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The Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in Kraków before World War I – attempts at transpartition activities*

Outline of content: The article presents activities of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art established in Kraków in 1902. The Society sought to conduct activities in the territories of three partitions on the basis of non-local delegates who sent in letters from the whole Galicia and other partitions, but also from outside the Polish lands. The main tasks of delegates (usually enthusiastic amateurs) were to carry out surveys and take stock of Polish monuments; they also tried, together with the Society, to make pioneering efforts to protect and preserve Polish cultural heritage. Thanks to the commitment of its members, the Society had several spectacular successes in the field of rescuing historical monuments in Galicia and the Polish lands under Russian partition.

Keywords: Kraków Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, Galicia, Jerzy Mycielski, protection of monuments, culture and social society, partitions of Poland

At the turn of the 20th century, Kraków was indeed an extraordinary place. The spiritual capital of Poland divided by the partitions was an important academic, cultural and artistic centre. Due to the political situation, Galicia offered the best conditions for the activities of all types of societies, organisations and associations. However, the city of Prince Krak was a particular phenomenon. A tourist guide from 1910 presented the following impressive overview in the part on statistics:

31 political and social associations reside in Kraków, as do 13 sports associations, 51 professional associations, and 108 workers' associations. The widely outspread humanitarian and

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charitable activity is evidenced by the existence of around 60 relevant institutions. There are 43 financial institutions in Kraków, among them the Kraków savings bank, the district savings bank, a mutual insurance society, a subsidiary of the national bank, a Galician bank for commerce and industry, a branch of the Austro-Hungarian bank, a subsidiary of the privileged-status mortgage bank, a subsidiary of the industrial bank for Bohemia and Moravia, and other. Kraków has a municipal theatre, and a people's theatre. In the field of fine arts, there are 14 active associations. In terms of work for the propagation of education and science, there are 27 associations, 20 social clubs, and 102 periodic publications with political, scientific or national contents in Kraków.¹

The above statistics can give us some idea of the social activities of Kraków's inhabitants. Among the many socio-cultural societies at the turn of the 20th century, the ones with focus on the protection of the national heritage began to play an important role. This interest in the relics of the past was in line with the general European trends – since the second half of the 19th century, the cultural heritage was increasingly considered an indispensable element of national identity, and the expansion of fields such as history of art and conservation of monuments contributed to greater respect for material remains of past centuries.²

The very idea of protecting historic buildings and works of art probably went back to the times of the French Revolution, and was a form of response to the huge devastations at the time.³ It was by the Seine at the beginning of the 19th century that attempts to institutionalise the preservation of monuments were taken. However, the effects they brought were not exclusively positive. Eugène Viollet le-Duc, who in the 1850s was in practice responsible for the protection of monuments in France, was a supporter of full reconstruction of historical buildings and restoring their original appearance, most often in the Romanesque or Gothic style, which in a sense were rehabilitated and privileged in the age of romanticism.⁴ A different approach to the protection of monuments emerged in the United Kingdom. John Ruskin, a contemporary writer, thinker and art theorist, opposed any interventionist conservation, deeming all reconstructions to be no more than imitations; however, he proposed the protection of historical monuments as a substantial part of cultural heritage.⁵ Nevertheless, it seems that for the Polish concepts in this area the German and Austrian influences were of particular importance. Here, the precursor of the idea of preserving historical monuments was Goethe: not only

¹ K. Kumaniecki, "Wiadomości statystyczne o Krakowie", in: F. Klein, *Kraków*, Kraków, 1910, pp. VI–VII.

² *Polskie dziedzictwo kulturowe u progu niepodległości. Wokół Towarzystwa Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości*, ed. E. Manikowska, P. Jamski, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 9–11.

³ P. Kosiewski, J. Krawczyk, "Latarnia pamięci. Od muzeum zabytków narodu do katechizmu konserwatora", in: *Zabytek i historia: wokół problemów konserwacji i ochrony zabytków w XIX wieku*, ed. P. Kosiewski, J. Krawczyk, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 12 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27–33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–41.

did he rehabilitate the Gothic, but he also considered medieval architecture to be a remnant of former Germany and deserving protection; his views contributed to the development of a certain cult of Cologne and Rhineland as the cradle of German architecture.⁶ However, attempts to theoretically systematise the concept of a monument and the tasks to be carried out within conservation did not appear until the turn of the 20th century. Of great importance here was an article by Alois Riegl, a Viennese art historian and general conservator, entitled *The modern cult of monuments: its character and origin*. In it, the author focused, for instance, on the historical significance of monuments, whose primary role was to commemorate – in order to describe it, Riegl introduced the term “age value”, which was to be at the heart of social worship of monuments.⁷ The German art historian Georg Dehio contested Riegl’s views. In many points both theorists’ opinions on conservation practices converged, however the way they perceived the reasons for which monuments of the past should be under protection and the methods leading to it were entirely different.⁸ For Dehio, it was of key importance that the monument be part of national heritage, and therefore should be reverently protected, in the opinion of Riegl such a definition carried a significant risk.⁹ The above mentioned differing concepts on the theory of monument protection were reflected in the discussion caused by the idea of the conservation of the Wawel Castle, and the pages of the Kraków press became the stage of a clash between the supporters of restoration (which for some meant recreating its state as closely as possible to the original) and the supporters of minimum interference in this important monument.¹⁰ It was also at the end of the 19th century that the book by Camillo Sitte *City Planning According to Artistic Principles*¹¹ became considerably popular. According to Krzysztof Pawłowski, “Sitte’s basic proposition was to prove that a city should be treated as a work of art, and that such qualities are presented by historical urban complexes, which not only must be placed under protection, but also the principles on which they are built should be studied and used in the composition of the modern city”.¹² The consequence of such a concept was the idea to protect the historical qualities of cities. Sitte’s views gained popularity also in Galicia, and the journal of Kraków Technical Society published a review of his book,

⁶ Ibid., pp. 52–56.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 58–61.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 61–63.

⁹ Cf. R. Kasperowicz, “Dehio i Riegl, czyli spór o przeszłość i przyszłość zabytków”, in: *Alois Riegl, Georg Dehio i kult zabytków*, transl. and prefaced by R. Kasperowicz, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 9–29.

¹⁰ Cf. *Wokół Wawelu: antologia tekstów z lat 1901–1901* ed. and prefaced by J. Krawczyk, Warszawa, 2012.

¹¹ C. Sitte, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Wien, 1889.

¹² K. Pawłowski, “Ochrona walorów zabytkowych miast, a geneza polskiej nowoczesnej szkoły urbanistycznej”, in: *Przeszłość a jutro miasta. Szkice urbanistyczne*, ed. K. Pawłowski, T. Zarębska, Warszawa, 1977, p. 163.

which extensively discussed the author's theses and interpreted the idea of a city as a work of art in the context of Kraków.¹³ Jan Wdowiszewski, when presenting in detail the contents of the book, put particular emphasis on discussing examples of the historical urban layout, often comparing them with solutions existing in the city at the foot of Wawel, which – as he wrote in his conclusion – had its objective: “Having reached the end of the task, let us express a modest wish that our effort towards a substantial and possibly thorough and clear presentation of the principles of constructing ‘a beautiful city as a work of art’ has not been in vain. Let this wish find fertile ground in the awareness and the aesthetic sense of the spheres in whose hands rests the fate of further development of our native city”.¹⁴ As the future would show, the hopes of the author of the quoted article did not quite come true.

