

Polish and European Archives:
Shared Heritage –
Dissimilar Experiences
Abstracts

The European Archive. European Projects

Alicja Kulecka

Napoleon Bonaparte and the European Archive

The concept of the European Archive was based on several assumptions. The first of those was an assessment of the act's quality. In the course of this process, acts of greater and lesser importance were separated. The criterion for assessment was a given document's historical value, i.e. its usefulness for researching the past. Archive materials which reflected important events in the history of Europe or were produced by act-makers who played an essential role in the past were treated with more attention. For instance, the Church used to shape the history and culture of Europe; hence the interest in papal archives was particularly evident. The second assumption linked with the concept in question was that France, as the state that used to be the model of Enlightenment and revolutionary ideas, should create the standard of archive-keeping, i.e. of collecting, storing, describing and providing access to documents. In the light of this conception, France's duty was to provide her satellite, allied and partner states with similar standards and to control their interpretation and application. Those archives were thus to constitute a centralised network. One centre was to be intellectually and ideologically dominant; this role was assigned to the central site, i.e. Paris. Another element of the concept of European Archive was that archive resources were organised in keeping with the factual order of the documents, based on defining the territory and the type of archive material. This concept greatly contributed to the development of the modern network of European archives.

Anna Laszuk

Archives Portal Europe as an effect of cooperation and actions based on international standards

The International Council on Archives, in existence since 1950, supports the actions of, and the cooperation between, archives worldwide. One aspect of its work is normalising archival description and presenting several international standards (ISAD(G), ISAAR (CPF), ISDF and ISDIAH). Descriptions prepared in keeping with those standards can be collected and made available in shared systems; this is facilitated by the computerisation of archive activity, a process which began in the 1980s. Archives Portal Europe was created within the framework of international projects: APEnet – Archives Portal Europe network (2009–2012) and APEx – Archives Portal Europe network of excellence (2012–2015). The portal enables access to information (close to 250.5 million descriptions of archive materials and over 21,000 descriptions of act-makers) and to digital copies of documents held in over 6,500 institutions in 31 countries and in the EU Historical Archive. The portal conforms to standards EAG, EAD and EAC and to technical standards: METS and OAI-PMH. Thus came into being a shared platform used in various ways by the states participating in projects. Fundamental descriptions can be sought in 24 languages. Explanations and practical dictionaries of terms used in the portal were prepared also in those languages. Descriptions of archive materials are mainly on the level of an archival set and an archival unit; they most often contain a minimum of element, so, in practice, the portal's potential in this respect has not been fully exploited yet. The portal makes it possible to see to what extent the traditional, national archive-keeping institutions are in keeping with international models. Descriptions of act-makers have so far been published by only seven countries participating in the creation of this portal. The shape of the portal was occasionally influenced by local traditions; for instance, only the French and German archives have made use of the additional thematic entries. Descriptions coming from the Polish state archives use the systemic-factual classification of act-makers, which is peculiar to Polish methodology of archive-keeping. Hyperlinks, which make it possible to navigate the vast network in order to expand and specify the sought information, are an important element of the system.

Anna Krochmal

Archives of the united Europe in the light of the APEX project

The APEX project – *Archives Portal Europe network of eXcellence* – was carried out in the years 2012– 2015 among 33 partner states of the EU. Polish state archives were among the participants. The aim of the project was to make archival resources collected by various institutions of the united Europe (e.g. the state, city, ecclesiastical or university archives), widely available. Archives Portal Europe developed as part of the project offers fast online access to over 245 million of archival descriptions and to over 200 million scans, all gathered in one place. They come from over 6,500 archives and record-keeping institutions located in 31 countries in Europe and outside it. The available information refers to archival materials dating from the Middle Ages to our times and encompasses a broad spectrum of research topics referring to the history of particular countries, mutual relations and contacts on the level of politics, economy and culture.

Participants in the APEX project cooperated closely with the largest European portal, the EUROPEANA; hence information referring to historical sources in European archives are currently available on both portals at the same time.

Violetta Urbaniak

Foreign archives as a focus of interest at the “Archeion”.

An introductory analysis

In the intentions of its creators, the “Archeion” was to give information as to state archives in Poland, their resources, the research conducted therein and specialist publications connected with their work; it was also intended to inform about the organisation of foreign archives. Authors who in the inter-war period discussed the issues of foreign archives focused their attention on their organization, operation and specific qualities. In addition, the “Archeion” attempted to bring to the Polish readers’ attention various new publications which referred to the issues of archive-keeping but were published outside Poland. After the period of suspension during the Second World War, the periodical was resuscitated in 1948. In this period, the issues of European archives acquired a new form. The subject-matter was present mainly in reviews and discussion of archives published outside Poland, in the overwhelming majority in the countries of the Eastern bloc, but not only there. The year 1955 brought significant changes, with the section “Archives abroad” being created within the “Archeion”. Since that time, the subject-

matter of foreign archives has been constantly present in this periodical; all that changed were the methods of presenting it and the authors of texts, who included employees of not only archives, but also of scholarly institutions.

