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Public Archaeology in Poland: State of the Art and Future Directions

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This article aims to conceptualize the present state of public archaeology in Poland, which has recently become topical in archaeological practice. The author defines public archaeology and discusses the historical background of such activities in the context of the specific traditions of Polish archaeology. He then describes the main forms of outreach activities undertaken by archaeologists in Poland and presents community-oriented initiatives that go beyond the education of the general public about the past and strive to engage local communities in activities focused on archaeology and archaeological heritage. He concludes by outlining some directions that this sub-discipline may adopt in future.

Keywords: public archaeology, Poland, dissemination, education, community-oriented projects

Introduction

Public archaeology is a broad term encompassing, among others, activities aimed at presenting archaeology to society, including it into the social discourse, and disseminating its findings in the public sphere. The increasing interest in archaeological education and public outreach, witnessed by Poland as elsewhere in the last decades, seems to confirm that it has become highly topical. It is difficult, however, to define precisely what public archaeology means, what it does, and to codify its disciplinary boundaries (Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez, 2015: 195–96). It can be broadly defined as 'any practice in which "the public" (however defined) and archaeology (as an academic discipline) intersect. Put another way, public archaeology is any endeavour in which archaeologists interact with the public, and any research (practical or theoretical) that examines or analyses the public dimensions of doing archaeology' (McDavid & Brock, 2015: 165).

The necessity to undertake certain public-oriented actions initially arose from a conflict of interest between archaeologists and society. It concerned the protection of archaeological heritage and sharing it with the wider public, or the justification of the need for archaeological research. The term public archaeology was first used by Charles McGimsey (1972). He claimed that every scientific form of archaeological activity has a public character because it affects heritage, which is in the public domain. Consequently, archaeological heritage is a common property of society, not the exclusive domain of archaeologists. It can also fulfil important social functions and people can use it in numerous ways and for various purposes (e.g. Smith, 2006).

Public archaeology relates to the wider world of politics, ethics, social questions, human rights, education, management, or economics (e.g. Little, 2002; Merriman, 2004a; Schadla-Hall, 2006; Matsuda & Okamura, 2011a; Skeates et al., 2012; Moshenska, 2017a). Today, the most

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prominent approaches addressing these domains include activism, multivocality, collaboration, and community engagement (McDavid & Brock, 2015). Importantly, it also emphasizes that archaeology, as a kind of social and cultural practice, constitutes an integral element of the present day-concerns with which it is engaged. It is a type of public activity, too, and archaeologists draw on public funds to conduct their investigations. Public archaeology also includes the ways of presenting the achievements of archaeology to the public at large, of interpreting the past and its relics, as well as other pursuits directed towards public understanding of the work of archaeologists; conversely, it includes the involvement of the wider public in archaeological activities.

Recently, various efforts have been made to incorporate public archaeology into local archaeologies, as attested in different parts of the world, including countries of central and eastern Europe. Despite this, public archaeology still remains perceived as peripheral to many archaeological endeavours outside the English-speaking world (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011a; Richardson & Almansa Sánchez, 2015), a state of affairs also evidenced in Poland.

Although there is a widespread awareness among Polish archaeologists of the necessity to conduct public-oriented activities, they are sometimes reluctant to consider them as relevant and as important as other domains of archaeology. It caused a kind of inertia and consequently reduced their understanding of public archaeology as only referring to education and outreach. I argue here that outreach activities are fundamental but not the sole undertakings in the domain of public archaeology (Kajda & Kobiałka, 2018: 79). There is an urgent need to expand its meaning and practice in order to frame relations between archaeologists and the public at large, to conduct community-oriented activities, and to redefine the present role of the discipline.

The Background to Public Archaeology Initiatives in Poland

Although numerous archaeological projects disseminating and educating archaeology to a wider public have become an integral element of archaeological practice in Poland, public archaeology as a concept has not yet fully emerged. This situation is complicated by the fact that public archaeology is still not considered by many professionals as a legitimate subject within archaeology, as archaeology in Poland has followed a trajectory that diverges from that of other countries and retained specific characteristics influenced by particular historical and political circumstances (Marciniak, 2015: 49). For a long time, archaeology was regarded in Poland as a purely scientific discipline and archaeologists found themselves in ivory towers, satisfied with academically sanctioned positions. Thus, they were exempt from any kind of public engagement; the general public was not thought to be a reliable partner, as archaeologists regarded themselves as the sole guardians of the archaeological heritage. This situation was further fossilized by the fact that archaeology was fully founded by the state and served its goals (Marciniak, 2015: 50). In this respect, Poland is not exceptional, as such a course of events can be observed in many countries in central and eastern Europe where the culture-historical paradigm was dominant (e.g. Piślewska, 2015: 35). These factors still mean that public archaeology in Poland differs from its counterpart in Anglophone countries, where it has become an integral part of archaeology long ago and is now an accepted topic of academic study and practice (Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez, 2015: 196).

