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**Mapy i atlasy Joachima Lelewela towarzyszące jego dziełom historycznym
ze szczegółowym opisem opublikowanych do 1830 roku**

**Maps and atlases of Joachim Lelewel accompanying his historical works
with detailed description of those published before the year 1830**

SUMMARY

The aim of the paper is to discuss the role of the Imperial Archaeological Commission in the protection of archaeological sites and findings on the territory of the Russian Empire, which also included those found in Polish lands under Russian rule. The Commission, based in St. Petersburg, was set up during the reign of Tsar Alexander II and was a state institution answerable to the Ministry of the Court. The main objectives of the Commission were to gather data on all kinds of antiquities on the territory of the Russian Empire and to conduct a scholarly assessment of their importance. The Commission was also engaged in archaeological excavations, but it was fully free to organize excavations only in state, public and church properties. The law did not allow excavations on private lands to take place until after the owners had given their permission. One of the major tasks of the Commission was to ensure a steady “flow” of antiquities to the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. Naturally, the antiquities that found their way to the Hermitage were those excavated by members of the Commission. Soon after its establishment, the Commission also issued an appeal calling for antiquities to be sent to it. In order to attract potential benefactors, there were even to be financial rewards. Rare and valuable artefacts were transferred to the Hermitage or other institutions selected by the Tsar, while those that were of no interest to any scholarly institution were returned to their owners or finders. In 1889, the Commission obtained, by a Tsar’s decree, the exclusive right to conduct archaeological excavations and to grant permission to conduct such excavations, as well as to supervise the renovation of historical buildings. The decree caused the Commission to become the central archaeological institution, in charge of all archaeological work conducted in Russia. The rationale behind the 1889 decree was that it should stop all uncontrolled excavations, but in practice it turned out that archaeological sites and findings were protected only when that was convenient for the Commission or when the Commission found them to be of considerable value.

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