

Professor Stanisław Kołodziejski (1951–2019) of blessed memory

On September 13, 2019, at the cemetery in Krościenko nad Dunajcem, we said goodbye to Staszek Kołodziejski, an archaeologist, an excellent researcher of mountain fortresses, the past of the Pieniny Mountains, and above all, a great friend and colleague.

Stanisław Kołodziejski was born on November 1, 1951 in Krościenko nad Dunajcem. Here he graduated from primary school and general education secondary school. The neighbouring castles in Czorsztyn and Niedzica, as well as the mysterious ruins of the Pieniny castle located in the Three Crowns Massif, inspired Staszek to undertake archaeological studies at the Jagiellonian University. He graduated in 1977 on the basis of the work entitled ‘Średniowieczne ostrogi z bodźcem gwiazdzistym z terenu Małopolski’ published a few years later.

While still in his fifth year of studies, he was employed in the Department of Pre-incorporation Krakow at the Archaeological Museum in Krakow, where he perfected his skills under the supervision of Professor Kazimierz Radwański. Continuing his interest in militaria studies, he catalogued all such artefacts in the museum’s collection. On behalf of this institution, he also conducted many archaeological supervision over various minor earthworks in various parts of Krakow, thanks to which he gained experience in exploring medieval cultural layers. He quickly used it, undertaking archaeological and architectural research in the area of his favourite Pieniny castle in the years 1977–1978, obtaining new, important findings related to the chronology of the structure and its founder. In the following years, he studied Lesser Poland castles, for example in Janowiczki, Biały Kościół, Olsztyn or Skała. There is no castle, fortified manor house or even an alleged place of such a structure in Lesser Poland, which Staszek would not visit, undertake research, and did not collect sources to describe them. In the years 2005–2010 he participated in large-scale archaeological and architectural research at the Main Market Square in Kraków, being the backbone of the expedition.

The collaboration with outstanding medievalists, established in 1979, centred around the Section for the Historical-Geographical Dictionary of Lesser Poland in the Middle Ages at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, had a huge impact on the scientific life of Stanisław Kołodziejski. It was then that he assimilated the historian's research skills, creatively combining it with archaeological methodology. Taking into account the broad historical context in the archaeological studies of the medieval settlement of Lesser Poland allowed Staszek to convincingly explain the lack of mottes in this area or to identify the processes leading to the breaking of the stronghold *regale*.

The fruit of extensive studies on the military architecture of Lesser Poland was his PhD dissertation entitled 'Średniowieczne rezydencje obronne możnowładztwa na terenie województwa krakowskiego' defended in 1989. This monograph and numerous further studies on Lesser Poland castles included Stanisław Kołodziejski in the group of the outstanding Polish castellologists. In total, he published over 100 works in national and foreign specialist journals and participated in dozens of conferences, often – in addition to delivering presentations – contributing to the discussion with accurate and valuable remarks. The recognition of the community for his scientific achievements was reflected in the appointment of Stanisław Kołodziejski to various opinion-forming bodies, for example the Committee of Medieval Archaeology of the Board of Pre- and Protohistorical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Scientific Council for Medieval Archaeology at the General Conservator of Monuments, the Council of the University Centre for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology of the NCU in Toruń, Spišský Dejopisný Spolok in Levoča (Slovakia), the Scientific Council of the Pieniny National Park and the Scientific Council of the Ojców National Park.

Staszek skillfully combined his scientific activity with official duties resulting from employment in the Voivodeship Archaeological and Conservation Centre in Kielce (1983–1990), and from 1991 in the Regional Centre for Research and Documentation of Monuments in Krakow, of which he was a co-founder and in the initial period of its activity deputy director. In 1991 he started working as an assistant professor at the Institute of History of the Jan Długosz Academy in Częstochowa. Lecturing and direct contact with young people gave Staszek a lot of satisfaction. At the Scientific Circle of History Students, he created an Archaeological Section, whose members under his leadership conducted field research and elaborated the results of these works. For his excellent results in research and teaching, Stanisław Kołodziejski was awarded four times with 2nd degree awards by the Rector of the Academy. Perverse fate made, however, that Staszek did not receive his habilitation at his own university, but he obtained the title in 2014 at the University of Łódź.

The popularisation of science also played an important role in Staszek's activities; he is the author of many entries in several encyclopedias and the co-author of several popular science books.

Although he had been struggling with a serious illness for years, he continued his research work collecting materials for his dream 'Pieniny Encyclopedia'. As far as possible he participated in symposia and in field archaeological research – of course in castles (in Czorsztyn and Rożnów), he prepared scientific publications reaching back to distant centuries and the latest, just post-war history of Lesser Poland. However, he did not have time to finish them – he died after another surgery on September 10, 2019 at the Krakow Szpital Bonifratrów.

Staszek was an extremely modest and warm person. The family house on the banks of the Dunajec River, practically until the end of his life, was open to visitors. It is here with him and under the caring wings of his wonderful mother, we 'recharged the batteries', and on the porch till dawn we had heated discussions or just, or 'even', ordinary conversations.

Staszek – we will miss you very much.
Friends