Fortunately, the situation is slowly changing in Poland, and the growing interest in public archaeology activities is noticeable. It is clearly evident by the increasing number of publications that

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cover aspects such as the promulgation of archaeological heritage and the discipline itself to the public (Chowaniec & Więckowski, 2012; Chowaniec, 2017); open-air museums (Gancarski, 2012); archaeological fairs and open-air events (Nowaczyk, 2007; Pawleta, 2017); museum education (Wrzesiński & Wyrwa, 2010); historical re-enactment (Bogacki, 2008; Olechnicki & Szlendak, 2020); the commercialization of archaeology and archaeological heritage (Pawleta, 2011); archaeological tourism (Werczyński, 2012; Pawleta, 2019); the social perception of the past (Pawleta, 2016; Kajda et al., 2018); and some community-oriented activities undertaken by archaeologists (Kajda & Kostyrko, 2016).

The factors that have significantly contributed to the way archaeology has been practised in Poland and given rise to the development of initiatives located within public archaeology were conditioned by specific circumstances within and without the discipline. The first of these was the changing political and socio-economic reality in post-1989 Poland, after the social revolution and the fall of the Iron Curtain in eastern Europe; in short, the collapse of the hierarchical system and the rapid emergence of the 'neoliberal' approach to archaeology. This new approach can be defined as a system in which the market is the primary catalyst for research (Marciniak, 2011: 182). The previously existing solid system of state sponsorship and the high status of scientists in the communist-run country collapsed, partly as a result of shrinking government funding for science (Kobyliński, 2002: 421; Marciniak, 2011: 183). This also led to a fundamental shift in the understanding of archaeological matters from a purely academic domain to a recognition of the cultural and social dimensions of archaeological sites and objects (Marciniak, 2015: 51).

Second, the system in which the market is the primary catalyst for research, that is a shift towards a free-market economy and consumer culture that expanded privatization, caused the commercialization of archaeology and heritage. This has led to the development of the heritage industry, as well as to an increased awareness of the need to conduct archaeology in a publicly and financially accountable manner. Moreover, large-scale infrastructure developments and the construction of a road network took place in Poland in the mid-1990s. This not only created opportunities for research and organizational challenges for archaeologists at an unprecedented scale, but also triggered the commercialization of archaeological research and the necessity to justify—for instance through public outreach programmes—the significance and value of archaeological work funded by developers or through public finances (Kobyliński, 2002: 421). As a result, the past and its relics have been increasingly treated as a 'resource' used for various purposes, and heritage as a deliberately created product, serving the satisfaction of consumer needs, including entertainment. In effect, nowadays commercial initiatives often play an important role in transmitting knowledge of the past in an attractive way and creating images of the past that enable people to access it widely (Pawleta, 2016: 124–30).

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008 had a considerable influence on the state of archaeology, requiring it to justify its usefulness and social value. Although it was more noticeable in European countries that felt the impact of the GFC to a significantly greater degree, this development also had an impact on Poland. Hence, numerous initiatives connected with public archaeology and community/inclusive archaeology were set up. Such ways of practising archaeology became most desirable for two reasons. First, they directly engaged society in learning about and discovering the past, and, second, they showed the practical side of archaeology as a discipline, playing a significant role in society from the perspective of

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the problems and challenges that the modern world is facing (Kajda & Kobiałka, 2017: 29).

These developments were accompanied by, and codified in, legal international and national instruments related to the protection, management, and access to cultural heritage. For instance, the Malta Convention ratified by Poland in 1996 requires each party 'to promote public access to important elements of its archaeological heritage, especially sites, and encourage the display to the public of suitable selections of archaeological objects' (Article 9.ii). Moreover, formal codes of practice were developed by different associations for archaeologists to follow when making ethical decisions and setting out their responsibility to society. For instance, in 'The Code of Conduct of Members of the Association of Polish Archaeologists', adopted in 2010, it is specified that members are required to make their work widely accessible and to provide appropriate information about the results of archaeological projects using all possible media. Furthermore, archaeologists should engage with local communities (Marciniak, 2015: 56). This code refers to aspects clearly related to public archaeology as a practice, yet it is not a binding by-law, and failing to comply with it has no serious repercussion.

