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Professor Jacek Kolbuszewski (10 May 1938–10 September 2022): A posthumous tribute

He was a Master, a Mentor, a Friend. I write “he was”, although it is difficult to forget the Person from Room 103, which he truly adorned. His warmth as well as his emotional bearing motivated his students, and he had many of them. Suffice it to say that he supervised 32 PhDs, a dozen of whom were subsequently awarded post-doctoral degrees and several were made professors. Over 400 participants in his seminars obtained MAs. He was extraordinarily hard-working, but he did not forget about others. He was demanding, but also just towards them. From the very beginning of his professional career he was fascinated with the mountains. This is hardly surprising — not only did he climb them, but he also wrote about them.

While still a student he made his debut on the pages of *Taternik* and *Kwartalnik Opolski*. Obviously, he published articles about his beloved Tatra Mountains. However, he did not limit himself to them and was interested in Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian as well as Finnish literature, publishing entries devoted to them in *Wielka encyklopedia PWN*. This alone testified to his great erudition, which he continued to develop over the years. He also published reviews of books he read;

interestingly, he made references to, for example, the mining literature of the 18th century. This unique range of interests led him to Silesian literature, to Adam Gdaczusz, among others. His writings were published not only in very specialised periodicals, but also in prestigious journals like *Ruch Literacki*.

In 1965 he obtained a doctoral degree on the basis of a dissertation on the artistic function of the Tatra motif, written under the supervision of Professor Stefan Kawyn at the University of Łódź. Interestingly, at that time he was not yet an employee of the Institute of Polish Studies, but a teacher of Polish at a Railway Technical College. Already as a doctoral student he wrote over thirty scholarly papers. At the same time he did not cease to follow Tatra literature and began to study Czech and Slovak literature. He was interested in mutual influences and relations between them. His articles continued to be published, not only in Polish, but also in foreign periodicals. Many of them appeared in *Wierchy*, a periodical of which he became editor-in-chief years later. In 1969 together with Stanisław Franciszek Kolbuszewski he published a selection of poems by the Latvian poet Jānis Pliekšāns (Rainis). In addition, his studies appeared in the Wrocław press.

In 1971 Professor Kolbuszewski began working at the Institute of Polish Studies, University of Wrocław. At that time he was already a respected researcher, author of over 100 papers, studies and monographic articles published in highly regarded periodicals. That year also saw the publication of his doctoral dissertation, *Obraz Tatr w literaturze polskiej XIX wieku (1805–1889)* [The Image of the Tatra Mountains in Polish 19th-Century Literature (1805–1889)]. The book summed up, as it were, the existing body of knowledge on the Tatra writings. It received several positive reviews. In that same year Jacek Kolbuszewski also published a novel, *Zostawcie mnie samego teraz* [Leave Me Alone Now], which was reviewed in literary periodicals. It was followed one year later by a collection of sketches about mountains and people, *Góry takie kamienne* [Mountains so Stony]. Another book published that year was *Skarby króla Gregoriusa. O poszukiwaniu skarbów w XVII i XVIII wieku* [The Treasures of King Gregorius: On Treasure Hunting in the 17th and 18th Centuries].

These publishing activities did not interfere with his comparatist and Tatra interests. He kept returning to them, publishing important research findings. He was interested in, *inter alia*, the periodisation of Slovak literature, the oeuvres of Polish and Slovak authors of the Romantic era, and the history of Polish mountain tourism. In 1974 Professor Kolbuszewski received a post-doctoral degree on the basis of his scholarly output (168 items) as well as the book *Modele estetyczne liryki słowackiej romantycznego przełomu* [Aesthetic Models of Slovak Poetry of the Romantic Turn] (1975). Significantly, in that period he was interested in the poetry of Jerzy Harasymowicz, contemporary circulation of horoscopes or the history of Dickens in Poland. His activity was also manifested in the writing of numerous reviews, published mainly in *Wierchy*. In 1976 he published another book, *Czarny szczyt. Proza taternicka lat 1904–1939* [Black Peak: Tatra Mountaineering Prose of 1904–1939]. This was also when his new passion — funeral sym-



1. Professor Jacek Kolbuszewski presiding over the proceedings of the sixth international conference *Góry – Literatura – Kultura* in Polanica-Zdrój, 2018. Photograph by Zbigniew Możdzierz (2018)

bolism — emerged. Begun at that time, it found its fullest expression in *Wiersze z cmentarza. O współczesnej epigrafice wierszowanej* [Poems From the Cemetery: On Contemporary Rhymed Epigraphy] (1985) and *Co mnie dzisiaj, jutro Tobie — polskie wiersze nagrobne* [What Today Unto Me, Tomorrow Unto You: Polish Tombstone Poems] (1996), finally in *Cmentarze* [Cemeteries] (1996). The year 1977 was marked by the publication of *Dziwne podróże, dziwni podróżnicy* [Strange Travels, Strange Travellers] as well as *Osobliwości i sensacje tatrzańskie* [Tatra Peculiarities and Sensations]. Many of his studies found their way into the periodicals *Wierchy* and *Pamiętnik Słowiński*. Together with Władysław Dynak he spoke on the reality of the school system at the time.

