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Crossing the Rubicon in archival sciences. Redefining the scope of state archivists in the 21st century Poland (with Ukrainian reflection)

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Abstract: *The archivist's profession has been shaped by its relations with historic sciences. In the 19th century, where first archival institutions were founded, they attracted numerous historians. It was them who primarily joined the ranks of archives' personnel and contributed to their development. It constitutes a foundation for the traditional archival methodology, the perception of archives themselves and the self-identification of their employees. Nowadays, the world is changing more rapidly than ever before affecting the archives. Polish state archives influenced by both techno-logical and cultural revolutions are faced with a difficult choice for further advancement of their scope and activities. This article outlines the principle reasons behind the discernible changes in the Polish archival realism. The authors try to answer the question of what these changes are, in which spheres of archival work take place and on what levels. They also prepare a portrait of an employee of the modern state archive in Poland and describe the transformations in the consciousness, self-esteem and intellectual and professional condition of archivists. They confront this picture with the situation in Ukrainian archives operating in a similar geographical area, although with the experience of the realities of the Soviet Union and a different systemic path after 1991. This comparative study was based on an analysis of the scientific literature on Polish and Ukrainian archivists and the results of research conducted by the authors among employees state archives.*

Key words: archival system, Poland, Ukraine, state archives, technology, transformations

Introduction

Polish state archives are a special government administration reporting to the minister responsible for culture and national heritage. It was established in 1919, after Poland regained independence after 123 years of captivity. Currently, it is made

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up of a network of 33 institutions operating in all regions of the country. These are 3 archives of a central nature (gathering documentation produced by central state authorities), regional state archives and their regional branches located in all regions of the country. State Archives are budgetary organizational units of the State Treasury, managed by the General Director of the State Archives. A total of 1,560 people work in Polish state archives, 65% are archivists, and 35% are administrative and service employees. This structure has a rich tradition, has a legal basis and its own work ethic.

The turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, however, brought about major changes in the life of archivists related to global trends. The world is changing more rapidly than ever before and the archives along with them. Polish state archives, whose endeavours are moulded mainly under the pressure of both technological and cultural revolutions, face a difficult dilemma of which path to choose with regards to their objectives and methodologies. This article indicates principal reasons behind shifts in the realism of Polish archives and aims to answer the questions concerning the scope and actual extent of the aforementioned shifts. Moreover, it is an attempt to portray an employee of a modern state archive in Poland as well as to capture the changes in consciousness, self-assessment and both professional and competences of archives' employees. A special character of the research carried out is given by the general presentation of the situation in the Ukrainian archives. The comparison of the directions of development of archival systems in two neighboring countries with a similar past shows the chances of imitating good foreign solutions. This article was based on scientific literature concerning Polish and Ukrainian archives and the results of a survey conducted by the authors among state archives employees between 2017 and 2018.

Polish archival traditions

Similarly as in other parts of Europe, the bases for the profession of an archivist were sciences of history. In the 19th century, when Polish lands were under occupation of the neighbouring countries and when first archiving institutions were founded, they attracted a lot of attention from historians using them to build a fundament of historical sciences. It changed the definition of 'the archive' which up until that moment signified a set of documents pertaining to closed institutions and historiographic branches. From then on, it began a new era of archives as an academic institutes.¹ The archives founded in Galicia in the second half of the 19th century, meaning both the National Archives of Municipal and Land Records in Lviv and the National Archives of Municipal and Land Records in Krakow are historical archives in their own right and were managed by Jagiellonian University professors.²

¹ Łodyński, 1937: 279.

² Ciara, 2002: 88.

Furthermore, they were the roots of state archives associated with the independent state proclaimed in 1918. No later than exactly the times of the Second Polish Republic, it has become crystal clear that academic activities of archives are at the same time their factual main objectives. These aforementioned objectives are organising acts, compiling inventories, registers and indexes as well as providing documents to scholars and making archival materials fit for print³. These duties became a foundation for the ethos of the archivists' profession in Poland. In consequence, 60% of all state archives' personnel were academics (IX 1939) and an *Archeion* journal was founded.⁴ After German occupation of 1939-1945, this path was not only continued but highly encouraged by communist archivists.⁵ As a result of this approach, the state archives were moved under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and granting them the right to hire academics with the same privileges as employees of academic institutes.⁶ It reinforced the importance of the key array of archival activities consisting of:

