

Abstract of the doctoral dissertation  
“Old Polish inscriptions in the former Konin Voivodeship”

The aim of this study is to conduct a critical analysis of the old Polish inscriptions in the former Konin Voivodeship. I wanted to discuss on the issues typical for the epigraphy such as analysis of content and functions of inscriptions and the characteristics of the type of writing and its shape. The base source has been subjected to the internal and external critique, as a result of which I pointed to the obstacles that emerged during attempts to read and determine the original content. I referred, at the same time, briefly to the contemporary problem of storing and taking care of the items stored and the issue of perceiving them as monuments. For me, the issues related to the placement of the objects bearing inscriptions in the contemporary consciousness of the people were equally important as issues purely epigraphic. I reflect on the cultural and social perception of inscriptions, motifs of its choice and ways of presentation. I discussed the problem of deliberate or accidental use of specific texts. I made attempts to answer the question why and for whom the given content was performed. I have shown that the collected inscriptions can serve as a source for the study of material and spiritual culture and customs of the Old Polish society. It should be borne in mind that, although I have monuments dating from the twelfth century, in my deliberations I focus mainly (because of the source material I have) on data dating from the eighteenth century.

The source basis of the work is constituted by traditional Polish inscriptions dating from the late twelfth-eighteenth century. In the former Konin Voivodeship I found 483 inscriptions, of which the largest number comes from the eighteenth century. The texts, with the exception of individual cases, have not been published anywhere. When publishing, I omitted inscriptions in Hebrew, because they are not included in my research problem.

The Institute of History of the University of Łódź got involved very intensively in the epigraphic works resulting in several publications of *Corpus Inscriptionum Poloniae* for the former voivodships of: Sieradz, Łódź, Piotrków and Skierniewice. The material collected during the epigraphic researches of the Institute of History of the University of Łódź allowed for the release of next volumes, but the lack of funds and possibility of acquiring sponsors meant that in the mid-90s of the twentieth century, the study was stopped.

With my work, I would like to complete the testing started in the former Konin Voivodeship, and thus revive the research project abandoned by the Łódź institutes before two decades.

The study consists in four chapters divided into sections and an annex.

Chapter I "Condition and types of epigraphic monuments" was devoted to the condition of monuments, which bear the inscriptions, to the characteristics of media of the epigraphic inscriptions and location of the content of the items. It was built on the basis of the material division and not the type of inscription content. This choice was made to avoid subjective views evaluating texts, which can lead to inconsistencies in their assessment and the wrong hierarchy. The adopted division also facilitated the description and characteristics of the specific groups without artificial internal divisions. Therefore, no separate pieces were formed dedicated e.g. boards, where the inscriptions were engraved, carved, painted etc. This division of the resource is also supported by the fact that on one monument may bear many different strings of different types or inscription may be included in more than one type of narrative. In summary of this part of the study I raised the issue of problems with reading characters resulting from lapse of time, human activity and manner of storing the monuments.

In chapter II "Palaeographical Analysis", I qualified characteristics of the inscriptions in terms the canon (shapes) characters, words and sentences in chronological order. In this part of the study, I put tables showing examples of all the letters and numbers inventoried in the area of the former Konin Voivodeship in chronological order.

In chapter III "Content Analysis", I focused on the analysis of the content of the inscriptions in terms of the information transmitted, intended propaganda purposes, selected quotes and their meaning to people living at present. I conducted the research of content of the inscriptions in terms of the possibility to receive the messages and the circumstances, in which they might have been created.

In chapter IV "Founders, creators and recipients of epigraphy", I presented information on the reasons for creating the inscriptions. I presented, where possible, the founders and authors of epigraphic monuments. In cases of lack of information about these, I presented the most likely solutions.

The Annex is composed of two parts. The first one is a base source attached in the form of a catalogue of old Polish inscriptions. Then follows a set of tables describing the epigraphic monuments.

The catalogue of old Polish inscriptions inventoried in the former Konin Voivodeship was not built entirely in accordance with the rules of CIP Edition House and only refers

to that. By creating a set of inscriptions described deliberately, I departed from the "Instructions for publishing epigraphic sources". As for the selection of texts to this catalogue, I decided to make some exceptions. The first was the inclusion of any data-tracking monograms and inscriptions that I was able to find in the concerned area. There is no doubt that such texts (created after the fifteenth century for monograms and after the sixteenth century for dates) are not attractive to epigraphists. Their inclusion was important for me for other reasons. Thanks to the above solution, I could put the monograms of the founders and creators of items, as well as these of the saints. In the case of craftsmen, where it was possible, I provide also maker's marks, if they were composed of letters or numbers. Publishing inscription composed of only dates made it possible to show a larger number of items older than the currently existing temple. The second exception was the creation of one global catalogue of epigraphic monuments, which was created due to the combination of the data obtained during the works carried out by conservators, students at the University of Łódź during the field trips in the years 1993-1994 and their own research during the tour in August 2015. For this reason, both objects located in the former Konin Voivodeship and moved beyond the concerned area, as well as the lost or destroyed items have been put next to each other.

Tomasz  
Rosiński