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## The Evolving Legacy: The Institutionalization of Ex-Presidents and First Ladies : A Transatlantic Perspective

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Iwona Świątczak-Wasilewska\*

## THE EVOLVING LEGACY: THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF EX-PRESIDENTS AND FIRST LADIES. A TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

### Abstract

This paper brings together the summary of the key presentations that took place at the conference titled: “Preserving the Memory of the Presidency” on October 10, 2012, in Warsaw, organized by the Lech Wałęsa Institute Foundation with the support of the Chancellery of President Bronisław Komorowski as part of the Lech Wałęsa Presidential Library and Museum Project. The paper presents unique transatlantic perspectives on preserving the memory of the Presidency and First Ladyship. It describes and analyzes the prevalent and emerging institutions dedicated to preserving presidential and First Ladies’ legacies. The examples presented in the paper are by no means exhaustive but include, among others: The US system of Presidential Libraries and Museums, US National First Ladies’ Library, The Archive of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic, The Václav Havel Library, The Musée du Président Jacques Chirac, The Historical Archive of the Presidency of the Republic of Italy, The German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv), and the Archive of the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland. The overarching questions that this paper asks, are: what kind of lessons can we draw from the examples presented at the conference and which of the lessons we can apply to better preserve the memory of the Polish Presidency.

The Lech Wałęsa Presidential Library and Museum Project reveals several constraints in institutionalizing the legacy of the individual President in Poland. The paper suggests that in order to avoid difficulties in establishing a separate presidential repository, appropriate archival legislation would have to be passed to account for such a possibility. Regardless of whether such presidential repositories would be privately or state-owned, the official records of the Office of the President must continue to be administered through the National Archives, because the Presidency is a public, not private, Office. From the institutional point

96

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of view, also the legal status of the official papers of the former First Ladies should be addressed. Importantly, the Polish Presidents must start planning for the Post-Presidency. The examples of institutions dedicated to preserving the memory of individual Presidents in the US and Europe illustrate that by getting institutionalized the former Presidents can spend the rest of their lives with a sense of purpose while maintaining the dignity and the status of the public figure. The establishment of Presidential Libraries and Museums is not an exercise in nostalgia about the once occupied position. Presidential Libraries and Museums are not only repositories for preserving the institutional memory of the Presidency. They are first and foremost living memorials where presidential legacy lives on and continues to evolve.

## Keywords

Presidents, First Ladies, archives, museums



## Introduction

In the fall of 2012, with the kind support of the Lech Wałęsa Institute Foundation, where I then worked as Coordinator of the Lech Wałęsa Presidential Library and Museum Project, and the Chancellery of President Bronisław Komorowski, I had the honor to organize and chair the first ever conference dedicated to the preservation of the institutional memory and legacy of the Presidency and First Ladyship in Europe and the United States. The participants invited to the conference on “Preserving the Memory of the Presidency” included, among others: Susan K. Donius, Director of the Office of Presidential Libraries at the US National Archives and Records Administration; Patricia Krider, US National First Ladies’ Library Executive Director; Vincent Rigau, Assistant Director of the Musée du Président Jacques Chirac; Director of the Archive of the Czech President, Jakub Doležal; Superintendent of the Archive of the President of the Republic of Italy, Paola Carucci; Anke Löbnitz of the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv), responsible for the Federal Presidential Office, and the Director of the Archive of the Finnish President Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, Pekka Lähteenkorva<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The conference on “Preserving the Memory of the Presidency” was held on October 10, 2012, in Warsaw.

This paper brings together the unique transatlantic perspectives on preserving the memory of the Presidency and First Ladyship. It describes and analyzes the prevalent and emerging institutions dedicated to preserving presidential and First Ladies' legacies. The examples presented here are by no means exhaustive<sup>2</sup>. Rather, they represent unique institutional models that exist in the countries from which the conference participants came. The overarching questions that this paper asks, are: what kind of lessons can we draw from the examples discussed here and which of the lessons can we apply to better preserve the memory of the Polish Presidency?

