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**Z dziejów polskiej archeologii. Falszywe zabytki runicznego pisma słowiańskiego**

**From the history of Polish archaeology. Counterfeit relics of Slavonic runic writing**

SUMMARY

The purpose of this article is to present the development of studies on the problem of Slavonic runes in the Polish 19th-century archaeology. According to the currently prevailing opinion, the oldest Slavonic writing is Glagolica from the 2nd half of the 9th century and that before its introduction old Slavs had not developed any sufficiently advanced and universal system of signs that could be called writing. Despite that, in the 19th century many Polish researchers were certain of the existence of Slavonic runes.

In the period between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century, a series of artefacts with this writing appeared. Not all of them were fake. Except for entirely fabricated specimens (bałwanki pryłwickie – Prillwitz idols), we also have: original relics that were incorrectly interpreted (e.g. 20 bronze helmets from Ptuj in Styria; inscription on the baptismal font from St. John's Church in Toruń), original archaeological relics that had counterfeit inscriptions and drawings (two stones of quern from Mikorzyn in Wielkopolska province), as well as mistakes made by researchers, who discerned runes where there weren't any (e.g. two stone lions from the cathedral in Bamberg).

The authenticity of Slavonic runes was questioned by some researchers from the beginning, but with the state of knowledge and available means of technology at that time it was difficult to verify it, while political pressure and also patriotism of many scientists resulted in accepting them as authentic. The credibility of that evidence was gradually questioned by more and more scientists, especially after the 1st World War when with gained independence by almost all Slavonic nations there was no political reason anymore to retain these theses on the authenticity of the runes.

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