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Archaeology, Politics, Entertainment and Dialogue: Polish (Digital) Public Archaeology¹

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Abstract

The following article addresses notions of communication of archaeology and communication between archaeology and society in Poland—past and present. The examination of these two issues begins with a presentation of their historical background, rooted in a political, economic and sociological context. Through reaching back to the past of the Polish state some trends in presenting archaeology to the public can be easily traced. Particular ways of communicating archaeology to the general public are deeply connected with tradition and the wider social and political context, all of which have an undoubtful impact on the reception and perception of archaeology—as a science and as a profession. New technologies, through which communication between archaeologists and society takes place, are definitely used in Poland nowadays, however, the ways in which information is constructed should refer to the existing experience. What should be found is some common ground on which new technologies and traditional ideas of presentation of archaeology could work together and create the most efficient presentation.

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Keywords

public archaeology, Poland, history of archaeology, digitalization of archaeology, digital public archaeology, public outreach

Introduction

The present paper describes ways through which communication of archaeology and communication between archaeology and society are currently organized in Poland. It presents a historical background of the relation between archaeology and society within a general political, economic and social context, in order to detect some trends which can be visible in current ways of presenting archaeology to the public. Tradition is the key element of the public's approach towards many aspects of life, including archaeology and comprehension of the past. Based on this assumption, the concept of digitalization and digital public archaeology, which are believed to identify contemporary social needs, will be presented.

Firstly, it should be clearly stated that public archaeology does not exist in Poland in all of its theoretically possible aspects, since only cases of popularization and education are contemporarily being raised. This derives from the fact that Poland has a different background of archaeology, i.e. a Continental-European tradition which, for many years now, has been trying to align with the Anglo-American one. Reaching back, both types of archaeology had been developing around different philosophical concepts. Continental-European archaeology (which embraces Polish archaeology) has been mainly focused on creating classifications, typologies of artefacts, and, on that basis, reconstructions of the past. Very characteristic of Continental archaeology was a common belief that material remains of past cultures reflect an actual ethnos, which may be traced linearly even from the 1st millennium AD to presently existing nations and countries. Such understanding fostered

political dependence of researches which were used as arguments in political struggles. Continental archaeology served mainly to create narratives about sequential events, thus exhibiting its attachment to history and humanities, and its background deriving from diffusionism theory (Trigger 2006).

On the other hand, the Anglo-American concept of archaeology, established under the umbrella of anthropological science, was rather focused on the then newly created, so-called 'new archaeology' (processualism). The new archaeology assumed a systemic approach towards past cultures, within which cultural processes, understood as anthropological construct, were looked for (i.e. Minta-Tworzowska 2002).

Such different approaches lie behind the divergent development of two types of archaeology. This led to the creation of public archaeology on Anglo-American ground, while in Poland, following the Continental-European approach, such a concept has not yet wholly emerged.

This article will, at first, describe the concept of public archaeology in general, which is contemporarily used to describe the relation between society (the public) and archaeology. This particular relation is recognized in actual activities regarding presentation of the past and archaeology itself. After introducing general understandings of the concept of public archaeology, I will try to find out whether public archaeology may be detected in past and contemporary Poland or not. Next, I will briefly discuss the history of archaeology from the restitution of the autonomy of the Polish state in 1918 until now. Finally, I will present contemporary ways in which archaeology is presented and communicated to society, and delineate well-established trends deriving from tradition and rooted in a variety of nationally gathered experiences. I will also focus on new concepts such as digital public archaeology, where I will refer to Web 2.0 concepts in terms of their usefulness in the case of Poland.

Public Archaeology: A Theoretical Background

Public archaeology may be defined as a general, one-term consolidation for community archaeology, heritage, public education, politics and archaeology, media and archaeology, performance, museums, tourism, civic engagement, and cultural resource management (CRM). All of the above are easy to number, but a closer examination reveals diversity. For example, according to CRM specialists, public archaeology community projects are a subset of their practice rather than an individual working method (Tringham 2009: 2-6). There are also differences connected to particular regions and countries, where tradition is a key factor determining diversity on a sociological level, with the general political context influencing it from the institutional side. Nevertheless, public archaeology involves engagement of a wide variety of public spheres, as it is predetermined to be working for the public and with the public.

Nick Merriman (2004: 5) underlines the discussion about archaeological heritage as a key factor bonding public archaeology as a conceptual whole. Public archaeology thus embraces all actions generating from the professional archaeology side towards public outreach, as well as discussions concerning archaeological resources among non-professional groups who are stakeholders of archaeological heritage. According to Tim Schadla-Hall, the term 'public archaeology' means "any area of archaeological activity that interacted or had potential to interact with the public" (1999: 147). He emphasizes the need for an active role of society itself in the following words: "We should consider not only public interest in terms of protecting and recording the past but also ways in which we can both involve the public and make it possible for them to engage in many of the issues which we too often debate without reference to them" (Schadla-Hall 1999: 156). On the other hand, Neal Ascherson sees public archaeology as an effect of archaeological activities

played in a world of economics and political struggle, concluding: "in other words, they are all about ethics" (2000: 2). Barbara Little proclaims that the term 'public archaeology' is much broader in its scope; it embraces, besides attempts to share publicly results of archaeological research and the obvious fact that archaeology is mostly funded through public resources, also "archaeologists' collaboration with and within communities and activities in support of education, civic, renewal, peace and justice" (2012: 396).