Andrzej Prinke

ARENA and AREA – two European projects
(CULTURE 2000 programme) focused on archaeological
archive material. The experiences of a Polish participant

During the last ten years, Poznań Archaeological Museum participated in five international projects, sponsored by the European Communities within the frames of INCO Copernicus and CULTURE 2000 programmes:

- **ArchTerra:** *extending the European Archaeology Web over Bulgaria, Romania and Poland* (1999–2000). The main task included installing the new ArchWeb sites in these countries to establish the Internet gateways to European archaeology.
- **ARENA:** *Archaeological Records of Europe – Network Access (Extending Online Access and Digital Preservation of European Archaeological Archives* (2001–2004). The project provided links between digital archives (databases) of nine European countries. It also included a number of activities aimed at the dissemination of knowledge using new Web-based technologies (Dublin Core, Z39.50, SGML/XML).
- **AREA – Archives of European Archaeology**, phase III (2001–2004) and phase IV (2005–2008). The project involved developing a research network dedicated to the history of archaeology, with particular emphasis on the archives of this discipline, their promotion and preservation. Its main objectives were to encourage research on the history of archaeology, to study, catalogue and help preserve the main archives, and to investigate the interrelations between the development of archaeology and the formation of cultural and political identities.
- **European Landscapes: past, present and future** (2004–2008). The project's focus was on aerial archaeology, heritage conservation and public awareness.

Archive Studies in Totalitarian Regimes

Zdzisław Chmielewski

Developing the scholarly identity of archive studies in the totalitarian systems of the inter-war Europe

The First World War meant the ultimate end of the “old world” in all the leading European states. Regardless of whether they substituted ancient regalia with republican emblems or whether they inexorably evolved towards dictatorships, they joined the search for solutions that would fit the new perception of current civilisational and technological transformations. The archivists’ milieu was also trying to find its place in this trend by concentrating on practical endeavours as much as on reinforcing the theoretical basis for archive studies – a discipline which was then entering the phase of cementing its scholarly identity. An essence of that period’s debates is found, above all, in works on archive studies published in Italy and Germany, i.e. countries which rejected both the post-Versailles solutions and the democratic projects of developing political systems that were undertaken in Europe at the time. In the late 1920s and over the following decade, archive studies in these two countries offer fundamental syntheses which summed up the hitherto achievements of the discipline and delineated its research perspectives.

The famous studies by Eugenio Casanova, Adolf Brenneke (who often referred to the former in his analyses) and Heinrich Otto Meisner (who focused on the broader context for archive studies) are excellent examples of re-evaluations taking place in the Italian and German archive studies in the inter-war period and of the general European significance of archive studies as practised in those two countries. In addition, they encourage, even oblige, us to pose questions that are difficult to discover in the texts on produced within archive studies so far. These question pertain to the place held by archive studies among the humanistic sciences and to this discipline’s peculiar integrative power that has been realised within the framework of varying, sometimes even opposing, political systems. The point to investigate is why archive institutions of Italy and Germany – two states which did not hide their expansionist policies to be implemented at the cost of both neighbouring and farther-away countries – so emphatically participated in the “Europeisation” of archive studies, the process of which is evident in the period between the two world wars. It is also necessary to ask to what degree this resistance of archive studies to non-scientific influences is an immanent elements of this discipline’s peculiar nature, of the rational principles of its functioning as

verified by practical experience. It is also necessary to assess whether archive studies in the Soviet Union were similarly resistant, considering that after the October Revolution this discipline developed in political conditions which, when compared with both the fascist regimes, constituted a reverse of the same coin.

Janusz Łosowski

Ideological contents in Soviet handbooks of archive studies

In addition to their primary didactic function, Soviet handbooks of archive studies had also an ideological role. Ideological contents was put into the prefaces, introduction and chapters devoted to documentation collecting, organisation of archive work, and documentation accessibility. This contents extolled the communist system and described Marxism-Leninism as the methodological basis of archive studies. In addition, they highlighted the importance of the party system in archival theory and practice and they promoted the cult of communist leaders, Lenin and Stalin. They also expressed, although to a lesser degree, loyalty towards selected members of the party and government circles. The recognition of the archive's subordination to political, administrative and security agencies, as well as the endorsement of their participation in the ongoing political and propagandist activity, were especially important. Ideological messages put into handbooks did not always constitute empty rhetoric that was used mechanically, as a *sui generis* camouflage; an analysis of some passages, and of phrases used therein, indicates that the authors of these materials truly believed in the rightness of Marxist-Leninist ideology and in the correctness of the current policies of the communist party. The inclusion of such contents did not result solely from pressure exerted by the superiors.