### **The Post-Presidency: an exercise in nostalgia?**

In a broader sense, the present paper touches upon the question of a President's life after the Presidency. The so-called Post-Presidency has become a significant institution in the United States in the twentieth century. The Post-Presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft marked, as Iwan Morgan (2012: 12) points out, "a transition in the role of former presidents<sup>3</sup>." It was, however, the emergence of the modern Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the thirties and forties of the twentieth century that laid foundations for the modern Post-Presidency. In the early history of the United States, presidential papers were considered to be the individual's private property. On the advice of noted historians and scholars, FDR established a public repository to preserve the evidence of the Presidency for future generations. FDR's decision stemmed from his belief that presi-

98

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<sup>2</sup> The way that presidential legacy is institutionalized in Asia can be exemplified by the Philippine Presidential Library and Museum, see: <http://malacanang.gov.ph/>. The Nelson Mandela Museum may provide the case for discussing the institutionalization of the Presidency in South Africa, see: <http://www.nelsonmandelamuseum.org.za>. In addition, in the US there are (vice) presidential facilities, birthplaces, historical sites and ancestral homes that are not administered by the NARA, but operated by private foundations, historical societies, or state governments. These include: the William McKinley, Rutherford Hayes, Calvin Coolidge, Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson Libraries, and The United States Vice Presidential Museum at the Dan Quayle Center. For example, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is owned and operated by the state of Illinois. In addition, more than twenty Presidents of the United States have or claim some Irish ancestral origins. The ancestral homes of Woodrow Wilson, Ulysses S. Grant, John F. Kennedy, to name a few of them, which I was able to visit, can be found in different parts of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Also, the Dutch origin and the presidential legacy of the Roosevelts in promoted by The Roosevelt Study Center in Middleburgh, the Netherlands, see: <http://www.roosevelt.nl>.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Roosevelt would become a third party candidate in the presidential elections of 1912 and Taft became the Supreme Court Justice.

dential papers are an important part of the national heritage, they promote understanding of the Presidency and the American experience, and should be accessible to the public. Also, despite the fact that the American political system gives no formal authority to former Presidents, the significance of the US Post-Presidency was recognized by Congress with the enactment of the Former Presidents Act (FPA) in 1958, which granted “all living former presidents a pension, an office and a staff to conduct their ongoing activities.”

The two sections that follow discuss in a more detail how presidential legacies are preserved and enhanced in the US and Europe. The first, ‘American’ section looks specifically at the system of Presidential Libraries and Museums and the National First Ladies’ Library. The second, ‘European’ section, in turn, describes selected European institutional models of preserving the institutional memory of the Presidency. These two sections are followed by the discussion of findings and conclusions.

## **1. Preserving the legacy of the Presidency and First Ladyship in the US**

### **1.1 Presidential Libraries and Museums in the United States**

The Presidential Library system formally began in 1939 after FDR raised private funds for his presidential library and then turned it over to the United States government for operation through the National Archives. Today the Presidential Libraries and Museums form a system of thirteen archival libraries, museums, and research centers that chronicle the lives and times of the former Chief Executives of the United States beginning with the 31st President of the United States, Herbert Hoover. The Harry S. Truman Library was the first to be created under the 1955 Presidential Libraries Act, and was followed by the Herbert Hoover and Dwight Eisenhower Libraries in the 1960s, The Lyndon Johnson and John F. Kennedy Libraries in the 1970s, the Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter Libraries in the 1980s; the Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and then independent Richard Nixon Libraries opened in the 1990s.

US Presidential Libraries and Museums are privately erected and federally administered through the centralized Office of Presidential Libraries, an entity within the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Its chief functions include the “establish[ment] and coordinat[ion] of policies with regard to Presidential Libraries, including programs for acquisition, preservation, and use of historical

materials, and the development of new Presidential libraries”; “provid[ing] oversight of budgetary and management controls within the libraries”; “maintaining liaison with the incumbent administration and with officials of former administrations with regard to organization, storage and reference service on Presidential materials” (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2015). Presidential Libraries are funded through a combination of congressional appropriations and private sources. Funds for “archiving and management of a President’s papers are appropriated to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA),” while funds raised by private organizations, including presidential library foundations, “support facility construction, programming, and other activities related to a President’s legacy” (Ginsberg and Lunder: 2010). At the end of each President’s term, the NARA establishes a Presidential Project until a new Presidential Library is built and transferred to the government.

Presidential Libraries are not libraries in a traditional sense. The entire system is designed around the collection of presidential papers. As the repository for preserving and making accessible the papers and records created during a presidential administration, the primary component within the presidential library system is the archive<sup>4</sup>. Objects, memorabilia, and other historical materials of US Presidents, such as gifts of state given to the President by foreign dignitaries, are considered to belong to the American people and they are displayed in the Museum component of the Presidential Library plant<sup>5</sup>. In addition, the Presidential Libraries and Museums help preserve and enhance presidential legacies through public education programs, teaching history, permanent, temporary and travelling exhibits, conferences, symposiums, book signings, and other public, or community, events.