Meanwhile, the messages of protecting Kraków's monuments for the future generations as an important part of national heritage were falling on a somewhat prepared ground. And so, 1888 saw the creation of the Group of Conservators of West Galicia (Grono Konserwatorów Galicji Zachodniej), and 1897 – the Society of Friends of Kraków History and Monuments (Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa), which exists to this day. The activities of conservators, art historians, and amateur enthusiasts focused primarily on Kraków and Galicia. However, they soon began to feel the need to organise a society whose activities would cover all Polish monuments, regardless of partition borders, and it is probably this feeling which can be understood as the genesis of establishing the society discussed in this article.

It seems that the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in Kraków is relatively little known. In the literature it is sometimes mentioned as the predecessor of the Warsaw Society for the Preservation of Monuments (Towarzystwo Opieki nad Zabytkami),¹⁵ referenced in terms of its importance for the development of Polish town planning, and in particular the concept of protecting the urban complex as a whole,¹⁶ listed among important institutions dealing with protecting historical monuments,¹⁷ analysed in terms of its conservation activities,¹⁸ finally, Franciszek Ziejka dedicated some space to it in his article *To save the national relics of the past for descendants... The social movement for the historical objects restoration in Kraków in 19th century (Ocalić dla potomnych narodowe pamiątki... O społecznym ruchu odnowy zabytków w Krakowie*

¹³ Ibid., p. 165.

¹⁴ J. Wdowiszewski, “Artystyczne zasady budowy miast”, *Czasopismo Towarzystwa Technicznego Krakowskiego*, 1890, nos. 7–11, p. 96.

¹⁵ Cf. *Polskie dziedzictwo kulturowe u progu niepodległości*.

¹⁶ Pawłowski, *Ochrona walorów*, pp. 165–166.

¹⁷ J. Frycz, *Restauracja i konserwacja zabytków architektury w Polsce w latach 1795–1918*, Warszawa, 1975, p. 190.

¹⁸ F. Midura, *Spółeczna opieka nad zabytkami w Polsce do roku 1918*, Warszawa, 2004, pp. 323–334.

w XIX wieku).¹⁹ Archival sources have been relatively little used; they are in the section of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in the National Archives in Kraków, and give a more complete picture of the activities of this underappreciated society. Meanwhile, the authors of the studies mentioned above base their conclusions mainly on printed sources, primarily the annual activity reports of the society.²⁰

In what circumstances was the new society founded? The story of its establishment is briefly presented by the protocol from the first general assembly of its members. In March 1901, the initiative to create the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in Kraków was put forward by a group of students at the Jagiellonian University and the Academy of Arts, who – as recalled by Marian Sokołowski during the inaugural speech: “turned to several prominent individuals in the country and abroad, asking for support and advice”.²¹ A temporary committee was formed, which held six statutory and eight administrative meetings. Its tasks included preparing the statute of the new society, developing a programme of its activities, and canvassing for future members. Unfortunately, for formal reasons the first version of the statute was not approved by the authorities, after some amendments the statute was only accepted at the end of 1901; on 23 February 1902, the first general assembly of members was held.

From the very beginning, the new society attracted great interest. The canvassing activities of the Interim Committee resulted in recruiting 108 members, including three founders, six supporting members, eighty four ordinary members, and thirteen extraordinary members (these categories related to the statute, to which I will return). The seat of the society was to be in the National Museum. The further part of the meeting chaired by the current president of the Interim Committee, Professor Kazimierz Kostanecki was somewhat surprising. When it came to choosing the Board of the new society, Adolf Sternschuss, a Kraków lawyer and art collector as well as one of the founders and – as it would turn out – one of the most active members of the society, made a proposal that the Interim Committee should indicate proposed candidates for the Board in order to facilitate and accelerate the elections. He also suggested that candidates overloaded with work in other faculties should be removed from the electoral list,

¹⁹ F. Ziejka, “Ocalić dla potomnych narodowe pamiątki... O społecznym ruchu odnowy zabytków w Krakowie w XIX wieku”, *Budownictwo. Czasopismo Techniczne*, 106 (2009), no. 9, pp. 369–380.

²⁰ This article is based primarily on the materials of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, kept in the National Archives in Kraków. Part of the materials relating to the activities of the Society (e.g. the correspondence) may be in the inheritance left behind by some of the members and correspondents; it does not seem, however, that such archives would significantly impact the present findings and conclusions.

²¹ National Archives in Kraków (ANK), no. 2621/9, General Assembly Protocol of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art.

and replaced with young people who could dedicate more time to the society. This was a hint at specific individuals. The candidates suggested by the Interim Committee included: Józef Onyszkiewicz, Feliks Jasiński, Stanisław Wyspiański and Włodzimierz Demytrykiewicz. The vote was secret, and thirty two people took part. Prominent Kraków artists (and people associated with such circles) were utterly unsuccessful in the elections, even though they were leading many other Kraków's cultural associations, for example the Kraków Beautification Society (Towarzystwo Upiększania Krakowa), or the Kraków Society of the Friends of History and Monuments (Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa). Suffice it to say that Włodzimierz Tetmayer received ten votes, Józef Mehoffer nine, as did Leon Wyczółkowski, Teodor Axentowicz and Stanisław Wyspiański had just four votes each, and Walery Eljasz only three. A relative majority of votes elected the following people to the first Board of the society: Prof. Piotr Bienkowski, Mikołaj Bronicki, Stanisław Cercha, Jan Chrzanowski, Count Michał Dzieduszycki, Dr. Konstanty Górski, Stanisław Jagmin, Dr. Jerzy Kieszkowski, Dr. Feliks Kopera, Prof. Kazimierz Kostanecki, Count Witold Miączyński, Prof. Count Jerzy Mycielski, Julian Pagaczewski, Mieczysław Rulikowski, Dr. Jan Stanisławski, Emanuel Świeykowski, Prof. Marian Zdziechowski, Józef Onyszkiewicz. The Board was therefore dominated by representatives of Kraków professors from the Jagiellonian University and the Academy of Fine Arts, representatives of the aristocracy, and students from noble families (Jan Chrzanowski or Mieczysław Rulikowski). Meanwhile, representatives of bohemian Kraków (perhaps offended by the discrimination in the elections to the first Board) had hardly any relations with the society, and are absent from member lists. During the first meeting of the Board, held on the same day, Prof. Count Jerzy Mycielski was elected President, his deputies were Prof. Kazimierz Kostanecki and Count Michał Dzieduszycki, and secretaries – Emanuel Świeykowski and Jan Chrzanowski. Jerzy Mycielski served as President throughout the whole existence of the society.

Jerzy Mycielski (1856–1928), an art historian and Professor of the Jagiellonian University, was a true enthusiast, who dedicated virtually his entire life to rescuing Polish cultural heritage (especially painting).²² It seems that it was the President and his wide network of contacts among the aristocracy and landed gentry across all three partitions which gave the Kraków Society its elite character, and at the same time the ability to operate across the partition borders. In the memoirs of Franciszek Klein, an art historian and member of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, the President of the Society is presented as an extremely colourful character: “for nearly forty years, he never tired of advocating Polish culture. During that time there was no art or culture issue which could do without his support. To top it all, he was an extraordinarily obliging and generous man, always ready to take part in any civic or charitable

²² A. Bochnak, “Jerzy Mycielski”, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, 22 (1972), pp. 332–335.

action, and we can say that nobody was ever failed by its famous goodness of heart. However, another man lived inside Jerzy Mycielski – next to the academic, writer and philanthropist – quite unlike the first one: worldly, hedonistic and a snob, and incredibly funny – a match for Molière or Fredro”.²³ Jerzy Mycielski had good social connections also at the Viennese court, which certainly favoured obtaining governmental subsidies for the society’s activities, and – as the future would show – high-level interventions could also be useful to rescue Polish monuments.