Vitalija Stravinskienė

Soviet Power and Vilnius Archives: the Difficult Period (1939–1941, 1944–1945)

The article analyses the Soviet policy in the sphere of Vilnius archives. The author investigates the following two aspects: 1) plunder of cultural values from the State Archive in Vilnius by the representatives of Soviet power in October 1939 and 2) changes that took place in the system of Vilnius archives at the beginning of the Soviet occupation.

The beginning of World War II brought about radical changes in Vilnius archives. Coming of Soviet power to Vilnius in the autumn of 1939 meant a loss of the most valuable archival collections stored in the State Archive in Vilnius. They were taken away to Minsk. The attempts of the representatives of the Republic of Lithuania to recover the lost cultural values were fruitless. The archival documents were returned to Vilnius in 1942–1943 when the Nazi authorities agreed to give them back at the request of the Lithuanians.

In 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania with its capital Vilnius. Incorporation of Lithuania into the USSR started. This process encompassed the archives of Vilnius too and they became an integral part of the system of the USSR archives. The archives became subordinate to the People's Commissar of the Internal Affairs (NKVD). The archives, together with the documents accumulated therein, were used for political-ideological purposes (exposure of anti-Soviet elements, repressing them, etc.). Such a situation remained unchanged during the entire period under investigation. Decisions on the activities and work of the archives were made in Moscow rather than in Vilnius.

Stanisław Koller

The file registry and the instructions and regulations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs head office in the process of eliminating and destroying Security Service operational files in the years 1956–1989. A comparative analysis

Operational files created by the units of the Security Service were brought together in the dedicated archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The procedure for the handling of all files coming out from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, operational files included, was defined in detail by archival regulations outlined by the Minister of Internal Affairs. The retention periods for files were written in the file registry that was attached to the archival instructions and regulations. In the years 1956–1989, the file registry was completely amended five times by regulations of the Minister of Internal Affairs and once by the regulation from the Ministry of Internal Affairs Archives' Director (Office C). This was regulation number 00123/57, 0107/68, 08/71, 034/74, 030/79, 049/85. The next amendments of the file registry decreased the number of operational files preserved permanently (category A), from 27.3% of the total number of files in 1957 to 7.5% in 1985; it also increased the number of operational files in short-term preservation (category B-2 to B-15) from 40.9% in 1957 to 61.2% in 1985 and kept the same

level of operational files in long-term preservation (categories B-20 to B-50) – 31.8% of the total number of files in 1957 and 29.8% in 1985. Despite the intense amendments of the file registry over this period, leading to the decrease in the retention periods for operational files, the Ministry of Internal Affairs head office produced at least 21 directives, instructions and guidelines ordering the elimination and destruction of certain categories of operational files. A detailed analysis of these commands demonstrates that immediate decisions of the Ministry's leadership were motivated by political events and were of major importance in the process of eliminating and destroying operational files.

The Social Function of Polish Archives – Collecting, Describing and Access to Documents

Irena Mamczak-Gadkowska

The development of archive training in Poland in the 20th century

The essay outlines the development of archive training in Poland in the historical perspective. Archivists began to be trained, and the first faculties dedicated to archive studies were founded at the universities in Toruń, Warsaw and Cracow, in the middle of the 20th century. Their inception was preceded by numerous initiatives undertaken by the archivists' milieu and the university circles; the aim of these initiatives was to organize an institutional archive training system. Many of these initiatives, especially those dating from the period immediately before Poland regained its independence and from the first years of the Second Republic, were never implemented; however, the curricula and training guidelines developed at that time were later reflected in the curricula of related courses and faculties established at Polish universities after the Second World War. Special attention is focused on the development of university-level archival education after the Second World War. The author presents the history of the inception of first archive-training faculties at the universities in Toruń, Warsaw and Cracow in the early 1950s, the development of archive-training institutions until the end of the 20th century, and the organisational evolution of archival education and the related curricula in Poland in the course of the 20th century.