With the establishment of the Presidential Library system, as Susan K. Donius (2012) pointed out, the papers of First Ladies

[...] from Lou Henry Hoover through Rosalynn Carter have been donated to the Presidential Library of their husbands as either a separate collection or as distinct parts of the Presidents’ collection. Official records created by the First Ladies from Nancy Reagan onward are covered by the Presidential Records Act of 1978 and belong to the public.

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<sup>4</sup> Records are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) after five years. However, under *The Presidential Records Act* of 1978, the President may restrict public access to records for up to twelve years.

<sup>5</sup> Procedures regarding acceptance of foreign official gifts are governed by the Foreign Gifts and Decoration Act.

## 1.2 National First Ladies' Library (NFLL)

There are no formal or official duties mandated by law for the First Ladies of the United States<sup>6</sup>. First Ladies, however, take on special projects or causes that are meaningful to them or to their families. Traditionally, the US First Ladies serve as the “hostess” for White House events, specifically State Dinners or other cultural events at the White House, and accompany their husbands on almost every overseas trip. Despite the fact that the First Lady is neither elected nor appointed to any official position, she enjoys an unparalleled access to the President and may be central to the operational functioning of the Presidency<sup>7</sup>.

The NFLL is dedicated to educating the public about the impact and contributions of First Ladies and preserving the memory for all US First Ladies<sup>8</sup>. As Patricia Krider pointed out during her conference speech, “People in the U.S. and around the world—the general public, schoolchildren, scholars, researchers, authors and historians—are interested in First Ladies; they just don’t know a lot about them” (Krider 2012). The NFLL offers a wide range of learning experiences, including summer reading programs, exhibits, conferences, a research library, and extensive materials on its website. The living history programs features a variety of First Ladies and dramatize their lives, their interactions with other notable women, or various aspects of the life in the White House. In addition, the NFLL amasses a substantial collection of materials including literature by and about First Ladies. The collection includes interviews, speeches, and public appearances of First Ladies, letters and books written by First Ladies; photographs, clothing, jewellery, and other personal items. Impor-

101

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<sup>6</sup> Since 1978, two laws have been enacted to restrict the activities of First Ladies: *The Ethics in Government Act* requires the spouses of high-ranking federal officials such as the President from accepting unreported gifts over a specific, ‘minimal’ value. Foreign official gifts over the ‘minimal value’ are considered gifts to the people of the United States and property of the US government. Domestic gifts to the First Lady may be disposed of as the First Lady wishes. If she wants to keep them, she doesn’t have to purchase them from the government. Moreover a presidential spouse is legally forbidden from being appointed to any official position by the President by *The Civil Service Reform Act*.

<sup>7</sup> The First Lady and her staff also produce and amass a considerable number of papers related to the daily functioning of the Office of the First Lady. She has a press secretary to handle media requests, interviews and events, a social secretary and staff to handle the State Dinners and events at the White House, an advance team to handle events outside of the White House, and a Chief of Staff that is in contact with the President’s staff on a daily basis to coordinate their two lives.

<sup>8</sup> The NFLL is located in Canton, Ohio. It operates and manages the First Ladies National Historic Site, which consists of the Ida Saxton McKinley House, the family home of First Lady Ida Saxton McKinley and the longtime residence of William and Ida McKinley.

tantly, the NFLL's collections are available to use and viewing free of charge. Through its extensive programming, the NFLL hopes to play an important role in convincing the public that the First Lady has a place in American history, that "there is more to her than the clothes she wears and how she styles her hair," (Krider 2012) and that First Ladies will not fade away from memory.

## 2. Preserving the legacy of the Presidency (and First Ladyship) in Europe

### 2.1 The Archive of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic and The Václav Havel Library

The Archive of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic is a public archive whose activities are regulated by Act No. 499/2004 on the Archives and Records Management. The Archive is a specialized repository within the Czech system of public archives. It preserves archival records of individual Presidents and their Offices since 1918. Organizationally, the Archive is a small entity within the Office of the President. The main goal of the Archive is to select presidential records for permanent storage and make them available to the public. The nature and content of these records depend, as Jakub Doležal (2012) noted,

not only on the constitutional authority of the president in the specific period, but also on the personality of the particular individual and the position of the president and his office in the political system and society in general. Due to the fundamental importance of the president in the constitutional system and society, the records of his office contain information of a wide range of stories, events, individuals, issues and areas of political, social, cultural, and economic development.