What set apart the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art from other cultural societies based in Kraków or Lviv, was that its activities by principle covered all three partitions. The activities of other societies, though their members were frequently citizens of the Russian or Prussian partitions, were local in nature (especially in the beginning), although their impact (owing to non-local members, publishers or press releases) was often much wider. Meanwhile, the activities of the Society were planned very broadly from its beginnings, already in the statute records. The statute stated that the seat of the Society was Kraków, and its purpose was to

- 1) Find and take stock of monuments of art and culture related to Polish history, wherever they are located.
- 2) Take care of monuments by protecting them from destruction, and acquire or accumulate movable monuments.
- 3) Encourage the knowledge and love of monuments of the Polish arts and culture in the Polish society.²⁴

As means to achieve these objectives, the statute lists: organising lectures and talks, and then publicising reports from them, issuing its own magazine, where necessary establishing delegates outside Kraków who would act on behalf of the society, creating a library of professional works and subscribing to professional magazines, maintaining relations with Polish and foreign societies and institutions with related purposes.²⁵ The finances of the Society were to be made up of annual membership fees, grants and donations, interest on reserve capital, income from capital and property, income from organised talks, performances and raffles.²⁶ The statute distinguished several categories of members: one could become a founder member after a one-off payment of 300 kronen, a supporting member – after paying 40 kronen, honorary members, appointed by the general assembly, were exempt from fees, an extraordinary member paid 4 kronen, and an ordinary

²³ F. Klein, *Notatnik Krakowski*, Kraków, 1965, pp. 57–58.

²⁴ ANK, ref. 2621/1, *Statute of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art*, Kraków, 1902, p. 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

member – 10 kronen per year. All members of the Society received special, printed membership cards.²⁷ The bodies of the Society listed in the statute were the general assembly and the Board, which was to consist of the President, two deputies, a treasurer, two secretaries, and twelve other members.²⁸

An important place in the structure of the Society was given by the statute to non-local delegates, who were described as a communicatory and executive body. The delegates were to answer directly to the Board, recruit new members, collect fees, raise further funds, seek out monuments of art and culture related to Polish history and notify the Board of their existence, they could also establish non-local groups.²⁹ It seems that among the tasks of non-local delegates the greatest emphasis was placed on adding new members to the Society and collecting fees among them, as well as taking stock of historical monuments located in the area subject to the delegate. Books with the names of non-local delegates have survived, including the names of the recruited members. In the event of not paying membership fees, the Board turned first to the delegate who referred the new member. In some cases, due to reluctance towards the unpleasant duty of asking for outstanding fees, a delegate would resign their post.

Much emphasis, as I have mentioned, was placed on cataloguing monuments in various regions. However, as the delegates were often ignorant in the field of art history or archaeology, already in its first year of existence the Society issued *Rules for the examination and inventory of works of art and art industry (Regulamin dla badania i inwentaryzowania dzieł sztuki i przemysłu artystycznego, Kraków, 1902)*. “Inventorying historical monuments – it explained – means taking notes precisely and as concisely as possible, listing in a descriptive way their characteristics and artistic properties. It is necessary to discover, evaluate, test, maintain and record monuments scattered around the country. This cannot bring successful effects without the help of exact reproduction, which is an essential basis for any study, and which becomes even more necessary where a scientifically accurate definition may be problematic due to the lack of subject knowledge”.³⁰ The interested members were next instructed how to describe monuments of architecture, sculpture, painting or crafts. It was stressed that it was best to take a photograph of the described object, or – if that was not possible – it was explained how to prepare a sketch which would present its appearance. Examples of correctly completed inventory entries completed the guidelines. As shown by the correspondence, this brochure, together with the Society’s statute, was posted to new members, in particular the Society’s delegates. Thus created three-partition network of delegates was to help inventory monuments that belonged to

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 6–7.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 9–13.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 14–15.

³⁰ ANK, ref. 2621/1, *Rules for the examination and inventory of world of art and art industry, Kraków, 1902, p. 3.*

the Polish tradition and history, and which – as was hoped – could be subject to conservation.

The picture of the activities of the non-local delegates of the Society emerges from the extensive collection of correspondence of the Polish Society of Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in the National Archives in Kraków.³¹ Apart from official or courtesy answers to invitations sent by the Board of the Society with the appointment of a non-local delegate, we can find many interesting letters from amateur enthusiasts, who took the proclamations of the Society to heart, and dedicated much free time to the task of inventory and conservation of Polish monuments. The letters arrived throughout practically the whole period of the Society's activities, however it seems that most come from the period until 1906, when it developed most dynamically. In addition to Galicia, most correspondence (and so most non-local members) came from the area of the Kingdom of Poland, and the so-called Western Krai. The Prussian partition is slightly less represented, but the Society had correspondents also in the regions of Poznań and Pomerania. Non-local delegates also tried to contribute to the cause of Polish monuments in Vienna, Paris and Berlin. Through their actions, the number of members of the Society slowly increased until 1906. In that same year, the Society had one honorary member, five founding members, five supporting members, 222 ordinary members, and 29 extraordinary members – a total of 262.³² However, a year later the number of members shrank noticeably to 192.³³

This situation may have had several causes. Firstly, 1906 saw the establishment of the Society for the Protection of Historical Monuments in Warsaw – due to the similar programme of both societies, some members and delegates from the Kingdom of Poland might have decided to switch to the newly formed Warsaw society. Secondly, the political situation in the Russian partition was hardly conducive to the development of cultural interests, which the authorities of the Society knew very well. Nevertheless, even in such difficult conditions and with a significantly reduced number of members, the Kraków Society not only survived the difficult years 1905–1906, but made vigorous efforts towards protection of Polish monuments in that time also in the Russian partition. This can be evidenced, for instance, by the address of Jerzy Mycielski during general assembly of members in 1906: “Despite many difficulties and lack of members, mainly due to the incidents in the Kingdom of Poland, this activity has, however, been marked by facts such as the maintenance of the Odrzykon castle ruins, with funds and efforts of the Society, and the selfless help of the architect Dr. Jan Sas Zubrzycki – or next, the restoration of St. Michael's Church in Vilnius carried out by the architect and director Zygmunt Hendel, through efforts of the Society and at the expense of

³¹ ANK, ref. 2621/ 6.

³² ANK, ref. 2621/4, Members of the Society in 1906.

³³ *Ibid.*, Members of the Society in 1907.

the Sapieha princes. This activity expanded further to Lithuanian castle ruins by Lake Galvė, studied in part by a delegate sent specifically for this purpose by the Society, director Zygmunt Hendel".³⁴

There was yet another reason. Although the list of the Society's members included prominent names from the Polish aristocracy (the Potockis, the Czartoryskis, the Dzieduszyckis, the Tyszkiewicz, the Branickis – to name just a few) as well as church dignitaries, many of them did not pay membership fees, some even four or five years in a row.³⁵ We might wonder, why was this the case? After all, it was not for lack of funds, nor was it because they had stopped supporting the noble ideas of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art. It seems that many might have become members or even delegates rather accidentally – on the basis of social or courtesy connections, but were not necessarily interested in the Society's programme. Moreover, the Society – despite its undeniable achievements – advertised its operations quite poorly (in comparison with others), and in organisational terms, it was at times in a slight disarray.

