

ARCHAEOLOGICAL-ARCHITECTONIC DISCOVERIES AND EXPOSITIONS IN WROCLAW

The destruction of Wrocław, a city changed into a fortress that endured a three-month siege in 1945 and was ruined in more than 65 per cent, involved great losses in the cultural objects of this historical place.

The lengthy post-war reconstruction of the historical city centre proceeded with various intensity and followed changing concepts. Despite obvious achievements in the restoration of the most important sections of the Old Town and of the most valuable architectonic relics, the city never regained her former splendour. Many of the lost objects could not be recovered or even reproduced. The gaps caused by destruction in the rows of Old Town buildings were filled with new houses of a more or less effective architecture, including single renovated, rebuilt or often reconstructed architectonic relics.

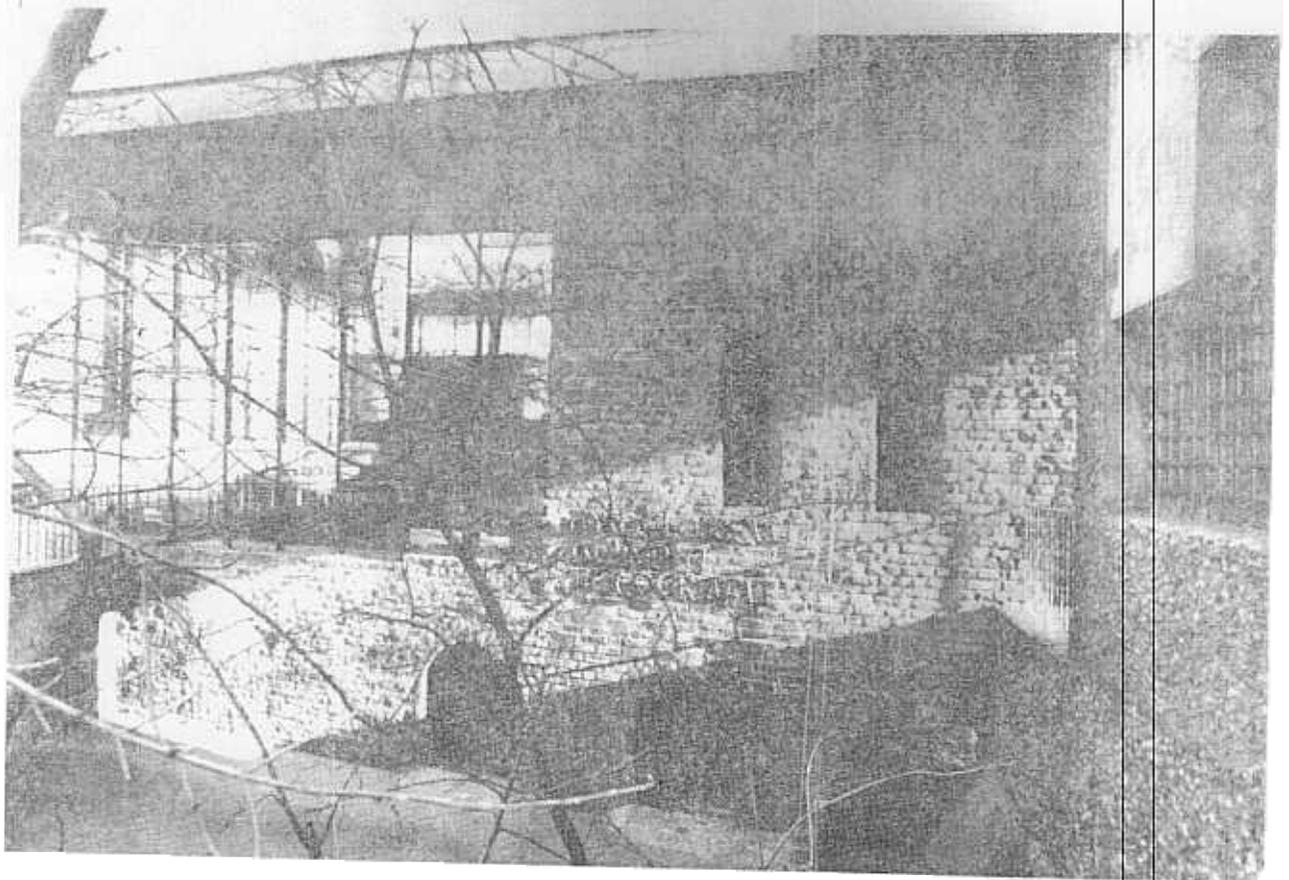
Nonetheless, these losses in the cultural heritage have been compensated with discoveries, the conservation and exposition of so far unknown architectural objects and relics, mainly from the early Middle Ages. Relics from that period hidden under the ground, concealed or obliterated by later, modern redevelopment, incited particular interest as regards their aesthetic and emotional substance and also as evidence of history of material culture. Some discoveries have been made as a result of systematic archaeological works endeavouring to elucidate certain problems concerning the origin of the Polish State, others were the result of earthworks at building sites and road constructions. They often brought to light valuable architectonic relics buried beneath one to three metres of rubble and soil accumulated through ages.

