

I n t r o d u c t i o n

I am very pleased that we are publishing papers delivered by friends and collaborators of Professor Andrzej Zaborski, by those who have been contributing to the successive issues of *Folia Orientalia* for years. Their intellectual share has always been decisive for the academic quality of the journal. They are mainly linguists, lexicographers, and philologists: Federico Corriente, Pierre Larcher, Gabor Takács, Carsten Peust, Michael Knüppel, Manfred Kropp. I am also glad to welcome a group of mainly young scholars from Iran: Akkadian and Elamite scholars, archaeologists and historians. Our collaboration has developed in outcome of a series of Iranist and translational conferences which have been held in Kraków over the recent decade. These conferences have been inspired and arranged by Anna Krasnowolska and Andrzej Zaborski. I am glad to observe that this collaboration is partly due to my visit to Iran as a speaker during the Third Biennial International Conference of the Persian Gulf (2012). I also welcome another distinctive group of new contributors from the realm of Arabic Studies: Yousuf B. AlBader, Stephan Guth, Qasim Hassan, Muhammad Al-Sharkawi, and David Wilmsen. Professor Zaborski lectured at the University of Haifa and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Consequently it is my great joy to include Almog Kasher from Israel in the list of contributors. As a Classics and Ancient Orientalist scholar, I am pleased to welcome Annalisa Dentesano's decision to contribute to the volume, with her patrological paper, and all the more so as she is a collaborator of Guido Cifoletti, an old and close friend of Andrzej Zaborski. Professor Zaborski was a committed reviewer and bibliographer. In this context I would like to say 'thank you' to those of you who sent in your book reviews.

The Editorial and Advisory Boards have been enlarged by the names of scholars who have significantly added to the development of the journal and its academic quality over the years, who have generously shared their scholarship with its previous and present editors-in-chief: Sergio Baldi, Manfred Kropp, Wilfred Watson, Gabor Takács, Jacobus Naudé, Didier Morin (the last-named was a close friend and regular collaborator of Andrzej Zaborski in his editorial work). Seymour Gitin of the William Albright Institute of Archaeological Research represents a newly developing branch of the journal: Oriental archaeology and history.

In this introduction I would also like to commemorate my friends and collaborators. Father Jerzy Chmiel, a Polish Biblical scholar and a member of the Editorial Board has died recently. He was a noble and modest man.

In the past year I also lost my friend Elaine Myers, a Canadian archaeologist, and Erdener Akyüz, a teacher of English at the Technological University of Istanbul. I have recently visited a small Polish desert, about 30 miles to the north of Kraków. You would not call it a desert in the Asian and African sense. It was a warm and sunny day with the temperature at 25° Centigrade, just like on the shore of the Dead Sea in December. I stopped on a dune, looked around and for a while forgot where I was. It seemed to me that I was again crossing the Judean Desert with Elaine, from the Murabaat Caves in Wadi Dargha to the edge of the desert hanging over the Dead Sea near Mitspa Shalem, which we saw in the rays of the setting sun after an exhausting trek. On the Aegean shores of Gallipoli and in Istanbul with Erdener we discussed history, languages, teaching, family problems, Islam and Christianity, cultural identity, art, ethics and literature. Our discussions continued for several years. It was not ‘a cross-cultural dialogue’. It was genuine, profound, human communication.

My third story comes from the Turkish part of Thrace, the neighbourhood of Malkara, where once I met an old shepherd resting by a well with his flock. We drank tea from bardaks and exchanged our views on contemporary world conflicts. It was a peaceful exchange of reflections which followed one another in an atmosphere of agreement and tranquillity like drops of water. When I was saying goodbye the old shepherd responded in the following memorable words: ‘When one day in the future you pass along the main road, come again to this well and stop. I will be here with my flocks in the mountains, I will see you, I will come down and we will again drink tea and talk.’ These are the words of an old Turkish shepherd I would like to dedicate to all the contributors of this volume and say my warm ‘thank you.’

Tomasz Polański