A significant loss of funds prompted the President Jerzy Mycielski to issue an appeal to county council marshals with information about the disastrous condition of Polish historical monuments, the activities of the Polish Society also outside Galicia (restoration of the Trakai Castle) and its large financial needs, with the request that the county councils join as full members for a fee of 10 kronen per year. He argued his appeal in the following way:

The monuments of our dear past, vanishing from year to year, are crying out for a speedy rescue and assistance not just from institutions guarding such monuments, but from the entire Polish society, all of which holds dear the past of the Homeland. Crumbling ruins of once proud castles, medieval churches falling to pieces, and Renaissance palaces and other buildings often scattered around the country no more belong to this or that owner, who often watches their destruction with an indifferent eye, but they are the property of the whole Polish society, all of those who understand the importance of such cultural monuments. Everyone has also the right, and even the obligation, to come to the rescue in preserving or maintaining, if not restoring the former state of each token.³⁶

Mycielski's arguments must have been convincing, because the appeal brought some results, and from then on several county councils were also supporting the

³⁴ 5th General Assembly Protocol of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, 10th March 1906. in: ANK, ref. 2621/9, The Book of General Assembly Protocols.

³⁵ Cf. ANK, ref. 2621/4, lists of members of the Society; *ibid.*, ref. 2621/5, Members of the Board and Delegates; *ibid.*, ref. 2621/7, Book of contacts of the members of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in 1903; *ibid.*, ref. 2621/8, list of members of the Society from 1908 to 1922/23.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, ref. 2621/3, Call of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art to District Council Marshals, 15 September, 1906.

activities of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art.

As I have mentioned, the activities and involvement of individual delegates are evidenced by their correspondence with the Board. An interesting example may be the case of the Chrzanowski family – landed gentry from the Lublin Gubernia in the Kingdom of Poland. Jan Chrzanowski, while studying in Kraków, became one of the founders and the first secretary of the Society, and was active at least until 1903. His father Bronisław was a supporting member of the Society, as well as a delegate to the Hrubieszów County. Among the members of the Society recruited by Jan Chrzanowski was also his mother Wanda and sister Ksawera.³⁷ When Jan returned to his home estate, for a while his contact with the Society stopped, however in response to the appeal of the Board he sent a long letter, in which he also explains his silence as well as the failure to pay fees by non-local members (mostly from the Kingdom of Poland).

A letter from April 1906 is rather pessimistic in its tone, but it seems that Chrzanowski makes some accurate diagnoses:

Immediately after receiving your letter of 19 April, I hasten to answer as follows. Taking an active part in the founding and early work of the Society for the Preservation etc., I was hoping that the Society would gain strong support in the Polish society, I have made every effort to notify the general public of the establishment of the Society. Unfortunately, our appeals and reports did not achieve results, and my personal canvassing actions recruited no more than half of the people I was counting on, and even those who are members do not support the objectives of the Society. Unfortunately, we are Poles, and lack of perseverance and energy is a characteristic of all our fellow countrymen. Lack of patriotism and willingness to do national work, or even to pay regular fees. I have been and I am interested in the Society, as every good cause. The fact that for a few years I have not done anything for the Society is not due to ill will, but because of numerous difficulties. While organising my assets and personal affairs I have had very little time. Also financial resources have not been large, which has not allowed me to financially support the Society so far either. On top of that, there have been difficulties arising from the political position of the Kingdom of Poland, censorship inconveniences and martial law determine my situation.³⁸

However, despite these difficulties Chrzanowski decided to engage in the Society's activities once again, this time as a non-local delegate, and in a further part of the letter he declares:

Today things have changed enough so I can help you, Sirs, especially after receiving such an honourable appeal. Unfortunately, I had a sad feeling about the Society, as I assumed that it was dissolved. I will gladly fulfil your wishes, but I would like to ask for a list of the Board

³⁷ Ibid., ref. 2621/4, cf. lists of members of the Society; *ibid.*, ref. 2621/5, members of the Board and Delegates.

³⁸ Ibid., ref. 2621/6, Jan Chrzanowski to [the Board of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], 26 April 1906.

members from the years 1903, 1904, 1905 and 1906, as well as reports from the years 1905 and 1906 if they have been issued, as canvassing is impossible without this information, since members ask for reports on the activities of the Society, and for information on who is in charge of the Society. I would ask you to kindly send me ten copies of the statute and reports for 1905 and 1906. Until I receive them, I cannot do anything.³⁹

However, another problem immediately appeared: if the prints are allowed, Chrzanowski asks for them to be posted directly to him, but if they “do not have *délit*” he asks to send them to a *poste restante* address and notify him. It turns out that Chrzanowski reported and agitated to only some of the people from the list of Society’s members who had fallen behind on fees, and some were from an entirely different region to the author of the letter. Nevertheless, he promised that he would do everything in his power to help collect the outstanding fees and to attract new members among the landed gentry in the area. He warned, however, that the current situation did not favour such activity: “The conditions here are extremely difficult. Farming and factory strikes, nationalist movements, electoral campaigns, expected reforms, martial law, all of this provokes incredible confusion, and even uncertainty of tomorrow. For this reason, thoughts are detached from the important matters concerning the whole Polish society. However, I will try to do what I can for the Society”.⁴⁰

Next to a large group of people discouraged towards the activities of the Society, inactive or not paying fees, there were very involved individuals, about whom we could say that their activities as Society’s delegates became a landmark moment in life. Among these people was the priest Górzyński from Zduńska Wola (Sieradz County in Kalisz Gubernia).

In the first letter of 1902, the priest thanked the Society for the suggestion to become its delegate, but he was somewhat coy, saying that he did not have the appropriate qualifications, since he was a dilettante archaeologist, and a very busy person as the pastor of a large parish and the dean of the Sieradz deanery, but eventually accepted the delegate function.⁴¹ In the second letter, written in 1903, he included a report about his energetic, as it turned out, activities; he wrote that he had found three citizens among landed gentry and one doctor – passionate amateur archaeologists, and intended to carry out the task with their help. He wanted to divide the district into four parts, allocate each to the recruited members, and leave the presidency to himself: “I intend to host quarterly sessions, at which they will report to me on their achievements, and I will set them tasks for the next quarter. Apart from taking stock and photographing archaeological and historical monuments, I would like to use the opportunity to do something also

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., Rev. Górzyński [to Prof. Jerzy Mycielski, President of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Zduńska Wola, 7 September 1902.

for prehistorical archaeology, and so on this occasion I want to make a map of prehistorical archaeology of the Sieradz County, whose lack for the entire country is severely felt by sciences”.⁴²

However, the activities in the area of preserving Polish monuments soon engaged Górczyński to such an extent that they became difficult to reconcile with his priestly duties. We can learn about the priest's further fate from a letter written in 1907:

Right Honourable President and Professor, In response to your kind letter from 3rd December this year, I have the honour to answer as follows: if, having a parish of 18,000 souls and Sieradz deanery three years ago I gave them up and in the 48th⁴³ year of my life sat in a university bench to study art history, in Kraków as well as in Graz and Rome, which probably does not happen often, then the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments is responsible... And in particular the Right Honourable President, who signed the Society delegate nomination sent to me three years ago to Sieradz deanery in Zduńska Wola. Because, wishing to carry out the duty of cataloguing monuments as thoroughly as possible, I invited five amateur archaeologists like myself known to me in the deanery, to divide the deanery into six districts, and scrupulously fulfil the task I was assigned. At this meeting, a certain decentralisation idea was born. – Not renouncing a close relationship with Kraków and sending the Society an inventory, after preparing it we decided to independently create and publish the *Treasury of Past Monuments of the Sieradz Land*.⁴⁴