A profound change in attitudes towards the past among Poles took place after the social revolution of 1989. Such a change has led not only to a revision of expectations and attitudes towards the past but also to a transformation in archaeologists' priorities regarding their aims and methods in education and dissemination of knowledge of the past. The new approaches include interrelated aspects, namely the increasing importance of memory in public life; the democratization of the past; the privatization of the past, based on creating its personalized visions; the conviction that direct contact with the past is possible through personal and sensuous experience; the commercialization of the past and cultural heritage, which is linked to the transformation of the essence of the past into a marketable product in the form of goods, services, or experiences; as well as a quest for identity and new forms of spirituality (e.g. Szpociński, 2010; Pawleta, 2016: 31–77).

The changes listed here have been further strengthened by the development of post-processual archaeology which have stressed that archaeological practice and interpretation are embedded in contemporary ideologies. Hence, there are various approaches to the understanding of heritage and the past, including those of non-professionals. Consequently, 'archaeology would no longer be an isolated and incomprehensible scientific discipline housed in "ivory towers", but a form of cultural activity participating in public life' (Kobyliński, 2002: 424). All these elements led to profound transformations in the organization of research and altered our understanding of the role of archaeology in the present-day world. Today, archaeologists find themselves in a new market reality; it has increased the pressure to stop serving only the community of scholars and to explicitly demonstrate archaeology's value for contemporary society. Archaeologists realized that intellectual introversion was no longer acceptable. This can be observed in public or community archaeology initiatives. The public is increasingly being recognized as a stakeholder in the decision-making processes regarding heritage management and plays an important role as a consumer of the products of archaeological activities (Marciniak, 2011: 186).

Outreach Projects: Presenting Archaeological Heritage and Archaeology to the Wider Public

The dissemination of archaeological research aims to ensure that its results are

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available to all interested parties, professional and non-professional. Therefore, it is an important activity in public archaeology and the prime element of the professional responsibility of archaeologists (Deskur, 2009: 284). Archaeological educational and outreach projects have a long lineage in Poland (Piślewska, 2015: 40–53; Chowaniec, 2017: 64–116). Today, archaeological reconstructions feature among the most popular initiatives (Gancarski, 2012; Pawleta, 2016: 185–250; Chowaniec, 2017: 222–29). They aim to recreate the past through full-sized reconstructions in open-air museums, reserves, archaeological parks, etc. Over the last few years, the process of revitalizing existing archaeological reserves and constructing new archaeological parks, replicas of prehistoric strongholds or settlements, mostly medieval or prehistoric, has grown in Poland and across Europe (Paardekooper, 2012). This results from the opportunity to use the European Union's structural funds designed to support the development of regional tourism. There are two basic forms, namely archaeological reserves and parks. An archaeological reserve is a faithful reconstruction, developed on an excavation site (e.g. the reserve in Ostrów Lednicki, a medieval fortified settlement on an island in Lake Lednica), and its fundamental role is to protect the archaeological heritage and open it to the public. An archaeological park is a reconstruction of buildings or a presentation of construction techniques used in a given historical period or region and that is why it can be located anywhere (e.g. the 'VI Ploughmen Settlement' in Bochnia). It is designed primarily to entertain, recreate, and educate. Reconstructions and reserves form an ideal backdrop for the recreation of past events by archaeologists or re-enactors during archaeological fairs, historical re-enactments, and living history lessons.

Without doubt, reconstructions are currently one of the most important ways to raise awareness of the past and shape knowledge about it. They help preserve archaeological heritage, make it accessible, serve scientific research, educate the public, and recreate, entertain, and boost local tourism (see Paardekooper, 2012). Yet, they have been abundantly criticized. First, building numerous reconstructions of hillforts goes against current conservation practice as they are often created *in situ* on archaeological sites. Moreover, the credibility and accuracy of many reconstructions are debatable: their components are often stylized and stereotyped for effect. There are also issues concerning the use of modern materials and equipment in the process of construction, which means that the buildings are often simply not the best representations of past remains. A significant element of this criticism concerns questions of authenticity and credibility, and the unlimited combination of buildings without consideration of their original spatial and temporal context. Moreover, archaeological sites are fragile resources, and inadequate site management, or inappropriate or uncontrolled exploitation, can result in deterioration or even destruction of the site and its related social, historical, or educational potential for tourism (Byszewska, 2011).

