

**„ARCHEION” JOURNAL. ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF POLISH ARCHIVES SINCE  
 1927**

*Ewa Rosowska-Jakubczyk<sup>1</sup>*

World War I and the resulting new geopolitical map of Europe fundamentally changed the situation of Poland. Disintegration of multinational European powers: the Russian Empire, Prussia, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire resulted in emergence of new European nation states: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland. Revival of the sovereign state of Poland, after Polish lands had remained under the rule of foreign powers for more than 120 years, has galvanized the community of Polish historians and archivists. The most urgent tasks undertaken by the community after establishment of the sovereign Polish state in 1918 were to secure the archival holdings that had been severely damaged and scattered as a result of warfare, to recover the archival materials that were removed from the Polish territories by the partitioning powers, and to undertake efforts leading to organization of Polish archival service<sup>2</sup>.

These most important tasks were reflected in the provisions of the Decree on the Organization of State Archives and Care for Archival Materials, issued by the highest state authorities on February 7, 1919 - the first legislative act in the field of archives in the history of modern Poland<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Doutora | „Archeion” journal | [erosowska@archiwa.gov.pl](mailto:erosowska@archiwa.gov.pl)

<sup>2</sup> See more: *Archiwa w Niepodległej. Stulecie Archiwów Państwowych 1919-2019*, red. nauk. E. Rosowska, Warszawa 2019; Motas M., *Powstanie polskiej państwowej służby archiwalnej przed odzyskaniem niepodległości*, „Archeion” t. 69, 1979, s. 39–56; Motas M. *W sześćdziesiątą rocznicę objęcia archiwów i archiwaliów przez władze polskie na jesieni 1918 r. w byłej Kongresówce*, „Archeion”, t. 67, 1979, s. 97–107.

<sup>3</sup> Mencil T., *Dekret o archiwach i opiece nad archiwami z 7 lutego na tle ówczesnego ustawodawstwa archiwalnego w Europie*, [in:] *Sześćdziesięciolecie polskich archiwów państwowych. Materiały z sesji, Łódź 10 XI 1979 r.*, red. nauk. A. Tomczak, M. Przeczek, Warszawa 1981.

The 1920s was a pioneering period, building the foundations of Polish archival science and modern archival studies. Archivists involved in this process were well aware of the vital role of a professional archival publication – an academic journal that would become a forum for presenting new ideas and thoughts on archival science, as well as for discussion and reflection.

Professor Józef Paczkowski, the first director of the State Archives, put forward the appropriate proposal in 1922. He envisaged the German periodical *Achivalische Zeitschrift* and the Dutch *Nederlands Archievenblad* as models for an academic archival journal. Polish archivists had to wait several more years for the idea of establishing their own academic journal to come true<sup>4</sup>. During that time, the state archives, wishing to support popularization of archival matters, began to publish archival-historical monographs to promote knowledge about Polish archival collections that were little known at the time<sup>5</sup>. Thus, before it was time for the "Archeion's" turn, a series of publications entitled "Publications of the State Archives" was initiated in 1922; a total of 15 items were published in the interwar period<sup>6</sup>.

The issue of publishing a proper periodical gained considerable publicity in the archival-historical circles during the 4th Congress of Polish Historians held on December 8-9, 1925 in Poznań. The gathering of representatives of Polish historical sciences has also become the first Polish archival conference. Alongside several hundred historians there were several dozen of the most eminent Polish archivists of the time, headed by Professor Paczkowski. The call to establish a periodical was universally voiced<sup>7</sup>.

Release of the first issue of *Archeion* in 1927 surprised and even startled the archivists in one respect: its singular title "Archeion" in particular. This ancient Greek word was meant to intrigue and pique curiosity, and thus to attract, while making it

---

<sup>4</sup> Paczkowski J., *Zapowiedź wydania czasopisma „Archeion”*, "Archeion", t. 1, 1927, s. nlb.

<sup>5</sup> See more: Mamczak-Gadkowska I., *Józef Paczkowski i jego wkład w budowę polskiej służby archiwalnej*, Warszawa–Łódź 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Inter alia: Manteuffel T., *Archives de l'État en Pologne — Origines, organisation et étatactuel. Supplément au vol. 9 de la Revue „Archeion”*, "Archeion", t. 9, 1931, s. 1–35

<sup>7</sup> *Pamiętnik IV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Poznaniu 6–8 grudnia 1925*, wyd. K. Tyszkowski, cz. 1. *Referaty*, Lwów 1925, cz. 2. *Protokoły*, Lwów 1927.

easier for foreign archivists and historians to understand what purposes would be served by the periodical in Poland. Publication of this first volume was eagerly awaited not only by its first editor, eminent historian and archivist Professor Stanisław Ptaszycki, but also by all the leading archivists of the day<sup>8</sup>.