Many discoveries were made during construction and renovation works, when removed structures or floors revealed fragments of walls or architectonic details disclosing so far unknown stages of the historical development of the building. These were usually ruins and fragments requiring conservation and a suitable introduction into the composition of the architecture of a building interior or the urban landscape.

More than once this was a new landscape replacing the destroyed, historical prospect, while adopted urbanistic and architectonic solutions not always favoured the exposition of old relics. Many of the discovered relics were only of a scientific value, they were unsuitable for exhibition due to aesthetic-architectonic, technical or functional reasons. But the situation was reversed when simple relics, for instance fragments of a gothic brick wall or stone detail became elements enriching the modest and simplified facades of old buildings thus demonstrating their historical origin. Details of foreign relics discovered at reconstructions of destroyed buildings were often also utilized and built into exhibition pieces or facades. This has been done frequently in Wrocław.

The conservation and exposition of discovered architectonic fragments from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was carried out traditionally "in situ", in specially built subterranean vaults, in walls and floors of newly constructed interiors, free-standing pieces on land surface and fragments in facades.

In the conservation process of brick materials there was no need to enrich its structure, it was merely cleaned and insulated against moisture. If the object was to remain exposed to the weather it was necessary to protect

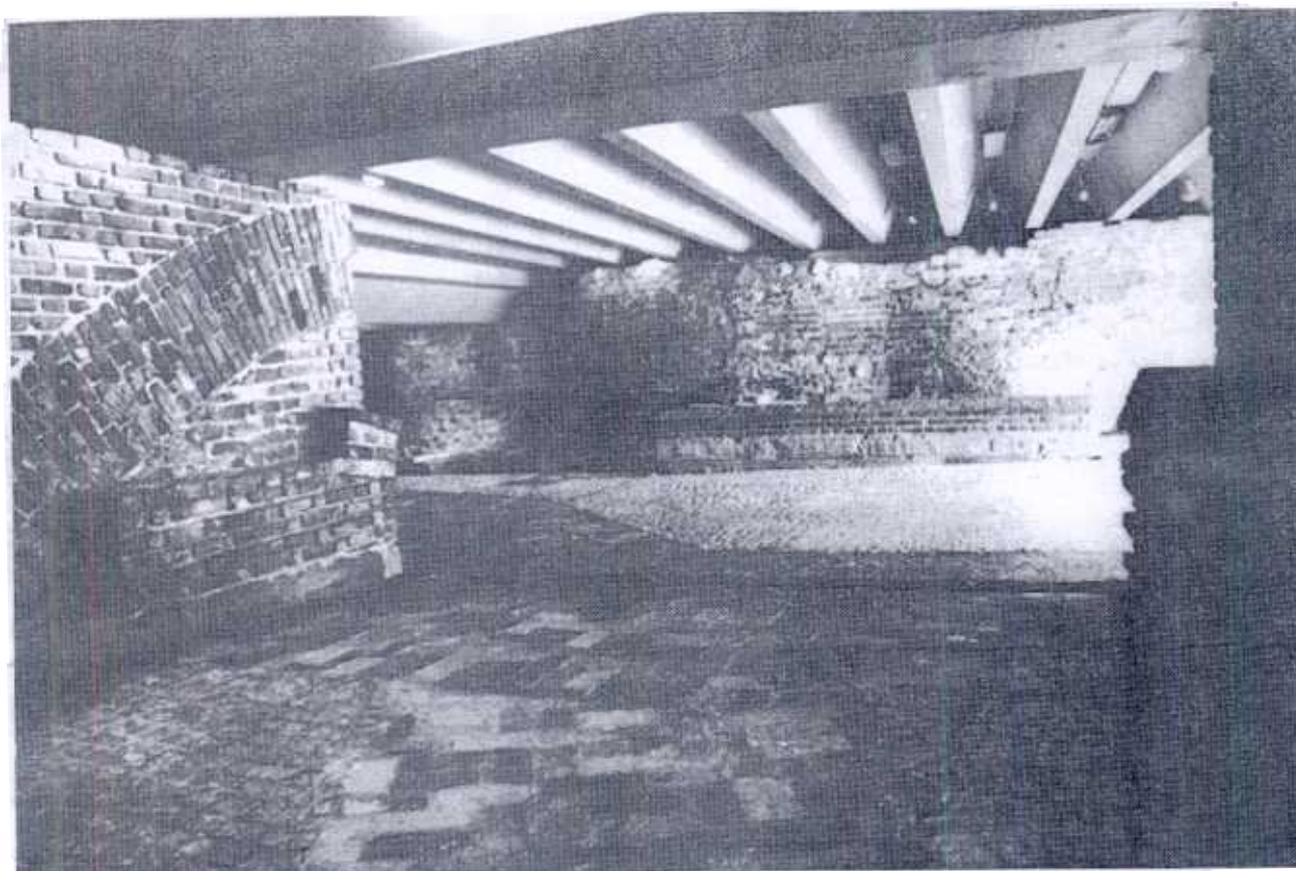


