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JÓZEF WOLSKI (1910–2008); AN EPITAPH*

Höheres Leben

Der Mensch erwählt sein Leben, sein Beschließen,
Von Irrtum frei kennt Weisheit er, Gedanken,
Erinnerungen, die in der Welt versanken,
Und nichts kann ihm der innern Wert verdrießen.

Die prächtige Natur verschönet seine Tage,
Der Geist in ihm gewährt ihm neues Trachten
In seinem Innern oft, und das, die Wahrheit achten,
Und höhern Sinn, und manche seltne Frage.

Dann kann der Mensch des Lebens Sinn auch kennen,
Das Höchste seinem Zweck, das Herrlichste benennen,
Gemäß der Menschheit so des Lebens Welt betrachten,
Und hohen Sinn als höhres Leben achten.

Friedrich Hölderlin

Józef Wolski, the distinguished historian and excellent Polish scholar, died in Cracow (Kraków) on October 2, 2008. His long life, successful, but also tainted with bitter experiences, deserves to be remembered for many reasons, not least of which is that his death marks the end of the era of the great masters of Polish scholarship who were educated in the free Second Polish Republic (Druga Rzeczpospolita). Professor J. Wolski's achievements as a scholar are all the more

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spectacular when one considers that they coincided with the major events of twentieth century Polish history.

Józef Wolski was born on March 19, 1910 in Tarnów, Lesser Poland (Małopolska), in a house on Ogrodowa Str. (now J. Bema Str.), as a subject of the emperor of Austria-Hungary. Józef's Silesian-born father, Jan, was then a sales representative for the chemical company Fritze from Florisdorf near Vienna. His mother was a Cracovienne with family roots in Jasło and in the area of Rzeszów. Józef's godfather was Władysław Brach, known as the "Tarnów Rockefeller," the owner of a nationally famous drugstore.

From the time when the Wolski family moved to Kraków before World War I (1912), Józef's life and that of his adopted city became inseparable. In 1918 young Józef observed how Austrian black eagles were removed and replaced with the insignia of an independent Polish state. In Kraków the boy completed the famed King Jan III Sobieski gymnasium, where he acquired an excellent knowledge of Latin, Greek, and French. He began to learn German from the 22-volume work *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon* which he had received as a gift from his father and aroused his interest in history and in distant lands.

After graduating from Jagiellonian University (UJ; 1928–1932), Wolski became an assistant of Prof. Ludwik Piotrowicz. Born in Nowy Wiśnicz near Bochnia (between Tarnów and Kraków) in 1886, L. Piotrowicz studied classical philology at Jagiellonian University with Prof. Kazimierz Morawski and then in Berlin with Eduard Meyer and Otto Hirschfeld (1912–1914). E. Meyer, a historian of the Graeco-Roman world and of the Orient, largely influenced L. Piotrowicz. After his involvement in Poznań (the capital of Greater Poland), including the founding of Poland's first chair of ancient history, Piotrowicz took the Chair of Ancient History at Jagiellonian University in Kraków (1922). Piotrowicz's methodology and his broad perspective of historical processes made a strong impression on young Wolski's scholarly formation and his later attitude toward research.

J. Wolski's master's thesis titled, *Arsaces I, the founder of the Parthian state*, was accepted as a doctoral dissertation (1936). He published it in the journal *Eos* then issued in Lwów, in 1937–1938 (later, in 1974, it appeared in French).¹ Wolski's dissertation not only marks the real beginnings of Parthian studies in Poland, but it also represents a significant turning point in the study of Parthian history, because his work advanced scholarship to a level higher than had been traditionally practiced and set modern research in a wholly new direction. In his

¹ 'Arsaces I, założyciel państwa partyjskiego' ['Arsaces I, the founder of the Parthian state'] *Eos* 38, 1937, 492–513; *Eos* 39, 1938, 244–266 (= 'Arsace I^{er}, fondateur de l'État parthe' in *Com-mémoration Cyrus. Actes du congrès de Shiraz 1971 et autres études. Hommage universel* (Acta Iranica 3), Téhéran 1974, 159–199.

