

Résumé of the 2nd issue:

The second issue of the Archival Review 2021 introduces an inspectorial report describing the audit experiences of Hungarian archives in 2020, by Gergő Bendegúz Cseh. Alongside, the issue contains articles mainly related to private document collection. In this context, the journal published a study on theoretical considerations and practical experiences by Ágnes Nagy and an article on the work of the Department of Family Archives and Collections of the National Archives of Hungary, by Anikó Schmidt. Erzsébet Szendiné Orvos's study on the authentic sources of literary works will hopefully become a series starter. The impact of cultural policy on public collections is described in a paper by Bernát Zsidi, on the history of the planned publication of the Index of Hungarian Academics, whose historiographical approach also provides a good characterisation of the 1960s. The booklet also includes a compilation of news from the first half of the year entitled Chronicle, a presentation of the volumes that won the Archival Publication of the Year Award, and a description of the first online archival journal, ArchívNet.

Erzsébet Szendiné Orvos: ‘...to conserve the Someday, so that the True may be true...’ – Authentic sources of Magda Szabó's writings

The author's study examined Magda Szabó's historical dramas and autobiographically inspired novels. She examined the research the author did before she started writing her works. Did she visit archives or did she use secondary sources? Who helped her and how?

Magda Szabó was often accused of portraying the past as she wanted it to be. But she argued that her method was different from that of the researcher. She spent long months or years studying a particular period of history, gathering everything that science had uncovered, but only keeping the important things.

The present study considers Magda Szabó's works to be based on reliable sources. The author has also sought the help of two renowned historians, István Balogh and Kálmán Benda, for her historical writings. She also conducted archival research, but in addition to written sources she also relied on oral history. Everything she wrote down is authentic history, but she had a special way of dealing with the facts she found: she made them narrative. In her autobiographically inspired novels, she did the same thing: she took everything that happened in her life apart, took it apart and incorporated the fragments she had obtained into her works.

Bernát Zsidi: Index of Hungarian Academics 1825–1965 – The journey of a ‘useful, gap-filling and timely publication’ from publication to withdrawal

'In the more than 130 years of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' existence, we do not have a single comprehensive publication that systematically provides data on the members of our Academy.' - wrote Zoltán Molnár, a staff member of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), in May 1964. In this note, Molnár proposed the idea of an academic lexicon,

which he would like to carry out in the near future, since he already had a 'basic cadastre' for this work. The draft was received with great enthusiasm by the library and the Academy, and most sources referred to the forthcoming volume as a gap-filling work. The deadline for completion of the index was to have been the 1965 General Assembly of the Academy, to commemorate the 140th anniversary of the Academy and the 20th anniversary of the 'Communist Liberation'. However, the volume was published a year and a half ahead of schedule, in the second half of 1966, with limited distribution and was already under seizure by the end of the year. The study attempts to show the vicissitudes of Molnár's work from compilation to banning and prosecution, i.e. how the originally planned lexicon became a reference work, its commercial sale a limited distribution, and its 'gap-filling work' a 'work of conscience'.

Ágnes Nagy: The documentary universe of private life – Theoretical considerations and practical experiences in the field of private documentary collection

Private document collection is not the focus of archival theory either in an international or a domestic context, despite the fact that the practice of collecting itself is continuous. At the same time, its intensive interaction with society requires the development of a social science approach, both in the field of collection and in the field of processing. Among the competing interpretations of archives, the study identifies theoretical points of orientation within a socially oriented conception of archives, such as the international archival literature, which since the 1990s has viewed the creation and preservation of private records as a social practice, and which seeks to extend archival thinking on documentary forms and record-keeping systems to the field of private records.

This study focuses on the social context of the creation, use and preservation of private documents, by examining the different phases of private document collection work in the Budapest City Archives. Its starting point is that family archival records are instruments of family self-determination, self-representation and the creation of family memory, and their archival management must therefore be based on these practices.

Anikó Schmidt: Collecting work at the National Archives of Hungary

The National Archives of Hungary have been collecting private documents since the very beginning, and they also pay special attention to the collection of the Hungarika materials. As private document collections often are collected in several parts, by several institutions, close cooperation between institutions is particularly important in this area. The continuous provision of information to the public is also essential to the success of this work, as it is a way of making people aware that their private documents may have a significant historical value. The private documents collected can play a vital role in the implementation of the increasingly popular public archival programmes. The paper describes the impressive achievements of recent years, but also the difficulties that hinder the success of private archival document collection.