1. Academic sessions, the purpose of which were a) enabling employees to overcome methodical difficulties in ongoing works; b) encouraging and instructing younger members of personnel in the fields of academic research; c) become a source for articles pertaining to archival sciences that should be published.
2. Preparing prefaces to inventories.
3. Compiling inventories based on themes to this day considered as one of the most important enterprises of national archival sciences.
4. Cooperating with academic institutions.
5. Organising and participating in academic conferences.
6. Publishing journals and monographs.⁷

The beginning and directions of changes

This situation changed in the final years of the communist reign and its eventual fall. The 1970s, and especially 1980s up until 21st century mark the time of transformation of state archives into state administration offices and by doing so, decreasing their academic activities. This process combined with distinctive troubles in studying of the archival materials happened to derive post-factum rather than a result of executing actual acts of law. The current archiving act⁸ leaves no room for

³ Motas, 1969: 122-123.

⁴ Tomczak, 1966: 72-73.

⁵ Bańkowski, 1964: 161.

⁶ Magier, 2019b: 93-96.

⁷ Bańkowski, 1955: 88-89.

⁸ Ustawa z dnia 14 lipca 1983 r. o narodowym zasobie archiwalnym i archiwach; Dz.U. 2020 poz. 164.

interpretation other than that academic activities are still in scope of the state archives. Moreover, it should be considered as one of the state archives' main objectives, equal to other tasks despite being a supplementary competence due to principal archival responsibilities. This approach is shared among academic circles who, in the process of educating new archivists, highly emphasise the need for research and scientific competences.

The General Director of State Archives is responsible for the policy of departing from the traditional model of functioning of state archives. It is accompanied by two phenomena in the recent decades, meaning the troubles in documents studying and in consequence, the identity crisis of archivists. Together, both paint a grim picture of archivists standing at a crossroads, immersed in a deep crisis of archival endeavours. Renouncing science and in consequence, a more common public perception of archives as state offices rather than academic or even cultural institutions led to treating them as typical government administration offices.

Gradually, classic methodologies were abandoned in favour of the so-called archival techniques, a term coined by German archival sciences but debatable in the light of Polish literature or archival sciences in general.⁹ The stress put on publicising with limiting the role of document studying (in itself a slight to the archivist's profession) half a century ago would be considered revering the archival techniques over the essential substance. Computer systems and other technological advances should be perceived as an auxiliary support and not the determinant in the ways of studying archive materials.¹⁰

Technological revolution

It is worth to consider the past and the present influence of the computing technology on the archivist profession, meaning coexisting with machines.¹¹ Computer utilisation which took off on a massive scale after the fall of communism in Poland was nothing out of the ordinary for the national archives. It is due to the fact that in the 1970s, the General Director of the State Archives created a taskforce titled *Information Technology and archives*. This team had two main goals: being up to date with foreign literature on the subject and researching the possibilities of using new technological means with regards to all stored data and its sources. It was destined mainly to make the archival tools more efficient as well as preparing for mechanical and automated way of providing the archive materials to the public.¹² In reality, it involved creating a new standard for labelling archive records, indexing documents

⁹ Arłamowski, 1962: 42.

¹⁰ Chorążyczewski & Gut, 2020: 64.

¹¹ Magier, 2018: 31-47.

¹² Krystek, 2004.

and a glossary containing labels and descriptions of archive materials in order to facilitate information and search purposes.

Nevertheless, the appearance of computers in Polish archives in 1990s paved the way to a revolution we still see today. An archivist would attempt at getting familiar with its setup, software and programming language. It soon became apparent that years of preparation would not help avoid the archivist the never-ceasing shock for having to face a super machine. Certain remarks from a decade ago have lost none of their relevance. It appears that something considered impossible at that time simply became a common standard. Technology level which was completely out of reach for archivists only yesterday became widely available and with relentless innovation it becomes already partially obsolete at the same time.¹³