When Górczyński became the president of the circle mentioned in his letter, he decided that he lacked relevant knowledge and should in fact study history of art in order to properly direct the work of the group, and as it turned out to be impossible to reconcile with his pastoral duties, he gave away the parish and began studying, as he writes in a letter to the Society: “in June this year, after three years of studies (nine months in Warsaw, the remainder abroad) I have returned to the country with the intention to dedicate the rest of my life to work for the monuments of our past. – As minds are absorbed with the country's social and political affairs, work will not be easy”.⁴⁵ First achievements, however, came quite quickly: he published an article *Does a priest need to know about art*, which prompted the bishop to introduce in the diocesan seminary compulsory art history studies, and to attend himself lectures given by Górczyński.⁴⁶

This dedicated member of the Kraków Society wondered, however (in 1907), whether it was appropriate to be a member in Kraków, since the same Society

⁴² Ibid., Rev. Górczyński [to Prof. Jerzy Mycielski, President of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Zduńska Wola, 22 February 1903.

⁴³ Emphasis by the author of the letter.

⁴⁴ ANK, ref. 2621/6, Rev. Górczyński [to Prof. Jerzy Mycielski, President of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Kłodawa, 10 December 1907.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

was founded in Warsaw. In addition – as his letter suggests – he was troubled by financial difficulties. The bishop therefore wanted to assign him to a parish to give him a source of income, but priest Górzyński rejected the proposal out of fear that it would involve him too much and take up valuable time, which he probably wanted to spend rescuing Polish monuments. However, as a result of this decision he had no way to earn a living and waited for the final decision of his bishop.⁴⁷

However, the last letter from Górzyński, dated in 1908, brings more news about promoting art history and preservation of Polish monuments. As it turned out, the priest persuaded the bishop to organise an archaeology and construction committee in the Włocławek diocese. The priest Górzyński personally created its plan of action, which included preserving and inventorying not only monuments, but also written documents, and provided money for ordering ornaments and accessories for churches from representatives of contemporary Polish art.⁴⁸ Górzyński planned to begin taking stock after two years, because – as he wrote in a letter – at the time he was teaching a two-year art history course in the seminary, following which he hoped to gain qualified helpers. After this period, the future of conservation in the Diocese of Kujawy and Kalisz, hoped Górzyński, would be covered.⁴⁹

However, not all delegates of the Society wanted to do charity work. For instance, the renowned photographer Michał Greim⁵⁰ from Kamieniec Podolski willingly accepted the position of the Society's delegate, and recruited several new members. As part of a monument inventory, he sent rich photographic material to the Society, consisting partly of photographs taken specially for the Society while touring the area, and partly of copies of his old photos. In his letter to the Board, Greim meticulously lists the costs he had suffered in connection with the photos,⁵¹ clearly hoping to be paid. Apparently, the photographer's hints were not interpreted correctly, because in another letter he expressed his expectations with complete directness. Although he attached photographs with the idea to publish them in an album (one of the Society's publications), he clearly stressed that he does not consider this to be charity, but that he expected his pictures to bear the relevant logo, and to receive remuneration.⁵² Further correspondence suggests that he had a habit of sending the Society prints of his photos instead of membership fees.⁵³

However, Greim seems to be an exception. Those invited to be delegates of the Society either declined for various reasons (e.g. an individual named Al. Jasnowski

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ ANK, ref. 2621/6, Rev. Górzyński, to the Board of the Society for the Preservation of Monuments in Kraków, Włocławek, 5 May 1908.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Cf. J. Garztecki, *Mistrz zapomniany. O Michale Greimie z Kamieńca*, Kraków, 1972.

⁵¹ ANK, ref. 2621/6, M. Greim to Jan Chrzanowski, Kamieniec Podolski, 6/19 January 1903.

⁵² ANK, ref. 2621/63, M. Greim to Jan Chrzanowski, Kamieniec Podolski, 5/18 January 1903.

⁵³ Ibid., M. Greim to Józef Onyszkiewicz, Secretary of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, Kamieniec Podolski [11/24 October 1907(?)].

from Warsaw did not want to be a delegate, because – as he argued – he was not suitable for collecting fees from members, had no relevant connections, and did not really see the possibility of organising non-local groups, lectures or canvassing in Warsaw for a Kraków Society⁵⁴), or got enthusiastically involved. There were also cases of individuals contacting the Society with a request to make them delegates. For example, Stanisław Jarocki, a painter from Vilnius, wrote in 1901, just a few months after the Kraków Society was established, that he would like to have more news about its activities than what could be learned from local newspapers, and asked for its statute.⁵⁵ As he claimed, he would have a lot of interesting things for the Society from Vilnius. In another letter, he declared that he was willing to become the Society's delegate, especially that he already had some experience, having written about the preservation of monuments, and as evidence cited his articles for *Światowid* or *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*.⁵⁶ In the end, it turned out that he could not wait for the commission and the statute, he took matters into his own hands and managed to recruit a few people, he also sent his membership fee in the amount of 10 kronen in advance. It was a positive exception – as I have mentioned, the Society faced some problems with collecting fees from its members.

Sometimes, however, it was not delegates' ill will, but the lack of reliable information. This was the case of Krzysztof Kraszewski from Romanów, a nephew of the famous writer. When summoned by the Board to pay outstanding fees, he reacted indignantly, claiming that he had already paid them;⁵⁷ after a further exchange of correspondence it became clear that Kraszewski had confused the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art with the Kraków Society of the Friends of History and Monuments, to which he also belonged, and was therefore convinced that he had paid his fees. After explaining the matter, he settled his debts to the Society and remained its member.⁵⁸

The system of collecting fees by the delegates could, however, breed some abuse. The Society's materials contain also files of a criminal case. The secretary of the Society Jan Chrzanowski asked the criminal court to release all papers bearing the trademark of the Society or signatures of its members, which were found with a detainee accused of fraud. The court accepted the request, and the materials found on his person showed that he wanted to use his alleged membership to extort

⁵⁴ Ibid., ref. 2621/6, Al. Jasnowski [to the Board of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Warsaw, 24 September 1902.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Stanisław Jarocki [to the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], undated postcard, post stamp: Vilnius, 26 August 1901.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Stanisław Jarocki [to the Board of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Vilnius, 16 December 1901.

⁵⁷ Ibid., K[rzysztof] Kraszewski [to the Board of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Romanów, 12 October 1909.

⁵⁸ Ibid., K[rzysztof] Kraszewski [to the Board of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Romanów, 18 November 1909.

fees. We can read in the court document: “Accepting the application filed by the secretary of the Society Mr. Jan Chrzanowski on 22 November 1902 to release any papers found by Mikołaj Brzezicki (a.k.a. Bromicki) bearing either the Society’s trademark or signatures of its Board members, we send: 79 membership cards with Bromicki’s signatures, 18 clear membership cards, 15 covers, 7 lithographic copies of the statute, 2 invitations to the meetings of members, 1 receipt book of the Society with no. 18”.⁵⁹ It also turned out that the accused admitted to collecting membership fees from one person in the amount of 10 kronen. Although an even larger sum of money was found on him, the Society had no chance of recovering the fees, as the creditor of the arrested had a writ of execution for a much larger amount (420 kronen).⁶⁰ It seems, however, that it was an isolated incident, and that activities for the Society and delegate functions were treated as a patriotic activity for the common good.