However, as a fine line separates the understanding of what constitutes presidential and personal records, the systematic collection of the records of the Czech Presidents can be hindered. Upon leaving the office, Doležal (2012) pointed out, "every President takes some gifts and presidential records, which are not registered in the Records Management System." As a result, presidential records can be found in other institutions or constitute private collections. The Václav Havel Library (Czech: *Knihovna Václava Havla*) is a case in point. The Václav Havel Library functions as "a centre for the documentation and research of modern Czech history with an emphasis on promoting the ideas and works of Václav Havel" (Google Cultural Institute, 2015). It is concerned with collecting, researching, publishing, disseminating and defending intellectual, literary and political legacy of Václav Havel—the writer, playwright, thinker, fighter for human



rights and the Czechoslovak and Czech President. The Václav Havel Library also gathers, digitizes, and makes accessible written materials as well as audio and sound recordings related to Václav Havel (Václav Havel Library, 2015).

## 2.2 The Archive of President Urho Kaleva Kekkonen (UKK)

The Archive of President Urho K. Kekkonen is likely the first presidential archive in the world inspired by the American model of presidential repositories. During his official trip to the US in the early seventies, President Kekkonen (1900–1986) got acquainted with FDR’s archive and returned to Finland with the plan that he would, too, promote the study of political history and his Presidency, and make his records available to researchers. The multiple-term Presidency (1956–1981) of Kekkonen occupies quite a unique place in Finnish history. As Pekka Lähteenkorva (2012) emphasized in his conference speech, Kekkonen was: “the only person who could handle our [Finnish] difficult situation between a great communist power and the western world. [...] The post-war history of Finland cannot be understood without getting familiar with [the holdings of the Kekkonen Archive].” Today, the aim of the UKK Archive is to preserve Kekkonen’s private documents, make them available for research and facilitate a better understanding of Finland and its Cold War foreign policy.

103

The Archive of Urho K. Kekkonen is the only presidential archive in Finland and one of the nine private archives in Finland funded by the state. In general, Kekkonen’s predecessors took their papers with them as they left the office. Some destroyed their papers intentionally; some papers were damaged during the war. In fact, few former Presidents donated their papers directly to the National Archives of Finland. Kekkonen’s successor—Mauno Koivisto (1982–1994) was the last President who could decide on the fate of his papers. Koivisto’s successors—Martti Ahtisaari (1994–2000) and Tarja Halonen (2000–2012) left the records of their Presidencies in the Archive of the Office of the President of the Republic of Finland, from where they will be transferred to the National Archives of Finland. In Finland also presidential spouses are obliged to donate their official documents to the state.

The UKK Archive is located in the Houvila manor, in the town of Orimattila. The Archive includes a museum room that holds the original furniture which decorated the interior of the Kekkonens’ dining room in the forties. The UKK Archive also cooperates with other archives, museums, the Finnish government and universities in com-

mon ventures related to enhancing the legacy of Urho Kaleva Kekkonen as the statesman and President.

In addition to the UKK Archive, a separate facility—The Urho K. Kekkonen Museum—is located in Tamminiemi, in the outskirts of Helsinki. The UKK Museum, which served as the Presidential Residence for the Kekkonens, houses most of the gifts that the Kekkonens received from foreign heads of state, politicians, and private people, and which in Finland remain the President's personal property. Despite the fact that President Kekkonen donated his library to the University of Oulu, also a significant part of his collection is still housed in the Tamminiemi Residence<sup>9</sup>.

### 2.3 The French National Archives and the Musée du Président Jacques Chirac

According to the French law, presidential papers and records are transferred to the French National Archives (FNA) as soon as a President's term in office expires. This, however, was not always the case. In fact, the FNA has few presidential documents relating to the Third Republic (1870–1940) and the Fourth Republic (1946–1959). From 1958 onwards (The Fifth Republic), the Presidency became the heart of the executive power in France and began to play a dominant role in political life, wielding significant power in the diplomatic and military domains, as well as the day to day execution of power.

104

This development had an effect on the volume of presidential papers and records produced. Documents relating to the Charles de Gaulle and the George Pompidou Presidencies were not placed directly in the FNA. Rather, they were donated by the President's son, Philippe de Gaulle, and the Georges Pompidou Association after the Presidents' death. In 1974, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing created an archive unit in the heart of the Élysée Palace which collects relevant documents and deposits them in the FNA. In 1979, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing introduced a law which stipulates that documents pertaining to the activity of the state are public papers and should be made available after thirty years. Sensitive documents are released after sixty years from the date they were produced. The French President, however, is free to dispose of the gifts he received during his time as President as he likes.

