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In memoriam Jan Krzysztof Winnicki (1942-2009)

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IN MEMORIAM
JAN KRZYSZTOF WINNICKI
(1942–2009)

JAN KRZYSZTOF WINNICKI, Egyptologist, papyrologist, and historian, passed away in Warsaw on 27 February 2009, after a long and severe illness. For many years in the Department of Papyrology at the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw, Krzysztof was an eminent scholar, a highly valued teacher, and a humble man. A student of professors Anna Świderkówna and Pieter W. Pestman, he was the only expert on demotic language and script in Poland, an authority on the civilisation of Egypt in the Late Period and the Greco-Roman times.

Krzysztof, as he was referred to by all his friends and co-workers, was born in 1942 in Warsaw. He completed his studies in Egyptology at the Philology Department of the University of Warsaw in 1965. After a few years away, he returned to the University's History Department in 1969 on a PhD scholarship. From that time until the end of his life he remained connected with our University. In 1974 under the direction of Anna Świderkówna he prepared his PhD thesis, titled *Armia Ptolemeuszów w Tebaidzie* (*The Ptolemaic Army in Thebais*), which was published in German translation in 1978 (*Ptolemäerarmee in Thebais* [= *Archivum Filologiczne*, vol. XXXVIII], Wrocław 1978). This monograph is unsurpassed to this day, eagerly and frequently referred to by historians and papyrologists alike.

Having obtained his PhD, in 1974 he was employed as assistant professor in the Department of Papyrology. In 1976–77 he completed an academic internship in Leiden, where, under the direction of the most renowned demotist of the time, Pieter W. Pestman, he studied demotic script and language, that is, the late form of the Egyptian language used throughout the first millennium BC. It was then that Krzysztof concluded his academic training. As the only demotist in Poland, from the late 1970s until 2009 he taught this language to Egyptology students of the University of Warsaw. Krzysztof combined this specialisation with classical studies, and as a competent papyrologist published a number of articles on significant Greek papyri. While still in Leiden, Krzysztof took part in an innovative undertaking that led to the *Guide to the Zenon Archive* (Leiden 1981), created by a team headed by Pestman and comprising, apart from Krzysztof, Willy Clarysse of the Catholic University of Leuven, Michel Muszyński, an Egyptologist from Antwerp (and a son of Polish immigrants), and others. For this vast *vade mecum*, indispensable to everyone reaching for documents of the Zenon archive, or merely working on the history of the third century BC, Winnicki prepared the sections XIII ('Geography', pp. 477–509), XIV ('Religion', pp. 510–516), XV ('Official and military titles', pp. 517–526), XVI ('Trades and occupations', pp. 527–542), and XVII ('Money, weights, and measures', pp. 543–553).

In the 1980s, Krzysztof devoted his time to strictly historical studies of one of the most important (and at the time barely researched) problems of the Hellenic period, the conflict between Ptolemaic Egypt and the Seleucid monarchy, known as the Syrian Wars. Krzysztof was excellently prepared for this task. He analysed and contrasted Greek sources with Egyptian documents, mainly inscriptions, which for the most part had been overlooked by the historians of Hellenism rooted in classical studies. The result of this work was the book entitled *Operacje wojskowe Ptolemeuszów w Syrii (Military Operations of the Ptolemies in Syria)*, published in 1989 and presented to the Department of History of the University of Warsaw as his habilitation dissertation. Winnicki discussed its most prominent theses in two extensive articles: 'Militäroperationen von Ptolemaios I und Seleukos I in Syrien in den Jahren 312–311 v. Chr.', part 1 in *Ancient Society* 20 (1989), pp. 55–92, part 2 in the same journal, 22 (1991), pp. 147–201.

Having obtained the habilitation degree in 1992, he was nominated Professor of the University of Warsaw. From this time onward, he undertook systematic studies of foreigners living in Egypt in the first millennium BC. Again, as in the case of his research on the Syrian Wars, in his work he bridged various disciplines and fields of study. It was customary to view the Pharaohs' Egypt of the Late Period as an entity completely separate from Ptolemaic Egypt, a powerful Hellenistic monarchy with Macedonian-Greek lineage. Krzysztof saw this differently. Although the dynasty ruling over the country had changed, and with it new people arriving on the Nile (Greeks and Macedonians), and although a new metropolis had sprung to life (great and magnificent Alexandria), nevertheless, from the perspective of an inhabitant of the Egyptian provinces, these changes, he felt, were not as fundamental as contemporary scholarship suggested. The criterion Krzysztof used to delimit the chronological framework of his studies differed from those commonly adopted to date: the first millennium BC, generally the time when demotic script and language were used in Egypt.

Fortunately, Krzysztof completed his final *opus*, and in autumn 2008 put the last dot in the manuscript of *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours: Foreign Population in Egypt in the First Millennium BC*, published as volume XII in the *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement Series* (Warszawa 2009). Regrettably, we failed to publish the book before Krzysztof's passing – we were a few weeks late. Three of us (Tomasz Markiewicz, Tomasz Płóciennik, and myself) worked on the book and each of us has been amazed by the great erudition of the author. Our work was hard, the more so as we could no longer ask the author any questions. On the other hand, we had the satisfaction of being able to pay a tiny part of our incalculable debt to Krzysztof – our Boss and Friend at the same time.

Krzysztof's professional path, sketched here in brief, was very well considered and consistent, just as he himself was consistent. He was a man of principles, in a rather old-fashioned way. If I were to describe him with just one adjective, without hesitation I would say that Krzysztof was an honest man: Reliable in scholarship, in teaching, and in life. His references were always credible, the grades given to students were always well-deserved, and his opinions balanced and well-founded.

Krzysztof was also a very modest man, far from showing off his knowledge or emphasising his superiority over those younger and somehow dependent on him.

I came to the Papyrology Department as a third-year student of Mediterranean archaeology. It was 1983. I found fascinating people there who have kept me attached to this place for many years. Those people have created an extraordinary team that worked together, complemented one another and simply liked one another as people. It was Zbigniew Borkowski who became my mentor, but I always could, and often did, draw from Krzysztof's knowledge. He always answered all my questions with patience, even when they were not very intelligent, as often is the case with young people who think they know more than they actually do know. Today I know that I learned a great deal from him.

So many people are no longer amongst us: Anna Świderek (Świderekówna) died in 2008, and Zbigniew Borkowski left us at the prime of his creativity eighteen years ago. Now Krzysztof is also gone.

[Tomasz Derda]