

IN MEMORIAM

MAKSYMILIAN SKOTNICKI

1937–2007

This issue of *Miscellanea Geographica* is specific as for the first time its editor is not Maksymilian Skotnicki.

He was not only its founding father, its author, its translator, and its editor-in-chief, but above all a good spirit of this periodical that for twenty years has presented achievements of geographers from the University of Warsaw to foreign readers. For all these years he invested his time and efforts to ensure the regular publication of *Miscellanea Geographica* and a representative selection of research from the conducted at the Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies of the University of Warsaw. He was passionately engaged in editorial duties and the consecutive issues, to which he so contributed, were his reward and his pride.

Maksymilian Skotnicki was born in 1937. He studied geography at the University of Warsaw and African studies at Sorbonne. He was a skilled and versatile geographer, just as familiar with the natural science as with socioeconomics. He was also an experienced cartographer and one of pioneers of using remote sensing techniques in the geographic research. However, the basic field of his activity was the regional geography with the main focus on Africa, in which he was an exquisite specialist with no match among the Polish geographers. He was engaged in the agriculture and land utilization problems and the population issues in Africa and other tropical countries. He conducted observations and field research on the Ivory Coast, in Mali, Niger, Tunisia, Egypt, Mexico, Turkey, and on the Pacific and the Indian Ocean islands. In the 1980's the problems of local development, studied in the Polish-French research group Languedoc-Mazowsze, joined the

mainstream of his interests. He was the initiator and coordinator of the studies upon the local development and the spatial value in various regions of France and Poland; over a dozen years of this team-work resulted in nine volumes published in France.

He was bound to the University of Warsaw though his whole professional life but he also lectured at several French high schools (Montpellier III, Paris-Nanterre, Limoges). He gave lectures on the tropical regional geography and the socioeconomic geography; he tutored dozens of master's diplomas. He served several managerial functions at the Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies of the University of Warsaw: he was an associate dean for nine years, among the others. He was very successful in developing the cooperation between the Warsaw geographers and foreign geographers, especially French. He was a member of the Commission for International Affairs of the University of Warsaw and the chairman of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland at the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography.

His exquisite language skills, characteristic for all his further author's and editorial work, manifested themselves early in his first publications written during the university studies. He was the author of nearly one hundred scientific articles, a co-author of several books, including academic and school manuals. He was a member of the editorial staff of the Polish periodicals: *Przegląd Informacji o Afryce* (Review of Africa), *Afryka*, *Azja*, *Ameryka Łacińska* (Africa, Asia, Latin America), *Asia & Pacific Studies*, and *Poznaj Świat* (Know the World). For many years he was also an editor of *Mappemonde*, a French periodical dedicated to the modern presentation techniques in cartography. He made a great contribution to popularization of geography: he was a co-author and a consultant of the most important Polish encyclopedias, among the others; and he published frequently in the popular science magazines. Making use of his proficiency in French he translated a lot of geographical papers into French and into Polish.

He was awarded many times: his mother Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies decorated him with the Jerzy Kondracki memorial medal; for his didactic and scientific output he was decorated the Knight's Cross of Polonia Restituta; and the president of the French Republic honoured him with one of the highest French scientific awards: *Palmes Académiques*.

Despite the progressive illness, he worked until his last days. He died February 26, 2007.

We sadly and regretfully realize the great loss we suffered with his departure. We will continue the work he commenced as we believe the idea that brought it into existence is still valid and needed.

Andrzej Walewski

English translation: Agata Rogalińska