François Mitterrand was the first French President to donate his gifts to a local authority, Nièvre County Council, which opened the

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<sup>9</sup>The term *library* is used here to denote a collection of books that belonged to President Kekkonen.

Seven-Year Term Museum in Château-Chinon in 1986. Also, Jacques Chirac's understanding was that he received gifts as the international representative of the French people and wanted them to be displayed in a museum and made available to the public.

The Musée du Président Jacques Chirac was created from a collection of gifts received by the Jacques Chirac during his term in office and subsequently donated to the Conseil Général de la Corrèze (Corrèze County Council). The Musée du Président Jacques Chirac, as Vincent Rigau (2012) pointed out, "bear witness to the desire of nation states to create the conditions in which a dialogue may take place, in order to preserve world peace. They also evoke the major political ceremonies which are a part of international life." In 2002 the Museum acquired the status of "Museum of France," which makes it eligible for state aid. The library complements the Museum and functions as a resource center and research area. The library is home to around 10,000 volumes, including books given to the President Jacques Chirac. Presidential papers, including documents and photographs, are deposited in the FNA. In France, the First Lady has no particular status and her papers and gifts she received are considered private property. Mrs. Bernadette Chirac, however, donated her gifts to her husband's Museum.

#### **2.4 The German Federal Archive and the Theodore Heuss House**

In Germany the records of former Presidents are scattered across different archives and repositories. Most of the papers and photographs relating to the actual execution of the duties of the Office of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany are preserved by the German Federal Archive in Koblenz. However, thus far, the papers of only five out of ten former German Presidents (Theodore Heuss, 1949 onward) are deposited in the Federal Archive in Koblenz. The core of the federal collection includes the papers from the Presidencies of Theodor Heuss (1949–1959), Heinrich Lübke (1959–1969), Walter Scheel (1974–1979), Karl Carstens (1979–1984), Richard von Weizsäcker (1984–1994). The papers of two other modern day German Presidents—Johannes Rau (1999–2004) and Gustav W. Heinemann (1969–1974)—are shared by several archives. For instance, papers relating to the various activities of President Gustav W. Heinemann can be found in Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bonn, Landeskirchliches Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen, and Stiftung Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv in Dortmund. Holdings pertaining to President Horst Köhler (2004–2010) and Christian Wulf (2010–2012) have not been formed yet.

Federal Archives do not keep museum objects, such as gifts of state. These items are preserved by the Office of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany. The documents of the German First Ladies are either part of the personal papers of the Presidents, constitute part of the holdings of the Office of the President, or form separate collections of the First Ladies.

The Theodor Heuss House stands out as an exceptional memorial to the first modern day President of the Federal Republic of Germany. Established in Stuttgart in 1996 by the Theodor Heuss House Foundation, the residence of the first President of the Federal Republic of Germany was turned into a peculiar institution that features a presidential library, archive, and a museum. It “promotes political education through seminars, training courses and lectures; makes a contribution to research in contemporary history [through] colloquia, own publications, editions and scientific projects; maintains an archive and library that are open to the public” (Theodor Heuss House Foundation, 2015). Its archives deposit speeches and newspaper articles, as well as some files from the Heuss Presidency. Numerous newspapers and magazines in which Heuss published, are also available for research. In addition, collections of objects and audiovisual materials deposited in the Theodore Heuss House contribute to a better understanding of President Heuss and his times. Extensive correspondence, subject files, collections of material, speeches and publications almost from Heuss’ entire political and journalistic activity are, however, deposited in the Federal Archive in Koblenz.

106

## **2.5 The Historical Archive of the Presidency of the Republic of Italy<sup>10</sup> and Presidential Foundations**

The modern day General Secretariat of the President of the Republic of Italy established in the Renaissance era Quirinal Palace (Palazzo Quirinale), the official residence of the President of the Italian Republic in Rome, dates back to President Luigi Einaudi (1948–1955), who laid foundations for its structure and organization<sup>11</sup>. Already under President Einaudi special attention was paid to the archives, which then comprised of those relating to the Royal House and the Provi-

<sup>10</sup> As Mrs. Paola Carucci had to cancel her trip to Poland just hours prior to the conference, this section is based on her conference paper and my own research inspired by her paper.

