

COMMUNITY WISDOM VS. THE PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATORS' APPROACH: THE RYNEK UNDERGROUND MUSEUM IN KRAKÓW AS AN EXAMPLE OF A DISTINGUISHED, MODERN IDEA OF PRESENTING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE HISTORICAL CENTRES OF CITIES

Abstract

Most monument conservators claim to show society how to interpret a particular heritage, such as what should be in their collective memory (worth preservation) and how the specific heritage should be presented. The lack of social obedience is explained by insufficient social education. The intensification of this knowledge obviously takes into account education in the spirit of "sustainable development". However, it is assumed in advance that heritage is of utmost importance here and everything else should be subordinated to it, adjusted to this "the only right idea" which has been elaborated for years. If, nevertheless, any restoration project breaks out from the imposed hierarchy and its effects become worthy or more popular, it is very often accused of "lacking sensitivity, having a superficial perception, or representing 'Disneylandisation', or even a cheap showiness". The author intends to present reasons why the Underground Market Museum in Krakow should or should not be created.

Keywords: presentation, cultural heritage, museum, crowd sourcing

1. Introduction

The presentation of cultural heritage is a process of organising physical access and providing society with the appropriate information about the history and values of the presented heritage. These actions are usually planned and carried out by professionals who first study and conduct scientific research on the given object and prepare its interpretation. The interpretation provides the basis for creating a model of presenting historic sites and monuments with the help of other specialists. It is a unidirectional communication, with the pace and quality determined by experts. A recipient has to acknowledge a given exhibition method while his or her potential dissatisfaction (usually resulting from the misunderstanding or poor attractiveness of the suggested form) can be manifested by a negative entry in a visitors' book, or a suitable comment added to Internet forums. The lack of sufficient social euphoria for the presentation model approved by experts is interpreted as an indication of a viewer's "cultural inexperience", low level of perception, or general lack of interest and taste among society. The 19th century paradigm – according to which the exposition of heritage should educate people in the first place – is still predominant among Polish conservational and museum circles.¹ In his monograph, L. Turowski focuses mainly on the problems of museums; however, most of his reflections also relate to the protection of brick monuments. The idea of "common cultural heritage", created in the 1960s²,

provoked a debate on the role of society in the protection of cultural heritage. As early as the 1990s, most countries in the world implemented changes in law which guaranteed social participation in the policy of cultural heritage protection at different levels. Public consultation and the local population's representatives taking part in the planning of different kinds of investment has become a recognised standard today. However, so-called "public opinion" is often neglected by specialists. They claim that "public opinion is not the Delphic oracle... Society does not have tools to provide correct answers to difficult questions. Its answers derive from gossip, slander heard somewhere, demagogic arguments, stereotypes, prejudices, and from people's stupidity."³ People are often emotionally involved in the cultural heritage, and consider the monuments of the past a crucial element of their identity – even if the past became a remote, other-worldly entity. That is why public opinion often becomes a peculiar bargaining card, both in the urban process of planning new investments and in making concrete conservational decisions.⁴ The case of a certain museum's emergence (presented in this article) can be the reason for detailed consideration on social participation's role in creating a heritage object's image.

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¹ L. Turowski, *Muzeum – swoista instytucja edukacyjna: wybrane problemy w ujęciu historycznym i współczesnym*, Warszawa: Ypsilon, 1999.

² P. Taylor, *Common Heritage of Mankind Principle*, [in:] K. BosseLMann, D. Fogel, and J. Ruhl, (Eds.) *The Encyclopedia of Su-*

stainability, vol. 3: *The Law and Politics of Sustainability*. Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing, 2011, pp. 64-69.

³ M. Ostrowski, *Co nas obchodzi świat*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2006, p. 131. This opinion is expressed in numerous domestic and foreign dissertations, e.g., R. Dyoniziak, *Sondaże a manipulowanie społeczeństwem*, Kraków: Universitas, 1997, S. Kuśmierski, *Świadomość społeczna, opinia publiczna, propaganda*. Warszawa, 1987, or D. McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory*, London 2000.

⁴ MMK Kraków, (online): www.mmkrakow.pl/386792/2011/9/19/protest-na-ul-jozefa-quo-vadis-krakowie-zdjecia-wideo?category=photos (date of access: 12 .02.2014).

2. Rynek Underground Museum was not built in a day⁵

Krakow is considered a very conservative city. There are not many objects representing modern architecture in the historic city centre,⁶ while permission for new investments has to be preceded by numerous analyses and opinions given by conservational urban planning and artistic committees. The issuing of a positive opinion is not synonymous with the beginning of works, as potential public protests, organised by different associations active in Krakow, also have to be taken into account.⁷ That is why the idea of making the Main Market Square's medieval buildings' relics accessible (reaching five metres below the surface) was a serious challenge, not only for a designer, but also for politicians, the city administration, and the whole Krakow community. It was the 6th Krakow Biennial entitled, "The Square in Krakow – Krakow in Europe" (1996), held at the end of the 20th century, which gave rise to this idea. Italian architect, Armando Dal Fabbro, a Gran Prix Biennial prize winner, put forth a proposal to create an open hall under the Main Market Square, supported by glass and steel columns inside which the market's medieval merchant buildings' relics could be exhibited. In two-tier undergrounds, next to the exhibition halls of various art galleries, a shopping mall and an auditorium were supposed to be located, among other things. The press named the Venetian's conception "a futuristic vision of the place".⁸ This innovative project provoked a heated debate in the city concerning the possibility of exhibiting underground structures which once occupied more than half the area of the Main Market Square (Rynek). The majority of conservational circles were against the crazy plan of interfering with the underground. City residents curiously followed the press disputes and regarded the idea as a fantasy financially and technically impossible to carry out.