1. Wrocław - a house from the beginning of the thirteenth century at Nankier Square. Remains of the facade supplemented with glass are exposed in a depression. Photo E. Małachowicz, 1986

the wall coping by levelling, sealing and to provide means to carry rain water away. Fragments of plaster and polychromy usually required conservation and fixing. Stone details, in general sandstone, required in certain cases a reinforcing of the structure which was done by saturation with a solution of epoxy resins and also a hydrophobization of the surface.

Another, more difficult problem was the conservation of discovered ninth to tenth century relics of wooden architecture, mainly carcasses of buildings and constructions of fortification walls once surrounding the city and the borough, at present on Ostrów Tumski. It was impossible so far to carry out in situ conservations due to building plans on the investigated area and also because of technical difficulties. These relics have been disassembled and preserved in laboratories where they await a setting up and exposition in an appropriate pavilion on Ostrów Tumski.

The earliest discoveries made in 1949-1950 during researches in the Cathedral on Ostrów Tumski revealed, besides scientific information, remains of a Romanesque crypt beneath the presbytery and several dispersed architectonic details from that period. These relics have been preserved beneath the presbytery in a subterranean vault prepared for this purpose. Exposed objects include remains of walls, column bases, stone blocks and details embedded in side walls which at present support the gothic presbytery. We are collecting



2. Wrocław - the interior of an underground passage beneath the former Oława Gate. The walls are constructed from walls of mediaeval fortifications and the silhouettes of missing walls have been marked with brick bands on paved surfaces. Photo E. Małachowicz, 1996