The year 1978 was marked by the publication in Bratislava of the book *Poezja pravdy a pravda poezie* [The Poetry of Truth and the Truth of Poetry] and in that

same year Jacek Kolbuszewski published 32 *wiersze o Morskim Oku* [32 Poems About Morskie Oko]. The following year he published, together with Mieczysław Ingłot, *Informator polonistyczny dla kandydatów na studia filologii polskiej Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*, a compendium for those wanting to study Polish at the University of Wrocław. He continued to publish in *Wierchy* and in periodicals like *Życie Literackie*, *Podkarpacie*, *Taternik*, *Nowiny Jeleniogórskie* or *Pamiętnik Słowiński*. In addition, he followed the developments in contemporary literature, which found its reflection in numerous reviews. From 1981 Professor Kolbuszewski became interested in yet another field — teaching. He included analyses of Bolesław Leśmian's and Zbigniew Herbert's poems in materials for teachers, and also contributed, in the *Polityka* weekly, to a discussion on extramural study programmes for teachers. In addition, he published Bogusz Zygmunt Stęczyński's work *Sudety*, on the basis of a manuscript, the anthologies *Strofy o górach* [Verses About Mountains] and *Strofy o kwiatach* [Verses About Flowers], as well as a theatre programme for a production of Karol Wojtyła's *Przed sklepem jubilera* [The Jeweller's Shop]. His monumental study *Tatry w literaturze polskiej (1805–1939)* [The Tatras in Polish Literature (1805–1939)] was published in 1982, becoming the crowning achievement of the Professor's passion and complementing, as it were, the earlier, more detailed analyses. The following year he wrote a synthesis of Latvian (together with S.F. Kolbuszewski) and Estonian literature for *Dzieje literatur europejskich* [History of European Literatures] as well as a sketch about Polish Romanticism as a contribution to a history of literature (in German).

In that period Jacek Kolbuszewski became interested in Polish philological dissertations in Galician schools as well as the question of the value of the textbooks used in Galicia to teach Polish literature. In 1984 the booklet *Góry jako źródło inspiracji artystycznej* [The Mountains as a Source of Artistic Inspiration] was published, followed a year later by Tadeusz Bocheński's poetry and prose published from a manuscript, as well as *Krajobraz i kultura. Sudety w literaturze i kulturze polskiej* [Landscape and Culture: The Sudeten Mountains in Polish Literature and Culture]. In 1985 our friend and master was granted the title of professor. The following year was marked by the publication of Stanisław Dobrzycki's study *Z historii literatury polskiej* [A History of Polish Literature]. At that time Professor Kolbuszewski devoted himself to a wide range of research interests, which was manifested in numerous reviews. In 1988 he published a collection of his father's writings, *Kolumna duchów nad nami* [A Column of Spirits Above Us] as well as Jānis Rainis' *Aforizmy* [Aphorisms] (together with S.F. Kolbuszewski). Several of his studies from that period dealt with the teaching of literature in schools. The year 1989 saw the publication of *Najpiękniejsze epitafia polskie* [The Most Beautiful Polish Epitaphs]. Jacek Kolbuszewski's pieces were also often published in *Przegląd Powszechny. Ochrona przyrody a kultura* [Nature Protection and Culture] (2nd revised edition –1992) appeared in 1990, followed by, in 1992, J. Rainis' *Józef i jego bracia. Tragedia w pięciu aktach* [Joseph and His Brothers: A Tragedy in Five Acts] (with S.F. Kolbuszewski). 1992 was also marked by the

publication, from a manuscript, of a book by Ludwik Kamiński (*vel* Kamiński), *O mieszkańcach gór tatrzańskich. Najdawniejsza monografia etnograficzna Podhala* [On the Inhabitants of the Tatra Mountains: The Oldest Ethnographic Monograph of Podhale], as well as of the anthology *Tatry i górale w literaturze polskiej* [The Tatras and Highlanders in Polish Literature] in the National Library series.