Public archaeology is contemporarily a fast developing branch of archaeological academic discourse. Inner discussions concentrate on the methodology of popularization, emphasizing the aspects of proper communication, and, as far as projects are concerned, the actual practice, thus case studies and their outcomes. Public archaeology is about satisfying social needs to comprehend the past through different means, such as popularization via education, exhibitions or publications, and participation of the public in developing archaeological knowledge through mutual contact between archaeologists and the communities within which they work. Thus, by necessity public archaeology developed few theoretical models based on which most of the popularization and participation projects may be examined. According to Merriman (2004: 3-4), two theoretical models to approach public archaeology may be distinguished, namely 'deficit model' and 'multiple perspective model'. The deficit model implies a common social need for better comprehension of science. It points at education as the best possible way for archaeologists to interact with society. Education in this model means spreading scientifically approved knowledge based on the relation between educator/lecturer and student/listener (i.e. Fagan and Feder 2006). The deficit model is, however, widely criticized by social scientists, who accuse this approach of being rather authoritative and too little society-oriented (Merriman 2004: 5-6). Therefore, due to wide criticism of the deficit model, the 'multiple perspective model' emerged. This communication-based

approach focuses on feedback archaeologists collect following educational activities. According to the multiple perspective model, there is no reason for exclusion of non-professionals from debates about the past. The argument goes even further by contending that they should be welcomed and encouraged to make their own statements (i.e. Holtorf 2005; Högberg and Holtorf 2006).

Cornelius Holtorf (2008), on the other hand, came up with a different division of approaches to the relation between archaeology and society. He distinguished three theoretical approaches, namely the 'educational model', the 'public relation model' and the 'democratic model'. The educational model assumes that society must be enlightened by archaeologists and the knowledge they spread. It assumes there is one proper vision of the past, which can be created only by archaeologists and presented only during their lectures. According to the author (Holtorf 2008: 150), this model has been most widely used in the past, and still is. The next approach, the 'public relation model', refers to the general tendency to commercialize heritage in order to revitalize tourism in a region. In this approach, emphasis is put on economic benefits rather than on educational and heritage protection values. This model also concerns improving the image of archaeology and creating a positive relation with the media for the purpose of collecting funds for further research (Holtorf 2008: 155). Finally, the democratic model reflects attempts of commutation of negative elements from the two previous models. It supports transmission of reliable, scientifically argued interpretations of the past, but does not exclude, rather engages the public in scientific discussions. It also supports scientific responsibility and sustainable development (Holtorf 2008: 157; Matsuda and Okamura 2011: 1-18).

Public archaeology is then obliged to address social needs, encourage self-realization, and stimulate reflection as well as creativity (Merriman 2004: 7). Consequently, archaeologists

should create proper environments for adequate and effective communication, which assumes not only sending a message but also receiving it back in the form of feedback (Craig 1999). What counts the most is creating space for discussion between professional archaeologists and non-professionals.

Although the above presented approaches embrace many important aspects of public archaeology, they keep silent on communication via the Internet which, thanks to its gaining popularity, is becoming of particular importance to archaeology (e.g. Kensa et al. 2011; Zdziebłowski 2014). The web provides new possibilities for popularization, wider access to research results, and creates space for a vivid dialogue between society and archaeologists via blogs and social media. Digital public archaeology aspires to answer the contemporary needs of society, which expects that high-technology should be engaged in transmitting and presenting knowledge of any kind².

To sum up, Public Archaeology discourse has given birth to several theoretical approaches designed to create the chance to discuss advantages, disadvantages and classification of particular cases. Nonetheless, the models –namely educational, public relation and democratic model according to Holtorf (2008), and deficit and multiple perspective model according to Merriman (2004)– are not considered to be definitive classifications with strict, impassable barriers, but rather concepts serving proper evaluation of some undertakings and approaches presented. Digital public archaeology is quite a new idea which has just started to emerge, but is already recognized as a very important agenda in the popularization of archaeology in general.

2 The concept of digital public archaeology will be presented in later on.

A Historical Background of the Relation between Archaeology and the Community in Poland

In order to describe contemporary relations between Polish society and archaeology, it is important to research experiences gained in the past. The context in which individual people exist has great impact on their actions, thoughts and decisions. Similarly, the context must be taken into account in the case of bigger groups, like societies or nations, in order to identify reasons for particular social behaviours and lack of others at the same time. Poland has undergone many different political changes, all of which have been influencing present social behaviours and choices. Past events changed the ways in which archaeology was being communicated in order to meet changing social/down-top and institutional/top-down needs and demands. Thus, I will briefly discuss how archaeological undertakings have influenced popularization and communication of archaeology to the public.

The context of archaeological popularization in 20th-century Poland

As it is already mentioned, contemporary ways of organizing communication between archaeology and society are rooted in experiences of the past. The beginnings of archaeology as a fully-fledged academic discipline are connected with Józef Łepkowski, who in the 1860s gained the very first professor title in archaeology in Poland, at Jagiellonian University, which was the very first stage for Polish archaeology in general (Kostrzewski 1948: 11, 35; Abramowicz 1991: 41). The turn of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century are connected with the beginnings of bigger openness of science towards society. Back then, well prospering museums and the high popularity of archaeological exhibitions were the main means of communication between archaeology and society.

