

# Marek Piela

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## Professor Andrzej Zaborski (1942-2014) – Obituary

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## Professor Andrzej Zaborski (1942-2014) – Obituary<sup>1</sup>

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Professor Andrzej Zaborski was born on 7th October 1942 in Cracow as a son of Roman Zaborski (a lawyer) and Bolesława Zaborska (a teacher). He got his high school diploma in 1960 in Jan Kochanowski High School no. 3 in Cracow. In July 1960 he began his studies in the Department of Oriental Philology of the Jagellonian University. His field of studies was Arabic philology. In 1965 he got his MA diploma with the thesis entitled “Medieval History of the Beja Tribes According to Arabic Sources”. In 1967 Andrzej Zaborski got a position of assistant in his parent institute. In 1969 he got his Ph.D. degree with the thesis entitled “Biconsonantal Verbal Roots in Semitic”, written under the supervision of Jerzy Kuryłowicz. The thesis was published as two articles in 1970-71. In 1976 Andrzej Zaborski got his habilitation degree on the basis of the book “The Verb in Cushitic”. The reviewers were Robert Hetzron, Karel Petraček and Jerzy Kuryłowicz. In 1978 he got the position of associate professor at the Jagellonian University where he taught Arabic and Semitic linguistics. In 1978-1979 he spent three months on a Syrian scholarship in Damascus. In 1982 he visited Algeria. In 1984 he conducted field work on Dahalo language in Lamu, Kenya. In 1989 he conducted two month field work on Beja, Nubian and other languages of the Sudan in Khartoum, Port Sudan and Kassala.

Andrzej Zaborski cooperated with several European universities. He was visiting professor in the Institute of African Studies of the University of Vienna, where he taught Somali and Oromo languages. Thanks to the Humboldt Foundation Scholarship he spent almost two years in the Institute of African Studies of the University of Cologne. He also lectured at the

<sup>1</sup> The obituary (reprinted here from “Rocznik Orientalistyczny” 67 (2) 2014) is based on *Curriculum Vitae* written by professor Andrzej Zaborski on 20th September 2012, accessible on the website of Southern African Society for Near Eastern Studies.

universities of Heidelberg, Torino, Udine and Mainz. The academic year 1990-1991 he spent in Jerusalem, invited as a member of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University, giving lectures in the research group 'The Living Semitic Languages and Comparative Semitics'.

In 1984 Andrzej Zaborski got his second habilitation in African studies at the University of Vienna. He lectured at that university in the years 1984-1999, teaching Somali, Oromo, Beja, Amharic, Tuareg, Masai and other languages as well as Afroasiatic linguistics. In 1989 he got the position of extraordinary professor in the Institute of Oriental Philology of the Jagellonian University on the basis of the book "Nominal Plural in the Cushitic Languages". In 2000 he got the position of full professor with tenure at the Jagellonian University. In the years 2000-2013 he was head of the Chair of Afroasiatic Linguistics in the Institute of Oriental Philology of the Jagellonian University. In those years he taught Arabic philology, comparative grammar of Semitic languages, rare Afroasiatic languages (Ethiopic, Syriac, Aramaic, Ancient Egyptian, Akkadian) and general linguistics.

Since 1970 Andrzej Zaborski was a member of the Oriental Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow Branch. He was its president since 1997. Since 1977 he was a member of the Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, being twice its elected vice-president (1999-2002 and 2007-2010). He was chief editor of the journal "Folia Orientalia". He participated with papers in about 130 international conferences and congresses, and organized several international conferences in Cracow, among them four editions of the conference "Oriental languages in translation".

The main field of research conducted by Andrzej Zaborski was Afroasiatic linguistics, especially Cushitic languages and Arabic. His two books concern the morphology of Cushitic languages. He translated and commented medieval Arabic texts, and wrote about 200 papers, dealing with Afroasiatic linguistics, the history of Africa, Arabic source texts for the history of Slavonic peoples, theory and practice of translation. He wrote a Polish-Egyptian Arabic phrasebook, coauthored a handbook of the Oromo language, and by applying modern linguistic theories and methods to the Semitic languages, greatly contributed to the Semitic philology. The bibliography of his works has been published in his festschrift ("Folia Orientalia" 49, 2012).

Professor Andrzej Zaborski was wise master, witty savant, enthusiastic sailor holding a Yachtmaster Ocean qualification. He passed away on 1st October 2014. He is survived by wife and son.