⁵ More details on the history of this conservation project can be found in the following articles: Kadłuczka A., *Koncepcja Rynku Podziemnego w Krakowie*, [in:] *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie* 19/2006, p. 68., A. Kadłuczka, *Podziemne Muzeum Rynku Głównego w Krakowie*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, 2010, and J. Sroczyńska, *Tempora mutantur e nos mutamur In illis*, [in:] REUSO, *Vida en edificios y cascos históricos. Itinerarios y paisaje dentro del patrimonio*, Madrid 2013, vol. 1, pp. 173-180.

⁶ The description and analysis of those few contemporary realisations in Krakow, built within the urban conservation area, were depicted by Ewa Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich, *Nowa architektura w tkance historycznej Krakowa*, [in:] *Florencja i Kraków, miasta partnerskie w Europie – wspólne dziedzictwo kultury*, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, pp. 677-691.

⁷ E.g. Obywatelski Komitet Ratowania Krakowa (Citizens' Committee for the Restoration of Krakow's Monuments), Stowarzyszenie Obrońców Krakowa (Association of Krakow Protectors), Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa (Association of Devotees of Krakow History and Monuments), etc.

⁸ L. Olszański, *Umiar czy wizja*, [in:] *Gazeta.pl*, 08.01.2002, (online): <http://krakow.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,35811,632210.html> (date of access: 2014-02-14).

Nearly two years later, the Municipal Services Department in Krakow (Zakład Gospodarki Komunalnej) commissioned the Atelier for Conservation of Cultural Property "Arkona" (Pracownia Konserwacji Zabytków "Arkona") with the square's modernisation. This was supposed to involve primarily the changing of its surface and lighting. The concept referred to the appearance of the Main Market Square from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Any interference in the underground was not taken into consideration as: "The condition of the remaining underground constructions, like basements of the Rich Stalls (Kramy Bogate), was undefined. Their intended use was also doubtful. What can be arranged in several dozen small stalls similar to those in Cloth Hall (Sukiennice)?"⁹ Architects protested against the presented project, calling it "trashy and artificially romantic." Finally, a decision concerning modernisation was postponed for the next five years.

A considerable deformation of the square's surface – as well as the Pope's anticipated visit to Krakow – forced the decision about the immediate renovation of pavements and roads in the Market Square in 2001. In connection with the intended modernisation (including the underground infrastructure of the place), it was decided that the development of *The Design and Conservational Study for the Main Square in Krakow (Studium projektowo-konserwatorskie dla Rynku Głównego w Krakowie)* would be commissioned to the Krakow University of Technology's Institute of the History of Architecture and Monument Preservation. The study was given a positive opinion by both the Association of Polish Architects (SARP), conservational circles, and the City Council. The study was approved by MKUA and WKZ¹⁰ in 2002, and it became the foundation of a two-stage construction and detailed design. The design was created in 2004 in Professor Andrzej Kadłuczka's studio – Archecon. It included all guidelines presented in the study, corrected "according to the technical and financial conditions, the results of archaeological probing, and the interdisciplinary discussion" on the sense of the underground exposition.¹¹ The presented design contained the suggestion of a partial exhibition of the preserved medieval relics under the surface of the Main Market Square. In order to do this, it was suggested that the ceiling's reinforced concrete slab should be used over the remains of the Rich Stalls (Kramy Bogate), as well as over the basements of Cloth Hall, which would be capable of shifting the surface load. The underground space was supposed to be used as a modern exposition of the Krakow City Incorporation Museum (Muzeum Lokacji Krakowa).

⁹ According to president of Arkona, Wojciech Feliks, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ MKUA, Miejska Komisja Urbanistyczno-Architektoniczna (Municipal Urban Planning and Architectural Commission), WKZ, Wojewódzki Konserwator Zabytków (Province Monument Conservator), SARP, Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich (Association of Polish Architects).

¹¹ A. Kadłuczka, *Projekt nowej nawierzchni Rynku Głównego w Krakowie i modernizacja jego infrastruktury podziemnej*, [in:] *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie*, 16/2004, pp. 5-12.