Revival of the Polish state: From 1918 to WWII outbreak

After the end of WWI in 1918, Poland was established as a new and free country. However, liberation of the Polish nation called not only for the establishment of a new government and administration, but also for a new education system. As a result, archaeology emerged as a separate academic discipline, and was included in the educational offerings of the most important Polish universities, such as University of Poznań (Abramowicz 1991: 105-106) where Józef Kostrzewski³, a professor of pre-history known as a founder and father of archaeology in Greater Poland, taught.

After WWI, there were many different ways of communication between archaeology and society, i.e. due to Józef Kostrzewski's involvement, such as the revival of periodicals and the conduction of excavations on a very important and perfectly preserved site at Biskupin⁴. Besides wide interest in prehistoric museum exhibitions, Poles also paid great attention to archaeological periodicals, such as *Z otchłani wieków*, and short press notes and announcements spread by radio broadcasts regarding the newest findings and their interpretations. It is worth pointing out that most of the excavations carried out in those times were sponsored by individuals or archaeological associations and companies. Moreover, associations'

³ Józef Kostrzewski was born in 1885 under Prussian domination. Through his buoyant activity he managed to have a great impact on archaeology not only in its academic facet but, more importantly, also on society, through communication and open dialogue. He was engaging himself in many dissemination activities of archaeology, which are represented through a great amount of published texts, as well as in reviving periodicals such as *Przegląd Archeologiczny* or *Z otchłani wieków*. His many public appearances, as well as his participation in loads of conferences and organization of innumerable excavations, show that Kostrzewski must have understood that the power of success and persuasion exists in public, not in a closed academic milieu. He also made his mark on the pages of history by introducing many new means of scientific researches, such as movies or the utilization of belletristic literature, which he seemed to take as marginal activities, yet nowadays they are taken very seriously by such first-class archaeologists as C. Holtorf or M. Shanks (Kobiałka 2014).

⁴ Biskupin is an archaeological site, discovered in 1933 by Walenty Szwejcer, a local teacher who reported it to Kostrzewski. Since 1934 the site was excavated by Poznań University's employees. Due to the extremely well preserved constructions of a wooden settlement, Biskupin soon became very famous and began to attract lots of interest which was strengthened by the life-size reconstructions of the buildings.

plenary meetings played an important role in serving as a space for nationwide discussion between professional archaeologists and society (Abramowicz 1991: 118).

Archaeology of interwar was deeply influenced by politics, especially in times closely preceding the WWII outbreak. All of the interpretative power of German and Polish archaeologists was focused on the ethnogenesis of Slavs and Germans, both of which ancient ethnics were argued to inhabit disputed, border territories. At the threshold of WWII, Polish archaeology flourished, only to come to an end with immediate German aggression, justified by, among other things, archaeological 'proofs' regarding German rights to the Polish lands (Kristiansen 1993).

After WWII

The end of WWII brought a new political system in Poland imposed by the Soviets, namely communism. In the very first decade after WWII, Polish archaeology was dominated by the cultural-historical paradigm, with the general assumption that scientists actually have the ability to reconstruct the past as it was. Thus, researches on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs continued. Further introduction of socialism had a huge impact on the ways of perceiving archaeology and the past. Due to an overriding philosophy introduced with communism, humans became a centre of all scientific interpretations.

Numerous excavations were carried out in the 1950s in the cities ruined during the war where destruction was so severe that complete reconstruction was necessary. On the other hand, the excavations which took place in smaller cities and their vicinity served the economic activation of local communities. Archaeological research programs contributed to the creation of place and space for dialogue between archaeologists and people working on excavations. This

is also a period during which numerous archaeological rescue excavations were conducted, crucial in preparing great, national economic investments. What should definitely be mentioned is the fact that archaeology was a discipline for the overriding communist ideology, due to its clear underlining of a materialistic approach to life (through examination of material residues of past societies). This particular feature of archaeology was also echoed in museum exhibitions, where past materialism was to be staged (Abramowicz 1991: 158-159).

The next decade brought an extremely important date for the Polish nation, namely the 1000th anniversary of the national baptism and the establishment of the Polish state in 966 AD, both by prince Mieszko I, the first ruler. In both cases, archaeology played an incredibly important role yielding inevitable proofs of past times. In conjunction with the national anniversaries, many so-called Millennium Researches were undertaken, all focusing on the very beginnings of the Polish state and Christianity. These huge hitherto Poland undertakings embraced excavations in the most important sites connected to the beginnings of the country, such as Poznań, Gniezno, Szczecin, Płock, and Gdańsk. The process of unearthing itself needed a workforce of local labour, favouring the formation of a special relation between field archaeologists and local communities. Local participants of those excavations became much more interested in the examined past than before. Participating in fieldwork activities and helping or simply inviting archaeological teams over gave local communities the opportunity to express their national feelings and learn something about their own past from the very source (Maciaszewski 2011). The following decades tarnished this special relation created during the Millennium Researches between society and archaeology. After the millennium program had passed, archaeologists began to shut themselves off, into their own professional milieu, and ignoring society and their needs. Such behaviour had a very strong impact on the public

perception of archaeology and, unfortunately, through this lens, also of the national past. People, who were totally engaged in excavations during the Millennium Researches era, felt betrayed by the lack of interest from the side of professionals, who abandoned them and excluded them because of the fulfillment of their own professional ego (Abramowicz 1991: 192-193). Such behaviour of archaeologists is commonly referred to as enclosing archaeology in an ivory tower (i.e. Kristiansen 1993, Marciniak 2011: 187-189). Nevertheless, the 1970s and 1980s were times of development for archaeological discourse. The decades just before the fall of communism in Eastern Europe were times when nations of the socialistic block tried to distinguish themselves from the soviet domination. For example, the then newly established museums, such as Dymarki Świętokrzyskie (since 1967) in south Poland, underlined national traditions and serving at the same time as touristic attractions and sources of entertainment. Such actions supported public educational purposes and positively affected the relation between society and archaeology (Czopek 2000).

