

MAN IN MEDIEVAL SOCIETY  
Professor Aleksander Gieysztor's Jubilee

On May 28, 1996, at Warsaw University took place a ceremony of renewal of the Doctorate in Humanities of Professor Aleksander Gieysztor on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his obtaining a doctor's title and reaching the age of eighty. On the next day a three-day (29–31 May, 1996) learned session started in his honour.

The session entitled: *Man in Medieval Society* was opened with A. Gieysztor's paper on the latest trends in world historiography researching medieval man seen as the main subject of study and at the same time — the main subject of history. Relations between the universal model of medieval man and actual living persons, analysis both of individual as well as group attitudes on the anthropological and philosophico-theological planes, the multifarious views of medieval thinkers on the subject on the basis of great variety of sources (lives of the saints, biographies, the so-called mirrors, unintentional records)—were the issues touched on in the inaugural paper. The session was focussed on six themes proposed by the organizers — Maria Koczerska and Roman Michałowski. The theme *Barbarian Communities and Medieval States* embraced the problem of the individual's attitude to collectivity in the kinship, neighbours' and tribal communities of early Middle Ages (Karol Modzelewski, Warszawa), the problem of women's enslavement as the condition of introducing the "civilization order", according to the Slav traditions from early Middle Ages (Jacek Banaszkie-wicz, Warszawa), the differentiation of social status in the light of funeral rites (Lech Lecciejewicz, Wrocław), and finally the ideological programme of Otto III (Roman Michałowski, Warszawa). The second theme was *Man in Face of the World and God*, where the discussion dealt with the ideological legacy of Saint Adalbert's martyrdom and its significance in the history of medieval Poland (Gerard Labuda, Poznań), the position of man in medieval religious communities (Jerzy Kłoczowski, Lublin), the model of sanctity and position of a saint in medieval Poland (Teresa Dunin-Wąsowicz, Warszawa), the relations between the Church and society in the light of Innocent III's bull (Jerzy Wyrózumski, Kraków), and relations between the individual and community in popular religiousness of Europe at the close of the Middle Ages (Stanisław Bylina, Warszawa). The third theme was *Real and Ideal Social Relations* where the postulated model of society versus the European social reality was discussed (Henryk Samsonowicz, Warszawa), social background of Polish medieval chapters was presented (Józef Szymański, Lublin), as well as man in the light of the trials followed by the Olbin Premonstratensians' monastery in Wrocław (Marta Mlynarska-Kaletynowa, Wrocław), financial means of ordinary people in medieval Poland (Stanisław Suchodolski, Warszawa), the environment of human life in medieval Poland (Jan Tyszkiewicz, Warszawa), and even the issue how European explorers communicated with Africans in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Michał Tymowski, Warszawa). The topics of the fourth theme *The Creator and His Work in Face of Society* included: the message of the symbolic portrait in Polish medieval culture (Przemysław Mrozowski, Warszawa), the image of man in Callimachus' epitaph (Piotr Skubiszewski, Warszawa), personality disturbances of medieval man exemplified by Guibert of Nogent (Jerzy Strzelczyk, Poznań), social relations in the light of German 13<sup>th</sup> c. poetry (Marian Dygo, Warszawa), and finally the position and role of the writer in medieval society (Edward Potkowski, Warszawa). The fifth theme encompassed the issue of *Ties with Ancestors*

*and Contemporaries*. The problem of the interpretation of Konrad I, Duke of Mazovia's chalice and paten was touched on as well as their connections with the genealogy of medieval Mazovian rulers (Kazimierz Jaśiński, Toruń), the issue of Kujawy medieval elites (Janusz Bierniak, Warszawa), the problem of "a passport to heaven" i.e. rites that were to secure salvation, resulting from the religious mentality in medieval Europe (Elżbieta Dąbrowska-Zawadzka, Szwajcaria), the issue of man versus the heraldic world (Stefan Krzysztof Kuczyński, Warszawa), the creative work of Świętosław Ihorewicz and Leon Diakon (Andrzej Poppe, Warszawa) and finally the initial history of the Gedymin dynasty (Tadeusz Wasilewski, Warszawa). The last, sixth theme was focussed on *Man in Face of History and Power*. Here the discussion dealt with relations between the Piast Dukes and 13<sup>th</sup> c. society (Stanisław Trąkowski, Warszawa), man involved in great trials — Bishop Muskata (Sławomir Gawałs, Warszawa), man and power in Moscow Ruthenia (Hieronim Grała, Warszawa), the ruler's contact with his subjects in late-medieval Poland (Maria Koczerska, Warszawa).

All in all 30 papers were delivered; an animated discussion followed. The session brought together over 100 participants, it was aptly called a Seym of Polish medievalists, assembling the most outstanding researchers from all over Poland. It was also a tribute paid to the king of Polish historiography, a foremost expert on the Middle Ages, teacher of and inspiration to several generations of Polish historians, as well as an eminent representative of Polish historiography on the international scene — Professor Aleksander Gieysztor. The materials of the session will soon be published.

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