Due to insufficient funds in the city budget, the idea to use part of the underground for cultural and commercial purposes was introduced. The idea soon captured the interest of private investors. From the very first details about the possibility of financing part of the project with private means, Internet community portals and press sparked heated debates among those who supported the idea and its opponents. According to the new version of the project, the underground relics of the Rich Stalls (Kramy Bogate) were supposed to be exhibited in the commercial centre, while part of the underground Cloth Hall was to be designated as an archaeological reserve of the City of Krakow's Historical Museum (Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa); this is where the exhibition dedicated to the history of the Main Market Square was planned. A former German fire protection water tank was supposed to perform the function of an auditorium hall. The city and province's conservational authorities, initially cautious and sceptical, imposed a ban on any adaptation of underground structures after the witch hunt initiated by the press and part of the conservational circles. It was justified by the difficulties accessing these structures and the unprofitability of the investment. Comprehensive archaeological research, which would verify the previous probing, was also demanded. In the face of growing criticism, the thought of financing the initiative within a public-private partnership was abandoned.

The idea of developing the underground area of the Main Market Square unexpectedly gained an ardent supporter in Professor J. Majchrowski, the City Mayor. After he officially announced his support for the idea, there was a storm of accusations, insults, prosecutorial denunciations, political and economic lobbying, and a press witch hunt, both in Krakow and around the country. However, the Mayor stayed relentless and supported the followers of Rynek Underground Museum with all possible methods.

The Citizens' Committee for the Restoration of Krakow's Monuments (Społeczny Komitet Odnowy Zabytków Krakowa) also got involved in the struggle by breaking their promise to give financial support for the investment. Professor J. Wyrozumski, president of the Association of Devotees of Krakow History and Monuments Protection (Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa), stated "...give up the idea to uncover the walls of the Rich Stalls (Kramy Bogate) as only several dozen people in Poland find them interesting, excluding an erage make the idea of the Rynek Underground exhibition possible against the odds, the European Union was asked for financial support. In this way, 70% of the funding was obtained for executing the underground tourist route entitled "Following Krakow's Traces of European Identity".

After six years of hard work related to archaeological and architectural research, the Rynek Underground Museum was finally opened in 2010. It was, however, preceded by multiple modifications of the project conception, and repeated interruptions of the investment process – and accompanied by heated debates and disputes between experts and politicians, all intensified by the media even after the opening.

3. Shock of modernity

On the day of the official museum opening (24 September, 2010), the first group of visitors included guests invited by the City Mayor, members of the City Council, the Małopolska Province local government assembly, experts from various fields related to monument conservation, and, most importantly, representatives from the press. Already the first interviews given on the spot revealed a considerable change in the attitudes of many specialists who had been in opposition to the project. Professor J. Wyrozumski, who opposed the investment earlier, explained that many people found it hard to imagine that "...such a splendid exhibition may be created out of seemingly uninteresting archaeological relics." Also Professor F. Ziejka, president of the Citizens' Committee for the Restoration of Krakow's Monuments (and a hardened opponent of the project) admitted, "Contrary to charges, this place has nothing in common with Disneyland; it is rather a modern history manual." Yet some people (for example, L. Sonik – Chairman of the Heritage Institute Association – Stowarzyszenie Instytut Dziedzictwa) described the exhibition as, "Very pop style, a bit kitschy, and inspiring emotions in a forced way; but this is the culture we live in." Readers' comments posted under the Internet article were also interesting; readers uncompromisingly suppressed all criticism of the museum: "Who are the critics? They are people who have never in their lives created anything. It fits like a glove. Today, museums MUST be for all, and not for a small percentage of the 'chosen' ones. You would surely like a museum visited by no one..."¹² What caused such emotions about the museum?

A few weeks before the opening of the exhibition, relentless opponents of the museum attempted to frighten the public with "some mysterious actions connected with the prepared exhibition scenario."¹³ City Mayor J. Majchrowski nominated a special team of experts on the arrangement and display of archaeological relics in the Main Market Square in Krakow, which was to be led by Professor I. Płuski (an outstanding monument conservator, and a well-known and respected person in Krakow). The team proposed the organisation of a city history museum in the underground, where a modern archaeological display would play a leading role, combined with models, visualisations, holograms and multimedia, all forming an exclusive tourist route with a 21st century display. The team's concept soon earned the support of many previous opponents, including the province monument conservator. The Historical Museum of the City of Krakow, which was to be the administrator of the exhibition in the future, prepared its scenario. It seemed that all disputes had been eased, when suddenly an unexpected decision announcing the

¹² B. Suchy, D. Hajok, *Stąd do przeszłości – opinie o podziemnym muzeum*, (online) homepage: www.gazeta.pl (date of access: 2010-09-24).