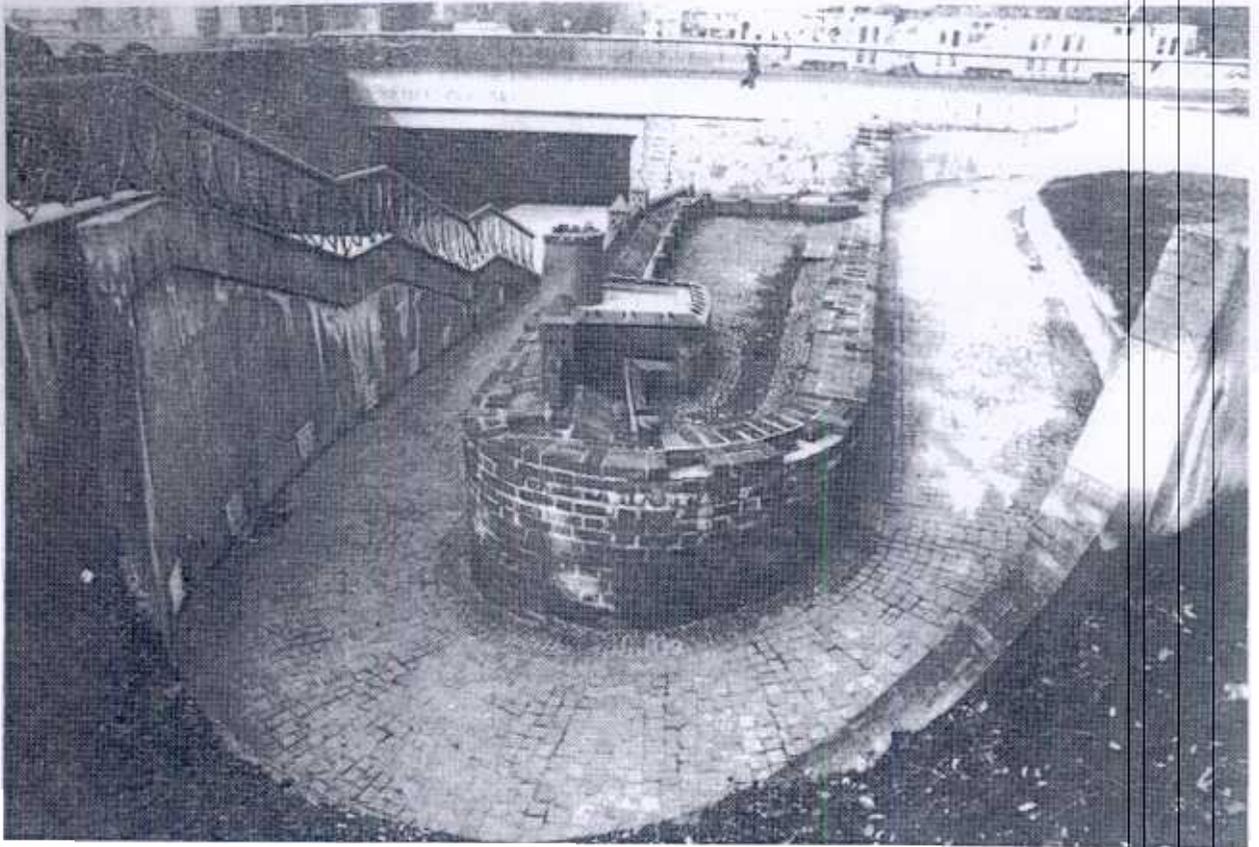
the remaining architectonic details from the Romanesque cathedral and preparing an exposition.

Following this first in Wrocław exposition crypt a similar one was built in St Mary's Church on the Sand Islet. It presents the remains of two development stages of the Romanesque architecture of this church. Another relic, a tympanum, remained in the above-ground part close to the entrance to the crypt.

Further similar discoveries and an exposition in a complex of underground rooms have been made in St Adalbert's Church where besides the remains of church walls from the beginning of the thirteenth century researchers disclosed a part of a cloister of a unique architecture and position.

The recent discoveries of Romanesque relics underneath the presbytery of St Elisabeth's Church and beneath the presbytery of St. Vincent's Church inclined researchers to preserve and expose these valuable architectonic fragments also in subterranean rooms - these works are being realized at present.

A role similar to those vaults and subterranean rooms was played - in the exposition of discovered relic of medieval fortification architecture - by the interiors of underground passages underneath modernized communication arteries where once the city gates - Oławska and St. Nicholas - had been.