<sup>11</sup> The General Secretariat of the President of the Republic of Italy is roughly the equivalent of the Office or the Chancellery of the President in other countries. Following the referendum of June 2, 1946, the Republic prevailed over the Italian monarchy. Enrico De Nicola was elected as Provisional Head of State and served from 1946 to 1948.

sional Head of State. In 1949 the Inventory, Library and Records Office was created to survey, make an inventory and catalogue the artistic objects, furnishings, books and documents. The records of the monarchy were divided between the Central State Archives and the General Secretariat of the President of the Republic of Italy. Most of the archives of the Royal House were transferred to the Central State Archives between 1964 and 1968. The documentation necessary to the management of the artistic heritage of Palazzo Quirinale<sup>12</sup>, however, remained in the General Secretariat. The archival material left there comprises the series of personnel records and inventories of the property of the Crown, including the property of the House of Savoy, or items pertaining to the royal state palaces<sup>13</sup>. During the Pertini Presidency (1978–1985) steps were taken to create a repository for the non-current records of the various offices. Also, efforts were made to obtain suitable premises for the records and the collection of newspapers and periodicals of the Press Office.

The proper Historical Archive of the Presidency of the Republic of Italy was created in Palazzo Sant'Andrea, in 1996, on the fiftieth anniversary of the constitutional referendum that abolished the Italian monarchy. However, it took over a decade to renovate the Palace before the Archive could be inaugurated in 2009. It now houses functional storage spaces, a reading room, a conference hall, and a specialized library. The Archive holds the personal papers of President Enrico de Nicola and the personal diaries of President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi (1999–2006), as well as the archives of Cesare Merzagora, who assumed temporary powers in 1964 for President Segni by virtue of his position as the President of the Senate. The photographic and audio-visual collections are particularly abundant. The records of the various offices within the General Secretariat contain some gaps, however. The situation stems from the fact, as Paola Carucci (2012) pointed out, that “presidential advisors are external personnel to the General Secretariat and they cease their activities at the end of the President’s term in office and presumably take some of the correspondence and papers with them.” Part of the Italian Presidents’ correspondence and office files can also be found in their personal archives located in different places, including The Einaudi Foundation in Turin; The Sturzo Foundation in Rome (President Giovanni Gron-

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<sup>12</sup> Palazzo Quirinale is one of the most important buildings in Rome both as an architectural work of art and an example of superb craftsmanship. In addition, the building stands on a major archaeological site of the temples of Quirinus and Salus from 4 BC.

<sup>13</sup> States existed on the Italian peninsula prior to the national unification.

chi, 1955–1962); The Segni Foundation in Sassari (President Antonio Segni, 1962–1964); The Pertini Association in Florence (President Giuseppe Saragat, 1964–1971, and President Sandro Pertini, 1978–1985), and the Senate (President Giovanni Leone, 1971–1978).

## 2.6 The Archive of the President of the Republic of Poland and The Archives of Modern Records

The Archive of the President of the Republic of Poland (APRP) was established in 1989 as one of the statutory organizational units within the Office of the Chief of the Chancellery of the President of Poland, from which it was separated in 2010 to become one of the organizational units within the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland. In accordance with the archival legislation (*Ustawa z dnia 14 lipca 1983 r. o narodowym zasobie archiwalnym i archiwach, amended*), the Archive of the President of the Republic of Poland is a separate archive, with the Chief of the Chancellery of the President of Poland in charge of determining the rules and standards of collecting and storing, and making the files available for research. The holdings of the Archive include: textual and audio-visual collections, including files, papers, photographs, sound recordings, and official seals relating to both the Chancellery of the Council of State<sup>14</sup> (1952–1989) and the Chancellery of the President of Poland, starting from 1989 onwards. By law, the APRP serves as an interim location for presidential papers for fifty years, after which time presidential papers are transferred to the Archives of Modern Records<sup>15</sup>. By custom, rather than law, the APRP also houses selected gifts of state (diplomatic gifts), which have been donated to the state by the Presidents of Poland.

108

## Discussion and Conclusions

The American system of Presidential Libraries and Museums remains an inspiring and unrivalled model for preserving, protecting and enhancing the legacies of former US Presidents and First Ladies. European countries have also established, in addition to the state-

<sup>14</sup> The 1952 Constitution of the Polish People's Republic eliminated the office of the President and substituted it with the Council of State that consisted of seventeen people, including its Chairman, four Deputy Chairmen, its Secretary and eleven other members. The Council as a whole was officially Poland's head of state. The Council of State was repealed in 1989 and some of its functions were transferred to the re-created office of the President of the Republic of Poland.

<sup>15</sup> The Archives of Modern Records is one of the three central, national archives.

owned Archives of the Office of the President, separate, privately funded, institutions that offer alternative models of preserving presidential legacies. For instance, the official papers and records of President Václav Havel and Jacques Chirac, respectively, are deposited in each nation's National Archives. However, other items, such as books, gifts and presidential memorabilia are housed in separate presidential facilities. Museums or Libraries dedicated to individual Presidents, such as The Musée du Président Jacques Chirac or Knihovna Václava Havla (The Václav Havel Library), are far more than repositories, however. They build upon and enhance presidential legacies, honor causes meaningful to the former Presidents, promote presidential contributions to democracy, human rights, organize exhibits, conferences, and support research.