¹³ Z. Bartuś, *Disneyland w podziemiach Krakowa?* (online): <http://fakty.interia.pl/malopolskie/news-disneyland-w-podziemiach-krakowa,nId,1238860> (date of access: 2013-03-04).

tender for the preparation of the exhibition scenario again triggered emotions. The winner of the tender was the Warsaw-Toruń consortium, Trias S.A.¹⁴ The consortium soon rejected the variant elaborated by the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow and presented its own exhibition concept. The new concept, full of multimedia and special effects, was approved not only by the Mayor, but also by the Expert Council, with Professor Pluska in charge. But the director of the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow, Mr. Michał Niezabitowski, protested. He was supported by the director of the National Museum in Krakow, Zofia Gołubiew, who stated that the project prepared by Trias was like Disneyland – much below the level expected of a museum. The protesters were also joined by the Association of Art Historians.¹⁵ Due to the lack of agreement between the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow and the Trias consortium, the museum lost its potential to influence the exhibition arrangement, and the possibility to manage the new museum. Museologists did not approve of the attempts to highlight multimedia exhibitions with funny animations, or with the exhibition's concept acting as a "theatre of impressions, affecting all senses."¹⁶ The exhibition scenario assumed a narration of "backward chronology", based on the rule of uncovering subsequent layers, starting with modern times. The entrance to the exhibition was located on the ground floor of Cloth Hall (Sukiennice), where the suspense began.



Fig. 1. People queuing to the underground museum, three months after its official opening. Photo by the author

The exhibition (based on discoveries made in the period 2005–2010) introduces its visitors to the world of a medieval town, demonstrating its cultural, political, and trade connections with other European countries of the era. The dark arrangement of all modern materials forms the necessary setting and perfectly contrasts with the bright original elements of the walls, pavements, or other relics and monuments. The visiting route goes through glass passages, which

give the original layers proper protection, while numerous touch maps and panels constantly enable visitors to compare Krakow's reality from that time to other European countries from the same period. Numerous precious objects and little monuments of artistic design found in this site are presented in special cylindrical display cases, thanks to which one can watch artefacts from all sides. Multimedia presentations, films, laser projections, and acoustic effects associated with the exhibition immerse viewers in the atmosphere of a medieval town. At this exhibition, where 700 architectural monuments, 500 electronic replicas of monuments, and 600 digital 3D reconstructions can be seen on a 4,000 square metre area – and at a depth of more than four metres below the ground – visitors can feel very different in comparison to other typical history museums. There is also an opportunity to watch eight cartoons and five documentaries explaining a given issue. Visitors can use 37 multimedia touch posts, watch visualisations on 25 plasma screens and 27 multimedia projectors, and finally listen to the sound of 98 loudspeakers. Foreigners can make use of 150 audiobooks available in five languages. A three-metre steam curtain, with scenes displayed from medieval town life, is planned as an additional attraction at the starting point of this presentation.

At the start (which actually dropped after the official opening), not all multimedia attractions functioned at the same time. This sparked a wave of complaints about the abortive and excessive investments in failing media.

Krakow residents and tourists welcomed the museum with delight. Comments in the press – which were mostly critical of the project earlier – suddenly started to show enthusiasm.¹⁷ During the first 10 weeks, the museum was visited by more than 75,000 people. At this time, the city budget received almost PLN 1 million (300,000 euros) even though the museum only operated at half its capacity, i.e. without commercial facilities or proceeds from taxes on merchandising. On the record day, the museum was visited by 1,564 people; yet the number could have been higher, except there was a limit of 180 people present at the institution at a time, set by the fire service. It also was open for just 10 hours a day. Almost four years after its opening, it is still actually impossible to buy a ticket to this museum without a prior booking. The annual income generated by the museum is equal to that in Wieliczka or Wawel. 90% of visitors give the exhibit the best reviews on social networks, thus they appreciate its different mode of presenting the cultural heritage. Its presentation style has become an inspiration for creating successive scenarios and arrangements in Krakow's museums.¹⁸

¹⁴ Known, for example, from the highly acclaimed scenario of the Warsaw Uprising Museum's exhibition.

¹⁵ Z. Bartuś, *Protesty przeciwko wystawie pod krakowskim Rynkiem*, [in:] *Dziennik Polski*, 15.06.2010 (online): www.dziennikpolski24.pl/arttykul/2774634,protesty-przeciwko-wystawie-pod-krakowskim-rynkiem,id,t.html (date of access: 2014-04-12).

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ D. Hajok, *Fascynujący Kraków osiem metrów pod Rynkiem*, [in:] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (online): http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,8333069Fascynujący_Kraków_osiem_metrów_pod_Rynkiem.html#ixzz1qzC7IXov (date of access: 2014-02-23).

¹⁸ E.g. *Schindler's Factory*, which was opened in the same year; historic *Eagle's Pharmacy* in the Podgórze district (which was the Ghetto area during the German Nazi occupation), or the new arrangement of the Historical Museum exhibition in the *Krzysztofor Palace* – planned for 2015.

4. Approach of professional conservators

Experts on monument conservation are actually specialists in different fields, so the frequent polarisation of their opinions is no surprise. These opinions are influenced by their experience, but also by varied systems of vocational education. The outlooks of masters who have been their teachers are also of great importance here. Institutions educating experts and professors that work there have an influence on either progressive or conservative evaluations of conservation projects. Our attitude to the reconstruction of modern-form architecture in historic city centres, or to the sense of virtual presentation and interpretation of monuments, is obviously an issue of our experience. Possible personal experience with various solutions, and active participation in international scientific debates, make it possible to learn new concepts or discuss their implementation. The contemporary management of cultural heritage is a relatively young discipline created in response to general changes occurring in the modern culture; these are transformed by cultural institutions into participating organisations that give viewers an opportunity to learn the presented heritage, but also provide both entertainment and new “experiences”.

