

New Form of Private Archives Publication – Digital Archive

Abstract: The present paper discusses a new form of archives – digital archives. Institutionalization of the private archives of public figures is one of the most complicated and problematic issues as it is associated with the ethical aspects of the intellectual heritage of a deceased person. Development of digital technologies offered a new way for dealing with this problem – digitalization of the archives. All written, documentary and photo materials of the archive can be digitalized and published, made available for the researchers so that the archive was maintained with the public figure's heirs without harming its integrity.

Key words: Digital archives, institutionalization, heritage

Autograph and any authentic source, with the exception of the narrative information, contains indirect data about its genesis, psychological-emotional atmosphere, creative history and environment. Therefore, the fundamental stage in textual studies performed for research of the public figure's life and activities is studying of his/her arch. Naturally, in this situation, availability of the archival materials to the researchers is decisive. Up to present, the only guarantee for this could be provided through their physical institutionalization while now there is a new way in a form of electronic archive.

Institutionalization of the private archives of public figures is one of the most complicated and problematic issues as it is associated with the ethical aspects of the intellectual heritage of a deceased person. In many cases, fate of the other, material heritage is determined while such individual is alive, according to his will. The society has numerous social and legal regulations for this. Public figure's personal library is also frequently classified as the material property. The owner disposes it like the other movable or immovable properties. For example, in winter 1953, 2 weeks before his death, physically weakened EkvtimeTakaishvili asked N. Muskhelishvili, the President of Georgian Academy of Science to allocate the truck to deliver his own library to the building of the Academy of Science (KKGNCM G. Lomtadze's archive, No: 153).

It is hard to explain why, but the historical facts show that the public figures pay less attention to their archive materials, compared with their libraries. The archive can be divided into three conditional parts: 1. creative materials (autographic versions of the works and monographs), frequently having the value of artifacts; 2. materials depicting the biography and public activities (personal and official documents, speeches, applications, bulletins, personnel records, bibliographies of their own works, photos etc.), allowing building of the chronological order of the public figure's biography and depicting his/her more or less prominent public interests; 3. Materials of private archive that are not intended for publication (personal correspondence, notebooks, records, diaries, random notes etc.) that are never published by the authors. They do not care about the fate of such materials and rarely state their will in relation to them and later this causes quite significant problems.

The author's instructions about their private arches after his/her decease are indeed very rare and, as a rule, only elderly authors do so. Notes about the fate of the materials intended for publication are more frequent. There are some cases, where such records are accompanied with the publication conceptions. For example, Akaki Tsereteli's will of 1913 contains the provision stating that the proceeds from sale of his copyright should be spent for publications of the folklore samples (KKGNCMA. Tsereteli's archive, No: 301). Unfortunately such examples are very rare and mostly, the public figures pay almost no attention to their private archives. On the other hand, the heirs bear much greater responsibility for the archives of their testator, as they have to make independent decision about the archive.

There are two forms of preservation of the private archives: institutionalized and private ones. If the archive owner chooses the former way, he/she has to think about the following factors: choice of organization to which the archive should be transferred to the narrow-focused one (sometimes the public figure's private archive is transferred to the institution to which his/her intellectual or emotional life was associated. For example, the archive of historian is transferred to the institute of history, linguist's archive – to the institute of linguistics, writers – to the institute of literature or to the museum etc.) or to the institution of wider focus (the organization holding the private archives of the public figures not by the activities or thematic spheres of the persons but with the conception based on single factor – keeping and preserving private archives of the figures of any sphere, as the unique personal data).

One of the main factors in choice of the institution is its high public reputation and, what is most important, the solid guarantees of physical protection of the archive. There are the forms of transfer from private person to the public institutions: donation and sale. In case of sale, it is necessary to determine the optimal amount on the basis of the relevant auditor's reports as there are the risks of subjective pricing of the archives, as from the side of the owner also from the side of the organization.

In many cases, the heirs demand from the organizations to involve them into the process of archive inventory and research or, even undertake inventoring and catalogization of the archives (for example, private archives of Ivane Javakhishvili and Tedo Sakhokia were processed by their children, respectively).

There are some cases, where the heirs, who have processed their testator's archives, classify the specific items. Examples of this include classification by Ivane Javakhishvili's daughter, Natela Javakhishvili. She has used two types of classification: "not for issuance" and "not for disclosure". Materials that are classified as "not for issuance" (KKGNCMI. Javakhishvili's arch No: 2969) still maintain the substantial value and after elimination of the certain, e.g. bureaucratic risks or after long period, they can become accessible. While the archive items classified as "not for disclosure" (KKGNCMA. Jambakur-Orbeliani's arch No: 210) have no such prospective potential. There is a notable factor, while the heir eliminates the existence substance of the specific document, why does he/she leave it in the archive? This shows that, irrespective of the degree of informative value, for the owner-heir, the integrity, entirety of the archive is sacral. One significant factor should be taken into consideration: private archive is a specific entirety, a single organism with no predetermined internal structure – each private archive is unique, individual, personified, its composition fully depends on the lifestyle of the individual, the sphere of his/her interests, character... Maintaining the archive's specific and unique nature is critical in the process of its inventory, structuring and catalogization processes, as well as in research activities.

