

Résumé of the 4th issue:

This journal issue also includes the second part of two summary studies. The second part of the study on the current challenges of Hungarian archival science (Balázs Bényei) examines the topics of preservation and processing, while the second part of the survey of European public archives deals with the future challenges of access and publication (Iván Székely - Michael Friedewald - Murat Karaboga). Related to professional challenges, a study on a survey conducted among ecclesiastical archives addresses the tasks involved in the archival transfer of records from church-run public education institutions (Dávid Világi). The availability of archival sources from the 1918–19 period is explored through a case study from Somogy County (Péter Farkas). In the context of preventing irregular record disposal, a study analyzing the importance of records management regulations examines the subject not only through legal and theoretical explanations but also through concrete examples (Viktor Haraszi). The journal also features an article on a study visit and partially a Hungarica research project, introducing the Imperial Archives of Japan (Szilveszter Dékány – Bence Kocsev). Additionally, this issue includes reports on experiences from genealogy research workshops, a summary of the Hungarian National Archives' anniversary event series (2023–2024), coverage of professional association conferences (MLE, FLE, MFLSZ), and a selection of recent news from the archival field.

Balázs Bényei: Challenges facing the Hungarian archival science in the 21st century II – Challenges in the preservation and processing of records

The near future presents numerous challenges for archives. For paper-based collections, ensuring appropriate storage conditions and handling contaminated records pose significant difficulties, along with the persistent issue of insufficient storage capacity. Related to this, archives are increasingly tasked with overseeing record creators under their supervision and conducting professional appraisal of records. While paper-based records continue to be generated, the role of electronic records is becoming more prominent. Due to the relative novelty of this field, not only technical and infrastructural issues but also regulatory dilemmas remain unresolved. The need for developing digitization strategies is also gaining attention, with future efforts likely requiring the establishment of integrated service platforms. However, large-scale digitization has limited value without adequate finding aids, therefore making the development of modern databases a key challenge in optimally meeting researchers' evolving needs in the near future. This study provides a detailed examination of these issues. (The first part of the full study was published in Volume 74 [2024], Issue 3.)

Péter Farkas: Archival sources on the history of Somogy County in 1918–19

Researching the period of 1918–1919 at the county level is particularly challenging due to both the loss of records and the need for researchers to be well-versed in the administrative structures of the successive regimes. This study aims to assist researchers in this field by marking relevant county and other archival source groups. Although the focus of the study is on Somogy County, with only minor regional variations, the methodology and guidance provided can be useful for researching any county. In addition to listing key source types, the author shares various pieces of information that facilitate research. Furthermore, complementing traditional archival sources, the study provides an outlook on the availability of materials in other types of collections as well.

Dávid Világi: New challenges – Initial experiences of ecclesiastical archives in handling records of church-run public education institutions

The modification to the archival law, which came into effect on January 1, 2022, placed ecclesiastical archives in a position where they had to decide whether to assume responsibility for overseeing the records management of church-run schools. In many cases, this question remains unresolved to this day. Through the example of the Diocese of Győr, this study explores the challenges and questions that declarant ecclesiastical archives faced in connection with the takeover of these institutions. While the author primarily shares the experiences of his archive, a separate section provides an overview of the situation at the national level. In the concluding chapter, the study attempts to anticipate future challenges and examine possible responses that ecclesiastical archives may provide to the issues raised.

Viktor Haraszti: One document does not make a summer, or are loopholes always there? – On the importance of records management regulations

Following the regime change in Hungary, it took many years for a clear legal framework for records management to emerge. In its early stages, this system still allowed for widespread irregular records disposal. However, thanks to the persistent efforts of archival professionals, legal regulations now provide a solid foundation for preventing such practices. At the same time, the controversy surrounding a public procurement tender for ventilators during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that a proper legal framework alone is insufficient if internal regulations still enable record creators to exploit loopholes. Preventing such situations places significant responsibility on archivists, as their supervisory authority is crucial in ensuring that these loopholes are closed across all institutions.

Iván Székely – Michael Friedewald – Murat Karaboga: The accessibility of European public archives II – Future challenges

Between 2022 and 2023, an international survey was conducted on behalf of the Council of Europe to examine how the accessibility recommendations issued in 2000 have been integrated into the operations of archival institutions. Based on the responses collected, this study examines the key areas that will pose challenges for archives in the near future. The authors address issues related to digitization, assessing both achievements and long-term goals, as well as the negative impacts that have emerged. The study also focuses on electronic records, exploring the extent to which users can be involved in archival processing and what innovations are necessary to improve the accessibility of asked information for a wider audience. Additionally, the study touches upon topics expected to shape the future of archives, such as the potential use of artificial intelligence and the challenges of anonymizing born-digital documents. The authors highlight that, based on the gathered data, the recommendations may soon be revised or expanded, which could significantly impact the future functioning of archival institutions.

(The first part of the full study was published in Volume 74 [2024], Issue 3.)

Szilveszter Dékány – Bence Kocsev: Succession questions in Tokyo – Research in the Japanese imperial archives

The collection of the Japanese imperial family operates under the supervision of the Imperial Household Agency and includes all segments of public collections, such as a library, museum,

and archives. The archival division has been gathering records since the beginning of the Meiji era (1868). A significant portion of the collections has already been digitized and made publicly accessible, with the digital archive available online since 2017. The authors of this study conducted research in the archives, focusing on Otto von Habsburg's visits to Japan and his relationship with the Japanese imperial family. Their study presents insights, experiences, and observations gathered on-site during their research.