Already the early ideas of using the underground relics in Krakow’s Market Square for display space stimulated heated debates in the community of experts connected with monument conservation. The first architectural concept from 2004, which proposed the use of the underground space under Cloth Hall (Sukiennice) for an “archaeological reserve” was protested against by the Małopolska Province Monument Conservator. The Market Square Archaeological Commission nominated by the Conservator and members of the Citizens’ Committee for the Restoration of Krakow’s Monuments applied for restricting intervention in archaeological stratification to the minimum, with the fear of “precious cultural strata being destroyed” by such an investment.¹⁹ The new concept of museum space assumed moving the exhibition to the northern part of the underground of Cloth Hall (Sukiennice) and to the space outside the facility, in the place of the former WWII fire tank. It was approved by the Province Conservator. Nevertheless, he still held the position that “the presentation of genuine relics of medieval cellars does not create on its own the value capable of attracting non-specialists,”²⁰ and as such is not very likely to become attractive social space. Archaeological probing in 2003 was systematically expanded by successive sites, which led to the creation of “considerable free space under the Main Market Square, enabling larger cubic volume than assumed in the approved project.”²¹

Another version of the project was created, which assumed that the exhibition would be extended by “...relics of the oldest early medieval buildings, pavements, and municipal devices” uncovered in the course of subsequent research.²² A new version proposed the organisation of an extra exhibition and commerce function in the underground. This idea caused an avalanche of expert protests. The Province Conservator stated that “the intention to incorporate exhibition and commerce functions under the Market Square is totally in contrast to the principles of conservation and leads both to the destruction of considerable sections of historical substance and to the degradation of the entire protected area.”²³ The danger of commercialising the Market space, even seven metres below ground (and which was once a commercial market), became a pretext for Krakow’s conservative community to exhibit their frustration. The protesters included members of the Association of Art Historians; Association of the Fans of the History of Krakow Monuments; Academic Council of the Institute of Archaeology at the Jagiellonian University; members of the Citizens’ Committee for the Saving of Krakow; and more than a dozen independent experts. The idea of an underground museum was supported by the vast majority of the architectural community, including the Board of the Krakow Branch of the Association of Polish Architects (SARP)²⁴ and conservators from the Association of Monument Conservators in Poland – an organisation of specialists from various fields who are involved in monument conservation. Apart from issues connected with functions, protesters also pointed at problems connected with proper conservation, which would be in danger “of destruction as a result of changing conditions” in the planned exhibition, whereas the adaptation of space would “make it impossible to conduct non-destructive archaeological research in the future.” There were also protests against modern forms and materials used to arrange the walls of the future museum “among which foundation stone walls would appear and serve as decoration.”²⁵ Complaints also concerned the excessive speed of conducting archaeological excavations, and a not-fast-enough evaluation of the explored space’s scientific and conservation value. This led to doubt regarding the substantive justification of the whole investment, which – according to some critics – was very risky in terms of the economic profitability. The author of the concept, Prof. Eng. Arch., A. Kadłuczka, responded, quoting Professor Zbigniew Kobyliński, an eminent archaeologist and former deputy general monument conservator in Poland: “Archaeologists can no longer stay in their ‘ivory

²² A. Kadłuczka, *Koncepcja...*, *op. cit.*, p.64.

²³ J. Janczykowski *op. cit.*, p.73.

²⁴ Zarząd Oddziału SARP w Krakowie, *Remont Rynku Głównego w Krakowie – ciąg dalszy – Stanowisko SARP*, (online): www.w-a.pl/2005/rynek_remont_sarp.htm (date of access: 2014-02-23).

²⁵ Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki Oddział w Krakowie, *List otwarty SHS Oddział w Krakowie w sprawie projektu tzw. Rynku Podziemnego w Krakowie*, [in:] K. Migacz, *Interpelacja w sprawie tzw. “przypadkowej dziury” pod Rynkiem Głównym*, Kraków, 18.01.2008, p. 6.

¹⁹ J. Janczykowski, *Informacja Małopolskiego Wojewódzkiego Konserwatora Zabytków dotycząca prac na obszarze płyt Rynku Głównego w Krakowie*, [in:] *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie* 19/2006, p. 72.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

²¹ Zespół Kontrolny Nr 32/06 Komisji Rewizyjnej Rady Miasta Krakowa, *Protokół z kontroli Komisji Rewizyjnej Rady Miasta Krakowa zagadnień związanych z remontem Rynku Głównego*, BR-01.0910-3/06, Kraków 2006, (online): www.rzeczprawa.eco.pl/walkazkorup/rynek/arch/2006/prot.htm (date of access: 2014-02-23).

