Foreword

The history of the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków has long been interwoven with the abundantly symbolical and meaningful space of Main Market Square (Rynek Główny) in Kraków. That bond has been represented by two landmarks of the plaza: the Town Hall Tower with its monumental outline, a branch of the Museum since 1968 and one of its best attended venues, and the stately edifice of the Krzysztofory Palace, the main seat of our institution since 1965. Starting from 2010, the Museum will be associated with yet another site in the Square: the underground vaults unearthed during the archaeological excavations carried out in the years 2005–2010. The municipal authorities have intended the vaults for another sphere of activity of the Museum and a part of the amazing story about the phenomenon of the legacy embedded in the name "Kraków".

The discussions and controversies that accompanied the archaeological survey were decidedly cut short by the Mayor of Kraków, Professor Jacek Majchrowski. In his bylaw dated 3 August 2010, the Mayor confirmed that the tourist trail being an outcome of the long years of works in the vaults would be handed over to the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków as an important element of the narrative communicated through the structure of the Museum. Independently of the said regulation, Chief Małopolska Conservator Jan Janczykowski, supervisor of the said archaeo-logical works, decided on behalf of the State Treasury, i.e. the legal owner of all the "treasures of the past" buried in the ground, that all the historical items unearthed in the Square shall be put at the disposal of the Museum.

On the occasion of opening the tourist trail in the vaults to the public on 24 September 2010, the guests to the inau-guration were presented with a special two-in-one publication. Bound in a light blue cover, that amazing keepsake consisted of a reprint of the memorable monograph on the Cloth Hall written by Władysław Łuszczkiewicz and published by the Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa (Society of Enthusiasts of History and Monuments of Kraków) in 1899 (*Sukiennice krakowskie. Dzieje gmachu i jego obecnej przebudowy* [The Cloth Hall in Kraków. A history of the building and its contemporary alteration], Biblioteka Krakowska [Kraków Library] no. 11), and *Sukiennice* [The Cloth Hall], a new publication written specifically for the occasion by Katarzyna Siwiec and Leszek Mazan (Kraków 2010). In his preface to the book, the Mayor of Kraków wrote: "I shall warmly acknowledge […] everyone who has contributed […] to the emergence of the new branch of the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków".

Bearing in mind Mayor's wish and the lines quoted above, the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków has decided to recapitulate the scientific, creative and organizational efforts connected with the development of the new museum by devoting the current issue of its scientific bulletin to that enterprise. We have been governed by three reasons when preparing this issue of *Krzysztofory*. First of all, being the eventual host of the venue, we are obliged to document its existence and functioning. Second of all, we wish to join the Mayor in his acknowledges by expressing our gratitude to everyone who has added to converting the underground vaults in Main Market Square in Kraków into a sphere of activity pursued by a cultural institution. Thirdly, the Museum has significantly contributed to the completion of the project with its research and planning works. Even though our concept was not implemented to a notable degree, as museum professionals who have devoted last few years of our work to this venue we still feel jointly responsible for the unusual space of Main Market Square – the *Forum Polonorum*.

Human memory is ephemeral, while the written word lasts. It is the mission of all museums in the world to convey heritage of the past to future generations. This idea has also motivated us to publish this issue of the scientific periodical of the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków.

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