Worthy of note is also Professor Kolbuszewski's editorial activity. He was the author of a dozen or so studies of and introductions to various works, at the same time serving as editor-in-chief of *Annales Silesiae* and *Litteraria*. In 1994 he wrote twenty-two entries on Lusatian and Slovak literature for the first volume of the Przewodnik Encyklopedyczny series, edited by Halina Janaszek-Ivaničková, *Literatury zachodniosłowiańskie czasu przełomów 1890–1990* [Western Slavic Literatures During a Transformation Period 1890–1990], vol. 1. *Literatura lużycka i słowacka* [Lusatian and Slovak Literatures]. At the same time he prepared for publication Zofia Jabłońska-Erdmanowa's poetry — *Stara ciupaga i inne wiersze z lat 1948–1993* [An Old Shepherd's Axe and Other Poems from 1948–1993]. That same year he published two more books: *Od Pigalle po Kresy. Krajobraz literatury popularnej* [From Pigalle to the Borderlands: The Landscape of Popular Culture] and *Przestrzenie i krajobrazy* [Spaces and Landscapes]. 1995 saw the publication of *Kresy* (The Borderlands) (4th edition — 1999) and *Tatry Literacka tradycja motywu gór* (The Tatras: The Literary Tradition of a Mountain Motif). In 1996 Professor Kolbuszewski launched the publication of the *Góry – Literatura – Kultura* [Mountains – Literature – Culture] series. In 1997 he published nineteen entries in *Słownik literatury popularnej* [Dictionary of Popular Literature] edited by Tadeusz Żabski. In addition, he began organising seminars on a broadly defined subject of death. As “Problemy współczesnej tanatologii. Medycyna, antropologia kultury, humanistyka” [Problems of modern thanatology: Medicine, anthropology of culture, humanities], the seminars took place a dozen of times. Also in 1997 Jacek Kolbuszewski published *Literatura wobec historii* [Literature and History] as well as a new selection of Stanisław Nędza-Kubiniec's poetry, *Do braci moich* [To My Brothers] and *Z głębokim żalem... O współczesnej nekrologii* [With Deep Sadness... On Modern Obituaries]. In 1998 Professor Kolbuszewski published Zofia Roj-Mrozicka's *Skorusowy różaniec. Wiersze z lat 1967–1997* [Mountain Ash Rosary: Poems from 1967–1997] as well as *Rzeki. Antologię poetycką* [Rivers: A Poetic Anthology] and, in the National Library series, Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer's *Na skalnym Podhalu* [In the Rocky Podhale]. The 2000 was marked by the publication of an ecological anthology, *Literatura i przyroda* [Literature and Nature] and B.Z. Stęczyński's short piece published from a manuscript, *Polska Najada, czyli głos wodospadu Łaby na Śląsku* [A Polish Naiad or the Voice of the Elbe Waterfall in Silesia], as well as *W kręgu Młodej Polski. Motywy i tematy* [In the Young Poland Circle: Motifs and Themes] and a collection of studies, *Znaczenie i wartości przyrody polskiej* [The Significance and Values of Polish Nature].

In 2003 Professor Kolbuszewski published *Na południe od Tatr. Studia o literaturze słowackiej* [South of the Tatras: Studies on Slovak Literature], and two

years later — *Literatury krajów nadbałtyckich* [The Literatures of the Baltic States] in the series *Historia Literatury Światowej w Dziesięciu Tomach* [History of Literature in Ten Volumes]. At the end it is worth mentioning the Professor's other works as well: *Kocham was, mali ludzie. Franciszkanizm — literatura — publicystyka* [I Love You, Little People: Franciscanism — Literature — Journalism] (with Małgorzata Łoboz, 2011), *Nekropolis* (2012), *Literatura i Tatry. Studia i szkice* [Literature and the Tatras: Studies and Sketches] (2016) and *Góry — przestrzenie i krajobrazy. Studia z historii literatury i kultury* [Mountains — Spaces and Landscapes: Studies in the History of Literature and Culture] (2020). It needs to be said that our friend and master was a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Committee on Literary Studies and Committee on Slavic Studies, as well as an Honorary Member of the Wrocław High Mountain Club. In addition, he received the Award of the Minister of Science and Higher Education six times, and was also awarded the City of Wrocław Prize (1990), Zygmunt Głogier Prize and Medal (1997), Prize of the Alliance of Publishers of Historical Books (1996), Literary Prize of *Wierchy* (2012) and Zakopane Literary Prize (2017). He remained active until the very last moments of his life and his well-known erudition and extraordinary memory remained with him until the end. He published a total of over 1000 articles, studies, analyses and reviews. For many years he headed the Department of History of 19th-Century Literature and also served as deputy dean of the Faculty of Letters, University of Wrocław. Professor Jacek Kolbuszewski made a lasting impression on his faithful students, all the more so given that he was interested in their development and oeuvre. He will be sorely missed.

May he rest in peace!

Krzysztof Biliński