After 1989 – Changes

The last decades, starting from 1989 and up until the present day, are times of great changes in Poland as archaeologists had to make their way through a new political and economic system. Due to the socioeconomic shift after 1989, the well-established communist-run system funding scientific researches collapsed, which resulted in the reduction of state sponsorship of numerous university departments. Moreover, developers began to take full responsibility for funding rescue excavations held in place of future construction sites. As a result, archaeologists had to focus also on legal matters and conservation tasks. The socioeconomic transition contributed to the establishment of new university departments which offered education in archaeology and resulted

in an enormous number of well-educated students which exceeded available work places. On the other hand, change in the common archaeological *lingua franca* from German towards English allowed better communication with the broader archaeological community (Marciniak 2011: 183-184).

Socioeconomic changes led to an intensification of infrastructural development which threatened numerous archaeological sites. General awareness of the need to preserve cultural heritage resulted in a great amount of rescue excavations. The biggest projects, i.e. highways and expressways improving trans-country connection, were connected with construction of the pipeline which was to transport gas from Siberia to Western Europe. Those huge projects needed a large number of archaeological research executors, which combined with the socioeconomic transition of the state led to establishment of private companies specialized in rescue excavations (Marciniak 2011: 185).

Over the last two decades, a change in the public use of archaeology has become visible. It shifted from being politically used, serving nationalist agendas by using archaeological heritage as a collective memory tool, to being focused on society as stakeholder of the past (Marciniak 2011: 191-192). After 1989, the shift from communist towards a free-market economy and expanded privatization caused commercialization. This is visible not only in the deterioration of professional archaeological excavation conductors into many of the small private companies, it is best exemplified in the expansion of public outreach programs, which are mass audience-oriented. Archaeological festivals, picnics, events, fetes, historical reconstruction activities, and archaeological workshops of experimental archaeology are activities that serve educational and public large-scale goals and additionally let local communities earn their living. Another good example is open-air museums and reconstruction sites which often host such happenings and work

year round on a daily basis as touristic attractions. These are the most influential ways in which archaeology has been presented to society for the past 25 years.

Archaeological museums

Museums are commonly known to be places where material culture is presented to the public. In the case of archaeological museums, they offer exhibitions comprised of only selected pieces, possibly the best preserved ones, which were excavated during archaeological research (Brzeziński 1998: 148). In Poland, any archaeological finding belongs to the state, so museums, as state institutions, are obligated to store all of the findings. This means that only a tiny portion of all artefacts stored are presented to the public. Archaeological museums are located in almost every big Polish city and archaeological exhibitions may be found in regional museums as well. Presently there is a visible tendency to attract visitors through rearranging already existing exhibitions in a modern way. For example, the Archaeological Museum of Poznań decided to give up traditional information boards in favour of audio guides for individual visitors and guides for groups. This decision was supported by the fact that a contemporary visitor is more open to sound and image than to written information (Brzeziński 1998: 150-151). Additionally, museums offer courses which are rather practical, during which participants learn, for example, how to make clay vessels (Brzeziński 1998: 151). Museums are very important national institutions, responsible for public outreach and knowledge dissemination. It goes without saying that the old-fashioned idea of monuments behind the glass has to be modernized in order to attract viewers. Therefore, many museums carry out digitization of their resources and exhibitions, as well as many public outreach programs in order to address their present audience's preferences for museum stock presentation (Chowaniec and Tavernise 2012).

Archaeological festivals

Archaeological festivals are outdoor events, organized for a mass audience, where different past arts and crafts are presented. According to M. Pawleta (2011), they are a part of 'the past industry'. In his reflections he refers to 'The Heritage Industry' by R. Hewison (1987) in which the author describes the process of adaptation of heritage for tourism, characteristic for Great Britain at the end of the 20th century. The process, motivated by social nostalgia and political factors, is, according to Hewison, rather negative. For Pawleta, however, the 'past industry' idea reflects contemporary European societies and ways of accommodating places of the past to the needs of the present, which has a positive social impact.

Archaeological festivals were, are, and surely will be the most massive undertakings in the area of popularization of archaeology. These events usually take place once a year, attracting public attention, even though their offer is mostly addressed to children. The best-known Polish archaeological festival, a must-see for every child, is the one that takes place every year in September in Biskupin, a tradition that dates back to 1994.