Among the delegates there were also people who – although they treated the activity as an amateur hobby – could boast truly professional knowledge of the monuments in their region. One of them was Michał Rawicz Witanowski⁶¹ from Kłodawa in the Kalisz Gubernia. He had read about the creation of the Society in the journal *Kraj*, and in August 1901 wrote a letter to the Society asking for more information about its activities.⁶² He was already a member of the Numismatics and Archaeology Society in Kraków. The Board offered him a function of a delegate, Witanowski accepted and became its representative for the Koło County in the Kalisz Gubernia, and in the absence of other candidates was also willing to oversee the Łęczyca County in the same Gubernia, and the Kutno County in the Warsaw Gubernia. He paid his fees regularly, and recommended new members.⁶³

In one of his letters he emphasised the importance of the activities carried out by the Kraków Society, especially in the Kingdom of Poland, writing: “We feel the lack of any preservation of monuments of the past particularly strongly here, and if anything is done, it is casual – out of a sense of son’s duty to our Mother – without consistency between well-minded individuals”.⁶⁴ In one of the letters he

⁵⁹ Ibid., The Imperial and Royal National Criminal Court, Morelowski to the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, Kraków, 24 November 1902.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Michał Rawita Witanowski, bearer of the Rawicz coat of arms (Częstochowa, 1858 – Piotrków Trybunalski, 1943), Polish regionalist, historian and specialist in regional geography, a pharmacist by trade; wrote works on history of archaeology and ethnography of Greater Poland, Lesser Poland and the Sieradz area. In 1880–1907, he lived at Kłodawa, where he had a pharmacy and founded a circle of educational society (*Macierz Szkolna*); after: *Michał Rawita Witanowski*, https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micha%C5%82_Rawita_Witanowski (access: 4 September 2015).

⁶² ANK, ref. 2621/6, Michał Rawicz Witanowski [to Jerzy Mycielski], Kłodawa, Kalisz Gubernia, 14 August 1901.

⁶³ Ibid., Michał Rawicz Witanowski [to Jerzy Mycielski] Kłodawa, Kalisz Gubernia, 29 December 1901.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 14 December 1901.

also offered a detailed cataloguing order to be used by the delegates in preparing the inventories, and suggested creating simplified instructions for conservation, not just taking stock.⁶⁵ He cared for the development of the Society, not only in terms of its essence, but also organisation: he meticulously counted the fees from new members he recruited, and tried to propose as delegates people who were not just keen to act, but also had a certain level of necessary knowledge (he caused the Kraków Society e.g. to issue an invitation to the mentioned priest Górzyński, one of the most active delegates).⁶⁶

The Society also wanted to use its delegates to reach Poles who lived abroad. And so, for example, in Paris an active delegate of the Society was the son of the poet, Władysław Mickiewicz.⁶⁷ It seems that he treated his position not just as an honorary one, as he managed to win over several members of the Polish emigration, and fund the Society with contributions collected in Paris.⁶⁸ Delegates were also active in Vienna, where the function of a delegate was offered to the engineer Stanisław Rybicki, who at the time was an official in the Austrian Ministry of Transport, and in the future the director of the Austrian State Railways in Lviv.⁶⁹ He considered the offer to be an honour, and wrote back in the following way: “Honourable Sir, I consider the foundation of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, which you were kind enough to notify me of in your letter of the 6th of this month, a truly patriotic undertaking for which we owe the initiators our gratitude, in the first place to you, Honourable Sir. If the monuments of art and culture are for each nation a precious reminder of the past, then to us they are the more valuable, because they are the only tangible monuments of the faded glory. They can be compared with several pieces of old furniture, placed in the home of a poor family, who remembered better days and reverently keeps its modest belongings rescued from confusion and ruin”.⁷⁰

However, despite these lofty declarations we do not know the course of further cooperation between Stanisław Rybicki and the Kraków Society, as the next letter tells us that the official, living permanently in Vienna, was offered the function of a delegate to... Zakopane, about which he had serious reservations.⁷¹ Perhaps this was due to a mistake, which in such broad-reaching activities was difficult to avoid, or perhaps it was the effect of muddled organisation which could have weakened the Society's efficiency.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Michał Rawicz Witanowski to the Board of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, Kłodawa, Kalisz Gubernia, 23 October 1902.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Michał Rawicz Witanowski [to Jerzy Mycielski] Kłodawa, Kalisz Gubernia, 23 September 1902.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Władysław Mickiewicz [to Jerzy Mycielski], Paris, 13 June 1902.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 26 June 1903.

⁶⁹ S. Brzozowski, *Stanisław Rybicki*, in: IPSB, <http://www.ipsb.nina.gov.pl/index.php/a/stanislaw-rybicki#> (access: 10 September 2015).

⁷⁰ ANK, ref. 2621/6, Stanisław Rybicki [to Jerzy Mycielski], Vienna, 10 January 1902.

⁷¹ Ibid., 5 April 1902.

As I have mentioned, the Prussian partition had the fewest delegates and members of the Society. One of the few was Count Adam Sierakowski from Waplewo, a landowner and well-known social activist – his property became famous as a Polish cultural centre in Pomerania.⁷² It turned out, however, that Count Sierakowski also struggled with paying the membership fee. He probably received a letter regarding this matter from the Society, which hoped to recover outstanding payments from six years. Sierakowski reacted indignantly to the letter: he claimed that he could not at all recall joining The Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art. If there had been proof that he had paid at the moment of joining, he would have been ready to settle the amount due for the two previous years, the rest he considered to have lapsed. However, if it had turned out that he had not paid once, he would not have felt obliged to pay at all. At the same time, he assured that the objectives of the Society seem “very agreeable” to him, and he would be willing to join it again. However, he put forward certain conditions: due to the fact that – as he admitted himself – he belonged to “countless societies”, he was not able to remember all the deadlines. He therefore expected the management of the Kraków Society to remind him of payment each time, or collect it in the form of postal advance. At the end of the letter, the count hinted that any delays in membership fees are the Society’s exclusive fault, because other “properly run” societies take care of reminding their members about fee payments.⁷³ The above letter may serve as further evidence that the association founded by Jerzy Mycielski, despite a large number of members from the high society, had problems with collecting membership fees. Perhaps indeed one of the reasons were organisational problems.

In some cases, an individual interested in the function of a delegate contacted the Society themselves, having already recruited a group of members convinced of the importance of monuments for Poles – particularly in the Western Krai. One of such delegates was Wandalin Szukiewicz (1852–1919), an archaeologist, ethnographer and social activist from the Lithuanian and Belarusian territories, a cousin of the Young Poland writer and art historian Maciej Szukiewicz.⁷⁴ In January 1902, shortly after receiving the news of the establishment of the Kraków Society, Wandalin Szukiewicz wrote an enthusiastic letter, in which he spared no praise for its founders, and stressed the importance of the field which it was to deal with. At the same time, he expressed a desire to become a delegate of the Society, and wanted to report a larger group of individuals from Vilnius and the Grodno Gubernia interested in the protection of Polish monuments

⁷² A. Chodubski, *Adam Sierakowski*, in: IPSB, <http://www.ipsb.nina.gov.pl/index.php/a/adam-sierakowski#> (access: 10 September 2015).

⁷³ ANK, ref. 2621/6, Count Adam Sierakowski to the secretary [of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art], Waplewo, 17 October 1909.

