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IN THE TREASURY OF MEMORY

In the Archive of Science of PAS and PAAS, the past meets the present. This is where hundreds of memorabilia and artifacts once belonging to eminent Polish scholars, as well as manuscripts and unique documents, form a priceless treasure trove of national heritage, open to explorers of history and science.

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Stepping into the narrow aisles between the Archive's shelves is enough to make one feel the weight of old documents. Every hour spent studying the accumulated materials becomes a journey into the minds of prominent Polish researchers. The Archive's shelves carry over 300 personal archives of scholars: early works, manuscripts of flagship publications, diaries, and documents related to stays in concentration camps – sources whose value cannot be overstated, and which allow us a glimpse into the fates of great minds.

The Archive of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences is a subsidiary unit that collects sources on the history of science and culture. It commenced its operation on April 1, 2002, following an agreement between the two institutions. However, its roots go back to the times of the Cracow Scientific Society, the Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and finally the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), including the Cracow Branch of the Archive of the PAS, established in 1955. The rich tradition of the institution, grounded in a commitment to preserving the integrity and uniqueness of its collections, has created a truly exceptional place. Its activities cannot be fully described in just a few words; this text offers only a brief outline.

The statutory tasks of the Archive of Science include collecting, storing, arranging, and providing access to archival materials of the PAS, the PAAS, scientific associations and institutions, as well as personal archives. Today, the Archive's holdings extend to almost two thousand linear meters – a standard unit used to measure the volume of shelved records. Two-hundred-year-old manuscripts, antique photographs, and even contemporary documentation form a particularly valuable national and, in some cases, international heritage.

What do the Archive's Repositories Store?

The specificity of the Archive of Science stems precisely from its collection. It primarily contains records of organizational units of the PAS in the Cracow area, including archival materials from the local branch of the Academy, institutes (e.g., the Institute of Nature Conservation of the PAS and the Institute of Nuclear Physics of the PAS), as well as committees and laboratories. The records of the Research Team for the History of Education during the Nazi Occupation of Poland, 1939–1945, remain a popular source of information about World War II. Also invaluable are the resources of the Department of the *Polish Biographical Dictionary* at the Institute of History of the PAS, as they allow us to explore not only the history of work on each volume of this monumental project in the field of Polish biographical studies, but also its scope and public reception. We can therefore trace the authors' repertoire of skills and methods, as well as understand the challenges they faced.



Photographs from Władysław Kotwicz's expedition to Mongolia, 1912:

Photo 1
Buddhist monks
in a Mongolian monastery
in Erdene Dzuu

Photo 2
Mongolian women
in traditional costumes,
photographed in a studio
in Urga

Photo 3
Participants in a scientific
expedition to Mongolia
in the summer, with yurts
in the background. Seated
in the center, from left to
right: Cyben Żamcarano,
Władysław Kotwicz,
Konstanty Maskow,
accompanied by
a Cossack escort

SCIENCE ARCHIVES PAS AND PAAS (3)

Personal archives of scholars, including many associated with PAS, constitute an important part of the repository. "I live by the maxim: 'Leave a trace.' What I mean is that I want my life to have a purpose; I want to leave something wise and valuable behind" – these words by geologist Wojciech Narebski could serve as a motto for all the creators of the personal archives gathered in our institution. Traces of their work and activities, as well as biographical materials, family records, and correspondence, allow them to continue "retelling their story," to protect it from oblivion. Take Aniela Gruszecka, for example – once a popular writer whose name is now largely unknown.

The analysis of materials such as the archives of art historian Karolina Lanckorońska, physician Julian Aleksandrowicz, and Polish philologist Mieczysława

Mitera-Dobrowolska can instill a sense of patriotism in younger generations. Complex personalities, such as philosopher Wincenty Lutosławski, emerge from the pages, mesmerizing audiences with their lectures. They also reveal figures who stood at the forefront of pioneering research, such as physicians Henryk Fryderyk Hoyer (father) and Henryk Ferdynand Hoyer (son). Finally, they spark curiosity about the world, as exemplified by photographs from the personal archive of geologist Walery Goetel or the travel diaries of zoologist Antoni Waga.

Robel's Archive is of exceptional importance for Polish martyrdom studies. It contains documentation of research on items recovered from the graves of officers in Katyn, preserved in secret by Franciszek Bielak. A particularly noteworthy item in Leszek

Starkel's archive is the Founder's Medal – the most prestigious British award for outstanding discoveries or achievements in the field of geography – which has so far been awarded to only two Poles.

Record of a Lost World

This subjective selection does not fully reflect the significance and diversity of the fonds. In every personal archive, we can find something intriguing – something that invites closer examination. The most popular, however, is the archive of the renowned orientalist Władysław Kotwicz. During his expedition to Mongolia in 1912, he collected numerous artifacts of old Mongolian writing, both originals and copies. He also brought back photographs depicting monasteries, Buddhist festivities, costumes, and everyday life. In the aftermath of the communist revolution, the world captured on photographic film ceased to exist, making the surviving images a unique iconographic source. Similarly unique are the working materials for the Mongolian census of 1915–1916. Kotwicz's collection is of interest not only to local Mongolian scholars, but also to representatives of governmental authorities and diplomatic circles. It also serves as a foundation for research conducted by scholars from Finland, Japan, and the United States.

The archival fonds are complemented by the collections of printed materials, such as the Lanckoroński Library in Rozdół, whose origins date back to the

18th century, and the book collection that once belonged to Professor Henryk Barycz. These collections also include some rare treasures; for example, the first edition of *Pan Tadeusz* is among the volumes.