Wiesława Kwiatkowska

The traditional description of Polish archive material versus international standards

The aim of the essay is to compare the traditional description of Polish archive material with the standards promoted by the International Council on Archives, above all the General International Standard Archival Description ISAD (G) and its complementary International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families ISAAR (CPF). An archival inventory, with an introduction containing a full description of the archive file and its components, has until now been of fundamental importance among the existing archival tools. A comparison of the introduction, as containing the description of the file, with the units of the ISAD (G) standard reveals that they are essentially compatible. Additional units in the standard are not contents-related; they are of a formal and legal nature and are easy to append. Thus, a correctly written introduction to an inventory makes it possible to produce a description of the file, and the series and sub-series included therein, in the ISAD (G) standard. In addition, the introduction contains data pertaining to the act-making process; these data are marginalised or altogether omitted in the standard. A description of units in the inventory is entirely sufficient to produce their description in the standard, and the contents of the first section of the introduction is enough to produce a normalised description of the act-maker and his functions. Thus, in the matters of content the Polish inventory conforms to the international norms used in describing archival materials and their makers. Despite this conformity, however, its contents cannot be automatically transferred to the computer system. The existing tools must be adapted to its requirements; this process will rely on their further unification, i.e. on developing a standard that will facilitate describing the entire archival resource. These changes will be primarily of a formal character. Information known to Polish archivists for decades will be entered into appropriate fields; these will be grouped into logical units serving the description of specific levels of the resource.

Wanda K. Roman

An archival information system versus the contemporary user

The problems discussed herein refer mostly to the definition of archival information and its direct corollary, the definition of an archival information system, its genesis and evolution caused by modern technologies, its presentation and the assessment of its currently operating traditional and electronic components. The main concern, however, are the opportunities regarding searching for archival data and making it accessible, which archival information systems offer to contemporary users, as well as the problems occurring when using various components of the system.

An archival information system (AIS) is most often understood as a set of interconnected elements which stores and enables access to information about archives, archive materials and the contents of archive materials. A contemporary AIS involves an inevitable collision between traditional structure and modern forms resulting from the use of computers and software. The new, electronic elements of an AIS are: websites of the Central Bureau of State Archives, archives and other institutions, presenting information on archives and their resources; national (standardised) and local databases; information systems; archival aids generated as electronic documents; archival aids traditionally digitalised and made available online; materials available online which are not electronic aids; source editions which are digitalised and made available online; specialist publications online, e.g. catalogues of archival exhibitions online.

Marcin Mielnik

Archival materials of the Ministry of Police of the Duchy of Warsaw

The aim of the essay is to describe the sources of the Ministry of Police of the Duchy of Warsaw. Starting point is the presentation of organization, competences and place of the Minister of Police and his department in the state administration system. Especially interesting is the analysis of organization of the Ministry and the impact of the minister. Simple schemes allow to understand the system of the records.

Most important archival materials are located in the Central Archives of Historical Records (AGAD) in Warsaw. Three fonds are worth noticing: the Governing Commission, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers. First

of them contains complete archives of the central administration, including the Commission of Police. On its basis one can analyse the beginning of the administration and the police. The second one contains the correspondence, the administrative books and different registers that comprise e.g. judicial, economic or military issues. The third fonds contains different documents created by the Council of Ministers, resolutions and registers of decrees. As a result of the presented analysis the author suggests singling out some important types of documents related to the police authorities and – indirectly – to the Ministry of Police as well.

Katarzyna Słojkowska

The “Przeździecki Cinders”.

Some notes on the Przeździecki Archive

A small box with remnants of archival documents constitutes one of the symbols, relics in fact, of a pre-war Polish collection. The so-called “Przeździecki Cinders” are a part of the legacy of Professor Aleksander Gieysztor, which is held at the Polish Academy of Science Archive in Warsaw. The Przeździecki Library was a family archive consisting of several very large sets of acts, encompassing documents dating from the 13th to 19th centuries. It comprised personal documents of family members, economic and estate archives and foreign collections. In 1939 it was one of the largest private archive collections in Poland; its contents was made available to scholars conducting scientific research. The box found in Professor Gieysztor’s legacy contains shreds of burnt documents with the “Counts Przeździecki Archive” stamp. After the catastrophic September of 1939, the young medievalist was one of the team securing the surviving library resources. Information on the war history of the Przeździecki collection is found in the materials from the legacy of Zygmunt Wdowiszewski, also held at the Polish Academy of Science Archive in Warsaw.

