

# Kowalski, Henryk

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## Tadeusz Łoposzko (1929-1994)

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### TADEUSZ ŁOPOSZKO (1929–1994)\*

In 2009 we commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of birth and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of death of professor Tadeusz Łoposzko, an eminent Polish scholar. He graduated from the Warsaw University. As a student he had an opportunity to be a pupil of professors Iza Biezuńska-Małowist, Kazimierz Kumaniecki, Rafał Taubenschlag, and others. From 1954 to his death professor Łoposzko was associated with Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS) in Lublin, and here he passed all grades of his academic career from an assistant to a full professor. He also fulfilled important University functions: as a dean of the Faculty of Humanities (1975–1981), Vicerector (1982–1984), Director of the Institute of History (1987–1991).

His research concentrated on two main areas of interest: social history of Rome and navigation in the ancient world.

In his publications devoted to the ancient Roman society professor Łoposzko dealt mainly with the definition, economic stratification and political role of the town plebs. He proved that plebs, which was formerly treated as homogeneous layer of society (*tertius ordo*), was in fact diversified by the economic factors<sup>1</sup>. He entered into the discussion on the Roman middle classes with a conception, that the richer groups of urban plebs also belonged to the middle class<sup>2</sup>. One of this groups were *tribuni aerarii*, which in 70 B.C. thanks to *lex Aurelia iudiciaria* became the third constituent – together with the senators and the knights

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\* Translated by Paweł Madejski.

<sup>1</sup> *Plebs miejski w Rzymie w okresie schyłku republiki (The plebs of Rome towards the end of the Roman Republic)*, Warszawa 1961 (unpublished Ph. D. thesis); *Plebs rzymski na przełomie naszej ery (Roman plebs at the turn of our era)*, „Balcanica Posnanensia”, 3, 1984, 145–155. Similar analysis was made 30 years later by B. Kühnert, *Die plebs urbana der späten römischen Republik. Ihre ökonomische Situation und Soziale Struktur*, Berlin 1991.

<sup>2</sup> *Średniozamożne warstwy społeczeństwa rzymskiego w dobie upadku republiki (Wealthy middle class of the Roman society at the end of the Republic)*, „Annales UMCS”, sectio F, 14, 1959, 53–99; *Rzymskie warstwy średnie w przededniu naszej ery (The Roman middle classes toward the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C.)*, „Antiquitas”, 13, 1987, 87–103.

– of the judicial colleges<sup>3</sup>. Tadeusz Łoposzko suggested that this group consisted of rich members of the urban plebs with the income higher than 300 000 sesterces<sup>4</sup>.

His was particularly interested in social movements of the Late Roman Republic. The social and economic transitions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C. increased the political influence of the plebs – especially the urban plebs. For this social stratum distributions of food and money – private and public or official – became an important source of maintenance. Lack or reducing of the distributions caused riots and tumults of the poorer members of the stratum. For radical politicians of the period urban plebs started to be an useful source of support. Its usefulness had been gradually growing together with the intensification of the inner fights between *factiones*<sup>5</sup>. The most significant scholar achievement of professor Łoposzko was his research on the activities of Publius Clodius, *tribunus plebis* of 58 B.C. Clodius came out against the conservative groups of aristocracy and the senate, that had been dominated by them. Łoposzko refuted a hypothesis that Clodius was connected with the Triumvirs, and carried out the triumviral policy (or the policy of one of them). According to Łoposzko Clodius was an independent politician whose aim was to limit the optimates' influences and to lower the position of the senate<sup>6</sup>. Of special importance was the analysis of Clodius supporters and his methods of political activity. Tadeusz Łoposzko proved that Publius Clodius based on wide stratum of the urban plebs, and all the Cicero's accusations against the tribune of using slaves and mob were sheer invectives<sup>7</sup>. Clodius tried to activate the plebs, and this was why he wanted to rebuild the *collegia*<sup>8</sup>. Another method was organising armed units – with their help Clodius dared to control the assemblies of the Roman people between 57 and 52 B.C.<sup>9</sup> He cleverly used the political and social situation. This was proved during the hunger riots of 57 B.C.<sup>10</sup> Łoposzko's attempt to identify one of Publius Clodius' helpers and a chief of one of the armed units – Sextus Clodius Damio – is also of great interest<sup>11</sup>. Łoposzko also discussed the

<sup>3</sup> *Les représentants de la plebe romaine dans les tribunaux de repetundis*, „Studia Iuridica”, 12, 1985, 127–130.

<sup>4</sup> *Die gesellschaftliche Stellung der tribuni aerarii*, „Vichiana”, 6, 1977, 204–217.

<sup>5</sup> *Ruchy plebejskie w Rzymie: od Grakchów do Cezara (Plebeian movements in Rome: from the Gracchi to Caesar)*, Lublin 1982.

<sup>6</sup> *Attempts at rescinding Caesar's bills of 59 B.C.*, „Annales UMCS”, sectio F, 32, 1979, 1–28.

<sup>7</sup> *Trybunat Publiusza Klodiusza w świetle źródeł i historiografii (The tribunate of Publius Clodius in the light of sources and historiography)*, Warszawa 1974.