Initially, it was assumed that "Archeion" would not be a regular periodical. It was supposed to be published once or twice a year, depending primarily on financial capacity of the state archives. Between 1927 and 1939, only 16 issues were published, which means one volume per year on average. Preserved archival documentation provides only partial information about the print run of the volumes issued before World War II. It is known that in 1933 and 1934 the periodical was published in 500 copies. In the interwar period, "Archeion" could be purchased in bookstores of one of the largest publishing houses in Poland at that time - "Gebethner i Wolff" - in Poland and abroad. International scientific exchange was extensive: "Archeion" was usually sent to approximately 100 foreign scientific institutions, mainly in Europe and the United States. A similar number of copies were sent to Polish institutions and scholarly societies, government offices and private individuals<sup>9</sup>.

It would be difficult to briefly describe all of the interwar volumes of Archeion, which included over 220 articles on specific topics as well as annals and information, written by 66 authors. Their names and titles of articles are listed in the index to volumes I through XV (1927-1937), included in volume XV in Polish and French<sup>10</sup>. In limiting the description only to the most general information, it should be noted that in terms of subject matter, the tone of the interwar "Archeion" was definitely set by works from the field of archival studies. This is the most numerous group of articles. Second most numerous is the group of articles and reporting items regarding foreign archives and foreign archival literature. The main focus was given to the experiences and achievements of archival science and archives in France, Belgium, the Soviet Union, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, and the United States. The listing order above - at least with regard to the initial references - is not coincidental. Polish archivists of the time consciously turned their attention to

<sup>8</sup> Woszczyński B., Sześćdziesiąt lat „Archeionu”, „Archeion”, t. 85, 1989 s. 7–28.

<sup>9</sup> Bańkowski P., *Narodziny i międzywojenne lata „Archeionu”*, „Archeion”, t. 50, 1968, s. 51-77.

<sup>10</sup> Moraczewski A., *Index des fascicules I- XV. 1927–1937/38*, „Archeion”, t. 15, 1937-1938, s. 253-270.

the French and Belgian archives when organizing archival administration and the archival network, as well as methodological considerations. The issues of archival science in the strict sense of the term, as well as those related to "office work", such as the issue of registries, occupied a relatively modest place in "Archeion". The issue of archival terminology was closely connected with the problems of archival science in "Archeion". It was felt to be one of the most acute problems in the development of archival science in those years. Polish archival science of the time not only lacked an archival dictionary. The topicality of archival terminology was so strong that matters of archival vocabulary became the subject of lively debate right at the dawn of the resurrected Polish state and lasted until the outbreak of World War II.

"Archeion" in the interwar period comprises not only the 16 volumes published between 1927 and 1939, but also the "Biblioteka Archeionu" ("Archeion Library") and "Dodatki do Archeionu" ("Archeion Supplements"). Both were also book publications included in the series entitled "Publications of the State Archives". Two publications came out under the form of "Biblioteka Archeionu": the first Polish academic textbook on archival science, published in 1929, which was the crowning achievement of archival knowledge at the time, and the 1933 guide to the archives of the former Republic of Poland from the earliest times to the end of the eighteenth century<sup>11</sup>.

The outbreak of World War II on September 1, 1939 put an end to twenty years of efforts, works, projects, deeds and hopes of the first generation of Polish archivists<sup>12</sup>.

During the German occupation of Poland, the state archives were seized by the occupying German administration, and in the eastern territories, annexed by the USSR under the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact - by the Soviet administration. World War II was the darkest period in the history of Polish archives, one that brought about enormous, irreversible losses of historical resources, either entirely destroyed or dispersed as a result of wartime activities. It also resulted in the loss of the most prominent members of the archival staff.

As the German army withdrew from Poland in late 1944 and Polish government was constituted, Polish archives and archivists resumed their activities in changed,

---

<sup>11</sup> Bańkowski P., *Narodziny i międzywojenne...*, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Bańkowski P., *Pół wieku odrodzonych polskich archiwów państwowych*, "Archeion", t. 51, 1969.

postwar reality. Publication of the "Archeion" was not resumed immediately. A decision to do so was only made in mid-1947, at a meeting of the Archival Section of the Association of Polish Librarians and Archivists. The first postwar volume, XVII, was released at the end of December 1947<sup>13</sup>. Since then, the periodical has been published regularly, initially twice a year, and since the 1980s as an annual. The most recent volume, 121, was published in 2020.