Mateusz Zmudziński

Filing parish and deanery documents on the example of the Toruń Diocese Archive of Historical Records

The essay focuses on the completion of one of the most fundamental archival operations, i.e. the filing of archive materials. Without it, materials collected in archives would not be accessible. Due to the extraordinary knowledge of their predecessors, the staff of state archives have the general methodological directives

to follow in their work on filing archive materials. Unfortunately, church archivists do not have such regulations yet; hence they are very often obliged to make use of the achievements of state archivists. The essay touches upon the history of the Archive of Historical Records at Toruń diocese, subsequently presenting the history and characterisation of archive materials collected therein. The core section focuses on the methods of filing the archive material at the act-maker and in the Church archives of historical records (the Diocese Archive in Pelplin and the Diocese Archive of Historical Records in Toruń).

Lukasz Karolewski

Crowdsourcing in description of photographs – outline of application

Working on identification and detailed description of photographs requires profound knowledge in very different areas which is unattainable for a single archivist. Limited number of employees and development of archival resources make this task even harder.

A solution could be the method of crowdsourcing which means delegating some tasks to the wide group of people, in this case – the Internet users. In many situations the enthusiasts of a specific subject can identify a photo faster and more accurately than an archivist.

The essay presents advantages and disadvantages of this method applied to the resources of the photographs in the archives, including some examples of right and wrong identifications.

Hadrian Ciechanowski

Public registers in archives. Part 1: the issues of collecting and filing sets of documents generated by Civil Registry Offices

State archives collect and store numerous public records that have a centuries-old tradition. Yet until now those materials were outside the archivists' main area of interest. Currently, however, the archives are getting ready to deal with registers which increasingly often are produced in the digital form. The process of digitalisation, increasingly more marked in the archives and state administration, has resulted in a need of focusing closer attention on this group of archive materials. The first part of a cycle of texts on public registers focuses on the issues of collecting and filing sets of documents generated by Civil Registry Offices. The

essay discusses the history of Civil Registry Offices, on particular series of archive materials generated by those offices, and on the main problems associated with filing them.

Anna Wajs

Diaries, memoirs and eyewitness reports in the Manuscript Collection at the State Archive in Warsaw

The collections of the City Archive in Warsaw ceased to exist on 4 November 1944; they were burnt by the Germans after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising. However, as early as in April 1945 the Archive was reactivated and the effort of describing document losses and gathering substitute documentation begun; the citizens were appealed to for donations of documents. In the years 1945–1947 and 1957–1959, former employees of city institutions, social activists and culture animators were encouraged to write memoirs and eyewitness reports of actions in which they participated. The yield amounted to nearly two hundred texts, which were deposited in the Archive's collection and incorporated into the newly created Manuscript Collection, where they joined the texts submitted in 1946 for a competition announced by the "Stolica" weekly and the texts awarded a prize in the competition celebrating the 15th anniversary of the liberation of Warsaw, announced by the city authorities. The archivist Adam Słomczyński was a zealous advocate of collecting such sources in the Archive, supported in his endeavours by Aleksy Bachulski, the director of the Warsaw Archive, and by Witold Suchodolski, the general director of State Archives. The issues associated with collecting and filing diaries, memoirs and eyewitness reports were discussed several times at the meetings of methodology commissions at the Warsaw Archive, e.g. in 1960 and 1964. The main speaker was Adam Słomczyński, who proposed the directives for, and methods of, filing such materials. The book-form inventory of the Manuscript Collection, which was completed in 1970, adopted the alphabetical order according to the name of the author. Some texts were provided with reviews; some were retyped. Słomczyński's postulates were partly carried out, as such texts were classified as substitute documentation and taken under consideration in the Archive's budget and work plan.

European Archives

Magdalena Heruday-Kielczewska

An ideal archive? The National Archive at Pierrefitte-sur-Seine

For many years, the French National Archives had to face the problem of the shortage of space to properly store their collections, especially evident in the case of their Paris seat. The archive at Fontainebleau, in turn, was located so far from the capital that researchers found it problematic to access it. After public debates involving archivists, researchers and politicians, a new building was erected at Pierrefitte-sur-Seine and acts generated after the year 1790 were relocated there. The move facilitated the introduction of a new archival information system; all archival units were marked with barcodes. It became possible to order materials online and to conduct search queries in inventories available over the internet. The new building is convenient for users and it also provides optimum thermal conditions for storing documents. The design of the research laboratory makes it perfectly suited to conducting archival research; it is provided with a sufficient number of comfortably sized tables and it offers assistance in conducting search queries, as inventories in the paper and online forms are readily available in a separate room. In addition, the Archive conducts popularising activity, organising occasional exhibitions, scholarly conferences, lessons for school-children and meetings for teachers; it also publishes a bulletin. Some small shortcomings proved impossible to avoid; but they do not overshadow the generally most positive image of one of the most modern archives of Europe.