Nowadays, the phenomenon of crossing boundaries between humans and machines, or even nature and culture is mentioned more often while undoubtedly the technology of today plays a part in every science domain, including archival sciences.¹⁴ This problem was not in fact a new occurrence and could be philosophically considered a wider problem of the universal influence of technology on human civilisation. As a consequence, the machine began to dictate the methodologies for archival works. In the very beginning, it served as a tool for creating new forms of archival materials as well as analyses of databases which had started growing exponentially in an uncontrollable manner to thousands of instances. Due to the technological influence, at first it was the archival information system which began to change. Slowly, it forced the evolution of methodologies for studying the records. The tendency to force changes on archivists to alter their methods became permanent in archival methodologies. The legacy of generations had to be subdued to newly created standards for labelling and descriptions supported by the language and operational capacity of the machine.¹⁵ The paradox that functioning of the archives in the modern world is impossible without machines became excruciatingly apparent. Moreover, the dominance of machine in the area of archiving may as well be a failure of the human archivist since it is becoming something completely brand new, renouncing the archival heritage.¹⁶ Archivists became yet another profession dependent on a machine. Nowadays, 76% representants believe they are completely reliant on machines while 81% of them cannot imagine modern work without the support of machines (despite assumptions, the distribution of answers pointing out those 'unimaginable' tasks per particular archival responsibility is not immediately obvious: reprography – 48%, conservation – 14%, making information available to the public – 14%, popularisation – 9.5%, supervision – 9.5%, studies – 5%) and sadly all 100% of respondents believe that the influence of machines on archivists will only gradually

¹³ Biernat, 2001: 21.

¹⁴ Manhoff, 2015: 514.

¹⁵ Roman, 2017: 13-14.

¹⁶ Berdyaev, 1933: 19, 26.

increase in time (The ‘Machines in the archives’ survey was conducted in September 2017 via a social networking site in the Archiwista24 group, which brings together ‘identity advanced’ archivists. It was completed by 70% of the entire community).¹⁷ Until, of course, a fateful confrontation in which the main stake will be the creation of a unified system entirely subservient to a machine.¹⁸ All of this take place in the “fever of transforming the society into information society”¹⁹ which affected archivists as well. It is worth to highlight that the majority (68%) of respondents, despite their pragmatic assessment of being dependent on a machine, still maintain that its influence on the archival works is largely positive, 30% see both positive and negative aspects while only 5% deemed the technological influence as entirely negative. Among examples of the negative effect the following were listed:

- electrostatic charges,
- human dependence on machines,
- close surveillance,
- primitivizing the factual substance,
- the need for constant raising of qualifications,
- a high probability of making errors which could be costly to the organisation.²⁰

Currently, it is the machine which seems to dominate humans. In order to facilitate our work, the machine caused irreversible changes to the perception of time and space. It forces its own logic and understanding of interhuman relations as well as defines ways of communication and expressing feelings. Imperceptibly, the machine stopped being simply ‘an archival tool’, in a same way a common ladder in the archive’s room becomes ‘an archival works’ dedicated ladder’ or a typewriter could ‘become an archival works’ dedicated typewriter’. The inability to ‘subjugate’ the super machine to archival needs stems from the limited influence of archivists on its software. They can only use it as long as they conform to its rules. The machine ceased to be the means and became the main objective of an archivist’s life.²¹ The few who could actually determine the configuration of the machine, the IT specialists, are far away from the state archives. Naturally, this magnifies the methodical revolution within the archival sciences domain and the chaos it entails.²² The Electronic Documentation Management System (EZD), Integrated Archival Information System (ZoSIA) as well as all national databases and the whole digitalisation domain forces archivists to connect only with machines and the world

¹⁷ Magier, 2017.

¹⁸ Żakowski, 2013: 16.

¹⁹ Roman, 2017: 20.

²⁰ Magier, 2017.

²¹ Skrzydlewski, 2004: 211.

²² Roman, 2017: 21.

it creates for them. In addition to the aforementioned, let us consider the effects of extended reality in the process of the archival education, popularisation or even archival tourism utilising computers, tablets or smartphones, basically any technology capable of visualising archival data. As a consequence, archivists become more and more anxious to stay true to themselves. Under the cover of human individualisation, a deindividualisation occurs which forces humans to become simply a cog in the system depriving them from intimacy. Furthermore, functioning in two different realities seems to create a boundary between public and private more distorted than ever.

