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**Państwowe Grono Konserwatorów Zabytków Przedhistorycznych:  
ważny etap starań o opiekę nad zabytkami archeologicznymi**

**The National Circle of Conservators of Prehistoric Monuments: an important  
stage in endeavours to take care of archaeological monuments**

SUMMARY

In the independent Polish state, conservation of archaeological monuments, as well as the works of art, architecture, nature or, generally speaking, national mementoes, was recognized as one of the most important issues requiring urgent institutional and legal settlement. Scientists and researchers from every annexed territory and numerous institutions, all shaped by university studies and long-standing experience, became involved in the work.

In the field of care and conservation of monuments, quite important was the enactment of the decree "On Care of Monuments of Arts and Culture" by the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Poland, on October 31 1918. This decree contained a statement related to the state care of all monuments and description of the type of monuments being subject to protection. Afterwards it became a basis for appointment of a special institution responsible for monuments care in February 22 1920 – Temporary Presidium of the National Circle of Conservators of Prehistoric Monuments. The article discusses the organisation and rules of operation of the National Circle on the basis of legal acts and discussions taking place in the papers at that time.

The importance of the activities of this small group of archaeologists for the history of conservation was demonstrated in the statement of Konrad Jażdżewski, author of the work *Protection of Archaeological Monuments. A Historical Outline*, Warsaw 1966: "Apart from the mentioned Presidium, it [The National Circle of Conservators of Prehistoric Monuments] was composed of 9 honorary conservators, 7 district conservators and several correspondents. Activities of this Circle during not so many years of its existence were extremely fruitful and were of fundamental significance, not only for the development of archaeological conservation in Poland but for the whole Polish archaeology in general. In addition to building from scratch a modern conservation service, which covered the territory of the whole state, and protection of prehistoric monuments on the areas until now mostly neglected in terms of their conservation, the Circle managed to bring about the creation of a central inventory of prehistoric monuments in Poland, to prepare legal acts concerning protection of these monuments, and to build the foundations of future State Archaeological Museum, as well as to publish 'Archaeological News' as the Circle's organ."

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