towers' and contemplate excavated works of our ancestors in their quiet offices. The need of the present time is to involve all archaeologists in rescue works, which cannot become less scientific or more superficial, even though they must be conducted very quickly."²⁶ Soon after initiating archaeological research, complaints appeared about the low substantive level, and poor formal preparation of archaeologists working under the Market Square for their research projects. They offered a winning bid, but unfortunately came from Wrocław, so they could not have been better specialists than eminent experts from Krakow. An odd situation followed the publication of a protest letter signed by the Nobel Prize winner, Wisława Szymborska, and several professors from Krakow's universities.²⁷ Soon after, someone denounced the reconstruction works in the Market Square to the prosecutor's office as illegal constructions which may even lead to a construction disaster.²⁸ There were heated debates on internet forums; for the next five years, newspapers offered "hot" news of successive discovered scandals, acts of bribery, or political extortion. The government, the prosecutor's office, church authorities, and all political parties and associations were involved in this affair. The then Minister of Justice, Zbigniew Ziobro, organised a press conference during which the Krakow investment was called an "archaeological crime".²⁹ All this caused the communities of architects, art historians, archaeologists, and monument conservators to stand on opposite sides. However, charges were dropped soon and the experts' emotions were calmed for a while after the nomination of the Expert Council by the City Mayor, with Professor Ireneusz Płuska in charge.

Experts protested again when the exhibition scenario implementation began. It turned out that the proposal to present exhibits according to new rules of museology (which gives preference to a performative approach, and also acts as a social construct created in the on-going interactions of visitors³⁰), is unacceptable in Krakow's vision of the museum presenting archaeological relics and city history. The majority of Polish museums are managed by a generation of specialists, ones educated in different dogmas. It is the object or the exhibit which must be in the limelight. The task of the museum is to "gather and protect natural and cultural heritage items ...; inform about values and contents of the gathered collections, popularise

elementary values of history, science and culture...; develop cognitive and aesthetic sensitivity, as well as make use of the gathered collections possible".³¹ The Polish Act does not contain any reference to the museum transformation which began the implementation of the idea of the community's sustainable development, switching places between the subject (exhibit) and object (visitor). R. Kostro, director of one of the most modern museums in Poland, claims, "An exhibit is also a means to achieve a certain goal which involves attracting the visitor and telling a story. In this sense, a modern museum is a museum which puts emphasis on the visitor – the museum in which the visitor is most important, and not the museologists, the exhibits, or anything else."³² This is a very risky statement, considering the prevalent attitude toward the protection of cultural heritage in Krakow. The Director of the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow, M. Niezabitowski, currently is also the President of the Association of Polish Museologists; he sees a need for change in the attitude of museologists to their collections. He said, "A modern museum is no longer a place of passive storage and protection of collections, with visitors walking in slippers. It is rather a meeting place where active, not passive, mingling with the products of past and modern culture takes place."³³ But he also made a bitter comment. "Contemporary global, social, and political transformations generate new needs towards museums. Museums become places where one can spend their free time and as such must compete with 21st century 'Olympic arenas': shopping malls, theme parks, and multiplex cinemas filled with the smell of popcorn. This competition concerns economic space only to a limited extent, but mostly the existential space. Museums fight for a man who is infected with an omnipresent virus of consumerism, and loses his or her identity and a deeper dimension of his own value."³⁴ Such an ambivalent attitude from the community is explained by its struggle to keep the world in which a museum was a "sacrum" zone for as long as possible. Society's changing anthropological awareness seems to be also rarely noted by the communities of monument conservators, archaeologists, or art historians. Perhaps the reason why this highly active community is seen in Krakow as very conservative lies in the lack of cooperation or willingness to learn the knowledge connected

²⁶ Z. Kobyliński, *Ochrona i zarządzanie dziedzictwem archeologicznym w Europie – wprowadzenie*, [in:] Z. Kobyliński (Ed.), *Ochrona dziedzictwa archeologicznego w Europie*, Warszawa 1998, p. 6.

²⁷ Maku, *Wrze pod krakowskim Rynkiem*, [in:] *Gazeta.pl*, 14.02.2006, (online): <http://krakow.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,35812,3164249.html> (date of access: 2014-03-15).

²⁸ B. Kursa, Piłat, *Przypadkowa dziura pod Rynkiem Głównym*, [in:] *Gazeta.pl*, 05.02.2006, (online): <http://miasta.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,35812,3397456.html> (date of access: 2014-03-15).

²⁹ L. Pilarek, *Czy na Rynku dokonano „zbrodni archeologicznej”?*, [in:] *Gazeta.pl*, 06.10.2006, (online): <http://krakow.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,42699,3667531.html> (date of access: 2014-03-15).

³⁰ This approach is explained in the article: B. Latour, *Wizualizacja i poznanie: zrysoywanie rzeczy razem*, [in:] *Avant. Pismo Awanardy Filozoficzno-Naukowej*, vol. 3, T/2012, pp. 207-257.

³¹ Ustawa z dnia 29 czerwca 2007 r. o zmianie ustawy o muzeach (Act of 29 June amending the Act on Museums) (Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] of 2007, No. 136, item 956) point 1.