Several generations of Polish archivists have been raised on "Archeion". The journal is one of the oldest academic periodicals in the humanities field in Poland. Published almost uninterruptedly since 1927 (with the exception of World War II time), it is a collective body of work and a joint achievement of the entire community of Polish archivists and historians. It serves Polish archives, Polish archival science and Polish archivists. The journal would often, especially in periods critical for the development of archival science, serve as a textbook on archival science and a guide to archival work, simultaneously documenting the development of Polish archival theory and practice, the activities of state archives, all their achievements and accomplishments, as well as the fate of Polish archival resources, including those related to losses suffered by archives as a result of World War II. A lot of space was devoted to the issues of collecting, storing, scientific processing, preserving and providing access to archival materials. "Archeion" has always been open to other auxiliary sciences of history, primarily source studies and editing of archival sources. The recent two decades have seen a progressive predominance of issues related to computerization of archival activity, initially understood as the use of computers in archival work, and more recently - broadly understood digital archival science. Evolution of the subject matter covered by the journal in the 21st century reflects the development of Polish archival science towards an interdisciplinary, or rather transdisciplinary, field of knowledge, combining traditional archival science with such disciplines as computer science, information science, cultural anthropology, etc.

Since its inception, it has been a tradition of the journal to provide information on archives abroad and Polish collections therein, as well as systematically published reviews of foreign-language archival periodicals, presenting the problems and

---

<sup>13</sup> Woszczyński B., *Sześćdziesiąt lat „Archeionu”*, op. cit.

solutions of archival science in the world. The fate of Polish archival resources in the 20th century inevitably directed these interests primarily towards European and North American archives, where the largest and most valuable archives of Poland and the Polish Diaspora are located<sup>14</sup>.

The present-day "Archeion" is a journal published online, targeted and focused on the development of Polish archival science, based on, and in touch with, the most important trends and directions in the development of world archival science. It is indexed in the most important databases of humanities periodicals. It is also a scoring journal for the purposes of evaluating professional achievements of academic lecturers. "Archeion" is an open-access online journal with an ambition to become a cutting edge journal, prominent among European archival journals<sup>15</sup>.

### **Bibliography:**

*Archiwa w Niepodległej. Stulecie Archiwów Państwowych 1919-2019*, red. nauk. E. Rosowska, Warszawa 2019.

Bańkowski P., *Narodziny i międzywojenne lata „Archeionu”*, "Archeion", t. 50, 1968, s. 51-77.

Bańkowski P., *Pół wieku odrodzonych polskich archiwów państwowych*, "Archeion", t. 51, 1969.

*Bibliografia zawartości tomów I–C. Dodatek do tomu C*, oprac. R. Piechota, „Archeion”, t. 100, 2000.

Mamczak-Gadkowska I., *Józef Paczkowski i jego wkład w budowę polskiej służby archiwalnej*, Warszawa–Łódź 1990.

Manteuffel T., *Archives de l'État en Pologne — Origines, organisation et étatactuel. Supplément au vol. 9 de la Revue „Archeion”*, "Archeion", t. 9, 1931, s. 1–35

Mencel T., *Dekret o archiwach i opiece nad archiwami z 7 lutego na tle ówczesnego ustawodawstwa archiwalnego w Europie*, [in:] *Sześćdziesięciolecie polskich archiwów*

---

<sup>14</sup> See index of v. 1-100: *Bibliografia zawartości tomów I–C. Dodatek do tomu C*, oprac. R. Piechota, „Archeion”, t. 100, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> [www.ejournals.eu/Archeion](http://www.ejournals.eu/Archeion). Archives of journal see: <https://www.archiwa.gov.pl/pl/578-archeion>.

państwowych. *Materiały z sesji, Łódź 10 XI 1979 r.*, red. nauk. A. Tomczak, M. Przeczek, Warszawa 1981.

Moraczewski A., *Index des fascicules I - XV. 1927 - 1937/38*, „Archeion”, t. 15, 1937-1938, s. 253-270.

Motas M. *W sześćdziesiątą rocznicę objęcia archiwów i archiwaliów przez władze polskie na jesieni 1918 r. w byłej Kongresówce*, „Archeion”, t. 67, 1979, s. 97-107.

Motas M., *Powstanie polskiej państwowej służby archiwalnej przed odzyskaniem niepodległości*, „Archeion” t. 69, 1979, s. 39-56

Paczkowski J., *Zapowiedź wydania czasopisma „Archeion”*, „Archeion”, t. 1, 1927, s. nlb.

*Pamiętnik IV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Poznaniu 6-8 grudnia 1925*, wyd. K. Tyszkowski, cz. 1. *Referaty*, Lwów 1925, cz. 2. *Protokoły*, Lwów 1927.

Woszczyński B., *Sześćdziesiąt lat „Archeionu”*, „Archeion”, t. 85, 1989 s. 7-28.

[www.ejournals.eu/Archeion](http://www.ejournals.eu/Archeion)

[www.archiwa.gov.pl/pl/578-archeion](http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/pl/578-archeion)