doctoral dissertation, Wolski disproved the beliefs then prevailing in scholarship, by employing a new methodology based on a rigorous philological analysis of determining the best source tradition of a given subject. By drawing on his creativity and skill as a scholar, Wolski was able to reconstruct historical processes which enabled him to establish their broad political implications. Wolski's method was reflected in his oft-mentioned motto: *non multa, sed multum*. The young, energetic scholar, supported by his mentor, worked hard on his habilitation concerning the collapse of Seleukid rule in Iran in the third century B.C. The 60–page dissertation was readied in 1938 and the first of two parts was published in 1939.²

Before the war in 1939, Wolski sent German translations of his doctoral dissertation and a portion of his habilitation to three distinguished scholars, W.W. Tarn (Cambridge), E. Bickerman (Sorbonne), and M. Rostovtzeff (Yale University). M. Rostovtzeff wrote Wolski in August 1939 acknowledging his achievements, and agreed with his new interpretation of Iran's history in the third century B.C. Wolski also propagated his findings among Polish scholars; a copy has been preserved of his 1937 article about Arsakes I in *Eos* dedicated to "His Honor Professor Dr. T. Sulimirski with the polite request for its acceptance."³

Wolski often reminisced about the Second Polish Republic (Druga Rzeczpospolita, 1918–1939) as a wonderful time, a period of flourishing scholarship in Kraków and in Poland, a formative time for him as a man and as a scholar. In the fall of 1939, Wolski was scheduled to leave on a scholarship in France. Tragically, Poland was treacherously assaulted on September 1, 1939, marking the catastrophic events of World War II. Germany and its allied Soviet Union partitioned the country and proceeded to engage in mass repressions and murders. Brutal acts also affected German-occupied Kraków, and in particular Jagiellonian University. On November 6, 1939, the Germans summoned almost 200 professors of Jagiellonian University and Kraków's other universities to the main UJ auditorium for a lecture by an SS officer, after which they were treacherously arrested ('Sonderaktion Krakau'). Wolski and other prisoners were first incarcerated in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp and then in Dachau. Many professors died as a result of extreme exhaustion, torture, and humiliation. Those who survived were released on the intervention by Benito Mussolini. The chain of people linked to Mussolini was long, but the decisive contribution was made by Luciana Frassati-Gawrońska (1902–2007), the daughter of the founder of *La*

² 'Załamanie się panowania Seleucydów w Iranie w III w. przed Chr.' ['The collapse of Seleukid rule in Iran in the 3rd century B.C.'] *Eos* 40, 1939, 23–47.

³ Małopolska-born (near Krosno), Sulimirski was then a professor of archaeology at Jagiellonian University (until 1936 he had worked at the famous King John Casimir University in Lwów). After World War II, he was a professor of archaeology at the University of London.

Stampa, who risked her life by supporting Poland in World War II. Those released from the camps included Józef Wolski, who returned to Kraków (January 1941). From 1942/3 he taught at the underground Jagiellonian University, an activity which was punishable by severe repressions, including death. With the help of Ludwik Piotrowicz, then the chairman of the Krakow chapter of the charity known as the Chief Welfare Council, he found work at Bank Emisyjny. Shortly before the war, Wolski's mother had died, followed by his father's death during the German occupation. After the premature death of his sister caused by illness and exhaustion during the German-ordered deportation from Kalisz (in Greater Poland/Wielkopolska) and her husband's imprisonment in Auschwitz (1942), Wolski had to provide for his nephews.

While Wolski was in the concentrations camps, M. Rostovtzeff published his monumental work on the Hellenistic epoch in which he gave recognition to Wolski's findings concerning Arsakes I.⁴ Wolski did not learn about this until well after the war and often remarked that Rostovtzeff's opinion was a breakthrough in his career. In June 1946, Wolski published his habilitation dissertation in French and won habilitation at Jagiellonian University.⁵ In 1948 he married Anna Piotrowicz, a daughter of Ludwik Piotrowicz's brother Karol, who had been murdered by the Russians at Katyn together with thousands of other Poles in 1940. His family became for Wolski a source of inspiration and strength. At the height of Sovietization and terror (1945–1956), Wolski and his family shared the same fate of all Poles as their country fell under the despotism of the Soviet Union and its backers. Those around Wolski did not escape recrimination. The communists forced Prof. W. Semkowicz, the grandfather of Wolski's wife, to be dismissed from his job at Jagiellonian University leading to his death in 1948. Wolski explained: "that under the guise of discipline the Kraków scholarly community came under attack for its exceptional resistance to accept the Sovietization of Polish science."⁶ Repressive measures were also taken against Ludwik Piotrowicz. In 1948 the communists closed the journal he edited, *Wiadomości Numizmatyczno-Archeologiczne* [*Numismatic-Archaeological News*]. Harassed, Piotrowicz died suddenly in Zakopane in 1957.