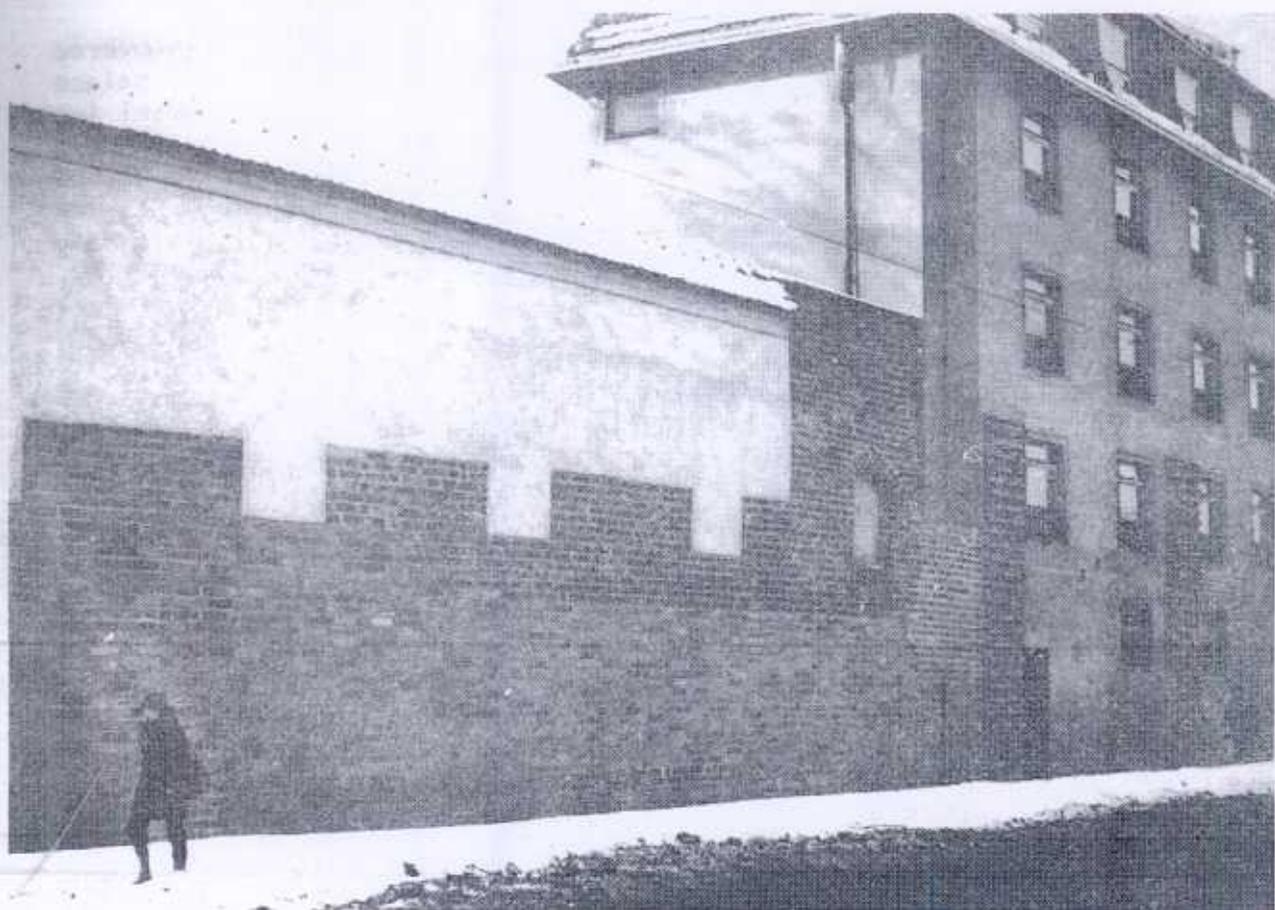
3. Wrocław - entrance /stairs and ramp/ to an underground passage beneath the former Oława Gate. A model reconstruction of this section of fortifications together with the gate has been placed on orillon platforma relics. Photo E. Małachowicz, 1986

Large relics of extensive fortifications at the former Oławska Gate, comprising gate-walls, curtain-walls of external fortifications and walls protecting the platform gate used as supports for the roof of this interior are also exposition objects. Forms of modern architecture are represented here only by roofs and stairs.