Archaeological fairs are a further fundamental aspect of archaeological outreach initiatives (Pawleta, 2016: 251–316; Chowaniec, 2017: 238–53). These are outdoor events, intended to raise awareness and educate people about the past, and usually take place at locations that have some connection to the past (e.g. in open-air museums). During the festivals, various facets of the past, material, social, or spiritual, are presented (Chowaniec, 2017: 238–53). They may include demonstrations of different crafts, e.g. pottery making or flint knapping, scenes from everyday life, warriors in battle, folk music concerts, etc. The demonstrations are given by archaeologists

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or museum workers wearing period costume, and by historical re-enactors (Nowaczyk, 2007). One of the largest and most famous events of this type in Poland, and indeed Europe, is the annual festival in Biskupin, visited by tens of thousands of tourists. Other examples include 'The Slav and Viking Festival' in Wolin, or 'The Slavs and Cistercians Festival' in Ląd nad Wartą. Fairs attract many visitors, indicating that the past can be presented in a way that contemporary audiences find alluring and engaging.

Archaeological fairs are closely related to historical re-enactment. It is understood here as a collection of 'activities based on the visual presentation of various areas of life in the past by people in costumes using objects relating to the past (replicas or occasionally reconstructions) for a given period, even relatively original artefacts' (Bogacki, 2008: 222). It involves staging past events based on historical or archaeological facts. It is not a truthful recreation of the past, but this 'recalled past', which oscillates between emotions and the visitors' interaction, creates an illusion in which viewers are in direct contact with the past. The need to preserve 'historical authenticity', the accuracy of the presentations (in artefacts, in a screenplay), in relation to the current level of knowledge is equally emphasized (Bogacki, 2008: 236). There are two predominant types of historical re-enactment, namely battle re-enactment and living history recreating aspects of everyday life (Bogacki, 2008: 227). The character of the re-enactment movement is spontaneous, grassroots, and managed by groups and independent societies (often in cooperation with historians, archaeologists, or local cultural institutions). Re-enactment is an increasingly popular pastime, and for many re-enactors it is even a way of life and sometimes a way of making a living. Re-enactors form their own subculture based on a positive valorization of the past, usually of their own nation. In Poland, with respect to the Early Middle Ages, ethnic identification with pre-Christian Slavs is quite common. Viking re-enactment is also present in Poland (Gardeła, 2016).

Although historical re-enactment and archaeological fairs constitute a new and attractive way of delivering knowledge of the past to a wider public, they have been criticized frequently for their lack of scientific rigour, credibility, accuracy, the poor quality of many presentations, and a growing uniformity and standardization (e.g. Nowaczyk, 2007: 507). It has also been argued that the accepted formula for presenting knowledge of the past often favours spectacle and attractiveness at the expense of scientific reliability (e.g. Dominiak, 2004: 85–86). This results in the loss of deep intellectual engagement in favour of shallow information transfer through play with no guarantee of improved understanding (Pawleta, 2016: 313–15). Of crucial concern is the issue of authenticity, conceived of as both proximity to a past material reality and as a subjective experience of the past (Brædder et al., 2017: 185). There lies a paradox at the heart of the imperative of authenticity guiding re-enactment efforts. Re-enactors usually seek to create, experience, and negotiate authenticity in the very process of imitating and embodying pasts, yet all kinds of recreations, re-stagings, and replicas are artificial, unoriginal, and arranged; they are merely simulacra of the past (Baraniecka-Olszewska, 2018: 121–47). Moreover, the unpretentious and commercial nature of re-enactments is frequently criticized by scholars for containing elements of entertainment that have little to do with recreating the past, instead being merely aimed at making a profit (e.g. Karwacki, 2012: 125–30). Historical re-enactment is not limited to a particular age or topic, as the spectacular nature of

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such endeavours can lend itself to many types of combinations: the early Slavs and Vikings, Romans and Celts, Slavic warriors, or Teutonic Knights, all of them can meet at the same time and in the same place. This unintentional syncretism has an obvious entertainment quality but may also be quite confusing (Olechnicki & Szlendak, 2020: 15).

More serious concerns relate to the image of the past that re-enactment creates, and these need to be addressed. Unchallenged and often stereotyped images of the past have a considerable potential to influence peoples' knowledge of their local and national history, as well as the general human condition and social relations. Archaeological festivals, and especially historical re-enactment, often project a heroic warrior ideal and a one-dimensional image of gender roles in the past. It results in the re-enactment of battles or staging of battles as the dominant element of almost every spectacle. This 'idealization' and 'glamourization' of war can be harmful in terms of education and may promote violence and trivialize war atrocities and the 'banality' of evil that every war generates (Baraniecka-Olszewska, 2018: 265–68). Equally dangerous is the glorification of past male dominance and the promotion of gender inequalities (Baraniecka-Olszewska, 2018: 241; Olechnicki & Szlendak, 2020: 4). Moreover, some re-enactment groups are linked to right-wing extremists and overlap with far-right elements of Neo-paganism, and they use open-air museums or archaeological festivals as meeting places (Reichenbach & Hoppadietz, 2019: 217, 229). The swastika sign is quite popular among Polish re-enactors as their logo, especially an eight-armed, double swastika called a *kolovrat*, that is believed to be an ancient Slavic pagan symbol (Reichenbach & Hoppadietz, 2019: 217, 229). Such ultra-nationalistic connotations are alarming today, when Europe is under siege from populist and far-right movements that often use the past to legitimize their ideologies (Niklasson & Hølleland, 2018).