Despite such obstacles, Wolski devoted himself to scholarly pursuits. As he remarked, after 1945 he followed the motto: *fortes fortuna adiuvat*. In 1945 he

⁴ *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, Oxford 1941, 1425.

⁵ 'L'effondrement de la domination des Séleucides en Iran au III-e siècle av. J.C.' in *Bulletin International de l'Académie Polonaise des sciences et des lettres. Classe de philologie – Classe d'histoire et de philosophie*. N° Supplément 5, 1939–1945, Cracovie 1947, 13–70.

⁶ J. Wolski in an interview by E. Dziwisz, 'Tak mogło być' ['The way it could be'] *Alma Mater* 61, Kraków 2004, 44.

became a member of the Historical Commission of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU). In 1952, communist authorities dissolved PAU, replacing it with the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), which was based on a Soviet model. In 2007, Wolski observed: “Today we are free, but back then it was captivity: Russia was all around, Rokossowski, Bierut. It was a harsh reality.”⁷ Unlike most of the academic community of the time, he never joined the communist party, because he was strongly critical over the new ideology, regarding it, quoting his words, as a “Marxist disease.” In 1946, Wolski started work at Łódź University (UŁ), which involved the heavy burden of having to make the long commute from his home in Kraków. Yet, this provided him with the opportunity to head the Department of Ancient History at UŁ, where he was appointed Professor Extraordinary in 1948. Wolski was removed from his post, however, and replaced by a member of the communist party in 1952. He next found himself at Wrocław University, where many scholars worked who had been deported from Lwów, a city annexed by the Soviet Union, and from other Polish centers (1952–1958). Wrocław University and its academic community provided Wolski with good working conditions, enabling him to publish many studies in *Eos*, the renowned journal moved to Wrocław from Lwów. Meanwhile, between 1947 and 1956 he continued to lecture in Katowice. In Wrocław, Wolski trained two students: T. Kotula and A. Ładomirski. In 1969, he recommended A. Kunisz (previously a student with L. Piotrowicz) and M. Salamon for work at Silesian University.

After L. Piotrowicz died, Wolski took over as Chair of Ancient History at Jagiellonian University (1958), which he headed until his retirement in 1980. He then supported the scholarly career of A. Krawczuk, also a student of L. Piotrowicz, who subsequently succeeded him as Chair, and who in turn was replaced by E. Dąbrowa. In 1962, Wolski became Professor Ordinary. He had an impressive record in research and teaching, serving as Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and History at Jagiellonian University (1965–1968) and as Chairman of the Committee for the Study of Antique Culture at the Polish Academy of Sciences (1977–1979). This did not always go smoothly, mainly due to political pressures.

Beginning in 1960, Wolski became deeply involved in direct international contacts, especially with scholars in Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, and Hungary. His first foreign visit was made possible by a scholarship from the Ford Foundation (1960). He traveled for three months in Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and France. It enabled him to make the personal acquaintance with such scholars

⁷ In *Starożytny Bliski Wschód w nowym świetle, Po drogach uczonych* [The Near East in a new light. Scholars' paths]. Members of PAU are interviewed by A.M. Kobos, vol. 2, Kraków 2007, 576.

as A. Simonetta, G. Le Rider, and A. Aymard. The tour ended with a visit in Germany, where Wolski was cordially welcomed by H. Bengtson at Würzburg. Among his other travels abroad, Wolski held fond memories of his visit to Israel in 1964, when he took part in the celebrations of the 600th anniversary of Jagiellonian University by its Jewish graduates.

In the decades that followed, Wolski attended many international conferences and was invited to lecture all over Europe. He always published in excellent scholarly journals, including *Eos*, *Iranica Antiqua*, *Klio*, *Historia*, *Syria*, *Berytus*, *Tyche*, among others.⁸ Wolski's output comprises more than 200 papers, dozens of reviews, and several books.