³² Muzeum Historii Polski, *W poszukiwaniu formuły nowoczesnego muzeum*. Fragments of a debate organised by Ośrodek „Pamięć i Przyszłość” within the conference devoted to the Muzeum Ziemi Zachodnich (Museum of Western Lands) programme, Wrocław, 18-19 May 2010, (online): www.muzhp.pl/artykuly/552/w-poszukiwaniu-formuly-nowoczesnego-muzeum.html (date of access: 2014-03-12).

³³ B. Gancarz, *Niezabitowski szefem muzealników*, *Gość Krakowski* 13.12.2012, (online): <http://krakow.gosc.pl/doc/1391471.Niezabitowski-szefem-muzealnikow> (date of access: 2014-02-16).

³⁴ M. Niezabitowski, *Muzeum we wnętrzu historycznego miasta – konflikt czy harmonia*, [in:] *Onet.pl*, 13.07.2011, (online): <http://magazyn.o.pl/2011/muzeum-we-wnetrzu-historycznego-miasta-konflikt-czy-harmonia/2> (date of access: 2014-02-23).

with modern art, psychology, and sociology. Outstanding specialists in their fields, real experts and practitioners are able to save any monument from destruction and protect it from degradation. They have no problems with scientific interpretations of the uncovered relics or duplicates taken from closed rooms. The problem appears when modern presentation and interpretation of cultural heritage force them to seek balance between “sacrum” and “profanum”, imposed by society.

5. Community wisdom

The wisdom of the crowd consists of single details transferred by individuals. Every single piece of this information is not as important as the set of information obtained thanks to the accumulation of these opinions; they are combined internally with a certain structure, for example thematic, appropriately converted, filtered, and degeneralised, so that it starts functioning as public opinion. The proper synthesis of various information leads to knowledge and wisdom.³⁵ As noted by J. Surowiecki in his book “Mądrość tłumu” (Wisdom of the Crowd), this theory works if the crowd is not particularly socially-oriented. If it does not act under the influence of the statements of others or when people try to be objective, without bringing their opinions to an average, with the aim of achieving the result generally considered reasonable.

From the very beginning of the discussion on the use of relics under the Main Market Square, the daily press was very keen on describing the development of the situation. Polarised expert opinions and extremely different comments expressed by local authority figures drove the public and stimulated the sale of newspapers.³⁶ This media fuss and subsequent alleged affairs discovered in relation to the investment aroused the rhythm of life in Krakow at the time. Newspapers tried to influence the public opinion and politicians used them for their own purposes. Tension slowly intensified. Early comments from the society influenced by articles of those who opposed the co-funding of the investment by a private investor were very balanced. The fear of possible “increase of prices” and “of the eastern part of the Market Square becoming ‘beautified’ by a large hole, lifts, air throws, and the whole system were predominant.”³⁷ The objections of conservators were not shared; people claimed that “conservators had better turn into museums themselves!” In every subsequent stage of the investment, indignation increased as well as a patriotic Krakow identity – but also the curiosity about what it would finally look like.

The first doubts were dispelled by opening the not yet ready museum to residents during the Night of Museums in May 2010.³⁸ Residents of Krakow stood in huge queues until 2 a.m. The Museum, which did not have exhibits yet, aroused huge interest and earned residents’ initial favour. Visitors who actively commented on the event in social networks summarised their impressions, for example, in this way: “It heralds a true and unusual journey in time which should definitely be taken in September in Krakow” or “If everything is as they promise, this will be a huge tourist attraction in the city centre.”³⁹ Before the opening of the museum, the public was moved by the dispute concerning the presentation of relics and Disneylandisation of the entire museum.⁴⁰



Fig. 2. Photos from interior, showing the interaction between the heritage and society. Photo by the author

Long lines that stretched for several dozen metres every day in the first six months following the museum’s opening in 2010 were not reduced to several metres until four months later. Even today, three and a half years after the opening, you need to book a ticket two or three days in advance to visit the museum. Some people return to the museum a few times. Just like above ground, Market Square is the heart of the city where residents meet to spend their time together in a nice way; the Underground Market Square has become a place where people can and do spend their time with one another, with their own history, the spirit of their ancestors, and with the living history of the place, which is continued four metres above, on the same day and at the same time. The Krakow Underground Museum gives excellent opportunities to all age groups, starting with the smallest kids for whom special rooms are designated in the middle of the complex. They

³⁵ N. Gane, D. Beer, *New media: The Key Concepts*, Oxford: Berg, 2008, pp. 46-58,

³⁶ R. Radłowska, *Ten remont jest zły? Tadeusz Prokopiuk i Andrzej Kadłuczka o remoncie Rynku*, [in:] *Gazeta.pl*, (online): <http://krakow.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,35797,2287658.html> (date of access: 2014-02-23).

³⁷ *Skyscrapercity.com*, (online): www.skyscrapercity.com/show-thread.php?t=176893&page=2 (date of access: 24.02.2014).

³⁸ Maku, *Noc Muzeów - gigantyczne kolejki do podziemi Rynku*, [in:] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14.05.2010, (online): www.krakow.pl/miasto/gazeta/?id=03.html (date of access: 2014-02-24).