Presidential libraries and museums may play important local and social functions. US Presidential Libraries and Museums are based in the President's hometown and bring a sense of pride to small town America about "a boy who made it big". The canton of Corrèze and the village of Sarran were chosen as the location of the Jacques Chirac Museum because Chirac started his political career in Corrèze and the Chiracs have their main residence the village of Sarran. Theodor Heuss House was established in the residence of the first President of the Federal Republic.

109

The Archive of the Finnish President Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, however, is a peculiar institution. Because of Kekkonen's exceptional position in Finnish presidential history, his presidential records and papers are deposited exclusively in the Archive of President Urho K. Kekkonen, the founding of which was his own idea. Generally, the papers of all other Finnish Presidents are kept by the Office of the President of the Republic of Finland and usually after twenty-five years they are transferred to the National Archives. The interim stage—when Presidential records are in the custody of the Office of the President for twenty-five years—makes the Finnish presidential records management system similar to Poland's, where presidential papers are initially deposited in the Archive of the President of the Republic of Poland for fifty years, after which time they are transferred to the Archives of Modern Records.

In general, the European system of presidential repositories focuses on preserving the legacy of the Office of the Presidency, rather than protecting and enhancing the memory of individual Presidents. The Italian and French models, though retain some similarities with the prevalent European system of presidential archives, vary in that the creation of the state-owned Archive of the Office of the President

is a relatively recent phenomenon. And thus most of the presidential papers are located in private presidential foundations and associations. The Theodor Heuss House, The Archive of Urho K. Kekkonen, and the Václav Havel Library, however, retain most similarities with the US Presidential Libraries and Museums by focusing on preserving the legacies of individual Presidents.

In Poland, there is no tradition of separate presidential repositories for preserving and making available the papers, records, collections and other historical materials of former Presidents that would combine a library, museum, and an archive—all under one roof. As noted earlier, the official records of the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland are administered through the Archive of the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland and the Archives of Modern Records. The concept of a separate presidential repository modelled after the US model attracted some interest with the establishment of the Lech Wałęsa Presidential Library and Museum Program in 2012. The Program was eventually discontinued roughly three years later due to the reorganization of the Lech Wałęsa Institute Foundation.

Although the significance of former Polish Presidents was recognized by the Polish Parliament with the passage of the *Benefits of the Former Polish Presidents Act* of 1996 (*Ustawa z dn. 30 maja 1996 r. o uposażeniu byłego Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*), which grants all living former Presidents a pension, and financial support to maintain an office to conduct their ongoing activities and lifetime secret service (Polish: BOR) protection, an establishment of the Presidential Library and Museum two decades after the end of President Wałęsa's term is beset by legal constraints as the official records of the Wałęsa Presidency are part of the Archive of the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland. Also, a confluence of circumstances, political and others caused President Lech Wałęsa make virtually irreversible decisions about the material legacy of his Presidency. As a result of the President's decisions, an array of precious objects relating to both his Presidency and his Pre-Presidential activities as a Solidarity trade union leader and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, can be found in the treasury of the Monastery of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, from where they cannot be relocated.

To avoid similar difficulties in the future, the significance of the material legacy of the Office of the President of Poland should be recognized with the passage of the *Presidential Gifts Act* that would make it obligatory for Polish Presidents to donate *all* gifts, artifacts, and other non-documental memorabilia connected with the execution of their constitutional duties to the state in order to protect and preserve them as



part of the national heritage<sup>16</sup>. In addition, in the event that any future Polish President would wish to establish a separate presidential repository, appropriate archival legislation would have to be passed to account for such a possibility. Regardless of whether such presidential repositories would be privately or state-owned, the official records of the Office of the President must continue to be administered through the National Archives, because the Presidency is a public, not private, Office. From the institutional point of view, also the legal status of the official papers of the former First Ladies should be addressed.

Importantly, Poland's Presidents and former Presidents must see the potential of securing their own legacies as guardians of history and shapers of memory. As no former President really hopes for obscurity, the Polish Presidents must start planning for the Post-Presidency. The examples of institutions dedicated to preserving the memory of individual Presidents in the US and Europe illustrate that by getting institutionalized the former Presidents can spend the rest of their lives with a sense of purpose while maintaining the dignity and the status of the public figure. The establishment of Presidential Libraries and Museums is not an exercise in nostalgia about the once occupied position. Presidential Libraries and Museums are not only repositories for preserving the institutional memory of the Presidency. They are first and foremost living memorials where presidential legacy lives on and continues to evolve.

