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CHRONICLE

26th Polar Symposium, Lublin, June 1999

The 26th International Polar Symposium took place in Lublin at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University on the 18–20th of June 1999. Its theme was: *Polish polar research – The Silver Jubilee of the Polar Club of the Polish Geographical Society*. This symposium constitutes a continuation of traditional annual meetings of Polish polar explorers and is sponsored by the Polar Club of the Polish Geographical Society and the Committee on Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Responsible for the organization of this event were members of the Department of Geomorphology of the Institute of Earth Sciences of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. The participants, 103 in number, represented universities, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences and other institutions whose interest lies in polar studies. In addition there were scientists from the Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Canada, Lithuania, Norway and Russia, who either took part in the proceedings or sent their contributions.

The honorary guests of the symposium were members of Professor Alfred Jahn's family: his wife Dr Maria Jahn, accompanied by her grand-daughter Joanna Jakubaszko-Turkiewicz and grand-son Jacek Jakubaszko.

The plenary session began on the 18th of June in the university aula. The symposium was officially opened by Professor Kazimierz Pękala, Chairman of the Polar Club and also President of the Organizing Committee of the 26th Symposium.

The memory of those recently deceased, namely, Professor Alfred Jahn, Dr Jerzy Kuziemski, Dr Andrzej Martini, Ing. Henryk Mogilnicki, Professor Janusz Molski, Professor Stanisław Szczepankiewicz, Professor Andrzej Środoń and Professor Jerzy Szczypa, was honored by a moment of silence.

The President of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Professor Kazimierz Goebel and the Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences, Professor Józef Wojtanowicz, spoke on behalf of the university authorities; they expressed their joy of being able to host such a gathering of polar explorers and wished them a fruitful and pleasant stay in Lublin.

Professor Krzysztof Birkenmajer, Honorary President of the Committee on Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, gave a very interesting lecture outlining the history of the Polar Club of the Polish Geographical Society.

The 54 papers and communiqués, presenting the results of research carried out in the Arctic and Antarctic regions and also concerning the history and activity of the Polar Club, were delivered during the symposium. Studies of these regions were undertaken by teams from various centres of learning, some were carried out thanks to international cooperation. Most of the programmes involve Spitsbergen where there is a permanently functioning Polish Polar Station of the Polish Academy of Sciences at Hornsund together with seasonally active university stations (among others: the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University at Bellsund, the Jagiellonian University at Sörkappland, the University of Wrocław at the forefield of the Werenskjöld Glacier, the Mikołaj Kopernik University at Kaffiøyra), as well in the Western Antarctic where there is a Polish Station *H. Arctowski*, on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands.



Exhibition *Spitsbergen in painting and graphics* (photo by Jan Magierski)

The main theme of the symposium was the functioning of the natural environment and polar geocoecosystems in conditions of advancing human impact and of global changes of climate; this is in accordance with present and future international projects concerning the Arctic and Antarctic.

The following papers were given during the plenary sessions of the 26th Symposium, chaired by Józef Wojtanowicz and Andrzej Kostrzewski:

The fortieth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty (Jacek Machowski, Warszawa); *The first Poles on Spitsbergen* (Adam Krawczyk, Kraków); *Polar explorers of the Explorer's Club* (Ryszard W. Schramm, Poznań); *The Renardodden 1 settlement. Problems of chronology* (Vadim Starkov, Moscow); *Polish-Argentinian paleolimnological research on King George Island, Southern Shetlands, Antarctica* (Andrzej Tatur, Warszawa); *The scenario of climatic changes of the Arctic in the XXI century* (Rajmund Przybylak, Toruń).

The majority of the papers were presented during specialist and poster sessions. They were chaired by Stanisław Rakusa-Suszczewski (Biological Sciences) and Marek Grześ, Henryk Gurgul, Andrzej A. Marsz, Andrzej Karczewski, Bogusław M. Kaszewski and Stanisław Uziak (Earth Sciences).

Due to limited time, it was not possible for all the papers and communiqués to be presented. All papers received were published in an English language version of a volume of the *Polish Polar Studies* series which for many years now is an accompaniment to Polar Symposia. The one published in connection with the present symposium, had as its title: *Polish Polar Research – The 25th Jubilee of the Polar Club of the Polish Geographical Society*. It numbers 428 pages with many illustrations, and contains papers dealing in geomorphology, geology, glaciology, hydrography and oceanology, biology, ecology, meteorology and climatology, archaeology as

well as humanistic and social studies. To mark the jubilee, a history of the Polar Club's activity was also included.

The present volume was dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Alfred Jahn, a distinguished scientist and polar explorer, founder and for many years President of the Polar Club of the Polish Geographical Society, who died on the 1st of April 1999, just 79 days before the opening of the 26th Symposium in which he was to have taken part.

All the participants received the subsequent volume (no. 7) of the *Biuletyn Polarny* annual, which is the organ of the Committee for History and Documentation of Polar Studies of the Committee of Polar Research of the PAS as well as of the Polar Club of the PGS.

The second day of the symposium chiefly concerned the Polar Club. It began with the celebration of Holy Mass as a memorial service for the late Prof. Alfred Jahn and other deceased polar explorers. This took place in the University Chapel of the Catholic University of Lublin.

Before noon, a general assembly of the Polar Club took place. On the agenda were the Club's activities in view of the silver jubilee of its existence as well as plans for the year 2000. 22 new members were also received into the Club.

During the symposium, an exhibition was opened in the Museum of the UMCS to mark the Club's Jubilee and to promote knowledge concerning polar regions; it was headed: *Spitsbergen in painting and graphics* and presented works by artists who are also polar explorers: Iwo Birkenmajer and Zbigniew Józwiak. An exhibition of artistic photography by Dr Jan Magierski, headed *Scraps of the Arctic*, was opened in the gallery of the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences. Both exhibitions were open during subsequent months and aroused great interest.

According to the Club's rules and tradition, polar symposia are an occasion to socialize. This was also the case as far as the present symposium is concerned: it had its solemn dimension, as befits a jubilee, as well as guarding its typical friendly atmosphere.

After the proceedings, the participants of the symposium had an opportunity to visit some of Lublin's unique monuments: the chapel of the Holy Trinity in Lublin Castle which, one should take note, is considered to be an architectural treasure of the highest order in world scale, and the Old Town.

A coach outing was also organized across the Nałęczów plateau to Kazimierz Dolny on the Vistula. Those taking part were able to learn about the particular character of the natural environment as they wandered through the loess gullies. They were treated to a magnificent view of Janowiec Castle on the other side of the Vistula near Męcierz and could enjoy the monuments of Renaissance architecture of Kazimierz. The outing also included a visit to the local Nature Museum with its permanent exposition concerning the gorge of the Vistula across the highlands of Central Poland.

The next meeting of polar explorers, the 27th Polar Symposium, is to take place in Toruń on the 1st-3rd of December 2000.

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