

# Zenon Woźniak (1931-2025)

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## CHRONICLE

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### ZENON WOŹNIAK (1931-2025)



Fig. 1. Professor Zenon Woźniak. Photo. K. Tunia

On February 3rd, Professor Dr Hab. Zenon Woźniak passed away. Seven days later, we paid him the last homage at the Prądnik Czerwony Cemetery in Kraków. It was a very sad day for the Cracow archaeological community and those who were close to the Professor throughout his life. We lost an outstanding scientist and a man of great kindness, well-regarded by all who knew him (Fig. 1).

Professor Zenon Woźniak was born on November 29th 1931, in Starachowice, now in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship. His school years fell during the difficult period of WWII

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and just after it. He was getting an education irregularly in various places. After completing the General Secondary School in Trzebnica, he applied, according to his interests, to study in the Department of Polish Language at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. However, due to a lack of vacancies, his application was refused. Eventually, he enrolled in the three-year course on the history of material culture at the same school. University diploma of the first level, obtained in 1953 after passing the final exam with an outstanding note from the supervising Professor Rudolf Jamka. Throughout the next two years, he continued studies at the Poznań University (later the Adam Mickiewicz University, abbreviated as UAM), at that time the only institution in Poland offering MA courses in archaeology (framed into the School of the History of Material Culture). He obtained his master's degree in 1955 based on the thesis entitled 'Archaeological materials for the prehistory of the Rawicz district'. Interesting and little-known information about this period of Zenon Woźniak's life can be found in the paper by Lucyna Leśniak (2025), based on archival documents at UAM and references to the memoirs of Professor Jan Machnik (2017).

After returning to Kraków in 1955, Zenon Woźniak was appointed to a post at the city's Archaeological Museum. His employment there (initially in the Nowa Huta Branch) lasted till 1964. Then he became an employee of the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences (abb. IHKM PAN), which today is the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology (abb. IAE PAN). This institution is linked practically to all of his professional career, from 1964 up to his retirement in 2001. In the 1980s Zenon Woźniak assumed the post of the Head of the Archaeological Station at Igołomia, belonging to the Cracow Branch of IHKM PAN.

The Professor's professional interests focused on the Early Iron Age and the Hallstatt, La Tène, and Roman periods. He is the author of 200 scientific works, including five books (Dobrzańska *et al.* 2005, 7-15). His main research objective was the Celtic culture in Central and Eastern Europe. In this field, he was an unquestionable expert, recognised in Poland and abroad, beginning with the publication of his work on the Celtic settlement in Poland (Woźniak 1970). This significant study was based on his doctoral thesis, which was elaborated under the supervision of Professor Stefan Nosek and defended at the IHKM PAN in 1967. A series of other works and the habilitation thesis on the eastern borderland of the La Tène culture (Woźniak 1974) only augmented his reputation. The title of full professor was granted to Docent Zenon Woźniak in 1989.

The achievements of the Professor in studies on the Celtic culture in Poland and south-eastern Europe, based on a thorough analysis of archaeological evidence, still retain their value, despite the natural progress of our knowledge and discoveries.

It is not possible to list all the scientific achievements of the Professor in this short text. Among the most important, there is a significant revision of the chronology of Celtic culture in Lower and Upper Silesia, and the definition of the Celtic-Przeworsk group in Lesser Poland, later referred to by him as 'the Tyniec group'. Remarkable is the evidence for the existence of a Celtic mint workshop in this territory. It should also mention the mono-

graphic work on the painted pottery workshop in Podłęże, Kraków district (Woźniak 1990). Further, there is the study on ancient stone sculptures from the Słęza Mountain, in which a hypothesis of a possible Celtic nemeton-type sanctuary was put forward (Woźniak 2004), and the chronological definition of the terminal phase of the Lusatian and Pomeranian cultures. In his focus, there were also the Púchov culture and, so far, unnoticed on Polish territories, materials of the Jastorf culture. It is not commonly known that the Early Slavic pottery on the settlement site Kraków Mogiła 1 was recognised by Zenon Woźniak. It resulted from his research visit to Bohemia in the 1960s, when the Prague-type pottery was being defined. Professor Helena Zoll-Adamikowa has many times underlined this fact.

From the late 1950s, Professor Zenon Woźniak led field research for several years at multicultural settlement sites: Kraków-Mogiła 1, Podłęże in the Wieliczka district, and Targowisko and Łęzkowice, both localities in the Bochnia district. In the 1960s, as a member of the Carpathian Archaeological Expedition led by Professor Andrzej Żaki, he excavated sites associated with the Púchov culture.

For more than forty years, Professor Zenon Woźniak was associated with the international periodical 'Acta Archaeologica Carpathica', issued by the Archaeological Committee PAN, initially as an editorial secretary and, after Professor Żaki left Poland in 1975, as editor-in-chief. Under his supervision, over 35 volumes of AAC were published, highly ranked by Central European archaeologists. When the same institution created the series 'Prace Archeologiczne', Professor Zenon Woźniak resumed editorial responsibility for editing the first volumes. For many years, he was editorial secretary and then deputy editor-in-chief of 'Sprawozdania Archeologiczne', a periodical of IHKM PAN in Cracow.