The inclusion of the records of the Scientific Society of Cracow into the Polish National List of the UNESCO's *Memory of the World* Program (2018) attests to the exceptional value of these archival materials.

All this represents only a small part of the materials gathered in the archive. The archival fonds occupy a central place in this institution, with all activities and operations focused on and revolving around them.

From the Life of Archivists

On a daily basis, the work in the archive mainly involves providing access to records in the research room, conducting inquiries, and arranging the collection – that is, organizing archival materials in permanent order, creating appropriate access tools, and digitizing documents.

This work can be time-consuming and demanding, especially in the case of personal papers. The archive includes not only documents, but also antiques, and rare and unusual items (e.g., microscopic preparations), illustrating the diversity of the materials we handle. Sorting photographs and correspondence and navigating through the complexities of intricate notes require archivists to possess not only a wide range of skills, but also precision and patience. Only a fully arranged fonds can serve as a convenient tool for researchers.

Overseeing the institutional archives of the Cracow-based units of the PAS is also an important task of our institution. Responsibility for shaping the Academy's archival collection is carried out, among others means, through consultations, reviews of standards, and the organization of meetings, which provide opportunities for training and the exchange of experience.

At the same time, the Archive conducts extensive informational, popularizing, scientific, and publishing activities. Our aim is to keep the memory of scholars alive. Exhibitions have become a hallmark of the archive; particular attention should be drawn to the series *W służbie nauki* [In the Service of Science], dedicated to the profiles of outstanding researchers and supplemented by scientific sessions and publications devoted to them.

The exhibitions also accompany important events and anniversaries, including those associated with the Academy, such as the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the PAS Kraków Branch (2017), as well as the nationwide events, for example the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great

One of the archival exhibitions – a presentation of an old print from the Archive of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences



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War (2014) and the centenary of Poland's regaining of independence (2018). Both biographical and contextual themes were brought together in an exhibition organized on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino, dedicated to the previously mentioned Wojciech Narębski, a soldier of the 2nd Polish Corps who served in the same unit as Wojtek the Bear (2019). The opening of the exhibition – attended by its main protagonist – attracted an exceptionally large number of visitors.

Exhibitions frequently serve as a complement to the specialized topics presented during congresses or symposia; for example, the exhibition *Orient Near and Far* accompanied a session called “7th International Conference of Oriental Studies: Collections of Texts and Artefacts” (2018).

Living Archive

Another form of popularizing the collection includes lectures, presentations, workshops, and displays of archival materials. Through these activities, students, lecturers, and researchers not only from Poland but also from international institutions – including Daemen College in Amherst, the University of Regensburg, the University of West Attica in Athens, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the Curie Museum in Paris – as well as representatives of foreign diplomatic corps, gain direct access to the materials.

The Archive regularly organizes scientific conferences. Their thematic scope has so far included historical and biographical topics, as well as – of particular interest to specialists – methodological issues. Digitization, the organization of photographic collections, and new challenges in managing fonds of private provenance are just a few of the issues currently faced by modern archival science.

The publications of our institution include both scholarly works and commemorative volumes. Book launches and author events are well attended not only by the academic community. This outward-facing openness increases the institution's visibility and attracts new audiences.

International cooperation is also developing intensively. Since 2003, the Archive of Science has partnered with the Masaryk Institute and the Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The joint work carried out over the past 20 years has produced tangible results in both the scientific and publishing fields, including editions of correspondence between Polish and Czech scholars, the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Cotopaxi volcano expedition (2022), and a specialized methodological colloquium (2023)

In turn, as part of the project conducted with the Institute of History and Ethnology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and the Department of Turkic



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Studies and Peoples of Central Asia at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, we carried out digitization and publication of invaluable census-related materials from Mongolia. The Archive has also collaborated with institutions from Japan and Hungary. Thanks to all these efforts, the creators of our personal archives continue to serve as ambassadors of Polish scholarship around the world. After all, the work of a single scholar is just a part of a larger heritage.

Out of Concern for Collective Memory

Awareness of what we possess and what we leave behind is crucial for preserving the memory and history of scholarly communities – both institutions and individuals. This testimony is also essential for fostering generational continuity. For this reason, the creation of specialized support units with a clearly defined focus is not an isolated phenomenon. The world's leading scientific institutions, including universities and academies, maintain their own archives, which enhances their prestige and enables the development of a unique research infrastructure.

Institutions such as the Archive of Science of the PAS and the PAAS in Cracow do not function in isolation from reality, but are naturally embedded in society and responsive to its needs. Above all, they safeguard – with utmost care and responsibility – the elements that ensure the continuity of the institutions of which they are a part of; their achievements and heritage. ■

Interior of one of the archival repositories

Further reading:

Archive of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAAS), <https://archiwumnauki.pan.pl/>

Krzywda, P., Pułłocki, T. (eds.). *Archiwum Nauki PAN i PAU z perspektywy 20 lat. Rzeczywistość i wyzwania* [Archive of Science of the PAS and PAAS from the Perspective of 20 years: Reality and Challenges]. Cracow, 2022.

Quote cited in the text: Narębski, W., Kobos, A. *Zostawić po sobie ślad... [Leaving a trace...]*, [in:] *Po drogach uczonych. Z członkami Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności rozmawia Andrzej M. Kobos* [Following the Scholars. Andrzej M. Kobos Talks with the Members of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences]. Kraków, 2008, p. 536.