Wolski and Franz Altheim, a German polymath active in Halle before the war and then in Berlin, established a long and fruitful working relationship. F. Altheim specialized (together with his adopted daughter Ruth Stiehl) in the history of the ancient world, Iran, and Central Asia. Although Wolski did not spare his friend criticism in academic terms, both scholars held the other in high regard. Altheim saw to it, for example, that Wolski's major works were published in German (1969).⁹ A moving testament of Wolski's close and cordial links with the German scholarly world after World War II appears in a letter by Professor Gerhard Wirth (now Professor Emeritus of Ancient History, University of Bonn): "Wolski gehörte ja in die Welt der polnischen Geistesaristokratie (...). Er hatte nicht nur große Bekanntschaft mit der deutschen Fachkollegenschaft gewonnen, ja hat zu dieser gehört. Die Freundschaftlichkeit, mit der er die alten Beziehungen wieder aufnahm und solche mit Jüngeren aufnahm, ergab für mich das Bild einer menschlichen Großzügigkeit, die über die Malaisen des Jahrhunderts hinweg half. Dort, wo ich mich mit ihm beschäftigen musste, habe ich mich immer als eins mit ihm gefühlt".¹⁰ A true friendship likewise developed between Wolski

⁸ See a.o.: 'The Decay of the Iranian Empire of the Seleucids and the Chronology of the Parthian Beginnings' *Berytus* 12, 1956–1957, 35–52; 'L'historicité d'Arsace Ier' *Historia* 8, 1959, 222–238; 'Les Iraniens et le royaume gréco-bactrien' *Klio* 38, 1960, 110–121; 'Arsace II et la généalogie des premiers Arsacides' *Historia* 11, 1962, 138–145; 'Le rôle et l'importance des mercenaires dans l'état Parthe' *Iranica Antiqua* 5, 1965, 103–115; 'Les Achéménides et les Arsacides. Contribution à l'histoire de la formation des traditions iraniennes' *Syria* 43, 1966, 65–89; 'Die gesellschaftliche und politische Stellung der großen parthischen Familien' *Tyche* 4, 1989, 221–227. For a comprehensive bibliography of Wolski's publications, see: 'Bibliografia publikacji profesora Józefa Wolskiego' by E. Dabrowa, M. Salamon, in *Hortus Historiae. Studies In Honour of Professor Józef Wolski on the 100th Anniversary of His Birthday*, Kraków 2010, 5–17.

⁹ 'Der Zusammenbruch der Seleukidenherrschaft im Iran im 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr.', 188–254; 'Die Iranier und das griechisch-baktrische Königreich', 255–274; 'Das Problem des Andragoras', 275–280, in F. Altheim, J. Rehork (eds.), *Der Hellenismus in Mittelasien* (Wege der Forschung, Bd. XCI) Darmstadt 1969.

¹⁰ I am most grateful to Prof. Sabine Müller (University of Kiel, Germany) who kindly sent me a text written by Prof. Wirth concerning his contacts with Prof. Wolski (November 2010).

and J. Harmatta, a Hungarian orientalist. He valued his friendship with the Belgian archaeologist, L. Vanden Berghe.

After the fall of Poland's communist dictatorship, Wolski enthusiastically joined in the work of a restored Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU) in 1989. This in part led him to publish his research in the form of books, which until now had appeared as articles. The first was *L'Empire des Arsacides* (Acta Iranica 32), Lovanii: Peeters 1993.¹¹ Its somewhat abridged version appeared in Polish as *Imperium Arsacydów*, Poznań 1996. These were followed by *The Seleucids: The Decline and Fall of Their Empire* (Polska Akademia Umiejętności. Dissertations of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, vol. 91), Kraków 1999, also published in Polish with supplements.¹² The last volume was *Seleucid and Arsacid Studies. A Progress Report on Developments in Source Research* (Polska Akademia Umiejętności. Dissertations of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, vol. 100), Kraków 2003. Wolski emphasized that this trilogy encompassed much of his life's work.

While Wolski's research tended to focus on Hellenistic and Parthian Iran, he also published studies on other subjects in ancient history. In his polyhistoric approach, he consciously followed the heritage of L. Piotrowicz and E. Meyer. He had a particular liking for the history of Athens and Sparta in the sixth and fifth century, especially in context of their relations with Persia.¹³ Many other works concerned the Hellenistic period, especially the roles played by Alexander the Great and the Seleukids,¹⁴ while others concerned the Achaemenids and the Sasanians.¹⁵ Wolski devoted much study to the history of the Greeks in Baktria

¹¹ See the reviews by A. Invernizzi, *Mesopotamia* 1994, 339–342; E. Kettenhofen, *Die Welt des Orients* 28, 1997, 252–266.