Therefore, maintenance of the natural texture of the archive structure is a very significant issue for both, the heirs and textual researchers, for whom, any archival item is the potential opportunity of history reconstruction.

In the private archives of the 20th century there are numerous embarrassing documents, for example, letters some favors from the authoritative and influential persons to the similar addressees. The fact that such materials are contained in the archive and it was delivered by the heirs in such composition, may be also related to their desire to be unbiased in portraying the public figure.

The institutionalized archives, with some exclusion, are accessible for all interested, including, of course, the researchers as well.

The other way of preservation of the private archive is its maintenance at home, in the family. Currently, access to numerous archives very interesting for research in various scientific disciplines is absolutely excluded or very restricted for this reason. This can have both, practical and mental reason. In some cases, this is not the result of reasonable considerations but the arch is maintained at home where the public figure has spent last years of his/her life by inertia.

On the other hand, the mental background of this phenomenon is high sensitiveness of the heirs. The owners "regret" their heritage (here lack of trust to the institutions is not as high as the inertia of emotional links with the heritage) though in many cases they cannot even reason objectivity of such approach. Evaluation of reasonability and weighted nature of such decision by the third parties would not

be correct. In many cases there are the facts that the heirs have regretted that they have transferred the archives to the organizations. There were the cases where the heirs desired to return back the archives.

The heirs are much more sensitive to the personal items or accessories maintained with the archive. The heirs usually use to deal with the personal items (for example, the painting or craft items, sheet music etc. made by the public figures) while the written heritage is left for the end. Generally, sensitivity to the personal items and accessories is much higher from the side of public as well. For example, in the private archive of Ilia Chavchavadze his wallet is the most popular item (KKGNCM I.Chavchavadze's archive No: 55).

The sensitivity of the heirs preventing them from institutionalization of the archives is frequently associated with the sacral or emotional issues. There are many such things in the private archives. They can be in a form of both, the textual (formulas of cursing or blessing, wills, individual superstitions...), and biological data (fingerprints, traces of the skin microscopic flora on the papers, various spots, parasites, biological remains, traces of the mildew etc.) There are the cases where the private archives contain toothbrushes, brushes, socks, jackets, cans, tram ticket, napkin, banknotes etc. From some of the above items even DNA samples can be taken.

One more fact is notable: the archivists maintain for long time the memories about such piquant details from the life of one or another public figure, as the health status. They deem necessary to mention that one or another public figure had tuberculosis or other infectious disease and their archives should be handled with care, using special safety measures. For this reason the archives are subject to special laboratory treatment. Information about health is of interest as such as well. For example, in Ilia Chavchavadze's notebook there is recorded a recipe of remedy for rheumatism showing that he or his relatives had such health problem. The archivists of various countries frequently mention that they are subject to extensive influence of the energy field of the individual in whose private space they have entered though due to their institutional duties. These and other similar facts negatively impact transfer of the archives to the organizations and providing their wide scientific circulation. Therefore, the owners of the archives receive numerous consultations with the representatives of such data protecting organizations before making final decision.

For the thinkers of 19th century creation and strengthening of the institutional structures was of great significance and therefore, their private archives were oriented towards public area. This can be seen from the materials of the Society for the Spreading Literacy among Georgians and Historical-Ethnographical Society and their collections. Later, this tradition became weaker and due to the above factors the number of private archives increased.

The depositories of the ancient manuscripts etc., focused on preserving of private archives, employ the strategies for attraction of the new archives. For many years, the National Center of Manuscripts used the practice of visiting families for seeking of the archives and negotiating with them. After the meeting the relatives were invited directly to the repository to get familiar with the conditions and environment where, potentially, their testator's archive would be maintained. Thanks to such negotiations and preliminary familiarization numerous archives were transferred to the institution.

Significant factor is that usually, the archive is kept in the family by the first and rarely the second generation of the public figure, i.e. the people who were directly related to him/her. Possibly, this emotional factor complicates transfer of the archives and further generations could make more cold-minded decisions about need of publication of the materials of historical-cultural value.

Development of digital technologies offered a new way for dealing with this problem – digitalization of the archives. All written, documentary and photo materials of the archive can be digitalized and published, made available for the researchers so that the archive was maintained with the public figure's heirs without harming its integrity. In modern textual studies there are the methods and technologies that allow proper studying of the archives based on the digital materials. Archival material, as the artifact, remains with the owner, causing less emotional harm while the digital copies of the written heritage that is the property of the entire nation, rather than a single family, becomes available for all. Newly established organization – Association for Textual and Editorial Studies and Digital Humanities – will ensure digitalization of private archives with the heirs' consent and their inventory, if required,

according to the modern requirements. In our opinion, this is a very good incentive and the heirs of famous public figures owning their archives should take advantage of this opportunity.

References:

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