Actions and reactions

In such a complex reality, the traditional activity of archives pertaining to science found adversaries both those in favour of transforming state archives into administration offices as well as those who expected in a substantial increase in a widely understood idea of popularisation. Reasons behind the resistance expressed by archivists who are unhappy with changes being forced in a top-down manner in an aim to renounce its academic roots have always been diverse. From the abundant amount of academic research in the archival works or considering its academic mission as inessential and overly theoretic to stating that calls for scientific research is responsible for holding on to traditional practices much too tightly.²³ Popularisation and providing materials to the public was visibly articulated in a *State archives strategy 2010-2020*²⁴ which highlighted the need of focusing on education at the expense of scientific enterprises which may be disregarded. The creators of this policy attempted to reconcile seemingly irreconcilable differences, meaning focusing on popularisation and education but eliminating scientific research. As a result, it impoverished the earlier and forced to reuse the works of other institutions. In effect, state archives began to use already published works (books, comic books and mainly games) created by other institutions, mostly the Institute of National Remembrance. It poses challenging questions such as: does it really help in raising awareness regarding state archives and their vast data collections? Additionally, could an archivist who is out of touch with the classic archival science be an efficient addition to the archive's personnel?

The aforementioned dilemmas have been highly important to people responsible for archival policies in Poland in the last 20 years. Władysław Stępnik, the General Director of the State Archives in years 2011-2016 attempted at a change in previous policies. Due to his efforts in amending the laws pertaining to archives, a possibility of employing academic personnel was included. However, due to a lack

²³ Chojecka, 2019: 126.

²⁴ *Strategia archiwów państwowych na lata 2010-2020.*

of executive acts, this regulation became defunct. The academic circles highlighted the importance of research activities in the archives to the successor of the General Director. As a result there was a session of the General Directory of the State Archives and academics in the summer of 2018. Unfortunately, the newly appointed Academic Council for Cooperation with the General Directory of the State Archives as well as State Archives themselves with academic circles in Poland could not act in the light of the personnel change on the position of the General Director.²⁵

The aforementioned direction of changes in the archival reality met with a complete misunderstanding by state archives' employees. Naturally, they happily welcomed the salary increase resulting from the fact of including state archives' employees into civil service.²⁶ However, they were nowhere near ready to face the consequences of that change, i.e. transforming archives into state administration offices. As a result, there were not only modifications in the archival practices but also adjustments in the consciousness of the personnel which proved quite an interesting matter.

Archivists' awareness

It is extremely important to answer the question what their employees think about the current situation in archives. On July 20 – September 17, 2018, I conducted an anonymous internet survey entitled *Study in the state archives AD 2018*.²⁷ The questionnaire was completed by 13.5% of all employees, which means that it may be a representative group for statistical assessments. The results turned out to be very interesting.

The majority of personnel are tasked with factual execution of archival requests (49.5%), publishing and archiving information (40%), studies (39%), and finally supervising documentation production by their authors (26.7%). The lowest number of people are in charge of digitalisation (12.9%), administration (15.7%) and academic works (16.7%). It is worth to highlight that most employees are tasked with more than one objective despite the nominal specialisation suggested by the state archives the structure of which is organised in specialised units. These individual specialties concern mostly supervision – 11% of employees are exclusively handling this particular task, archival queries – 10%, studies – 8%, making documents available 5% and digitalisation 3%. A typical employee of a state archive is fairly experienced with 60% of staff members with more 11 years of experience. The newcomers also constitute a discernible share of more than 10%. However, there is a noticeable fluctuation of workers during the first two years which is why there is a small share

²⁵ Ciechanowski, 2018: 326.

²⁶ Ustawa z dnia 5 lipca 1996 r. o służbie cywilnej; Dz. U. Nr 89, poz. 402.

²⁷ Magier, 2019a.

of employees with 3 up to 5 years of experience (little over 7%). It seems that those who can survive the first three years are more likely to stay there permanently. Most of them work in cities with population over 50.000 inhabitants where central and regional archives have their seats. Only close to 20% of employees work in provincial towns. The large majority have completed some form of archival education (university diploma of Archival Studies, university diploma in Historical Studies with special emphasis on archival studies, post-graduate archival courses, independent archival courses). Only 18% state archives employees admitted, they have no archival education background. Of those 18% staff members, a little beneath 22% work in office administration, 8% in digitalisation and 70% perform various other tasks such as archival queries (53%), making documents available (31%), as well as document studies (22%), archival supervision (11%) and others. As expected, the highest number of employees with no archival education background are experienced archivists with at least 11 years of experience (53%). However, what is very surprising is the fact that there is a remarkable share of 25% newcomers with an experience for up to 2 years with no archival education background. In the light of widely available archival education opportunities in multiple education centres throughout the country, these 25% of young staff members with no archival education are a questionable result given that only 22% of those are in charge of digitalisation while 11% work in administration.