Archaeological museums and exhibitions are further important means of promoting the archaeological heritage in Poland. Today, significant changes have taken place in this domain, brought about by market demands, visitor expectation, and the need for museums to be competitive and better fulfil their mission in society. Although exhibitions in archaeological museums remain the most popular way to present the past to the public, major changes in the forms and strategies governing these exhibitions have taken place, and are linked to the use of multimedia techniques (Pawleta, 2016: 317–91; Chowaniec, 2017: 222–38). For instance, the 'Following the traces of the European identity of Krakow' exhibition in Krakow's Old Market underground museum combines fragments of original historical walls and streets from the ninth to the fifteenth century preserved *in situ* with authentic finds, full-size reconstructions, and multimedia presentations (using 3D technology, virtual installations, holograms) that allow visitors to immerse themselves into the daily life of medieval Krakow. Moreover, one of the most important challenges that archaeological museums face today is to enhance their educational role (Pawleta, 2016: 366–77; Chowaniec, 2017: 253–54). This means moving away from passive learning in favour of active methods that engage visitors, simultaneously emphasizing the development of intellectual skills and practical aspects such as interpreting and selecting information. Most archaeological museums in Poland offer extracurricular classes built around their collections. They are a very effective option in terms of their impact on participants as, during lessons in, for example, pottery making, children can engage directly with aspects of the historical environment.

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Changes in archaeological museums in post-1989 Poland did not result from planned curricula or theoretical foundations. On the contrary, they were a practical adaptation to new socio-political and economic conditions, especially market demands and the expectations of contemporary audiences. Although archaeological museums in Poland effectively disseminate knowledge about archaeological heritage, archaeology, and the past, some archaeologists (e.g. Chowaniec, 2017: 293–94) claim that, with some exceptions, they are not prepared to play an important role as modern educational institutions and, in many cases, are at odds with new museological assumptions (see Vergo, 1989). This is because usually their activity is limited to traditional forms of conveying knowledge, such as museum lessons, guided tours, and public exhibitions that remain the dominant way of presenting artefacts. The use of multimedia also raises legitimate concerns. The equipment should complement the museum's narration but not dominate the message; it should be used with restraint, so as not to overshadow the authentic object. The commercialization of museum activities, the introduction of elements of entertainment intended to make them more attractive to visitors, and their proliferation are a disturbing trend. It reflects museums that have become focused solely on profit and the mercantile aspect, meaning they are concerned more with attracting visitors in increased numbers than with education. Such a museum may gradually cease to fulfil its defining function, expending time and staff expertise instead on competing with other commercialized centres of entertainment and leaving educational recreation as an afterthought. Thus, we must try to find a balance between what constitutes a museum's intrinsic value (its collection) and additional attractions. Museums must not forget that their fundamental function is to acquire and curate the collection, and not cross the line between the museum as a cultural institution and the corporate entertainment business.

A broad range of other outreach initiatives have been undertaken in recent years in Poland, but these are beyond the scope of this article. Overall, they confirm the view expressed by archaeologists worldwide that public archaeology activities equate mainly with education and dissemination (e.g. Piślewska, 2015: 34). As such, they can be linked with Merriman's (2004b: 3–4) 'deficit model' or Holtorf's (2007: 150) mixture of 'the educational model' and 'the public relation model'. Such attitudes have, however, been disparaged for making the role of the public relatively passive and for communicating archaeology in an expert mode, in what has been labelled the 'authorized heritage discourse' (Smith, 2006). Although 'the idea of education underlies a great deal of work in public archaeology, based on the principle that experts have a responsibility to share their knowledge with those who can appreciate and use it' (Moshenska, 2017b: 8), dissemination cannot be a top-down and one-way process, from archaeologists to the general public. Rather, we have to take into account how public engagement can be integrated into archaeological outreach activities. Luckily, the situation has been slowly changing towards a more participatory archaeology focused on community-oriented projects.

