

**Echa odkrycia Polonu i Radu. Ogólnodostępne wykłady i prasa
w latach 1898-1901**

The discovery of Polonium and Radium in the Polish press 1898-1901

SUMMARY

The discovery of polonium and radium by the Polish scientist Marie Skłodowska-Curie as reported by the Polish press in 1898-1901 is analysed. For Polish people the discovery by a Pole of a new element named in honour of the Polish nation at a time when the name of Poland was erased from the political maps, had a special meaning and during 1898 and 1899 many magazines and journals carried news about this discovery. The first magazine to report it was that the Lwów Polytechnical Society, which in the issue of 10 August 1898 repeated the contribution of 18 July presented in the French Academy of Science. In November the photographic magazine "Światło" ("The Light") published an article written by Marie Skłodowska-Curie.

The discovery of the second radioactive element, radium, in December 1898 made almost no impression on the Polish society. As in the whole world, the meaning of these discoveries was not fully understood. In 1898 several new elements were discovered by W. Ramsay in the air, so the radioactive elements were regarded simply enlarging the number of known elements. The rays emitted by these elements darkened photographic plates, just like Roentgen rays, so they seemed to be another method of taking photographs. Only one exhaustive article was published in 1899 in the Polish press, in the weekly magazine "Wszecławiat" ("The Universe"), and it was written by Marie Skłodowska-Curie herself. It was only at the end of November 1899 after visiting Paris that two professors of physics of Polish universities in Cracow and Lwów delivered lectures about polonium and radium. More news about radioactivity can be found in Polish journals only in 1901 and later, and it was only then that such information began to be presented in popular lectures.

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