111

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<sup>16</sup> Some presidential memorabilia, domestic and foreign gifts of former Polish Presidents are preserved in the Archive of the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland, but their legal status is not explicitly regulated and thus some presidential gifts are considered private property, others are donated to church, academic, private institutions, schools or private individuals.

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**Iwona Świątczak-Wasilewska** – doktor nauk humanistycznych Uniwersytetu Helsińskiego w zakresie Area and Cultural Studies, amerykanistka, wykładowca Uniwersytetu Przyrodniczo-Humanistycznego w Siedlcach oraz Ośrodka Studiów Amerykańskich Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Praca doktorska dr Świątczak-Wasilewskiej *‘The Toughest Season in the White House:’ The Rhetorical Presidency and the State of the Union Address, 1953–1992*, porusza zagadnienia związane z retorycznym aspektem prezydentury amerykańskiej i mechanizmami powstawania orędzi o stanie państwa (*State of the Union Address*). Stypendystka amerykańskich i europejskich instytucji zajmujących się ochroną i kultywowaniem prezydenckiej pamięci instytucjonalnej. Pomysłodawczyni polskiej biblioteki prezydenckiej – projektu, który przez kilka lat realizowała w Fundacji „Instytut Lecha Wałęsy.”

112

## Streszczenie

Artykuł jest podsumowaniem najważniejszych prezentacji, które miały miejsce na konferencji “Preserving the Memory of the Presidency” 10.10.2012 w Warszawie przez Instytut Lecha Wałęsy, przy poparciu Kancelarii Prezydenta Bronisława Komorowskiego, jako część projektu Biblioteki Prezydenckiej i Muzeum Lecha Wałęsy. Dotyczy unikalnej perspektywy transatlantyckiej na przechowywanie pamięci o Prezydentach i Pierwszych Damach. Opisuje i analizuje główne i dopiero pojawiające się instytucje poświęcone przechowywaniu dziedzictwa Par Prezydenckich. Przykłady zaprezentowane w artykule nie są oczywiście wyczerpujące, ale między innymi obejmują: amerykański system Bibliotek i Muzeów Prezydenckich, Narodową Bibliotekę Pierwszych Dam USA, Archiwum Biura Prezydenckiego Republiki Czeskiej, Bibliotekę Václava Havla, Le Musée du Président Jacques Chirac, Archiwum Historyczne Prezydentury Republiki

Włoch, Federalne Archiwum Niemiec (Bundesarchiv) oraz Archiwum Biura Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Podstawowe pytania artykułu to: czego możemy się nauczyć z przykładów zaprezentowanych na konferencji i które z nich możemy wykorzystać, by lepiej zachowywać pamięć o prezydenturze w Polsce.

Projekt, dotyczący Biblioteki Prezydenckiej i Muzeum Lecha Wałęsy, odsłonił pewne ograniczenia w instytucjonalizacji dziedzictwa poszczególnych prezydentów Polski. Należałoby stworzyć odpowiednią legislaturę archiwizacji, by uniknąć trudności przy tworzeniu kolejnych repozytoriów prezydenckich. Niezależnie od tego, czy takie repozytoria byłyby państwowe czy prywatne, oficjalna dokumentacja Biura Prezydenta powinna być wciąż administrowana przez Archiwum Narodowe, gdyż prezydentura jest publiczna, a nie prywatna. Z instytucjonalnego punktu widzenia należy się też przyjrzeć statusowi prawnemu dokumentów oficjalnych byłych Pierwszych Dam. Kolejno, prezydenci Polski muszą planować okres poprezydencki. Przykłady instytucji, przechowujących pamięć o indywidualnych prezydentach w USA i Europie, ukazują, że instytucjonalizacja pozwala prezydentom na zachowanie celowości życia, jak również godności i statusu osoby publicznej. Zakładanie bibliotek i muzeów prezydenckich nie jest kwestią nostalgii, a wagi przykładanej do poprzedniego stanowiska. Biblioteki i muzea prezydenckie nie są jedynie repozytoriami pamięci instytucjonalnej o prezydenturze. Są one przede wszystkim żywymi i ewoluującymi pomnikami dziedzictwa prezydentów.

## **Słowa kluczowe**

Prezydent, Pierwsza Dama, archiwa, muzeum