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**Badania archeologiczne i historyczne księdza Ignacego Polkowskiego (1833–1888)
w Wielkopolsce**

**Archaeological and historical researches by Father Ignacy Polkowski (1833–1888) in
Wielkopolska**

SUMMARY

This article has been dedicated to life and scientific output of Father Ignacy Polkowski, who lived in the years 1833–1888. The priest Polkowski specialized in historical research, with a range of sources. Especially his interest was in epigraphy, sigillography, diplomatics, numismatics, and archaeology.

Ignacy Polkowski came from a family of minor nobility from Zduny near Łowicz. Following his ordination he in 1857 began a ministry as vicar in Radzymin, then Brzeziny. In 1862 he became pastor of the Łaznów, and since 1863 of the Głuchów. Since 1862 Father Polkowski served as Secretary of the Consistory of Warsaw and began a close cooperation with the then Archbishop Zygmunt Szczęsny Feliński in Warsaw. He was a close witness of the attitude of the Archbishop in the difficult period before and during the January uprising. After the deportation of the Archbishop by the Russians in 1864, Polkowski, in order to avoid arrest, left Warsaw and borders of the Polish Kingdom. Originally he traveled to Paris, and later to Rome, where he stayed until 1866. In 1866 he returned to Poland, but not to the part remaining under Russian annexation, but to Grand Duchy of Posen, being under Prussian rule, where he lived in the Counts Skórzewski's manors. Initially, he stayed in Czerniejów, and later in Lubostroń.

During his stay in Lubostroń, Polkowski started efforts to research of the archaeological history of the region, the origins of Polish Catholic Church and the Polish history. The most significant had been his achievements in the area of archaeological research, centered around Lednica Lake. Polkowski discovered in Głębokie in 1872 the treasure of medieval coins, and has released the first book on archaeological research in Ostrów Lednicki: "Descriptions of ancient ruins on the island of Lednica Lake". Besides archaeological research, Polkowski greatest achievements were related to the research undertaken on the achievements and life of Copernicus. These studies were associated with the celebration (initiated by Polkowski) of four hundredth anniversary of astronomer's birth, which was decorated in Toruń in 1873. Continuing efforts, Polkowski dedicated his historical works to the life and achievements of Copernicus. In addition, he published a number of sources and smaller articles on that. In connection with the celebration different artistic means of expression commemorated Copernicus. The most famous of them was Jan Matejko's painting *Astronom Kopernik, czyli rozmowa z Bogiem* (The Astronomer Copernicus, or Conversation with God), prepared for a jubilee in 1873, not without encouragement from Ignacy Polkowski.

Unfortunately zealous activities connected with the celebration, and defense of Copernicus belonging to the Polish nation, has brought on Polkowski several unpleasant consequences.

For breaking the press law, he was sentenced by the court to pay a fine, temporary imprisonment, and finally leave Germany (united since 1871).

Accordingly with the judgment of the court Polkowski in 1877 left the Grand Duchy of Posen and went to Kraków remaining under Austrian rule. In Kraków Polkowski most fully developed his scientific activities. He has been director of treasury and archive of the Cracow Cathedral Chapter on the Wawel Hill. Since 1877 he was a member of Archaeological Committee of Academy of Learning. Later he was active in History of Art Committee too. He wrote for numerous magazines, newspapers and scientific journals. He worked on the editions of the sources for the history of Polish Middle Ages, working on the release of Jan Długosz. He studied the history of St. Stanislaus Bishop and his cult. He drew up current catalogs until today archives and incunabula file in the Chapter on Wawel Hill, as well as an inventory of historic Cathedral Treasury.

Polkowski passed away leaving behind a legacy and many works which undertook a variety of issues related to the history of Poland, as well as the preservation and popularization of Polish heritage. He has died prematurely at the age of 55 years.

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