

Professor Kazimierz Godłowski

in memoriam

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On the ninth of June 1995 the life of an eminent scholar and one of the greatest archaeological authorities in Europe came prematurely to an end. He was born in Kraków on the 9th of December 1934, but spent his early childhood in Wilno. He was the son of Włodzimierz Godłowski, a professor of the Stefan Batory University in that town, who in the spring of 1940 as a reserve officer of the Polish Army was murdered by the Bolsheviks in Katyń. He was brought up by his mother Zofia (*née* Czechowicz) a doctor of medicine, and a woman of great strength of character. It is to her that we must look for the source of some of the features of the character of her son, such as his integrity, courage and patriotism.

Kazimierz Godłowski after finishing the Nowodworski Liceum in Cracow studied archaeology at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (1951-1955) under Professor Dr Rudolf Jamka; his second mentor was the great ethnologist Kazimierz Moszyński, director of the chair of Slav Ethnography at Cracow University. The whole of his later career was connected with Cracow University through his scientific work and teaching in the chair of the Archaeology of Poland, later (1972) transformed into the Institute of Archaeology. In 1964 Kazimierz Godłowski presented his excellent (1374 typed pages and 118 plates of illustrations) doctoral thesis *The Przeworsk Culture in Upper Silesia*. The promotor of this work was Professor Rudolf Jamka. He obtained the next stage of his scientific qualifications, his habilitation in 1969 on the basis of his seminal work *The chronology of the Late Roman and Early Migration Periods in Central Europe* published in English a year later. This covered the basis of chronological definition of the Later Roman and Early Migration Periods in Barbaricum (*i.e.*, the territory north of the Danube and east of the Rhine). In the years 1974-1975, Kazimierz Godłowski gained a scholarship of the Alexander Humboldt foundation and worked in Germany, where he found himself in the group of pupils and collaborators of his third academic mentor, Prof. Dr Joachim Werner, the great scholar from Munich.

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Kazimierz Godłowski was nominated associate professor in 1977 at the age of 43, and nominated as a full professor six years later. His position in the academic milieu is witnessed among other things by his election in 1991 to the Polish Academy of Knowledge (PAU) and shortly after he became the vice-director of its Philosophical and Historical section, and since 1994 a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. Since 1975 he was a member of the German Archaeological Institute. He was also elected to such significant bodies such as the Senate of the Jagellonian University, the Council of Higher Education, The Committee of Pre- and Protohistorical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Central Commission on Scientific Degrees and Titles. In 1976–1991 he was a superb director of the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University, and was completely involved in the development of his institution.

Professor Godłowski's research interests covered the millennium approximately from the Pre-Roman period to the beginning of the Early Medieval period (4th cent. BC to 6th cent. AD) in central and eastern Europe. Due to his work in this field he was generally acknowledged the leading Polish expert in the archaeology of the Roman and Migration Periods. His published works include nine books, and more than 170 articles. Each of his works, including reviews and excavation reports was a singularly precisely-formulated work of original and creative form, marked by superb and unmatched professionalism. It is notable that he was able to link powerful argument with clarity and simple style and form of presentation.

Parts of Kazimierz Godłowski's master-thesis on the late La Tene period and Roman social relations in the area between the Oder and Vistula valleys was acknowledged as worthy of edition as a book (1960). His study over many years of the Przeworsk Culture in Upper Silesia resulted in a series of works, including two books (1969 and 1972). His work (1970) on the basis of the chronological definition of the Late-Roman and Migration periods of central European Barbaricum is of basic – and without exaggeration one can say fundamental – importance for the development of our knowledge of the end of Antiquity in this area. This work has become one of the most frequently-cited European publications in this field. It is unfortunate that the author was unable to complete the work he began on a new enlarged and enriched version of this work written a quarter of a century ago.

In the course of these 25 years Professor Godłowski was a dominant figure among the investigators of the period of Roman Influences and Migration Period, which is signified among other things by his basic influence on the main synthesis on this period in *Pradzieje Ziemi Polskiej* volume V, 1981, as well as his excellent work on the cultural changes and changes in the settlement of central and southern Poland at the end of Antiquity (1985). One cannot omit mention either of a wide synthesis of the La Tene period in Europe (1977) and also the very successful little textbook of Polish archaeology (titled *Ancient History of Polish Territory*, 1971 – several later

editions) which he wrote together with with Professor Janusz K. Kozłowski. This, because of its clear construction and synthetic form has become very popular as one of the most competent and also accessible works of this type.

Since the beginning of the 1970s Kazimierz Godłowski opposed the views which were almost unanimously shared by the Polish archaeological community and supported by politicians concerning the autochthonous origin of the Slavs in the area between the Oder and Vistula. This hypothesis was clearly in conflict with the results of his work on the cultural changes and their chronology in this region. His publication of the so-called "Yellow Book" (1979) of unprepossessing form started a radical revolution in the views of Polish archaeologists towards a general acceptance of an eastern homeland of the Slavs.

This great scholar was the creator of a new direction of the study and interpretation of archaeological sources – and not only archaeological ones – from the turn of Antiquity and the beginning of the Medieval Period. He had sufficient reason for satisfaction when the term "the Cracow School" began to be used.