There is a different aspect as regards the exposition of relics of fortifications at the former St. Nicholas' Gate in an underground passage beneath the present day First May Square. Modern architecture surround at one wall only the remains of two turrets which in the old times protected the gate and antegate from the outside, separated from the interior as a whole by a special depression in the floor.

In order to elucidate exhibited relics it is planned to make a model reconstruction of the gate complex - similar to the one existing at the passage below the Oławska Gate.

The remains of those two gates and several relics of medieval fortifications exhibited in open space represent so far unknown valuable relics of medieval town fortifications. A fragment of the oldest fortification wall with a thirteenth century bastion has been discovered and exposed at present day Krasiński Str. The bastion has been adapted to cultural purposes.



4. Wrocław - remains of the first city wall from the thirteenth century exposed on the facades of houses at Grodzka Steet, Photo E. Małachowicz, 1986

A large part of a bastion, known as "Bernardine", from the end of the fifteenth century was discovered near by at Słowacki Str. in 1967 during excavations for the construction of a hotel. Besides conservation works the exposition of those fortifications as a whole required considerable earthworks and site planning of the surrounding area in the vicinity of the former moat.

In 1983, as a result of investigations carried out at the site of the former brick bastion on the Oder, researchers discovered a considerable part of its architecture dated to the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries. These remains are at present the object of conservation works. Remains of this bastion - casemates and flank - with relics of the medieval gate, will be adapted to usable purposes, including a cafe.

Copious remains of a thirteenth century house - a unique architectural example from that period in Wrocław - have also been adapted to practical use. Discovered in the rubble of cellars and walls remaining from destroyed buildings at the Nankier Square, the house was preserved, the missing parts of walls were supplemented in the form of glazing on a steel construction and covered with a roof plate. It now serves as an exhibition gallery.

Adapted to similar purposes have been the underground rooms discovered beneath the house at the Market Square no. 17, in the former bishop's palace and the present-day house for pensioners at Cathedral Str. on the Tumski Islet. These interiors buried for a long time and with partly destroyed walls were adapted for a club - after their exposition, conservation and the replacement of indispensable construction fragments.

The interior of many churches, such as St. Idzi's, St. Adalbert's, Holy Mary's or St. Peter and Paul's have been - owing to studies and discoveries - enriched with new fragments of architecture and plastic ornamentation. Particularly valuable were: a pillar of a bipartite rood screen, the decorations in the presbytery, the reading room and the central pillar supporting the vault - architectonic details unique in Wrocław.

Particularly valuable are finds of twelfth to thirteenth century architectonic relics made during years of researches in the area of the former ducal castle on the Tumski Islet. Discoveries included many remains of castle buildings destroyed in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries: fortification walls, the palace, the abbey, three chapels and fragments of timber-earth ramparts of the castellan stronghold from the eleventh to twelfth centuries. The remains of this castle have besides scientific and aesthetic values also a considerable historical and emotional significance which was decisive in their careful conservation and exposition. The partly realized project provides for several expositions of under- and above-ground relics and the management of the entire site of the castle indicating outlines of the old building.

Other discoveries, exposed on the facades of burgher houses, include fragments of their medieval architecture - for instance: Nankier Square no.16, Market Square no.3 and others.

In some cases, for example at Szewska Str. 35, Igielna Str., the exposition of medieval relics does not seem to be quite substantial and comprehensible, but it adds to the perceptible accomplishments in this specific realm of conservation activities in Wrocław.

These activities will be continued. On the basis of Wrocław's experiences and studies researchers plan similar works in other towns where relics of architecture may be found. Exposition methods are also subject to evolution, from the most simple interiors to more effective architectonic forms providing a cover of background for exhibited ancient objects or relics.

ARCHEOLOGICAL-ARCHITECTONIC DISCOVERIES AND EXPOSITIONS IN WROCŁAW

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The conservation and exposition of discovered architectonic fragments from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was carried out "in situ", in specially built subterranean vaults, in walls and floors of newly constructed interiors, free-standing pieces on land surface and fragments in facades.