Among the important achievements of Professor Zenon Woźniak are the elaboration of the concept of monographs on sepulchral sources from the Pre-Roman to Early Migration periods in Poland. They were to include not only archaeological materials but also anthropological, palaeozoological and metallographic evidence according to needs and possibilities. The project, truly of European magnitude, has so far resulted in the publication of 28 works in English and German, framed within the series 'Monumenta Archaeologica Barbarica'. The *Collegium Editorum* of the series was presided over by Professor Zenon Woźniak. This success was made possible by grants obtained, first (from 1993) from the Committee for Scientific Research, then from the National Science Centre. Additional organisational and financial support was provided by several other institutions, *e.g.*, the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw, the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology PAN, the Institute of Archaeology of the Warsaw University, and, finally, the Monumenta Archaeologica Barbarica Foundation.

The Professor was the editor of the collective study on contacts along the Amber Route at the turn of the eras (Woźniak *ed.* 1996) and the co-editor of the Jubilee Book offered to Professor Andrzej Żaki on his eightieth anniversary (Woźniak and Gancarski *eds* 2003).

Among Professor Zenon Woźniak's fields of activity was teaching. He supervised six doctoral theses on the La Tène and Roman periods, consulted on and revised many doctoral



**Fig. 2.** Professor Woźniak with his wife surrounded by his former PhD students and friends. Sitting (from the left): Halina Dobrzańska, Krystyna Jabłońska-Woźniak, Zenon Woźniak, Katarzyna Czarnačka, Paulina Poleska. Standing (from the left): Marcin Rudnicki, Tadeusz Makiewicz, Marek Bednarek, Vincent Megaw, Szymon Orzechowski. Photo: K. Tunia

and habilitation processes in Poland, France, and Germany, and served on many boards responsible for awarding scientific degrees. For several years, he lectured to students in the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University and ran doctoral seminars in the Archaeological Museum in Cracow.

The scientific merits of Professor Zenon Woźniak were well recognised in Poland and abroad. He was being invited to various symposia, congresses and scientific associations. In 1959, he became a member of the Archaeological Commission of the Kraków Branch of PAN, serving as its secretary for many years and then as vice-chairman. In 1979, he was elected a corresponding member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft LaTènezeit and invited to do L'association de fer in France. For several terms, he was a member of the Scientific Board of the IHKM PAN and then of the IAE PAN. In the Committee of Pre- and Protohistory PAN, he presided over the Committee for Evidences, and then the Committee of the Pre-Roman and Roman periods. Remarkable was also his cooperation with the Central European Commission of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (abbr. PAU). In 1997, he was elected a corresponding member of the Historical-Philosophical Department of PAU. Twelve years later, the General Assembly of PAU Members granted Professor Zenon Woźniak the rights and the title of Full Member of this Department.

In 1977, Professor Zenon Woźniak received the Award of the Scientific Secretary of PAN for outstanding achievements in archaeology, and in 2003, the Józef Kostrzewski Award of the Association of Polish Archaeologists. He also received the state's Golden Cross of Merit.

The community of archaeologists of the La Tène and Roman periods honoured the Professor with two books dedicated to him. The first of them, published in 'Series Gemina'

(Andrzejowski *et al.* eds 2002), includes papers on Polish cemeteries from the Roman and People's Migration period. Most of their authors formerly collaborated with the Professor during his association with the series 'Monumenta Archaeologica Barbarica'.

IAE PAN in Cracow organised two jubilee events in honour of Professor Zenon Woźniak. The first one, in February 2002, for his seventieth anniversary, brought a large number of his archaeological friends and greetings from Poland and abroad. The second event, commemorating fifty years of Professor's research activities, was held in the same place in January 2006 (Fig. 2). During it he was honored by the book dedicated to him – 'Celts on the Margin', the common work of specialists in this field from Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, USA and Australia (Dobrzańska *et al.* eds 2005).

I belong to those who had chances to develop their professional competence under the care and guidance of Professor Zenon Woźniak. He supervised my doctoral thesis, and after obtaining a PhD, he proposed me for the post of editorial secretary of 'Acta Archaeologica Carpathica'. I got to know him as a teacher, mentor, and experienced editor, very respectful of authors. From this time, I remember a very significant incident. The editorial board of AAC received a text in Polish written by a foreign author. To improve the language, I shortened some sentences, which, in my opinion, were slightly too long. However, such interference was not accepted by the Professor, who always followed the rule that any changes in someone's writing are acceptable only if the text is confusing or orthographically incorrect.

Zenon Woźniak was the only professor at Cracow's archaeological institutions who backed my idea to organise the Congress of the European Archaeological Association – 12th Annual Meeting Cracow 2006, and helped me with this challenging task (Fig. 3).

The man, unpretentious, taciturn, honest and empathetic, passed away. He will live in our memories.



Fig. 3. Professor Zenon Woźniak and Professor John R. Collis from Sheffield University at the opening reception of the 12 EAA Annual Meeting, Cracow 2006. Photo: L. Pizfo

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