<sup>8</sup> *Kolegia rzymskie w latach 58–56 p.n.e. (Roman collegia 58–56 B.C.)*, „Annales UMCS”, sectio F, 20, 1965, 21–43.

<sup>9</sup> *Mouvements sociaux à Rome dans les années 57–52 av. J.-C.*, Lublin 1980.

<sup>10</sup> *La famine à Rome en 57 avant J.-C.*, „Quaderni di Storia”, 5/10, 1979, 101–121. Cf. L. Fezzi, *Tadeusz Łoposzko studioso di Publio Clodio Pulcro: spunti sulla carestia del 57 a.C.* (in present volume).

<sup>11</sup> *Sextus Clodius Damio?*, „Historia”, 38, 4, 1989, 498–503.

similarities and differences between Catilina's conspiracy and Clodius' movement<sup>12</sup>. These publications established Łoposzko's position as a worldwide – known scholar<sup>13</sup>.

The ancient Roman slavery was another field of professor Łoposzko's scientific interest. He paid particular attention to the participation of slaves in plebeian movements, riots, and political clashes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C. He proved that slaves never formed an independent group acting to achieve its own goals – the only exception was the Spartacus' uprising<sup>14</sup>. Clodius and Catilina also had not aimed at improving the situation of the slaves<sup>15</sup>. The results of his research and reflections on Roman social history Łoposzko summarised in two handbooks: *A social history of the republican Rome*<sup>16</sup> and *A social history of the imperial Rome: an outline*<sup>17</sup>. The two books were the first attempt in Poland to sketch the development and evolution of the Roman society from the regal period to the empire. Łoposzko concentrated his research on social movements, stressing the political role (and its changes) of every social layers. In his research he tried to be objective, rejecting the extreme views of the Marxist historians and historians of the Western Europe as well.

Łoposzko's another field of research was navigation and sea history of antiquity. He interested especially in the history of navigation, beginning with its earliest forms, and its economic role – shipping lanes, trade routes, exchange and circulation of goods (such as amber, tin, copper, ores, luxurious goods). He gathered his discoveries in *The mysteries of ancient maritime navigation*<sup>18</sup>. He also dealt with the ancient fleets and sea battles. He proved that sea wars were as important as land campaigns, and sometimes they had a decisive influence on the hegemony in the Mediterranean<sup>19</sup>. As an appendix to the main theme he wrote another two books: on the catastrophes of the ancient fleets<sup>20</sup>, and on the ancient piracy. The latter one was connected with social and political dimensions of pi-

<sup>12</sup> *Sprzysiężenie Katyliny a ruch Klodiusza (Catilina's conspiracy and Clodius' movement)*, „Antiquitas”, 15, 1992, 127–142. Cf. T. Łoposzko, H. Kowalski, *Catilina und Clodius. Analogien und Differenzen*, „Klio”, 77, 1990, 199–210.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. H. Benner, *Die Politik des P. Clodius Pulcher. Untersuchungen zur Denaturierung des Clientelwesens in der ausgehenden römischen Republik*, Stuttgart 1987; W. J. Tatum, *The Patrician Tribune. Publius Clodius Pulcher*, Chapel Hill–London 1999; L. Fezzi, *Il tribuno Clodio*, Roma 2008.

<sup>14</sup> *Gli schiavi nei movimenti sociali in Roma nel I sec. a. C.*, „Antiquitas”, 10, 1983, 95–106.

<sup>15</sup> *Clodio e gli schiavi*, „Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debrecensis”, 21, 1985, 43–72; *Catilina et les esclaves*, [in] *Forms of control and subordination in antiquity*, vol. II, ed. T. Yuge, M. Doi, Susono 1986, 297–307.

<sup>16</sup> *Historia społeczna republikańskiego Rzymu*, Warszawa 1987.

<sup>17</sup> *Zarys dziejów społecznych cesarstwa rzymskiego*, Lublin 1989.

<sup>18</sup> *Tajemnice starożytnej żeglugi*, Gdańsk 1977.

<sup>19</sup> *Starożytne bitwy morskie (Ancient sea battles)*, Gdańsk 1992.

<sup>20</sup> *Katastrofy antycznych flot wojennych (Catastrophes of the ancient fleets)*, Lublin 1993.

racy<sup>21</sup>. His last book (published posthumously) was devoted to the archaeology of Santorin – Thera, and the great volcanic eruption that he dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. He discussed the possible connection between the cataclysm and the decline of the Minoan civilisation and the Atlantis<sup>22</sup>.

The present volume is a homage to the memory of this eminent scholar, teacher, and friend<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> *Starożytni piraci Morza Śródziemnego (The piracy of the ancient Mediterranean)*, Lublin 1994.

<sup>22</sup> *Największy kataklizm w dziejach ludzkości (The greatest cataclysm in the history of mankind)*, Lublin 1996. The latest discoveries shifted the eruption into 17th c. B.C.

<sup>23</sup> The first volume of studies devoted to the memory of prof. Łoposzko was published in 1994 – *Terra, mare et hominess: volumen in memoriam Thaddei Łoposzko*, ed. H. Kowalski, W. Śładkowski, Lublin 1994 („Annales UMCS”, sectio F, vol. 49). Łoposzko’s bibliography is to be found there on pp. 15–26.