Highly significant questions in this survey which could indicate signs of problems for modern archives pertain to attitudes regarding specific tasks executed by the state archives employees. Tasks which were pointed out as most appealing were archival queries (43%), studies (33%) as well as providing documents to the public and archival information (26%) and efforts in popularisation (25%). The aforementioned results are a close match with responses concerning tasks considered the least favourite among employees. It turns out that the most dreadful tasks according to Polish archivists are supervision over the ever-piling documentation (45%) closely followed by digitalisation (36%). Although the reasons for which these were chosen could not be more different. While the archival supervision is undoubtedly a highly difficult task which requires not only knowledge in many domains but also systematic acquisition of new competence. Additionally, it requires social competences to efficiently communicate with the outside world which is something not immediately associated with the archivist profession. The digitalisation efforts, on the other side, are a sequence of technical, menial and mundane tasks for which archivists feel overqualified and consider them below their competence. In third place, as the least favourite archivist activity concerns the academic pursuits. It may be a sign of a more overt way to express moving away from the classic operational formula of the national state archives, renouncing the roots reaching back to the 19th century historical science. On the other hand, it could be an indication of an imbalance in the traditional dichotomy of the Polish archive as a science facility and seat of an administration

office by leaning towards only the latter function. For most archivists, this direction is a shortcut to a trivialisation of the archive studies. Renouncing the academic roots of archive studies could eventually lead to archivists fading away among other office clerks. This is especially visible in the scope of tasks concerning studies where many staff members believe that it is a direct continuation of the historical role of archivists as a profession (43% of respondents). Moreover, less than 40% of state archives' employees are in charge of document studies and for only as much as half of them, it is the one and only task in their scope. All other are forced to combine it with archival queries, making documents available to the public, popularisation as well as supporting storage areas and academic pursuits.

However, the ubiquitous process of retroconversion seems to be the most detrimental in the eyes of Polish archivists. It entails a conversion of printed catalogues containing descriptions for archival evidences into a machine-readable form such as an Integrated Archival Information System (ZoSIA) which was forced into state archives in 2017-2018. Almost all staff members were instructed to abandon any other task in order to enter information into the system. This activity was seemingly accompanied by trial balloons exemplified by statements from the management who disapproved of traditional tasks performed by archivists in the light of evidence keeping and the needs of the digital world. Sadly, this left the archivists in a sense of frustration. It coincided with years of struggle typical for state administration employees such as low salaries by comparison to expectations resulting from knowledge and education levels (indicated by 90% of respondents), inadequate staffing (54%) and the excessive bureaucracy (35%). Additionally, combined with surprisingly numerous cases of negative issues dragging for years such as flawed organisational systems (25%) and bad atmosphere at work (15%), it most definitely led to a decrease in efficiency of state archives staff members. Among defects of working in a state archive, employees listed a poor perception of the public on the archival work, a lack of regard for the institution, its work and its employees, and a continued process of delegating more work without additional hiring or salary increase (as in the example of the digitalisation process) not to mention a director described as 'not easy to deal with'. Furthermore, the respondents also mention the everchanging priorities, a more frequent 'randomness' of people working in the archives but also poor working conditions as well as non-transparent career paths and the substantial gap between the expectations for archival work and the policies formulated by responsible management. Despite all these reasons, by far the one that has been raised the most is lacking a clear objective for archive's actual functioning as well as missing a comprehensive long-term policy plan. It may indicate that the concepts and priorities introduced by of the gallery of previous general directors are not in line with employees' beliefs. That could be one of the reasons behind a considerable, close to 10% of respondents, agreement among state archives employees for not considering

it a permanent workplace. Another grim thought is that further 32% of staff members is not sure if they would like to stay in their current workplace.²⁸

Who are the modern Polish archivists that seem to emerge as a result of this survey? They are certainly seasoned employees with a dozen years of experience. Additionally, they are accustomed to performing almost any task that is in scope of the state archive in spite of not refraining from narrow fields of expertise, especially with regards to archival queries and studies as well as information and making documents available to the public. They are formally educated in the field of classic archival sciences leading to preferences for traditional archival tasks, rather than assignments immediately connected to administrative or legal efforts or even technical tasks such as digitalisation. In the recent years, the state archives renouncing their traditional roots in favour of compiling inventories and the aforementioned retroconversion led a distinct identity crisis. What is more, low salaries, insufficient hiring associated with cumbersome bureaucracy as well as the lack of clear objectives for the functioning of the archives have a detrimental effect on the staff morale. Together, they all translate to a considerable feeling of frustration. Especially the last part fills modern archivists with apprehension and doubt whether they should stay in the archival service.²⁹ Simultaneously, there are new developments in the archival world. There is an emergence of ‘new archivists’ working side by side with the classical archivists. These are the archivists who always play the role of clerks. They do not have the same dilemmas. It corresponds directly with an arrival of archivist faculties’ graduates who are not purely historians. It is a phenomenon beginning in Poland from 2009.

