

# TEMAS: a Thesaurus of Early Modern Documentary Forms\*

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**Abstract.** Research indicates that many archive users struggle with the interpretation of archival descriptions. This is a multi-layered problem, ranging from a lack of understanding of the concept of archival representation and its limits, to a lack of acquaintance with archival terminology and documentary forms. To support archive users in this latter area, the Belgian State Archives has developed TEMAS, a bilingual thesaurus (Dutch/French) that offers definitions for and maps (quasi-)synonyms of more than 450 early modern documentary forms. In doing so, TEMAS brings together the scattered knowledge on early modern documentary forms and makes it easily accessible for archive users. Due to technical and budgetary constraints, the first version of the thesaurus was developed as a relational database in Access, which can be downloaded as open data from the online SODHA repository ([www.sodha.be](http://www.sodha.be)). In the coming years, the Belgian State Archives will rework this database into an open linked data thesaurus using multilingual thesaurus software that will facilitate data sharing and reuse. Linking TEMAS to Records in Contexts – the new description standard of ICA – is also a track that will be explored in the coming years.

**Keywords:** Thesaurus, Archival Description, Early Modern Record Types, Documentary Form, Accessibility.

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