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Podróże krajoznawcze Ludwika Kondratowicza (Władysława Syrokomli)

The touring journeys of Ludwik Kondratowicz (Władysław Syrokomla)

SUMMARY

The aim of the current article is to present the interest in antiquities taken by Ludwik Kondratowicz (known under the pen-name of Władysław Syrokomla), a 19th-century poet who lived and worked in the eastern lands of Poland. The activities of Kondratowicz as an antiquities-lover coincided with a period of a rapid development of archaeology in the second half of the 19th century, when antiquarianism evolved from collecting antiquities to a scholarly discipline taught at universities. Syrokomla's literary work earned him fame and resulted in many contacts with the academic community of Wilno (Vilnius), and his frequent travels provided him with an opportunity to meet many interesting people. Among the acquaintances that Kondratowicz made were well-known collectors and lovers of antiquities, who were both a source of inspiration and aroused his interest in issues of archaeology; the names included: Eustachy Tyszkiewicz, Konstanty Tyszkiewicz, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Adam Honory Kirkor, and Wincenty Pol. During his touring journeys Kondratowicz visited museums, private collections and sites of key importance to Polish history. If time allowed, he also conducted excavations, registered tumuli, remnants of earthwork strongholds and other ancient sites, and donated the finds to the Museum of Antiquity in Wilno (Vilnius). All of his journeys were reflected in articles published in journals, and in his books, as well as in some of his poems. Apart from his keen interest in archaeology, Kondratowicz also showed a lot of concern for the protection of monuments of the past. In an attempt to instil a sense of responsibility for preserving the cultural heritage in a wider readership, he appealed to the editor-in-chief of "Kurier Wileński" [Wilno Courier] to introduce a column devoted to cases of destruction of historical buildings and sites in the Lithuanian lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As an amateur archaeologist, Kondratowicz was highly respected by his contemporary antiquarians. Even today, his publications and field research is highly valued in Belarussian writings on archaeology.

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