⁷⁴ M. Blombergowa, “Wandalin Szukiewicz”, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, 49 (2013–2014), pp. 211–213.

in those regions.⁷⁵ After he was accepted to the Society, he treated his duties very seriously.

In another letter he presented a list of five candidates for delegates to the Society. They were far from random because, by his own admission, he first gathered opinions about them and checked their competence. He also informed the Society that in Vilnius “something of a local Society for the preservation of local monuments” is being formed, and hoped that through this initiative he would be able to find even more collaborators for the Kraków Society.⁷⁶ In subsequent years, Szukiewicz continued to actively support the Society founded by Mycielski: he paid his fees, canvassed for new members, participated in the studies of the Trakai Castle. Detailed reports from this activity were published within the releases of the Polish Society for the Preservation of the Monuments of Culture and Art.⁷⁷ He also became involved in the research into other monuments in Vilnius, organised by representatives of the Kraków Society (including conservation of the Church of St. Michael).⁷⁸

The above examples of correspondence from members and delegates of the Society do not cover all the matters, of course, however it seems that they provide a relatively good picture of the three-partition activities. As mentioned earlier, the correspondence often contains information that may suggest certain amount of organisational disarray (e.g. the priest Zdzisław Zakrzewski from Poznań Province volunteered to become a member and delegate of the Society in June 1906, he even paid his fee, but received no response until October;⁷⁹ Stanisław Tarnowski from the Turczyńce estate in response to reminders explained that it was not his fault that members he referred did not pay fees, as he had sent the Society a book of receipts so the accounts could be checked over two years earlier, and it had not yet been returned;⁸⁰ the list of examples goes on). Perhaps with slightly better organisation the Society would have performed much better, especially since the majority of members and delegates belonged to social elites, and therefore had the necessary means to achieve even the most ambitious objectives aimed at preserving Polish monuments.

Even when analysing the address books of the members of the Kraków Society, we can tell that non-local members are mainly aristocrats, landowners, the

⁷⁵ ANK, ref. 2621/6, Wandalin Szukiewicz [to Jerzy Mycielski], Vilnius, 29 January 1902.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 6/19 April 1902.

⁷⁷ M.M. Blombergowa, *Wandalin Szukiewicz. Syn Ziemi Lidzkiej – Badacz i Społecznik (1852–1919)*, Warszawa–Lida, 2010, p. 43 (http://pawet.net/files/w_szukiewicz.pdf [access: 13 September 2015]).

⁷⁸ Protocol from the 5th General Assembly of the members of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art, 10 March 1906, in: *Book of General Assembly Protocols*.

⁷⁹ ANK, ref. 2621/6, Rev. Zdzisław Zakrzewski to the Society, Golejewko, p. Chajno (Rawicz) [Poznan Province], 30 October 1906.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Stanisław Tarnowski [to the Board of the Society], Turczyńce, p. Satanów, Podolia Gubernia, 16 November 1906.

intelligentsia (doctors, lawyers, writers, professors, artists), as well as (although less numerous) representatives of the local elite, small communities, e.g. teachers, priests or pharmacists.⁸¹ Out of non-local members and delegates, most (except Galicia) came from the Kingdom of Poland and the Western Krai, and only a few from the Prussian territories.⁸²

Regardless of the objections to the running of the Society, it should be stressed that it achieved several spectacular successes, presented in the reports published each year, such as the aforementioned saving the Trakai Castle, restoring the Church of St. Michael in Vilnius, restoring epitaphs of Kraków bishops in the Church of St. Francis, and “maintaining the ruins” of the Odrzykon Castle. We also should not forget its merits for Kraków itself. Working jointly with other Kraków societies, it contributed to saving historical buildings next to St. Giles Church in Kraków.⁸³

The story of defending another important monument, the Krzysztofory Palace in Kraków, is somewhat more complicated, as without the personal intervention of the President Jerzy Mycielski it would probably not have survived. When, in 1912, the palace, located in Kraków’s Main Square, became the property of a construction company which was planning to demolish it, the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art vigorously joined its defence. One of the Society’s members, art historian Franciszek Klein, dedicated the Krzysztofory Palace a special, richly illustrated publication, emphasising not only the artistic value of the object, but also its importance for the national heritage: “In every country there are buildings which form the inviolable property of the whole society. They are linked with the history of the city, with its art and culture so strongly that they are the living document of the nation’s past. Sanctified by historical tradition, surrounded by general respect – such buildings last for centuries, not changing much. Such inviolable property of the nation is the Krzysztofory Palace in Kraków”.⁸⁴ Klein also rejected the views of the construction company, which was apparently counting on large profits after the demolition of the palace and unequivocally stated that “the Krzysztofory Palace, the largest and grandest house of old Kraków, as a relic of the past with unique importance to the nation, must be maintained in full, and on its restoration, which can be carried out only by an outstanding professional talent, the relevant authorities should make every effort so that the monumental character of this object does not suffer”.⁸⁵

However, in 1914 the fate of the famous monument hung in the balance, as the city authorities finally approved its demolition. What helped at the last

⁸¹ Cf. The contact book of members... for 1903; *ibid.*, ref. 2621/8, List of members for 1908 [1908–1922/1923].

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*, ref. 2621/26, correspondence regarding the saving of historic buildings near the Church of St. Giles in Kraków.

⁸⁴ F. Klein, *Pałac “Pod Krzysztofory” w Krakowie*, Kraków, 1914, p. 3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

moment was a personal intervention of Jerzy Mycielski at the heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand, who forbade the destruction of the palace.⁸⁶ The genesis of close relationships between the Society's president and the heir to the throne was supposedly a favour: Count Mycielski, an avid genealogist, helped prove connections of the heir'smorganatic wife Countess Chotek to the Jagiellonians.⁸⁷

During World War I, the Society did not suspend its operations completely, trying even in those difficult conditions to act for the preservation of Polish monuments, which did not avoid the war. In 1916, after only a year's break, a general assembly of members was called to address the issue of war losses and the need to rescue Polish cultural heritage.⁸⁸ The Society tried to raise funds to rescue monuments among the general public, and when this brought no measurable results, it prepared an appropriate appeal to the Polish National Committee in Paris, but without any particular effect. Practical efforts were also taken, such as the rescue of the destroyed collegiate basilica at Wislica, or cataloguing bells requisitioned by Austrian authorities.⁸⁹

After World War I, the Society did not work quite as energetically and vigorously, and the number of members dropped. Protocols from general assemblies⁹⁰ and meetings of the Board⁹¹ end in 1923, but it seems that the Society operated until the death of its President and founder in 1928.⁹²

The proposed transpartitional programme of the Society seems to have succeeded only partially, but given the political situation it must be considered a big

⁸⁶ Klein, *Notatnik Krakowski*, pp. 12–14.

⁸⁷ "This initially purely ceremonial or conventional acquaintance changed over the years into a close, and even warm friendship. Its foundation lay in a great favour which Mycielski had done to the heir to the throne. As is well known, the archduke Ferdinand d'Este had committed, against the will of the emperor and the entire court, a misalliance by marrying Countess Chotek. Although admittedly the family came from old Czech nobility, it could not, of course, match the Habsburgs and did not even have the title *ebenbürtig* (of equal birth), given to a dozen oldest aristocratic families in the former Austrian monarchy, which aligned them with the ruling family. For this reason, the Archduke and his wife were prone to much unpleasantness and humiliations from the court etiquette. Meanwhile, Mycielski found information in old annals and chronicles that the noble family of Chotek was in the second half of the 15th century related to none less than the Jagiellonians. Although the relatives were many times removed, the link was there. Apparently this was enough for the Habsburg family to stop looking askance at the wife of the heir to the throne, and the old emperor appointed her to her rightful place in the hierarchy of the court, giving her the title of Duchess of Hohenberg", *ibid.*, pp. 60–61.