¹² *Dzieje i upadek Imperium Seleucydów [The history and fall of the Seleucid empire]*, Kraków: Enigma-Press 1999, with two supplements: M.J. Olbrycht, 'Seleukids and the culture of their epoch,' 135–208; J. Bodzek, 'The Catalogue of Seleucid coins in the National Museum of Cracow,' 209–235.

¹³ 'Pausanias et le problème de la politique Spartiate (années 480–470)' *Eos* 47, 1954–1955, 75–94; 'Les changements intérieurs a Sparte a la veille des Guerres Médiques' *Revue des Études Anciennes* 69, 1967, 31–49; 'Les Grecques et les Ioniens au temps des guerres médiques' *Eos* 58 1969–1970, 33–49; 'L' influence des guerres médiques sur la lutte politique en Grèce' in *Acta Conventus XI "EIRENE"*, Wrocław 1971, 641–647; 'Médismos et son importance en Grèce à l'époque des guerres médiques' *Historia* 23, 1973, 1–15; 'Thémistocle, était-il promoteur de la démocratie athénienne?' *AAntASH* 32 1989, 43–49; 'Thémistocle, la construction de la flotte athénienne et la situation internationale en Méditerranée' *Rivista di Storia dell'Antichità* 13/14 (1983/84), 179–192.

¹⁴ 'Alexandre le Grand et l'Iran. Contribution à l'histoire de l'époque séleucide et arsacide' *AAntASH* 31, 1985–1988, 3–11; 'L'hellénisme et l'Iran' in M.-M. Mactoux, E. Geny (eds.), *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque. II: Anthropologie et société*, Paris 1989, 439–446.

¹⁵ 'Darius III's peace offer to Alexander of Macedon after the battle of Issus, 333 BC: an historical evaluation' in W. Kaczanowicz (ed.), *Studia z dziejów antyku*, Katowice 2004, 33–40; 'Ar-

(Afghanistan, southern Uzbekistan, Tajikistan), who were closely linked with his interests in the Parthians and the Seleukids.¹⁶ Another area of interest to him was Rome, including the formative process of annalistics,¹⁷ and the causes of the fall of Rome seen by analogy with the history of Iran (the concept of war on two fronts).¹⁸ Several articles investigated Roman political relations with Iran.¹⁹ Wolski's output also includes publications on Thrace, Palestine, Oriental chronology, Aegean culture, and the Linear B writing system. His academic handbook, *Historia powszechna. Starożytność* [*World history. Antiquity*], published in 1965, had a total of 11 editions by 2007. The *Atlas historii świata* [*The world's historical atlas*] (Wrocław-Warszawa 1974), which draws heavily from the work advanced by L. Piotrowicz, became a perennial throughout Poland as part of every curriculum on world history. Wolski often stressed L. Piotrowicz's contribution to the atlas, often remarking on his own early fascination with maps and cartography, inspired by the German *Meyers Lexikon*.

Wolski strongly accentuated a need to use various sources in historical research, including archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic evidence.²⁰ It is little wonder then, that his former students include no small number of scholars who integrate into their craft such diverse fields as history, numismatics, epigraphy, and archaeology (T. Kotula, A. Kunisz, L. Morawiecki, M. Salamon, M.J.

sakiden und Sasaniden' in R. Stiehl, H.E. Stier (eds.), *Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben: Festschrift für Franz Altheim zum 6. 10. 1968*, Bd. I, Berlin 1969, 315–322; 'Czy państwo Sasanidów było rzeczywiście 'nowoperskie?'" [= 'L'Empire des Sassanides était-il réellement néo-persé?'] *Eos* 78, 1990, 147–154.

¹⁶ 'Les Iraniens et le royaume gréco-bactrien' *Klio* 38, 1960, 110–121; 'Die Widerstandsbewegung gegen die Makedonenherrschaft im Orient' *Klio* 51, 1969, 207–215; 'La problématique de la fondation de l'État gréco-bactrien' *Iranica Antiqua* 17, 1982, 131–146.