The earliest discoveries made in 1949-1950 during researches in the Cathedral on Tumski Islet revealed, besides scientific information, remains of a Romanesque crypt beneath the presbytery and several dispersed architectonic details from that period. Following this first in Wrocław exposition crypt a similar one was built in St Mary's Church on the Sand Islet. The recent discoveries of Romanesque relic underneath the presbytery of St Elisabeth's Church and beneath the presbytery of St Vincent's Church are preserved and exposed its architectonic fragments also in subterranean rooms.

The discovered remains of two-gates: Oławska and St Nicholas, exposed in the interiors of underground passages and several relics of medieval fortifications exhibited in open space represent so far unknown valuable relics of medieval town fortifications. A fragment of the oldest fortification wall from the thirteenth century has been discovered and exposed at present day Grodzka Str. A large part of a bastion, known as "Bernardine", from the end of the fifteenth century was discovered near by at Słowacki Street in 1967 during excavations for the construction of a hotel. In 1983 were discovered valuable relics at the site of the former bastion on the Oder, which will be adapted to usable purposes, including a cafe.

Adapted to cultural purposes have been the underground rooms discovered beneath the house at the Market Square no. 17, in the former bishop's palace and the house for pensioners at Cathedral Street on the Tumski Islet.

Particularly valuable are finds of twelfth to thirteenth century architectonic relics made during years of researches in the area of the former ducal castle on the Tumski Islet. The remains of this castle have besides scientific and aesthetic value also a considerable historical and emotional significance which was decisive in their conservation and exposition.

Edmund MAŁACHOWICZ

LES DECOUVERTES DES FOUILLES ARCHEOLOGIQUES ET LEUR EXPOSITION A WROCLAW

En 1945 Wrocław a subi de graves pertes et destructions à cause du siège de la ville et des hostilités, surtout dans le domaine du patrimoine culturel. Malgré les restaurations des monuments détruits, la ville n'est jamais revenue à son ancienne splendeur. Les pertes de ses ressources patrimoniales ont pu être compensées, dans une certaine mesure, par la découverte et la conservation des vestiges architectoniques jusqu'alors inconnus et mis au jour, surtout ceux du haut moyen-âge. Des sondages et des recherches sur ces vestiges du passé ont été faites au cours des travaux de fouilles, des opérations de restauration et des travaux de construction.

Les fouilles archéologiques dans les églises gothiques les plus anciennes y compris la cathédrale, ont révélé de nombreux fragments d'art roman qui ont été conservés et exposés dans des cryptes souterraines, aménagées à cet effet.

Des restes de remparts du moyen-âge et d'un système de défense postérieur conservés en fragment depuis leur destruction dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle, a été l'objet d'une recherche approfondie. Une découverte des vestiges plus importants a commencé par la mise au jour d'une partie d'un beffroi du XIII^e siècle, enseveli jusqu'à ce jour dans des ruines. La découverte d'une bastide du XV^e siècle, au cours de la construction d'un nouvel hôtel, a enrichi encore les ressources historiques de la ville. La construction d'une voie de communication a révélé d'importants fragments d'anciennes fortifications et portes d'enceinte de la ville qui, après des opérations de conservation indispensables, ont pu être exposés. L'une de plus intéressante découvertes est celle du flanc d'un bastion, le plus important de la ville qui a été conservé avec des fragments reconstitués. Le tout avec les souterrains a été adapté à de nouvelles fonctions: services gastronomiques et culturels. On projette de continuer, dans d'autres places des fouilles afin de mettre en lumière d'autres fragments de ces fortifications.

Des recherches ont été entreprises, depuis des années, sur les vestiges du château des princes de la dynastie des Piast, notamment sur l'île d'Ostrów Tumski, qui relève des XII^e et XIII^e siècles. Un projet de conservation, d'exposition et d'aménagement a été élaboré et réalisé partiellement. Ce terrain riche en souvenirs historiques et culturels est ouvert, en partie au public.

De même, des intérieurs du XIII^e siècle, découverts dans les sous-sols de la Place du Marché d'Ostrów Tumski, ont été exposés. Dans ces travaux on s'est limité à la conservation indispensable des vestiges et à leur mise en lumière dans l'encadrement de l'architecture contemporaine.