Archaeological and historical festivals help their visitors become familiar with some fractions of the past. They serve the purpose of learning through fun, of which the second part is most surely achieved. School and family trips give the opportunity to get in touch with the past to children and young people who seem to be the main beneficiaries of such festivals. A very important part of archaeological festivals is presentations of ancient arts and crafts, which may be examined in terms of experimental archaeology for the public. Experimental archaeology is one of the means of archaeology popularization that is regarded as scientific, even academic. During such workshops visitors are able to learn how to make flint weapons and pottery. There are, however, also larger projects, such as house building and village building, or construction of means of

transport, such as boats and carriages. Workshop participants can later test hand-made objects in real life. Experimental archaeology is believed to help better understand past human behaviour (Coles 1977; Bakas 2014; Brzeziński 2001; Migal and Barska 2003). The first archaeological festival in Biskupin, back in 1994, was based on experiment performances, simultaneously carried out by 200 people in order to serve nearly 40,000 visitors. Its undeniable success contributed to eager creation of similar events.

Another example, having now a very wide, international range of visitors is the Vikings and Slavs Festival held in Wolin. Besides workshops or presentations of everyday life in the past, it includes a very big reconstruction of an early medieval battle which attracts crowds⁵. The *Dymarki Świętokrzyskie*⁶ festival is another example. The event takes place on an archaeological site where reconstructed buildings, characteristic for the region, are located. All reconstructions were built using ancient techniques, which is frequently pointed out as an advantage in terms of doing experimental archaeology.

Nevertheless, present processes regarding heritage and its social display are also easy to study through the lens of the rules of the market. They refer to commercialization and 'commodification' of heritage, which certainly leads towards creation of social approaches to the past (Pawleta 2011: 10). Archaeological festivals play a significant role in contemporary society, being linked to ludic, entertainment and commercial culture, which seems to be an answer to contemporary social needs. Theoretical approaches to these phenomena oscillate between their educational and science popularization values. Education at any level, from primary schools to Third Age Universities, is widely believed to be crucial in terms of engaging the public and disseminating the

⁵ See more: <http://www.jomsborg-vineta.com/xviii-festiwal-s%C5%82owian-i-wiking%C3%B3w.html> [24.04.2015]

⁶ See more: <http://www.dymarki.pl/> [24.04.2015]

conviction about the shared responsibility to preserve the mutual past (Brzeziński 2001).

However, archaeological festivals are facing criticism too. It is questioned whether archaeological festivals actually serve the purpose of social education. In fact, festival organizers pay much attention to profits, overlooking spatio-temporal consistency of the event, which is, amongst other common misinterpretations, regarded as the main disadvantage of festivals in general (Brzeziński 2000; Dominiak 2004; Pawleta 2011). The merchandise surrounding the events, offered on souvenir stalls and via gastronomic infrastructure, is used as a channel for commercial undertakings, helping sponsors market their names and make people aware of their brand.

To sum up, commercialization, despite of its faults, plays an important role in archaeological festivals, as it meets the demands of the contemporary society looking for entertainment more than knowledge (Pawleta 2012a; Szalbot 2010). Archaeological festivals are often, like in the Biskupin case, a quite important source of income for local communities, so, in order to increase their income, they need to play by the rules of the market and be able to stand on competitive touristic offers of the region.

Historical re-enactment

Historical re-enactment may be defined as an activity which serves visual presentation of the past (i.e. either specific events, such as battles, or scenes from everyday life). Re-enactments are based on scientific knowledge about the presented period. Such events are prepared in order to amuse and educate their public, being mostly hobby activities, able to serve scientific research. Re-enactors believe that every effort must deliver presentation of the reconstructed period in the most thorough possible way (Bogacki 2010; Rojek 2009).

M. Bogacki (2006) divides historical re-enactment into historical battle reconstructions and performances of everyday life. However, most of the battle reconstructions are accompanied by performances of everyday life from the epoch in order to create a more 'real' arrangement. Thus, such a division seems, in my opinion, quite artificial, serving only classification needs. People taking active part in re-enactment performances are mainly members of associations such as 'Centrum Słowian i Wikingów Wolin-Jómsborg-Vineta'⁷ or 'Polskie Stowarzyszenie Walk Rycerskich'⁸, amongst many others.

The history of battle re-enactment in Poland is commonly said to begin with the first Grunwald battle reconstruction in 1997, but it is known, that the re-enactment movement was brought to Poland by Zygmunt Kwiatkowski, who organized a first (modern) knight tournament in 1977 (Rojek 2009: 5-6).

Even though oversights do occur, historical re-enactment performances have an educational, scientific and experimental background, and such a description will always be found in any particular event (Bogacki 2010). As such, historical re-enactment is believed to be a way of 'teaching through play' about the past, linked with entertainment and the ludic sphere of life, where sometimes economic benefits override scientific and educational values (Pawleta 2010, 2012a, 2012b). Such an approach on the part of organizers is believed to derive from cultural changes and socio-economic transformations in Poland of the last two decades (Kobiąłka 2013: 110, Marciniak 2011).

7 <http://www.jomsborg-vineta.com/> access 8.04.2015

8 <http://www.pswr.pl/> access 8.04.2015

Reconstructed and constructed archaeological sites

Most of the archaeological festivals, historical re-enactments and experimental workshops take place within surroundings that reflect living conditions of the past. Most of the Polish archaeological fetes are located in spaces created in order to offer the possibility to perform and re-enact the past. Their aim is to give spectators a glance into past ages, and possibilities to experience past conditions and empathize with the predecessors.

