

## **Henryk Makowski (1910–1997)**

Professor Henryk Makowski died on 30th January, 1997. The Polish scientific community is proud of his world-famous discoveries on ammonoid biology. His theory of sexual dimorphism in ammonites gained him a wide reputation among fellow scientists. Students knew him as a popular and appraised lecturer, as well as editor and coauthor of historical geology handbooks. To his younger colleagues, he was a Professor, head of the Historical and Regional Geology Laboratory, and Dean of the Faculty of Geology of the University of Warsaw. All who knew him remember him as a man of great wisdom, modesty, and goodness. He did not push forward his own opinions; he approached everyone with attention and respect, was simple and honest.

There are no longer any geologists who would remember Henryk Makowski in his youth. He was born in 1910 in Volhynia, in a part of Europe especially hard hit by the historical cataclysms of the first half the century. He grew up in Krzemieniec, where he finished the well known college – Liceum Krzemienieckie. Later, he studied geology and paleontology in the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius (now Lithuania) and Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov (now Ukraine). He was employed at the Lvov University



shortly before World War II, while he was still a student. He graduated shortly after the Soviet invasion of 1939. During the Soviet occupation he worked in an enterprise prospecting for coal in the Carboniferous near the Bug River, and during the German occupation – in the Amt für Bodenforschung.

By the end of the war he was in Warsaw, and in the aftermath of the war there was no use returning to his homeland. He began actual research work and scientific career at 35. He was a senior researcher in the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin for some time, but by the end of 1945 he moved to the University of Warsaw after his Lvov mentor, the late Prof. Jan Samsonowicz.

The University, as the whole city, was just beginning to raise from the ruins, and the decimated scientific staff had first to bring it back to life. The didactic paleontological

collection originated from the black-burned fossils that Makowski had dug out from the ruins and ashes of the Geology Laboratory. He had to set anew his research topic. First, he turned to the stratigraphy of the Jurassic from boreholes in Eastern Poland. Then he became fascinated with the exquisitely preserved ammonite fauna from the Łuków erratic mass, left by the Scandinavian ice-sheet in the Pleistocene. He devoted his monograph 'La faune Callovienne de Łuków en Pologne' to these fossils, for which he was granted a PhD in paleontology in 1951.

Detailed studies of this wonderfully preserved material directed him towards studies of the sexual dimorphism in ammonites. These have become his lifetime fascination and rewarded him with greatest successes. The sexual dimorphism was already suggested by earlier ammonite researchers, but it was Makowski, who analysed the phenomenon in depth and presented a strong case with elaborate arguments. Much of his evidence came from biometric analysis of the shell ontogenetic development. He did not restrict his interests to the Łuków ammonites, but also did research on numerous specimens collected from many Devonian and Jurassic sites. The results were published in 1962, and his monograph 'Problem of sexual dimorphism in ammonites', published in *Palaeontologia Polonica* opened a new chapter in ammonoid biology. It was acclaimed by the world experts in the field.

This monumental opus set the level of Prof. Makowski's ambitions. He continued research aimed at further development of his discoveries presented there. His work was slowed down by his long lasting illness. He regarded only high rank scientific questions as worth his attention. Only reluctantly did he decide to publish minor papers, and he only wrote a few of them later. His last publication, on dimorphism and evolution in goniatite *Tornoceras*, appeared in the *Acta Palaeontologica Polonica* in 1991. Making science was his main goal; he looked upon formal academic career with warm-hearted irony and distance so typical for him.

His scientific works rest mostly within the realm of paleontology. Only while working on paleontological questions did he touch stratigraphic problems, perhaps because he mostly had to do with condensed deposits, often containing mixed faunas. Only his lectures and handbooks reveal his deep stratigraphical insights. In 1963, he participated in the first Polish-Mongolian Paleontological Expedition to the Gobi Desert (see photo), organized by the Institute of Paleobiology, Polish Academy of Sciences. This tightened his contacts with colleagues from this Institute.

He will be reminded to us by the logo of the *Acta Palaeontologica Polonica*: a dimorphic pair of Jurassic ammonite shells drawn by him for his magnum opus.

Michał Szulczewski