The Polish experience and transformations in the Ukrainian archival system

The Polish experience of reforming all spheres of life, and not just archives, turned out to be extremely important for Ukraine, which has chosen a course for European integration. As for the archives, first of all, we are talking about the introduction of the latest information technologies.³⁰ Ukrainian archivists note the progress made by Polish colleagues in the development of technologies for working with electronic documents, as well as in the transition to electronic document management, and in the implementation of large-scale digitization of archival documents and the provision of electronic services to users.³¹ However, the internships of Ukrainian archivists in Poland, including the author, make it possible to see other achievements. In terms of material support and state support, the archives of Poland are significantly ahead of the Ukrainian ones, the high level of qualification

²⁸ Magier, 2019a.

²⁹ Magier, 2019c: 119-120.

³⁰ Romanovs'kyy, 2019.

³¹ Palamarchuk & Cherniatyns'ka, 2018.

of personnel is obvious, and the traditions that Polish archivists develop are also important. In particular, let's pay attention to democracy as the basis of corporate culture. At the same time, a number of problems are common for Polish and Ukrainian archivists, and their solution is of mutual interest.

The *Strategy for the Development of Archival affairs for the Period up to 2025*,³² presented by the State Archival Service of Ukraine for public discussion in 2020, contains a number of important points that are the result, among other things, of studying and foreign experience. Particular attention should be paid to the 2nd section *Main Problems, Challenges and Risks*, which presents a SWOT analysis of archiving in Ukraine. Without characterizing the statements available here, which, in our opinion, quite accurately capture the state of affairs in the industry, we allow ourselves to express only a few theses related to risks and challenges.

In particular, we note that digitalization and computerization are not only the main route for all archival institutions in the world, but also a certain kind of challenge for archivists, because of imply major changes in competencies and professional approaches. Although the digitalization of all processes of archiving and office work has been identified as priority No. 1 for the work of the State Archival Service of Ukraine³³ for several years, nevertheless, the development of not only regulatory and methodological documents that should regulate the entire range of works on digitization, but also the digitization strategies of the National Archival Fund.³⁴ Accordingly, there is no single methodology for creating digital copies, recording and providing access to them. The situation differs significantly in different archives, as evidenced by the results of the survey of employees of Ukrainian archives.³⁵ And yet, there was an awareness of the fact that digital technologies are the future of archivism. It became clear that they significantly affect changes in the mechanisms of state administration, the system of values, social interaction in culture, standards and patterns of people's behavior.³⁶ So far, among Ukrainian archivists there are quite optimistic opinions about the role of such technologies in archiving. In particular, they are seen as an important factor in those transformations of the archival industry, which will determine its openness, will contribute to its integration into the global archival and information space, "ensure the highest level of functioning of the entire system of archival institutions at the central, sectoral and local levels".³⁷ Attention is drawn to the fact that the use of information technology opens up additional opportunities for improving the management of personnel of archival institutions, increasing the efficiency of planning work and executing decisions made,

³² *Stratehiia Rozvytku Arkhivnoi Spravy*, 2020.

³³ Alyeksyeyenko & Balyshev, 2019: 192.

³⁴ Maystrenko & Romanovs'kyi, 2018: 81.

³⁵ Didukh & Zaliatok, 2019: 90 and further.

³⁶ Prychod'ko, 2020: 106.