He liked to direct fieldwork, which he continued to the end of his life. Among other sites, he dug the cemetery at Opatow near Częstochowa and the cemetery and settlement at Krzypinów near Cracow, and finally since 1982 with great enthusiasm devoted himself to the excavation of the exceptionally interesting Late Roman and Early Migration Period settlement at Jakuszowice near Kazimierz Wielki.

One cannot omit mention of the great international conferences which he organized and also of his activities as animator and editor of many important collective works.

He was an incomparable academic mentor and teacher, extremely demanding and even scrupulous in scientific matters, but also understanding in the case of mishaps and inadequacies of his pupils in all other spheres of life. He valued young people with their own ideas, even if they were inconsistent with his own views. He willingly took part in discussions, but never enforced his own ideas. He possessed enormous erudition and knowledge of phenomenal proportions which he was especially able to pass on.

Under his tuition, about 50 master-theses were written, and 5 doctorates. He was the promotor of three habilitation theses, in addition one may add one doctorate and one habilitation which were well-advanced at the time of his death. For several years he was reviewer of most of the doctorates and habilitation theses concerning his field of study, and also several professorships.

He was intensively involved in international collaboration with almost all significant archaeological institutions in central and eastern Europe involved in the study of the Period of Roman Influences and the Migration Period. This collaboration was mostly concerned with joint academic projects of which he was either organizer or was invited to take part in. He had especially close links with several

German institutions (Munich, Frankfurt–Main, Berlin, Bonn) and also with Vienna (where he lectured at the university in 1988), Brno, Prague, Petersburg, Nitra, Budapest, Wilno, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Minsk and Kiev.

In recent years his special concern was the deterioration of the situation in the administrative structure of the discipline and the perspectives of the preservation of archaeological sites. He fought valiantly for an improvement in this situation, and many times took the floor on this matter publically and in written statements. A few months before his death he was taken straight from hospital to an important meeting concerned with the preservation of our ancient cultural heritage. Unfortunately he did not live to see the fruits of his efforts in the form of certain changes for the better which have taken place more recently.

Despite all this he never shut himself away only to matters concerned with science. He was very knowledgeable about Polish history even to modern times, and was especially interested in the history of the multicultural zone of the eastern parts of the Second Republic (the so-called *kresy*). He knew almost everything about the past and difficult modern problems of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania; those three countries were closest to his heart, and he was constantly ready to learn more about them, their problems and people.

His Polish patriotism had a noble dimension, today usually disregarded and treated as old-fashioned and characteristic only of the citizens of the Old Republic. He was always strongly concerned with the political fortunes of his country, and in critical moments was eager to take part in events. This was always prompted by the same system of values, as a student he carried illegal correspondence of the Primate of Poland imprisoned by the Communist government in Komaczy in the Beskids. In the Martial Law period during the whole of the 1980s he was one of the leaders of the illegal Solidarity organization of the University.

The Lord gave him the spirit of a true wanderer. He sought his own way through the Carpathians and the Białowieża forest, but also in Africa, Mongolia, India and Siberia. In his youth he wandered alone in the mountains, sleeping wrapped only in an old army coat under the open sky. He was entranced by the natural world, he was fascinated by wild animals and all types of exoticism. His deep and sometimes exceptionally detailed knowledge of the areas of the world which he penetrated was extremely impressive.

He always expressed his views, both scientific and all others, unequivocally and without insinuation. He had an exceptional gift – generally unappreciated in a teacher and public speaker – of criticising someone in such a manner that the object of criticism was conscious that it was done without the intention of causing him harm. It was difficult to find even the shadow of malice in him.

He had however other human weaknesses, many dozen warm and good-willed stories (and some verses) about him were current, as well as some other more or

less invented anecdotes. In the field, by the evening campfire or at the table, he was transformed into a matchless singer. He knew many Polish songs – including probably all old soldiers' songs as well as those from the *łeszy*. With equal enthusiasm he also dipped into his repertoire of Ukrainian, Russian, Belarussian, Czech, and Slovak tunes. he was able to charm up the atmosphere of a splendid traditional Slav revelry (*biesiada*).

He had many devoted and loyal friends to the end of his life, not only in Poland, but also in the Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania, but also in Munich, Vienna, Brno, Petersburg, Nitra and Copenhagen. He was respected and adored by his students, loved and admired by his friends and colleagues, but we were given his rich personality for too short a time. Always full of energy and initiative, of proverbial health and vital power, he was unable to conquer his merciless disease.

All of us have around us people of differing degrees of wisdom, talent, energy, responsibility, honesty, courageousness in the defence of their convictions, openness, friendliness towards others. Our companions in our journeys through time and space differ also in the depth of their knowledge of the world and the breadth of their horizons. Generally these traits occur in varying proportions, and their harmonious linking into the highest scale of values occurs especially rarely. Those who knew Him have no doubts that among such noble exceptions belongs the name of Kazimierz Godłowski.

We become constantly more aware that the loss of Kazik means the drastic and permanent impoverishment of that part of our world, which was the field of the life-work of many people of Cracow, all investigators of the ancient history of Poland, and also a great number of archaeologists in other parts of Europe.