Reconstructions appear to be of two different kinds: they are built either in the place of the original ancient site, being faithful to the original (e.g. Biskupin⁹), or in any other place, having no archaeological origins, where the goal is to depict past ways of constructing buildings of a particular period in the surrounding area (e.g. Centrum Słowian i Wikingów Wolin-Jómsborg-Vineta¹⁰). The first example legally operates under the name of 'archaeological reserve', which corresponds with a quite strict protection of the area, where no modern building investment or any other intervention, such as ground or environment interference, is permitted. The overriding goal of archaeological reserves is to protect heritage and its natural surroundings, as well as popularize knowledge and show heritage to the public. The second example refers to archaeological parks, named also open-air museums, the main goal of which is to provide entertainment but with no exclusion to educational and scientific values (i.e. Paardekooper 2012). However, those two categories often overlap, making definite categorization not possible.

Nowadays, physical reconstructions of past settlements serve as year-round open centres of popularization of archaeological heritage, commonly put on the regional touristic map. Thanks to

9 See more: http://www.biskupin.pl/asp/pl_start.asp?typ=14&menu=298&strona=1
[11.11.2014]

10 See more: http://en.polska.pl/The_Village_of_Slavs_and_Vikings_11709.html
[24.04.2015]

that, their existence has important impact on the economy of the region (Pawleta 2012b: 373). Another very well prospering example of an archaeological reserve in Poland, besides the aforementioned Biskupin, is 'Karpacka Troja'¹¹, where visitors can find a reconstructed rampart and two gates leading to the stronghold. In the reserve, spectacles of 'living history' are also played, arranged in reconstructed dwellings. Similarly, a stronghold located in Sopot¹² is a place where reconstructions also serve as a stage for different touristic attractions. Those examples are just a drop in the sea of reconstructed archaeological sites in Poland. Open-air museums and *in situ* reconstructions are a perfect background for archaeological festivals and re-enactment performances. Reconstruction sites offer space for individual contact with presented interpretations of the past (Brzeziński 1998: 152-155). They encourage imagination by playing with the senses, which, as a whole experience, can lead spectators to the feeling of communion with the past and, as C. Holtorf calls it, to experience travel in time (2009).

Whether archaeologists like the way in which archaeological museums, open-air museums, archaeological festivals, or historical re-enactments present scientific knowledge or not, what remains is the fact that they were, are, and surely will remain in the nearest future the main means of communication of archaeology and the past with the public. It seems that society most eagerly takes part in events which, besides new knowledge and experience, provide them mainly with entertainment. This fosters the archaeo-touristic movement, attracted by the fragility of the past and the possibility to experience it. However, archaeotourism may lead to over-commercialization of heritage and have devastating consequences for archaeological sites and historical monuments. Thus, it should be organized under the aegis of sustainable development and heritage

11 See more: http://www.karpackatroja.pl/skansen_14_0.html [24.04.2015]

12 See more: <http://www.archeologia.pl/grodziskosopot/skansen.html> [24.04.2015]

protection in the first place¹³, and only followed by entertainment (see Silverman 2002; Porter, Salaazar 2004; Hoffman, Kwas, Ratkowska 2010; Abu Tayeh and Mustafa 2011; Comer, Willems 2011; Pawleta 2012b; Bracz and Cieślewicz 2013).

Seeking New Horizons: Digital Archaeology Perspectives

Modern ways of popularization of archaeology, with the emphasis on digital projects, are presently discussed in reference to the ways of interpretation, preservation and presentation of archaeological data and knowledge (i.e. Kansa et al. 2011). The dissemination of archaeological record via the Web gives relatively beneficial results, generating worldwide access to such content. Digital and virtual archaeology are two separate (regarding technological methods of implementation) sides of the coin: Digital refers to visualizations, reconstructions (2D and 3D) and digital publishing of scientific research, which may all be described as digitalization of archaeological data in order to transfer it via the Web or reproduce it with the use of computer and know-how to operate with it (see Lynch 2002; Pavidias 2007; Oberländer-Târnoveanu et al. 2008). On the other hand, virtualization of archaeology concerns creation of common content recognized within assumptions of Web 2.0. Access to such is unlimited, easy and available for anyone who is able to use a computer and the Internet. Such a contribution is possible through the development of social media platforms, blogging and mailing lists, and other commonly created content in the Web (Kansa and Deblauwe 2011; Richardson 2013).

The past few decades saw substantial development of computer devices and World Wide Web (WWW) services. It seems impossible today to imagine the public image and even the existence of institutions responsible for cultural heritage protection, promotion

¹³ <http://www.archaeological.org/pdfs/AIATourismGuidelines.pdf> [24.04.2015]

and research without the use of the internet, which is responsible for their virtual visibility¹⁴. Museums and libraries especially have recognized the need of digitalization of their collections. Their undertakings regarding the creation of common spaces for access result in wide popularization of knowledge and growing historical and archaeological awareness. Visualizations of museum collections (e.g. 3D reconstructions of single artefacts or even whole sites) help attract public attention (see: Chowaniec and Tavernise 2012). Easier to be consumed, visual communication is more efficient for the modern public and thus more likely to be chosen over traditional communication means (Boguni-Borowska and Sztompka 2012, Ogonowska 2012). But popularization of knowledge via the Internet has many methodological restrictions, such as difficulties in distinguishing reliable, scientific content among irrelevant spam information, anonymousness, information overload, and simple junk and advertisements, which provoke disinformation and misunderstandings (Kansa 2011: 1). Web 2.0, besides creating space for wide communication between archaeology and society, is also the way to support the digitalization process through popularization of its undertakings and achievements via social media.