⁸⁸ The Protocol of the 19th General Assembly of the Society members, 19 February 1916, in: *The Book of General Assembly Protocols*.

⁸⁹ ANK, ref. 2621/11, Report of the activities of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art for 1916–1919, in: *Protocols and reports of the activities of the Society and official trips of the members delegated by the Board*.

⁹⁰ *The Book of General Assembly Protocols*.

⁹¹ ANK, ref. 2621/10, *The Book of General Assembly Protocols of the Board of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art*.

⁹² Cf. ANK, ref. 2621/2, *Registration of the Society after World War I*.

achievement. Perhaps its excessive elitism hindered the promotion of the ideas and activities of the Society in wider social circles, but the most influential part of the population became familiar with its objectives and principles that guided the operations of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments. Hard work of enthusiastic amateurs – art historians or archaeologists – contributed to cataloguing precious monuments of Polish culture and art, and thus often to their preservation. It must be emphasised that it was the first society for the preservation of monuments on Polish territories. The Warsaw Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments, inspired by the Kraków organisation, was founded in 1906, and the Lviv Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Art and Culture (whose statute was based almost entirely on the Kraków one) was established in 1916.

It is worth noting that although the Society founded by Jerzy Mycielski lost some members and delegates from the Russian partition following the establishment of its Warsaw counterpart, it never treated the Warsaw Society as its competitor. It made attempts to cooperate across the partition borders. Among the documents of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in Kraków, there is a rough draft of the letter to the Warsaw Society, a report on current activities in the Kingdom of Poland and in Lithuania. In the conclusion, the authors wrote: “This picture shows, however, that we have not cordoned ourselves off along the border, and it may also be the beginning of more intensive work in the future. We are encouraged to draw this conclusion also by the kindly reply of your Honourable Board, which we want to be the basis for further joint action of the two Societies”.⁹³ The year 1906 did not therefore draw a line under activities in the Russian partition, where representatives of the Kraków Society were still trying to inventory and, as far as possible, preserve monuments of Polish culture and art. It seems that, when assessing the achievements of the Kraków Society and admiring the zeal with which some delegates set about their mission, clearly treating it as a patriotic duty, we cannot forget that the background for these attitudes was the discussion around concepts such as culture and national art, which had been continuing among the intellectual elite for a long time, and the Polish monuments were an integral part of the national heritage – not only reminders of the glorious past, but often an integral part of the concept of national style, which was to belong to the future.

It seems that this in fact pioneering work of the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art and an attempt towards a trans-partitional agreement of elites in the name of higher values is relatively little appreciated in the literature, therefore all the more worthy of a reminder.

Translated by Damian Jasiński

⁹³ Ibid., ref. 2621/11, Protocols and reports of the activities of the Society and official trips of members delegated by the Board.

The Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art in Kraków before World War I – attempts at transpartition activities

Abstract

In 1902 in Kraków the Polish Society for the Preservation of Monuments of Culture and Art was established with the purpose of protection of all Polish monuments in all the Polish lands under three partitions. The group of founders was dominated by professors of the Jagiellonian University and the Academy of Fine Arts, members of the Polish aristocracy and students from the families of landowners. The Society's president was Jerzy Mycielski, an art historian and professor of the JU. The main difference distinguishing the Society from others was its activity within the territories of three partitions set forth in the statute. For this reason, an important place within the Society's structure was occupied by its non-local members who were to recruit new members and collect membership fees, but also to make inventories of Polish historical monuments and take measures for their preservation. Their activities are reflected in a collection of their correspondence preserved in the National Archives in Kraków. Most members were from Galicia, from the Kingdom of Poland and from annexed territories. The letters reveal their zeal and dedication to their tasks; and it should be emphasised here that usually they were amateurs, lovers of history or archaeology, such as the family of Chrzanowski from the Lublin Gubernia, or Father Górzyński from the Kalisz Gubernia, Michał Rawicz Witanowski from Kłodawa, or Wandalin Szukiewicz from Vilnius.

The Society, despite organisational problems, had several important successes, such as saving the castle at Trakai, restoration of St Michael's Church in Vilnius, or salvation from demolition of the Krzysztofory Palace in Kraków. Despite the fact that three-partition operations specified in the statute were carried out only partially, the activities of the Society could be regarded as successful, for it was the first institution protecting Polish historical monuments on the Polish lands under the three partitioning powers. The article is to remind of this pioneering activity in the context of transpartitional cooperation in the name of protection and preservation of Polish cultural heritage.

Краковское Общество по опеке над польскими памятниками культуры и искусства до Первой мировой войны - попытка транстриграничной деятельности в аннектированных частях Польши

Аннотация

Краков на рубеже XIX и XX веков был важным научным, культурным и артистическим центром, в котором находились штаб-квартиры многих организаций и обществ. К концу XIX века в Галиции приобрели популярность лозунги о защите памятников старины. Тогда были основаны м. пр. Гроно консерваторув (Общество реставраторов) или Общество любителей истории и памятников Кракова. Однако чувствовалась необходимость создать общество, которое радиусом своего действия охватывало бы все польские памятники старины независимо от границ, разделявших польскую территорию. Таков был генезис Общества по опеке над польскими памятниками культуры и искусства, образованного в 1902 г.

Среди основателей преобладали профессора Ягеллонского университета и Академии Художеств, представители аристократии, а также студенты из помещичьих семей. За все время существования Общества, его председателем был Ежи Мыцельский – искусствовед, профессор Ягеллонского университета. Описываемое Общество отличалось от

других, прежде всего, записанной в уставе деятельностью во всех трех аннектированных частях Польши. В связи с чем, важное место в структуре Общества занимали приезжие делегаты. Их задачей было вербовать новых членов, собирать членские взносы, а также инвентаризировать польские памятники старины и предпринимать конкретные действия по их защите. Картину деятельности этих делегатов рисует собрание переписки, находящееся в фонде ТOnPZKiS в Государственном архиве в Кракове. Больше всего приезжих членов Общества было из Галиции, Царства Польского а также из Западного края (т. н. «отнятых территорий»). В переписке содержится множество примеров полной энтузиазма и самоотвержения деятельности приезжих делегатов. Надо подчеркнуть, что обычно это были не профессионалы, любители истории или археологии. Можно привести в пример семью Хржановских из Люблинской губернии, ксендза Гужинского из Калишской губернии, Михала Равич Витановского из Клодавы или Вандалина Шукевича из Вильны.

Несмотря на организационные проблемы, Общество в своей деятельности добилось нескольких существенных успехов – нпр. спасения замка в Троках, реставрации костела св. Михаила в Вильне или защиты от сноса краковского дворца «Кциштофоры». Задуманная в уставе, трансграничная деятельность на аннектированных территориях Польши лишь частично удалась, но учитывая организационные трудности возникшие в результате м. пр. политики разделивших Польшу государств, ее можно считать успешной. Это было первое Общество по опеке над памятниками старины на польских землях. Статья является попыткой напомнить об этой новаторской деятельности в контексте трансграничного сотрудничества во имя идеи защиты польского культурного наследия.

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