

Władysław B. Kubiak
(1925-1997)

The 18th century English poet, Alexander Pope, surveying the hullabaloo of Hanoverian society, opined "We die of nothing but a rage to live". That this is apposite of Prof. Kubiak is true only in that an accident, hardly an intention, occasioned his demise. That he was avid to live is true for he was on his way from his beloved country home in Wery to Warsaw from which he would take off for Egypt a day later to take up his research on the Islamic ceramics found at Kom el-Dikka in his beloved Alexandria. For this work he had been honoured by a grant from



the Max van Berchem Foundation in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments in the field of Islamic Archaeology. This field and the cognate ones of Islamic Art and Architecture are the poorer today for the accident that eclipsed a man and a scholar at the zenith of his career.

Władysław Kubiak was born in Wiązówna near Warsaw in 1925. In the Jagiellonian University he pursued undergraduate work in Oriental Studies, a splendid preparation for his future career, one which included Classical languages and history which scaffolded his particular interest in the lands of the eastern Mediterranean. He received his M.A. from his *alma mater* in 1953

having submitted and defended a thesis on Ibn Fadlan's geographic work of the 10th century. Following a decade of study, field work and travel in the Middle East he received his doctorate in 1966 from Warsaw University with a thesis on urban topography of Medieval Alexandria. Again following a sojourn of study and field work in Egypt he achieved his habilitation at the same institution in 1979 on the basis of a manuscript (subsequently published) on urban development of Fustat.

Dr. Kubiak pursued his archaeological work in Egypt and Nubia for more than three decades working at such diverse sites as Faras, Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria and Fustat, the site from which modern Cairo has blossomed. On other occasions he worked in Greater Syria and for one year studied the society and culture of North Africa through a study grant to Algeria. The result of such manifold and diverse activity can be gleaned from many articles not only on the archaeological and artefactual results of various digs, but equally so from others of outstanding merit on epigraphy, numismatics, economic history and the culture of the contemporary Arab World. By way of relaxation he published an exceptional translation of sections of *A Thousand and One Nights* from Arabic into Polish and composed by translation a teaching text on Persian Islamic painting.

He was Associate Director of the Fustat Expedition, American Research Center in Egypt, from its inception in 1964 to its field work finale in 1981. He was Secretary of the Warsaw University Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology in Cairo following its foundation. Prof. Kubiak pursued his research in the United States as Senior Fellow of the Dumbarton Oaks Institute of Byzantine Studies. At Warsaw University he became the Director of its Institute of Developing Countries in the Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies and was instrumental in fostering a program in Islamic Archaeology within the same University's Institute of Archaeology. Though often sorely burdened with the in-

satiable demands of academic administration, he never foreswore his dedication to and zest for pedagogy which has left a number of young scholars in different fields in his debt, scholars who with his published work constitute his enduring memory and reputation.

His revised habilitation thesis was published by the American University in Cairo Press in 1987 as *Al-Fustat: Its Foundation and Early Urban Development*. This has become his signal contribution to Islamic Archaeology, a study which not only summates all previous scholarship on the subject but provides entirely new insights on the development of the early Islamic *amsar* or *soi-disant* camp-capitals. These insights sprang not only from his rereading of the basic Arabic sources but equally so from his field work at the site. One cannot imagine such a volume being superseded in the foreseeable future though he would not have minded such a fate, if the scholarship and insights of the newer conceptions were as soundly based.

Though reasonably modest in self-conception, Prof. Kubiak insisted on the strictest norms of textual scholarship before any interpretation could ensue. (One feels here the stern hand of his earliest mentor, Prof. Lewicki of the Jagiellonian University.) Even in his occasional works one finds the same textual vigour and fidelity. Thus one experiences an haunting loss at what his newer lines of research, particularly on the ceramic finds at Kom el-Dikka, would have produced. But sufficient abides for us to discern a fine archaeologist, a dedicated teacher, a scrupulous scholar and a mettlesome colleague. Władysław Kubiak cleared a path in an arcane subject; may his followers prove worthy of the joyful sweat of so avid an explorer.

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Tadeusz Dzierżykraj-Rogalski
(1910-1998)

Elżbieta Promińska
(1941-1998)



Eminent anthropologists, Tadeusz Dzierżykraj-Rogalski and his wife Elżbieta Promińska, passed away recently within a short time of each other, he on January 21, she on February 6.

They had worked together for many years, both of them affiliated with several scientific institutions: the Medical Academy in Białystok, the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw. A pastime that had brought them together was a passionate interest in Egypt and Sudan, which bore fruit in their regular and frequent cooperation with various archaeological expeditions, but foremost with Professor Kazimierz Michałowski and the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology in Cairo. Together with teams from the Centre, they worked at Faras, Alexandria, Deir el-Bahari, Old Dongola, Kadero and Cairo, and also took part in the re-

search of the Italian mission in Gela in Sudan and the French expedition to Douch. They combined research on the skeletal remains from archaeological excavations with studies of the contemporary population in Wadi Halfa, Alexandria and El Tikena, carried out in association with Sudanese and Egyptian colleagues.

Tadeusz Dzierżykray-Rogalski started anthropological studies in Egypt in 1958. During the UNESCO Nubian Campaign (1960-1964), he investigated the skeletal remains from the tombs of the bishops of Faras, uncovered in the vicinity of the Cathedral at Faras, and published the results as a separate study. In 1962, he began work in Alexandria, where he was joined by Elżbieta Promińska in 1964. For fourteen years they worked together on recording the skeletal remains from the Arab necropolis on Kom el-Dikka. Together with the studies on the contemporary population of Alexandria, this effort of many years gave rise to a monograph on the population of Muslim Alexandria written by Elżbieta Promińska.

Together they devoted a great deal of attention and several studies to the Neolithic tombs at Kadero and Gela in Sudan. They also recorded the skeletal remains from tombs in Old Dongola, the medieval capital of Nubia. They were instrumental in developing Nubian studies in their field, presenting their findings at numerous scientific conferences around the world.

Tadeusz Dzierżykray-Rogalski also devoted his attention to research on Egyptian mummies from the Pharaonic period. He began his investigations on mummies uncovered at Deir el-Bahari in the course of Polish-Egyptian work in the temple of Hatshepsut, and continued them later at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

In the 1970s and 1980s, he carried out research on the skeletal remains from the 15th-16th century Mausoleum of Emir Qurqumas in the City of the Dead in Cairo.

While a fascination with Africa was hardly the only theme in their professional life, Tadeusz Dzierżykraj-Rogalski and Elżbieta Promińska were always happy to return to the banks of the Nile to continue their work there. Indeed, not quite a year ago Tadeusz Dzierżykraj-Rogalski had been preparing to go to Egypt once again.

They were both splendid associates for expeditions working in difficult conditions in the field, and will be remembered for their good spirits and ever present smile, just as much as for their constant willingness to give of their knowledge, particularly when medical aid was required. They leave behind many friends, both among their professional colleagues in Poland and among the numerous local associates with whom they had worked over the years in Africa.

Włodzimierz Godlewski