Digital Public Archaeology

Crystallization of the so-called 'digital public archaeology'¹⁵ was possible due to the rapid development of internet technologies, which allowed formation of new opportunities for archaeologists to create space for communication with society¹⁶. Digital public archaeology

14 <http://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1205/1205.5611.pdf> [24.04.2015]

15 The term 'public archaeology' received for the first time widespread attention when Ch. R. McGimsey published *Public Archaeology* in 1972. However, the author underlined that archaeologists must cope with two audiences: their professional colleagues and the public (McGimsey 1972: xiii, after Schadla-Hall 1999: 147-148)

16 However, Dawid Kobiałka (2014) argues that engaging the public and seeking opportunities

is an answer to a rising social need for easy and unlimited access to scientific data. Archaeologists, standing in front of the challenge to digitalize their work, carry out their new duties with dignity and a scientific approach, although difficulties arise while considering the reliability of internet published information. Archaeological knowledge is believed to have a cumulative character, and creation of new theories is almost prohibited without referring to authorities (Boast and Biehl 2011: 120). This issue is widely discussed, because the overwhelming anonymity of the Internet makes all users equal and having the same rights to claim their opinions, regardless of their actual knowledge and experience (i.e. Dimitrovska 2008; Boast and Biehl 2011; Kansa and Deblauwe 2011; Richardson 2013). Nevertheless, new digital public undertakings emerge all over the world, offering the possibility for regular discussions between archaeologists and non-professionals interested in archaeology from various places on the Earth. It all fosters mutual interest and favours international collaboration (Richardson 2013).

Digital technologies, which enable digital public archaeology development, are all tools of the so-called Web 2.0 (Kansa et al. 2011). Social media services such as Facebook and Google+; blogs and microblogs such as Twitter; communities of contents, namely YouTube, Vimeo or Wikipedia and wikis, are considered useful for knowledge dissemination and communication with the public. The same applies to services where users may share their pictures and comment on them, such as Flickr and Instagram or platforms like Pinterest, which enable users to create a network of interesting subjects described or depicted on different websites. Through the content of archaeology-oriented sites, the public may take part in discussions, ask questions, seek for participation in projects, and first of all gain knowledge in their chosen direction, through individual research, not enforced through a top-down approach

of communication with people is not an answer, as many archaeologists see it, for all of the issues and problems of archaeology.

(Richardson 2013). The hypertextual¹⁷ content of archaeological social media websites lets their users move freely from one topic to another, allowing choosing those topics which happen to be the most interesting for a particular individual at a particular moment. It also fosters spreading noteworthy news and information, which may be shared through the social media so that they become visible for other users (Kansa and Deblauwe 2011). Hypertextual connections and sharing links favour self-teaching and exploring data similarly to how archaeologists explore archaeological sites.

Digital public archaeology is a great opportunity for both the public, who may actively participate in archaeological discourse, and archaeologists, who gain interest in their work, and social acceptance for conducted research. However, even though society has an easy access to archaeological content via Internet websites and social media services, still only a tiny percentage of all users is eager to contribute his/her feedback through a comment or share. Moreover, measuring the actual interest in archaeological websites, expressed in number of visits, is very complicated, and in some cases (without proper algorithm implementation) even impossible (Richardson 2013). Thus, archaeologists actually do not know exactly with whom they are dealing with as their public, or the actual range of their digital undertakings.

(Digital) Public Archaeology in Poland

Presently, digitalization of Polish national heritage is in progress (Chowaniec and Tavernise 2012). Museums are using new technologies to modernize exhibitions and digitalize their archives in order to facilitate their use. As Boast and Biehl (2011: 121) claim, the so-called 'new museums' have shifted their main goals

¹⁷ Hypertext is a word or phrase that links to other information, allowing users to move from a currently visited page to another, that refers to the word or phrase which were a link in the previous site.

from being centres of research and collecting institutions towards being educational units. A good example is the Archaeological Museum of Poznań¹⁸, which over the past few years has changed into an actual educational institution, remaining at the same time a traditional exhibition, being collection and research oriented, unit. Nonetheless, it is visible that public support, gained i.e. through active promotion on the website and social media, resulted in growth of offered attractions and events undertaken with cooperation from other heritage institutions from the city of Poznań (e.g. ICHOT¹⁹ or Genius Loci Reserve²⁰). Together they create attractive events which are organized in order to present heritage from many, sometimes surprising and unpredictable, perspectives (e.g. evening/night guided tours, city games, quests, themed tours, or sightseeing involving the senses of touch, hearing or smell). Similarly, such events and touristic offers are created in other Polish cities, such as Wrocław, Kraków or Warszawa. Kraków, the former capital of Poland, has many archaeological and touristic attractions. Amongst them, there is an archaeological exhibition worth-seeing located under the main market of Kraków, where many modern solutions are used. Warszawa, which is the present capital of Poland, also offers the possibility to see exhibitions in the district of Wilanów.