A Step Forward: Community-Oriented Archaeology

As stated, the scope of public archaeology should not be equated with the education of the general public about the past and its archaeology or with outreach programmes alone. Far more important goals determine dialectic relations between archaeology and society; these have been defined in community archaeology (e.g. Moshenska & Dhanjal, 2011; Thomas, 2017). Thus, the

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aims of such an understanding of public archaeology are not directed at teaching people about the past, but 'rather it is more about treating local communities and various stakeholders as partners in a dialogue about the past and its value in the present' (Kajda & Kobiałka, 2018: 80). The involvement of local communities that feel associated with the places where archaeologists work is of crucial importance. The characteristic element of such society-driven initiatives is that they rely on a community's engagement with archaeological projects, so that local groups may have an influence on their goals and outcomes. Such collaboration can lead archaeologists to change the way they approach a particular site or the methods and theories they use to understand past relics and interpret past human actions (Agbe-Davies, 2014: 1600).

An example of such an initiative is a project jointly conducted by archaeologists and the Association for the Development of Villages ('Razem') at Bieniów, entitled 'applied archaeology: society-past-remote sensing' (Kajda & Kostyrko, 2016; Kajda & Kobiałka, 2018: 81–85). The research was undertaken in response to a request from the Razem association. The project set out to identify the structure of the early medieval stronghold, located between the villages of Biedrzychowice Dolne and Bieniów, using remote sensing methods and presenting the effectiveness of modern techniques in archaeological investigations. In addition to its scientific goals, the project's objectives were to promote the local archaeological heritage and to show the value of cooperation with local communities. Thus, interviews with the inhabitants of the villages were conducted. They were intended to examine the inhabitants' attitude to the past, the surrounding landscape, and to illuminate their perception of heritage. Additionally, lessons for children from nearby schools took place at the site to introduce them to archaeology, to the protection of archaeological monuments, and to the significance of cultural heritage.

An international project, 'Community archaeology in rural environments: meeting social challenges' (2019–2022) (https://archaeologyeurope.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/), is another interesting initiative. Local rural communities are encouraged to participate in archaeological discoveries in villages from regions as varied in terms of culture, landscape, history, and rurality as the UK, the Netherlands, Poland, and Czechia. Over three years, local people have been working with archaeologists to investigate their village, using finds from multiple test pit excavations, which the residents themselves plan and carry out. The project's objectives include connecting rural communities to their local heritage and drawing attention to the social and scientific value of a heritage that is often overlooked but which is an important element of rural landscapes. Based on the excavated data and local stories, the proposed approach concentrates on writing historical narratives that connect the present-day place and people with their tangible heritage and landscape biography. The project also strives to achieve wider societal benefits, namely to raise the educational aspirations of local communities, improve social mobility and community self-esteem, strengthen social cohesion, and increase opportunities for locally-based extra curricular activities.

In Poland, some initiatives, which follow the guidelines of community archaeology, refer to the increasingly popular trend for investigating the archaeology of the contemporary past. They usually target the study of the relics of the painful events of the twentieth century. Good examples are the projects 'Archaeology as an antidote to oblivion and vandalism: Towards roadside history lessons from the First World War

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(1914–2014)' and 'Archaeology of reconciliation: Roadside history lessons on the Great War by the Rawka River as lessons in reconciliation (1915–2015)'. Their main idea was to restore 'the memory of places, things and human deeds that were almost completely erased from historiography' (Zalewska, 2017: 67), in this case the memory and knowledge of the use of chemical weapons by the German forces on the Eastern Front during the First World War in 1915. These projects were intended not only to disseminate knowledge about activities carried out in this region at this time, but also to sensitize the public to care for the memory of the past (Zalewska, 2014). The projects developed numerous didactic tools that proved useful in restoring the memory of events from years ago, directly related to material carriers of knowledge, meaning, and memory of the Great War. The publication on these events was prepared and distributed to the local community, and information boards were put in significant places in the region (Zalewska, 2014: 34). Much attention was also paid to recognizing attitudes towards the material remains of the conflict among the local population and their level of knowledge about them. Moreover, several community initiatives were carried out to protect the most vulnerable objects, and a workshop was organized for the local youth in the cemetery of Bolimowska Wieś where fallen German soldiers are buried.

The potential of community-oriented projects, which are at an initial stage in Poland, has not yet been fully explored. Although they are usually grant-aided and short-term initiatives, they show a slow but important shift in attitudes and thinking about the relationship between archaeologists and communities that extends beyond simple outreach and includes attempts to engage communities directly with archaeological practice and their own heritage (Olivier, 2015: 14). Community-oriented initiatives can be considered enriching when compared to professionally directed projects. Yet numerous challenges and pitfalls must be overcome: for example, the need to reconsider notions of what constitutes a 'community', how to conduct participatory research, how to approach alternative understandings of heritage and interpretations of the past, how to foster long-term commitment, or how to avoid superficial involvement. Some scholars also argue that allowing untrained non-professionals to carry out archaeological research is akin to vandalism (e.g. Zalewska, 2018: 24). Finally, the political exploitation and potential misuses of interpretations of the past must also be considered (Thomas, 2017: 22).