³⁷ Kalakura & Kovtaniuk, 2019: 20.

and electronic interaction between users of archives and archivists minimizes their physical communication, which, in turn, minimizes the number of conflict situations.³⁸

In part, this view influenced the changes that have taken place in the system of archival education. So, in 2015, archival education was removed from the faculties of history, within which archivists were trained from the middle of the 20th century. Moreover, it should be mentioned that in the mid-1990s, within the framework of the ‘history’ direction, a separate specialty ‘archival studies’ was introduced at universities and in-depth training of students in this field began. Since that time, at the historical faculties, even a separate enrollment for this specialty was carried out from the 1st year. Then, since 2006, this specialty corresponded only to the ‘Master’ level. In April 2015, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine changed the list of specialties. Instead of ‘archival studies’, the specialty ‘information, library and archival affairs’ was introduced within the framework of the ‘culture and art’ direction. Only at some historical faculties, in particular at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv in 2019, began training students in this new specialty, which is associated with the development of a “new model of archival education”.³⁹ However, such a solution is associated with a number of difficulties, and the main one is a different set of basic disciplines, which does not correspond to the profile of the Faculty of History. In fact, we are talking about the change in the main focus in the training of archivists, about different understanding of the functions of an archivist. Although it is said about the interdisciplinary basis of the new specialty, however, the turn associated with adaptation to the requirements of the digital environment is obvious. To what extent is such a step justified? In our opinion, there has been some absolutization of technological innovations and the leveling of the role of traditions in the development of ways for the development of archiving. Thus, it must be remembered that one of the most difficult issues of archivism is the examination of the value of a document, which implies an understanding of many social processes in a broad historical perspective. The newest formats for the existence of documents in no way cancel the fact that the specified expertise remains in the list of top topics of archivism.⁴⁰ In our opinion, it is also important that the traditional archival document was not opposed to a person, but connected with a person. We are talking about the fact that historians-archivists behind each document saw people involved in its occurrence, with their plans, thoughts, feelings. Thus, an attempt to bring archivism beyond the boundaries of the humanities can be quite dangerous. By the way, such a model, which provides for the training of a certain universal archivist, “who would possess universal and humanitarian, and scientific, technical, and socio-economic and managerial knowledge, is also seen as difficult to achieve, and

³⁸ Kalakura & Kovtaniuk, 2019: 33-34.

³⁹ Voytsekhivs'ka & Paliyenko, 2019.

⁴⁰ Bezdrabko, 2019b.

was ready ... for the technogenization of archival production processes”.⁴¹ Obviously, archives perform a fairly wide range of functions (including social orientation⁴²) and require specialists of various profiles. Accordingly, in our opinion, a more correct solution would be to provide higher educational institutions with the opportunity to train archivists with a designated specialization (technical educational institutions with a bias towards the latest computer technologies, humanitarian ones with an emphasis on the traditional functions of an archivist, on the problems of source study, historical memory, etc.), as well as to create a system of archival postgraduate education, which would allow archives to get the missing specialists through the retraining of their employees. Special attention should be paid to the issue of specialists-restorers of archival documents. To date, the training of such specialists in Ukraine has actually been transferred to the archives themselves and is based on the enthusiasm of the relevant workers, and the technologies used correspond to the level of the last century.⁴³

Speaking about the problems of archiving in Ukraine, one cannot fail to mention the personnel problem. With the adoption of a new version of the law *On the National Archival Fund and Archival Institutions* (2001),⁴⁴ archivists received the status of civil servants. This strengthened their financial situation, but at the same time strengthened the regulation of their activities, and also approved their image as employees of the state apparatus, in fact, officials. Moreover, as the researchers note, this contributed to a reduction in the number of archival workers, since, as a result of the proclaimed state policy of reducing the number of civil servants, in the regions they began with the reduction of archivists. As a result, the total staffing of archival institutions decreased by 21% between 2013 and 2018.⁴⁵ In addition, some administrators responsible for the work of archives in the regions (including some directors of archives) began to insist that the main task of the archives is to provide all kinds of information, and scientific work in the archives is not provided. The bureaucratic routine, which is inevitable in such institutions, began to be quite definitely opposed to creative work, which could not but affect the negative perception of archives by university graduates who were offered to work in the archive, but at the same time they were immediately warned that they have no prospects for doing scientific work in the archive.⁴⁶ It is not surprising that there is a tendency towards

⁴¹ Bezdrabko, 2019a: 62.

⁴² O. Levchuk (2021: 29) names eight such functions. In the *Strategy for the development of archival affairs for the period up to 2025* the modern system of archival institutions is called the “social information industry” (*Stratehiia Rozvytku Arkhivnoi Spravy*, 2020).

⁴³ Kalakura & Kovtaniuk, 2019: 37.

⁴⁴ Zakon Ukrainy vid 13 hrudnia 2001 roku pro vnesennia zmin do Zakonu Ukrainy "Pro Nacional'nyi arkhivnyi fond i arkhivni ustanovy" (VVR, 2002, N 11, st. 81)

⁴⁵ Kalakura & Kovtaniuk, 2019: 37.