¹⁷ 'La prise de Rome par les Celtes et la formation de l'annalistique Romaine' *Historia* 5, 1956, 24–52.

¹⁸ 'Le rôle et l'importance des guerres de deux fronts dans la décadence de l'Empire romain' *Klio* 62, 1980, 411–424.

¹⁹ 'Néron, politique réaliste' in J.-M. Croisille, R. Martin, Y. Perrin (eds.), *Neronia V. Néron: histoire et légende. Actes du V^e Colloque international de la SIEN* (Clermont-Ferrand et Saint-Étienne, 2–6 novembre 1994) (Collection Latomus, vol. 247), Bruxelles 1999, 11–20; 'Sur l'authenticité des traités romano-perses' *Iranica Antiqua* 27, 1992, 169–187.

²⁰ 'Formowanie się tradycji irańskiej w starożytności w świetle monet' ['The making of Iranian tradition in the light of coins'] *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne* 22, 1978, 186–189; 'L'archéologie et l'Iran parthe' in A. Lipska, E. Niezgoda, M. Ząbecka (eds.), *Studia Aegaea et Balcanica in honorem Lodovicae Press*, Warszawa 1992, 167–171; 'L'archéologie et l'histoire ancienne: l'Iran à la lumière des nouvelles sources archéologiques' in J. Śliwa (ed.), *Centenary of Mediterranean Archaeology, 1897–1997: International Symposium (Cracow, October 1997)*, Kraków 1999, 129–134; 'Znaczenie pewnych elementów epigraficznych i ikonograficznych na monetach partyjskich dla rekonstrukcji procesu historycznego' ['The meanings of some epigraphic and iconographic elements on Parthian coins for a reconstruction of the historical process'] *Notae Numismaticae* 3–4, 1999, 95–101.

Olbrycht). Wolski consciously chose to limit himself to the study of Graeco-Roman sources, while drawing on Iranian accounts to a limited extent. In this, he applied his professional principle that one should use sources one knows thoroughly. Wolski also stressed that our approach to the history of Iran must be free from exaggerated Eurocentrism.

Wolski was not an easy man to approach at first, especially with regard to younger people, but once “the ice was broken,” to know him was to partake in a spiritual feast. The Professor was aware not only of the importance of his many achievements, but also of his personal ability and erudition in which he continued the scientific tradition of the Second Republic so that he might serve as a role model for future generations of Polish academics: “The first blow to the Polish intelligentsia was struck by the Germans, then by the Russians. Murders, exiles, Sovietization of science. Such losses can only be undone after generations.”²¹ He frequently expressed the joy of having lived to see a free Poland, “The Most Serene Republic” (Najjaśniejsza Rzeczpospolita). Wolski reviewed more than 50 doctoral dissertations, 40 habilitations, and 30 professorial qualifications. His students are engaged in numerous learned bodies and institutions throughout Poland.

If I may be permitted, I would like to share some personal memories of Professor Wolski. I first heard of him when, in my high school library, I encountered a scholarly periodical which included his article about the Seleukids in Iran.²² When in the early 1990’s I undertook to write a doctoral dissertation on the Parthians and their relations with Central Asia and nomads, Wolski firmly supported my idea. He had just published several works about nomads and the relationship of the Parthians with Central Asia.²³ My thesis was written at Münster University (Germany); Wolski as my mentor and then reviewer supported me during the trying time before the defense of my dissertation at Jagiellonian University. His appraisal of my work left a lasting impression on me: “A work has been created which I can with full responsibility call a habilitation, of course even more so as a doctorate”. He also helped me through some rough times after receiving my

²¹ In ‘Tak mogło być’ [‘The way it could be’] *Alma Mater* 61, Kraków 2004, 45.

²² The article was ‘Geneza ruchów separatystycznych w Iranie w III w. p.n.e.’ [‘The origins of separatist movements in Iran in the 3rd century B.C.’] *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 88, 1981, 417–429.