Future Prospects and Conclusions

Despite public engagement being still underestimated by many professionals in Poland, the situation is slowly changing. Nevertheless, we still observe in many initiatives the predominance of the education and the deficit models that see the wider public as an entity to be informed by archaeologists. Public archaeology in Poland can be interpreted as a commitment on the part of archaeologists to make archaeology more relevant to contemporary society and as an endeavour that is more practice-oriented (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011b: 7). However, I argue that it is not enough to pay attention just to popularization; we should move beyond it, since 'outreach is attached to archaeology by principle; it should never be exceptional' (Almansa-Sánchez, 2018: 202).

Here, I propose a number of actions that should be undertaken in this most promising area for future development. First, it seems urgent to concentrate our efforts on providing theoretical frameworks for public archaeology and to conceptualize what it means and how it

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operates in the Polish context. As mentioned, there is no discussion among professionals aimed at reaching a consensus on how public archaeology should be defined. Taking into account the different national contexts, the disciplinary traditions of archaeology, and the socio-economic and cultural circumstances under which public archaeology is subject to policy (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011a; Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez, 2015: 196), it is not justifiable to simply impose a definition of public archaeology from outside. Thus, a concept that is relevant to the distinctive nature of Polish archaeological practice must be worked out. Only then can more integrated methodologies be implemented, addressing complex issues of practising public archaeology; these would facilitate collaboration across and beyond academic disciplines and point to possible directions which might bring collective benefits.

Second, the development of a training programme dedicated to public archaeology is equally important. The growing interest of non-academics and academics, as well as the increasing involvement of archaeology graduates in public outreach and community-involved activities, is forcing systemic changes in the archaeological curriculum at Polish universities. Courses on public archaeology, museology, archaeological education, and popularization are still insufficient in Poland. A dedicated public archaeology MA programme devoted to theoretical and practical training is needed. It would equip graduates with a distinct set of skills and knowledge that would enable them to pursue careers in professional organizations associated with archaeology, museums, and the cultural and heritage sector, and to effectively implement the aims of public archaeology in their work.

Third, educational and outreach activities should be continued but in a different manner. Regardless of its positive impact on the field, 'public archaeology as education' often represents a form of public archaeology that meets the needs of archaeology and is not aimed at the needs of the 'public at large' (McDavid & Brock, 2015: 162). This is true in the Polish case. Thus, I advocate setting out potential future directions for public archaeology education in order to progress it in a meaningful way and make it more inclusive and participatory. It demands, on the part of the archaeologists, a different perspective on cooperation: namely a departure from a top-down approach and a move towards 'teaching *through* rather than about archaeology' (Bartoy, 2012). I share the opinion that educational opportunities can empower us collectively towards critical thinking and historical insights, as well as offering an understanding of the human condition within time and space. Such opportunities also foster community building, inclusivity, and pluralism (social, national, cultural, etc.). They can also teach us to practise living more tolerantly in a multicultural society and change people's worldviews, perhaps the most important future direction for public archaeology (Simandiraki-Grimshaw, 2020: 8982). A proper education can prove to be a remedy to the 'epistemic popularism' that public archaeology and heritage studies have been tending towards in present-day Europe (see González-Ruibal et al., 2018).

The engagement of local communities in archaeological research and cooperation with the public at a local level is very important since the heritage belongs to the community and is part of its world (Chroustovský, 2019: 3). The archaeological heritage is not exclusively the domain of archaeologists, and broad access to it is a *sine qua non* condition if heritage is to be an important element of social life and archaeological heritage protection policies are to be continued. Such an approach requires a change in the attitude

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of professionals, who should accept that archaeological heritage is not only about the past but predominately about the present. Moreover, heritage can serve multiple social stakeholders, their interests and desires. Archaeology and heritage are meaningful for them; there is therefore a need to take them seriously throughout the heritage management process. Thus, we, as archaeologists, must learn 'how to fulfil a public role by engaging with communities as co-creators placing the past at the service of the public so that it is relevant and useful in the context of their daily lives' (Olivier, 2015: 13).

