

# Paulina Florjanowicz

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## Dear Readers

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Ochrona Zabytków 62/4 (247), 4

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2009

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Dear Readers,

Undoubtedly none of us will deny that the most pleasant part of the job of a historian, an art historian or an archaeologist is the moment of direct contact with an authentic witness of the past, a historic substance constituting a material testimony of bygone times. Particularly thrilling is the possibility of discovering something new on our own; hence long studies and extensive inquiries. Readers of "Ochrona Zabytków" have the opportunity to learn about surprising results of such research.

But conservation means much more than cognition and analysis. It is mainly a matter of protection and the will to preserve traces of the past for posterity. Therefore, it is so important to be able to perceive historic monuments in a wider context of contemporary reality. Such an analysis of threats and opportunities is extremely difficult, but necessary in order to preserve this small group of remains of ancient centuries.

This task is particularly difficult nowadays, when we come up increasingly often with a previously unknown question: "what for?". Since the beginning of existence of the Polish school of conservation, its main representatives have focused on the question: "how?". How to protect monuments? How to analyse them? How to document them?

Today we can do nothing but appreciate their efforts and brilliant achievements. It is also hard to complain that the answer to the question "what for?" was not sought in the past. What was the purpose of protection, research and documentation? What was the purpose of preserving relics of the past for posterity? Attempts to answer these questions were not made, because such questions themselves were treated as rhetorical.

Unfortunately, this approach is no longer self-explanatory today. "What for" is not a rhetorical question any more. Those who ask it more frequently and loudly expect an answer. If they do not receive one, they think that there is probably no reasonable justification for spending relatively little, but nevertheless public money for the preservation of all of these relics and antiques.

This is why the world of conservation is changing its image. Educational efforts aimed at increasing social awareness play an increasingly important role and are a key part of the effective heritage protection strategy today.

We should, therefore, appreciate the professionalism of research works carried out with passion for many years that are described in an article about the Venerable Onuphrius Orthodox Church in Posada Rybotycka. At the same time, it is necessary to take notice of dramatic consequences of the absence of the subject of protection in local law, which results in the disappearance of historical buildings even in Warsaw. This problem is described in an article about the area of the Mokotów Fort.

Attention is also paid here to monuments that are relatively young and probably less spectacular, but extremely important from the perspective of source value; they are described in a text about the Old Polish Industrial Region.

The above content may suggest an extremely pessimistic vision of the future of our heritage, but, on the other hand, things do not seem to look that bad if we can greet our readers again in a new issue of our magazine. We are absolutely certain that the group of persons who treat "what for?" as a rhetorical question is still large. We only have to double our efforts to provide a satisfactory answer to those who do ask this question.

I hope you will enjoy reading our magazine!



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Director



of the National Heritage Board of Poland