²³ ‘Środkowoazjatyckie plemiona irańskie – nomadzi czy ludność osiadła?’ [‘Central Asian Iranian tribes; nomads or settled peoples?’] in A. Bursche, M. Mielczarek, W. Nowakowski (eds.), *Nunc de suebis dicendum est... Studia archaeologica et historica Georgii Kolendo ab amici et discipuli dicata. Studia dedykowane prof. J. Kolendo w 60-lecie urodzin i 40-lecie pracy naukowej*, Warszawa 1995, 261–264; ‘Les débuts de l’Etat parthe et ses contacts avec l’Asie Centrale’ in *Convegno internazionale sul tema: La Persia e l’Asia Centrale da Alessandro al X secolo, in collaborazione con l’Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Roma, 9–12 novembre 1994)* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Atti del Convegno Lincei 127), Roma 1996, 179–185.

PhD. Later Wolski lent me much support in my research on the Parthians and the Hellenistic era in Asia, including the role of Alexander the Great in the Iranian world, which concluded with my habilitation (2005). During our private meetings, Wolski always showed interest not only in my academic pursuits, but also in my personal life. He was eager to talk about the need to maintain ethics and honor in scholarship, hinting at some painful examples he knew from personal experience when some academics resorted to slandering their colleagues. Wolski looked back on L. Piotrowicz as someone who had appreciated his work and gave him “his wings.” And just like his mentor, he considered not only a student’s knowledge, but also a student’s attitude as paramount. He was a man of great warmth and cheerfulness, which filled every conversation.

Wolski’s publications found readership in Iran, as I could see for myself encountering a book of his in a Teheran bookstore on Engelab-e Islami Street. The book *L’Empire des Arsacides* (Lovanii 1993) was translated into Persian (*Šāhanšāhi-ye Aškāni*, Tehran 1386/2007). In conversation with foreign academics his name often came up in entirely unexpected circumstances. During a meeting in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Prof. Eduard V. Rtveladze, a member of Uzbekistan’s Academy of Sciences, showed me offprints of several articles by Wolski from the 40’s and 50’s. The Polish historian had sent them to Prof. M.E. Masson, E.V. Rtveladze’s mentor, who had headed the South-Turkmen Comprehensive Archaeological Expedition (YUTAKE). The author added a dedication hoping for good future relations. In Western Europe, Wolski’s name became a hallmark of advanced Polish research into the ancient world.

Wolski lived in extraordinarily harsh times, without ever sullyng his good name, whether during the German occupation or in the communist period, while some scholars bowed in conformity, if not in servitude, to the oppressive authorities, or could even zealously attack inconvenient persons. Despite his concentration camp experiences, Wolski succeeded in keeping very fit. Almost to the end of his days, he remained an active scholar. Wolski loved the province of Małopolska (Lesser Poland), particularly the Carpathians, and regularly traveled with family and friends to mountain towns like Rabka, Mszana Dolna, and Zawoja. The last-named health resort was donated to PAU by archduke Karol Habsburg (from the Polish Habsburg line), a fact which Wolski, who was attached to Austro-Hungarian tradition, often emphasized. Wolski visited Austria several times (until 2000), enjoying Vienna’s spiritual atmosphere and making trips to other regions, including the Mariazell pilgrimage center. He was a great lover of opera.

In 2003, Wolski received an honorary professorship from Jagiellonian University. A year later, he published his memoirs, *Kraków przede wszystkim* [*Kraków comes first*] (Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków), an impressive work to conclude the life of an equally impressive man. In them, he portrayed past Kraków and the

splendid scholarly community it enjoyed before World War II, but he also describes the harsh years of occupation and the communist period, followed by those from 1989 to 2003. Quite remarkable are his warm words about his family, his beloved wife, who died in 1983, and his two daughters, Teresa and Elżbieta, who showed much devotion in caring for him to the end: “Mine was not an easy life, but I do not complain about the life I had. Domestic life filled it with radiance.”²⁴

I learned about the Professor’s death just as I returned from Rome, where I had spent some time on a Lanckoronski Foundation Grant in summer 2008. I had intended to meet him and tell him about my experience in the Eternal City and my planned expedition to Central Asia (Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan). The meeting never took place. At Kraków’s Rakowice Cemetery, the Professor was mourned by family, friends, and colleagues, in the golden rays of the Kraków autumn.

²⁴ In *Starożytny Bliski Wschód w nowym świetle, Po drogach uczonych* [Ancient Near East in a new light. Scholars’ paths]. Members of PAU are interviewed by A.M. Kobos, vol. 2, Kraków 2007, 578.