Further, academia must become more involved in public archaeology and assimilate the goals of public archaeology into its research projects. Although outreach or community involvement might be mandatory in some state-funded projects, this is not enough, since the engagement of professionals in such initiatives is crucial if we are to conduct research that inspires community-oriented work and fosters the self-reflexivity that must underpin serious community engagement (Agbe-Davies, 2014: 1600; Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez, 2015: 205). To fulfil these aims, more funding opportunities to support research from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education should be made available. Yet, today, in calls for application to the relevant archaeology panel of the National Science Centre, issues regarding public archaeology are not included. Consequently, there are no possibilities or sufficient funds for conducting such projects. Such a situation has not been improved by the fact that other smaller programmes allow for minor funding opportunities; for example, the National Heritage Board of Poland, which regularly calls for archaeological projects and requires applicants to include the public visibility of their project activities (e.g. open lectures for local people, exhibitions, etc.). Further, a partial solution to this situation is offered by the participation of Polish archaeologists in international projects, but such initiatives do not fill the gap. Thus, effective undertakings on a much wider scale must be secured on a national level for public and community archaeology initiatives within programmes designed specifically to support basic research.

The evaluation of the attitudes of archaeology's stakeholders and of public archaeology projects is of crucial importance. It should be the first and essential step in any initiative of that kind. Unfortunately, such research is an exception in Polish archaeology and only a few studies have been conducted so far. The NEARCH survey of the perception of heritage and archaeology by European citizens (including Poles) (Kajda et al., 2018) or small-scale studies, concentrating on local communities and their view of heritage (e.g. Kajda & Kostyrko, 2016), can serve as examples. For now, the paucity of data is probably the greatest barrier to future developments in public archaeology in Poland. Consequently, there is an urgent need to conduct large-scale surveys using qualitative and quantitative social research methods as a means of gauging public attitudes, concerns, and expectations. Evaluation would produce a more sophisticated body of knowledge to make informed choices about the conservation, management, presentation, and interpretation of archaeological heritage and make community engagement initiatives more proactive and relevant (e.g. Moshenska, 2017b: 12–13; Almansa-Sánchez, 2018: 203).

Finally, archaeology has to actively engage in the crucial issues of the contemporary world. The assumptions of community archaeology are similar in many places, with aims set out in 'contemporary archaeology' (Moshenska & Dhanjal, 2011; Zalewska, 2018: 22). As a result, archaeological research is increasingly

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accompanied by the proactive involvement of people from outside the archaeological milieu. Contemporary archaeology requires the discipline to redefine its public role so that it not only addresses the greatest challenges of the present, marked by dramatic events and conflicts, but also resists attempts to glamourize or forget them. We must abandon those paternalistic attitudes that perpetuate the top-down transmission of knowledge from archaeologists to the general public in order to develop more inclusive and participatory attitudes to interpretation of archaeological heritage and the past, such as those promoted by community archaeology.

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L'archéologie publique en Pologne: état des connaissances et perspectives

L'auteur de cet article cherche à conceptualiser l'état des connaissances en archéologie publique en Pologne, un domaine qui s'est développé récemment en pratique archéologique. Il offre une définition de l'archéologie publique et présente brièvement l'historique de ses activités dans le cadre des traditions de l'archéologie polonaise. Il décrit les formes principales des activités de diffusion au public réalisées par les archéologues en Pologne ainsi que certaines initiatives locales qui vont au-delà d'une simple éducation du public et qui cherchent à engager les communautés locales dans des activités basées sur l'archéologie et le patrimoine. Son article se termine sur quelques recommandations que cette sous-discipline pourrait adopter à l'avenir. Translation by Madeleine Hummler

Mots clés: archéologie publique, Pologne, diffusion, éducation, projets communautaires

Öffentliche Archäologie in Polen: heutiger Stand und zukünftige Richtungen

In diesem Artikel versucht der Autor, den heutigen Stand der öffentlichen Archäologie in Polen zu konzeptualisieren, ein Teilbereich der archäologischen Praxis, der in jüngster Zeit aktuell geworden ist. Er definiert das Konzept der öffentlichen Archäologie und stellt solche Gemeinschaftsinitiativen vor dem historischen und spezifisch polnischen Hintergrund der Traditionen der Archäologie in Polen vor. Er beschreibt die Hauptformen der Öffentlichkeitstätigkeiten der polnischen Archäologen und einige Gemeinschaftsinitiativen, die über eine einfache Wissensverbreitung über die Vergangenheit hinausgehen und dessen Ziel es ist, lokale Gemeinschaften an archäologischen Projekten zu beteiligen. Abschließend skizziert er einige Richtungen, welche dieser Teilbereich der Archäologie in der Zukunft folgen könnte. Translation by Madeleine Hummler

Stichworte: öffentliche Archäologie, Polen, Wissensverbreitung, Bildung, Gemeinschaftsprojekte

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