There are too many different places where people can see archaeology oriented exhibitions and participate in events to count them here. Those activities are located in different places, showing various things, but have the same general and technological assumptions. Most of them show quite well the proper understanding

18 <http://www.muzarp.poznan.pl/> [24.04.2015]

19 <http://bramapoznania.pl/> [24.04.2015] ICHOT Brama Poznania is an interactive center. Its exhibition tells the story of the Polish state from the early medieval beginnings until present days.

20 <http://www.muzarp.poznan.pl/rezerwat/> [24.04.2015] Genius Loci Reserve is a sub-institution of the Archaeological Museum of Poznań. It offers its visitors the possibility to see the reconstruction of an archaeological dig with a profile of early medieval city wall, very characteristic for the early ages of Polish state settlements, accompanied with a very well-told story about the archaeology of Poznań and the beginnings of the Polish state.

and recognition of social demands regarding ways of presentation of the past. As such, the past is expected to be presented in interesting, sometimes surprising and mysterious, ways. New propositions of well-established institutions are appreciated because the public is used to believing that the knowledge transmitted by them is trustworthy. Digital technologies are welcomed as helpful tools in presenting heritage to the public during physical (real) events. Cultural and heritage institutions eagerly use social media, such as Facebook, and regularly update their websites in order to provide their audience with up-to-date information regarding organized events.

Digital public archaeology is mainly used as an additional and helpful tool in promoting and advertising public archaeology projects. Nevertheless, many new undertakings emerge, i.e. virtual-only projects, but being very new ideas, they are rather addressed to young people. For example, there is a brand new Polish archaeological blog, established by PhD students of archaeology at Adam Mickiewicz University, called *The biography of archaeology*²¹. This blog was created to be a virtual space for archaeologists (especially young) to share new perspectives and individual researches, a space for exchanging information and discussion between professionals and non-professionals who are simply interested in archaeology. Time will show whether interest in archaeological texts published there will grow further to include the broader public and not only archaeology professionals (as is the case currently). Such activities are not very common in Poland. Websites are commonly owned by institutions aiming to gain virtual visibility and additional advertisement. Virtual-only projects are probably not so widely known, but this is very difficult to measure.

A very interesting new venture will be carried out this year on the 24th of July, having a virtual-only character. The Polish edition of

²¹ <http://biografiaarcheologii.pl/> [24.04.2015]

the Day of Archaeology is organized by archaeologists from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Outreach of this undertaking is yet to be known, but the initiative itself is well established in the present schema of digital knowledge dissemination and public engagement in science. The Polish Day of Archaeology follows a British²² version of the event, which will be held this year for the fifth time. The Day of Archaeology is an annual, 24-hour virtual event which embraces adding posts on the website. Those posts must serve public insight in archaeologist profession, archaeology and social understanding of the past. The Day of Archaeology in Poland is a completely new undertaking, but may turn out into a very interesting large scale event.

On the other hand, social media services are overloaded with numerous fan pages dedicated to archaeological subjects. Any institution respecting social media's impact on contemporary society runs its own fan page. Moreover, people interested in archaeology also have their own fan pages, create virtual events, and so on. Those sites, mainly created on Facebook, are run by very different authors, but careful examination of published content shows that they mostly share the same or very similar information. Thus, they actually are an extension to information published in other media and virtual services.

Social media is very new but incredibly influential. However, the communities using them are, in their vast majority, only passive users, while only a tiny percentage of all users are considered as actually active ones. Thus, the real impact of archaeological fan pages on the public of social media is definitely very high but, on the other hand, extremely difficult to measure and absolutely impossible to control. Because of that, incorrect but extremely surprising, mysterious and interesting information is very often published, drawing great attention. Social media is a powerful

²² www.dayofarchaeology.com [24.04.2015]

tool in spreading information which can be passed very quickly to the worldwide audience. Nevertheless, people tend to doubt unbelievable messages found via the internet much more often than if they see the same one on the pages of a newspaper or a book. And this is good, because curiosity and doubtfulness makes people look for the right answers, however, most often on the internet.

The projects presented above are just a drop in the sea of digital public archaeology undertakings of archaeologists and heritage and cultural institutions in Poland. They may serve as a presentation of general trends in using the Internet to communicate with the public. The major concern, however, is how to measure the actual feedback to those projects, and the general interest in such undertakings. As virtual reality becomes more and more important, sometimes even replacing reality, internet is becoming the most sufficient means of dissemination of archaeological knowledge. People are also more eager to express their opinion under the mask of internet anonymity, so archaeologists should definitely take closer notice of what is published via the internet in order to get the most desired feedback for their work.

Conclusions

History and its events becomes a general, but very influential background for the present needs of archaeological knowledge and how it should be presented. Looking back to the last century, it is evident that different political and economic occurrences had great impact on national recognition and understanding of the past. Archaeologists have always tried to show results of their work in museums, and later on in archaeological parks and reserves. During the past few decades, as entertainment became more important, archaeology also had to learn how to become an

attractive touristic product, but with respect to scientific values. And so fetes, picnics, festivals and historical re-enactments began to draw attention of a mass audience, giving people the possibility to experience the past, empathize with their predecessors and learn through play. Presently archaeologists are looking to open a dialogue with society about the past and archaeology. For this purpose, they begin to use the internet and its tools, such as social media, websites with commonly created content, blogs, or regular websites, where everyone can speak their minds. Internet seems to become more and more important in presenting everyday life so, in order to engage the public in discussion about archaeology and the past, it must be taken into account very seriously.

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