⁴⁶ The *Strategy for the development of archival affairs for the period up to 2025* directly states that there is a “curtailment of the scientific initiative” in the central and regional state archives (*Stratehiia Rozvytku Arkhivnoi Spravy*, 2020).

an increase in the average age of archive workers, a slight replenishment of the archival sphere by young specialists. It is noted that among the workers of archives there are many people without the appropriate education, that often training is carried out directly at the workplace. The low level of wages and the image of archives in society explain the fact that in the system of archival institutions in Ukraine, more than 80% are women.⁴⁷

Today, Ukrainian archives have not only very limited opportunities for interaction with scientific institutions and other structures, but also a weakly expressed desire to cooperate with them. This position can be characterized as ‘social exclusion of archives’. To a large extent, this is due to the orientation of the archives, first of all, to the authorities and administration. The isolation of archives from the local society hinders the popularization of archival heritage and participation in educational programs in the regions. Not surprisingly, the media does not show much interest in them. In the public report of the Chairman of the State Archival Service of Ukraine for 2020,⁴⁸ a figure was announced – 192 TV spots and TV programs with the participation of archivists. However, it should be noted that these data relate to both central and regional archives, both central and regional television. In general, it can be argued that the public interest in archives is weak, but some responsibility for this should also be assigned to archivists. The orientation of the archives mentioned above also affects the service of visitors, when archives in various ways limit the work of researchers who come to them first of all and are more attentive to requests from administrative bodies. Correspondence to the ‘state status’ began to be interpreted by the leaders of the archival industry and specific archives as the unquestioning implementation of state programs without any local initiative. This includes the direct instrumentalization of history (the use of historical information in the interests of political power).

In the *Strategy for the development of archival affairs for the period up to 2025*⁴⁹ these and other problems are indicated, as well as ways to overcome them. In particular, it is proposed to introduce a ‘client-oriented approach to serving users of archives’, to create a ‘creative space for users’, etc. Particular attention is drawn to the use of social networks as a tool for creating a positive image of archival institutions. However, the researchers noticed that such tasks require special employees.⁵⁰ In fact, we are talking about the positions of PR managers in the archives.

Thus, by analyzing the challenges and risks, as well as trends in the development and transformation of the archival industry, it is possible to predict certain changes in the staff of archivists, as well as changes in their corporate culture. It is possible that the level of technological culture will increase, but the humanistic

⁴⁷ Kalakura & Kovtaniuk, 2019: 36; ‘Kruhlyj Stil...’, 2019: 255.

⁴⁸ Pidsumky Diial’nosti Ukrderzharkhivu, 2020.

⁴⁹ *Stratehiia Rozvytku Arkhivnoi Spravy*, 2020.

⁵⁰ Levchuk, 2021: 39.

essence of archiving may be threatened. Even now, especially in regional archives, one can observe a weakening of archaeographic work, a decrease in the number of exhibitions of documents, a decrease in interest to documents of personal origin, an unwillingness to conduct oral history researches and other works that would allow documenting the phenomena of public and private life in the 21st century, a decrease of qualifications of archivists in the field of auxiliary historical disciplines, etc. Such trends require the attention of the entire archival community. However, now the main challenge for Ukraine is the Russian military aggression, which has already led to numerous casualties and destruction, including those objects that represented the cultural heritage.

End

In the address by the new General Director of State Archives and his cabinet appointed in 2019 to lead the archives, there was a clear indication of a return to traditional, classic methodologies. A revolutionary attempt at forgoing all archival marks of identity was put to a standstill and the archives are back to square one with regards to the main dilemma. The natural evolution placing rendering documents available, which is one of the most recent archival tasks, in front of archival studies caused multiple changes in the day-to-day operations. In addition to a technological revolution, we could observe a revolution in the consciousness of the archivists themselves. Such are the results of popular tendencies. An identity crisis in the Polish archival studies is closely related to a lack of a clear objective for the archives and all their tasks. Surely, we can expect another attempt to combine traditional archival activities with a new methodology tailored to the technological revolution and modern challenges. Polish archivists are at the Rubicon, behind which is the future. Reaching the other side of the river is inevitable, yet, as in any case, there may be numerous ways to cross it. The responsibility is even greater as the chosen development strategy may become a model (good or bad) for the archival policy in post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine.

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