³⁹ *Naszemiasto.pl*, 15.05.2010, (online): <http://krakow.naszemiasto.pl> (date of access: 2014-02-23).

⁴⁰ Z. Bartuś, *Protesty przeciwko wystawie pod krakowskim Rynkiem*, [in:] *Dziennik Polski*, 15.06.2010, (online): www.dziennikpolski24.pl/artykul/2774634,protesty-przeciwko-wystawie-pod-krakowskim-rynkiem,id,t.html (date of access: 2014-02-24).

have a lot of educational entertainment for children and a show which combines a puppet show with 3D animations, and light and sound installations. Simultaneously, adults or teenage siblings who have come to the museum with kids can gain knowledge about the history of the city, choosing the means they like best. The lack of determined routes, or a visiting limit constitute, another, non-typical characteristic of Krakow's Museum where you stay as long as you wish, returning a few times to the sequences you have already seen. Internet users' posts under articles devoted to the museum show the opinions of proponents and opponents of multimedia in museums, which are usually polarised. Opponents claim that there is too much multimedia while fans are excited about it. Age statistics of respondents confirm that 90% of supporters are below the age of 40, while opponents usually constitute a traditional, older segment of society – the "pre-computer age", as can be predicted. Here is the first point of contact of cultural distinctness. The proverbial generation gap can also show its symptoms with reference to a museum exhibition. Older generations who are less accustomed to touch screens prefer traditional forms of captions in show-cases, but do not want to admit the natural barrier resulting from their fear of the unknown – in this case a computer screen. At the same time, the "iPhone generation", used to quick, often superficial information, can treat the visit to the exhibition as completed, and postpone the possibility of gaining the second or third level of more professional knowledge.

Already in 2011, the Underground Museum was granted several prestigious awards, including the Prize for the Historical Event of the Year (winner chosen by Internet voters), Prize of the Chamber of Tourism Odys 2011 (17th edition) and distinction in the "Grand Discovery of Małopolska" competition. In the following year, the museum was awarded a prize in the "Positivist of the Year" competition, was given the title of the "Friendliest Place to Kids" and the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation as the Best Tourism Product of the Year 2012. In 2013, the Historical Museum of Krakow was the only cultural institution listed as one of the Forbes Diamonds 2013 in the category of enterprises generating the annual profit of PLN 5 to 50 million. It received the first prize in the "Travellers Choice 2013" competition. According to Trip Advisors, the museum occupies the seventh position among 124 proposed Krakow attractions; from a total of 538 comments, 323 are "excellent" reviews, and 141 people gave it a "very good" rating. The most frequent comments are of this kind: "I rarely find museums equally interesting" or "Unconventional museum, far from standards."⁴¹



Fig. 3. Confrontation between the past and the reality of the present day which can be seen via the roof window.

Photo by the author



Fig. 4. Visualization of the underground exhibition.

Photo by the ACHECON

6. Conclusions

Crowdsourcing,⁴² which means benefiting from the wisdom of the crowd, requires breaking the existing procedures and, above all, a disrespectful approach towards the public, which experts promote. This term shows the possibility of benefitting from the social activity of users. It consists of reaching for other people's ideas and suggestions. The possibility of giving "common people" a chance to influence the shape of exhibitions or the presentation scenario is already being used by marketing companies (in their struggle for customers), but it is also an idea, which is slowly beginning to function in the presentation of cultural heritage. People's public expression of views on the subject of a given presentation and interpretation of heritage gives managers many tips about the potential improvement of a given object.

The way to interpret these suggestions, their prioritisation, limits of completeness, and the chosen level of limitations show the wisdom of experts. Expert knowledge is more stable because it is based on laborious, elaborated analyses, which are rarely governed by emotions. Social

⁴¹ Tripadvisor, *Podziemia Rynku*, (online): http://pl.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g274772-d2248956-Reviews-Rynek_Underground-Krakow_Lesser_Poland_Province_Southern_Poland.html#REVIEWS (date of access: 2014-02-24).

⁴² Defined for the first time by Jeff Howe, *The Rise of Crowdsourcing*, [in:] *Wired Magazine*, VI 2006, (online): www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.06/crowds.html (date of access: 2014-02-24).

wisdom is dynamic, and the impulsiveness of changes depends on the size of a given population and the speed of information circulation. Therefore, as far as the protection of monuments is concerned, it can be said that it is better to be based on expert knowledge than on social wisdom. But it should be remembered that the acquired knowledge changes the society reflexively. Present-day thinking about tradition and cultural heritage is the perception of matters, events, people from the past, and based on individual experience (which can give us tips to retain memory about

the past, and about the present for the future.) The development of civilisation does not give us such assurance. Technical inventions do not replace the internal confrontation between acquired knowledge, experiences of the past, and individual, deep reflection on values which one wants to retain for the future. The development of balance between scientific understanding of the reality and possibilities of crowdsourcing – whose values stem from tradition and humanistic reflection – is the most important thing in the contemporary presentation of cultural heritage.

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