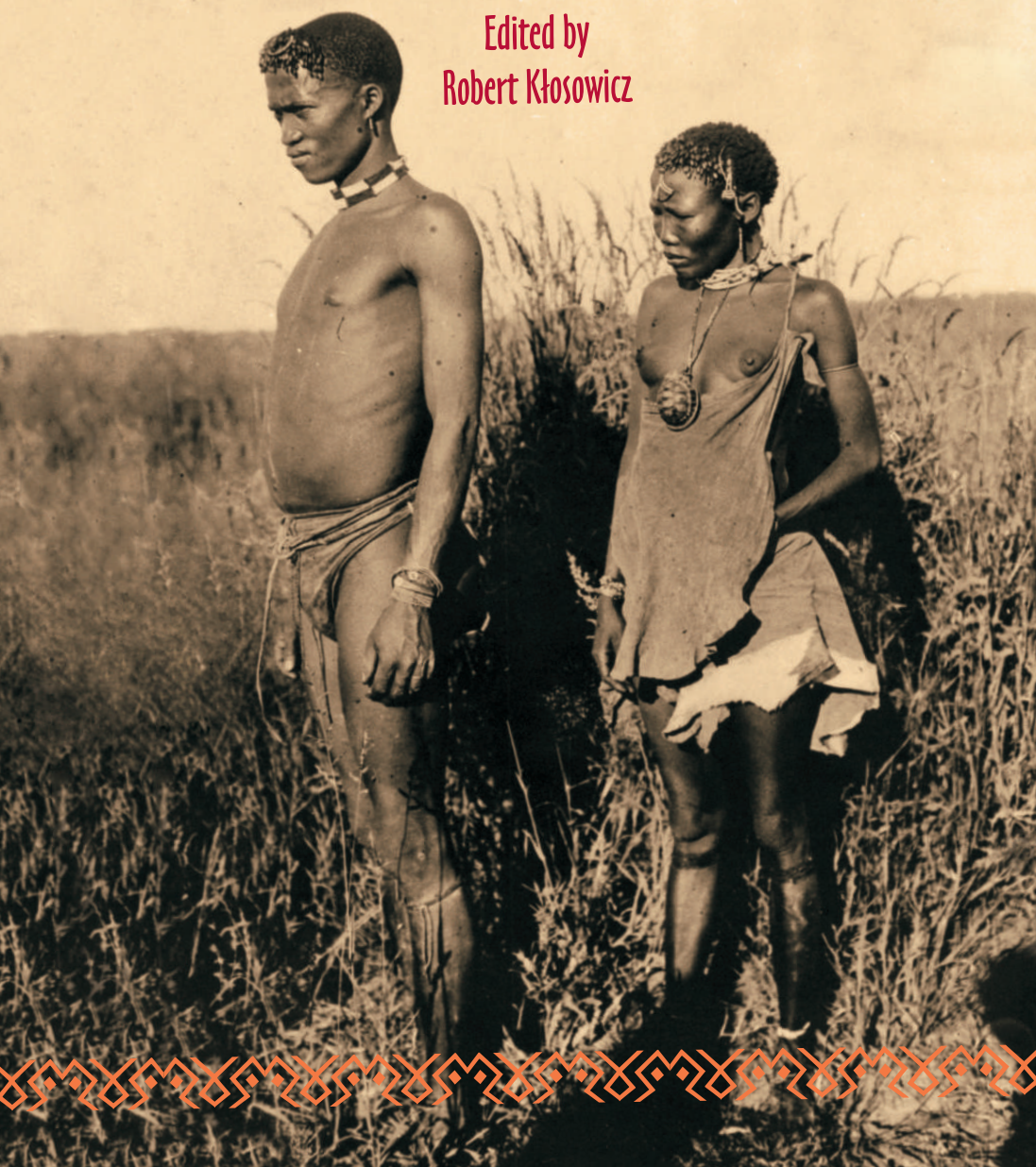


# PIONEERS OF AFRICAN STUDIES IN KRAKÓW



Edited by  
Robert Kłosowicz





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# PIONEERS OF AFRICAN STUDIES IN KRAKÓW

In memory of Professor Roman Stopa (1895-1995)



Edited by  
Robert Kłosowicz



Kraków

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## AFRICAN TOPICS IN ANDRZEJ WALIGÓRSKI'S AND LESZEK DZIĘGIEL'S RESEARCH



THE POST-WAR PERIOD in Poland did not work in favour of organising field studies abroad, especially those conducted within the territory of colonial states, administered by Western European countries. Nonetheless, there was a group of Polish researchers who were able to become acquainted with non-European countries and study them. Chronologically, the first Polish anthropologist to conduct research on the African continent after World War II was Andrzej Waligórski, a PhD student of Bronisław Malinowski.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In the text, the author uses the term “anthropology” as this Anglo-Saxon term (its creators were scholars from Great Britain and its political and cultural circles), understood as a synonym for “ethnology”, has begun to appear increasingly more frequently in Poland, replacing the thus far more commonplace terms “ethnography” and “ethnology”.

The aim of this article is the presentation of the scholarly profile and analysis of the academic achievements in the field of African studies of two Kraków-based anthropologists, first graduates and then professors of the Jagiellonian University, whose research was linked to African issues. Professor Andrzej Waligórski spent two years in Kenya (1946-1948) among the Luo tribe, conducting intensive field studies there. Professor Leszek Dzięgiel, his PhD student, as well as the co-author and continuator of his work, despite making such attempts was never able to visit Africa and admire its beauty personally.

The most important sources of information for this article are primarily two extensive interviews with Leszek Dzięgiel, conducted by the author in 2001 and 2005, as part of the international research programme *Wandel und Kontinuität in den Transformationsländern Ost- und Südosteuropas* [Change and continuity in the transitional countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe].<sup>4</sup> These interviews contained information about his cooperation with Andrzej Waligórski and about how they jointly prepared the field study results Waligórski had brought back with him from Kenya. As supplements to the data obtained during the interviews may serve two monographs written by Leszek Dzięgiel: *Swoboda na smyczy. Wspomnienia 1946-1956* [Liberty on a leash. Memoirs 1946-1956],<sup>5</sup> an autobiographic text, published in Kraków in 1996, and the less personal

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<sup>4</sup> This programme was executed in 2001-2005 within the framework of the international grant FOROST (*Forschungsverbund Ost- und Südosteuropa*) under the supervision of Prof. Klaus Roth from the Munich-based Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität.

<sup>5</sup> L. DZIĘGIEL, *Swoboda na smyczy. Wspomnienia 1946-1956*, Wydawnictwo Arcana, Kraków 1996.

study, also dedicated to the Kraków-based intelligentsia *Paradise in a Concrete Cage. Daily Life in Communist Poland. An Ethnologist's View*.<sup>6</sup>

Among the texts commemorating Leszek Dziegiel after his death, it would be worthwhile to mention the articles written by Krzysztof Lalik (*Wspomnienie o profesorze Leszku Dziegłu* [Remembering Professor Leszek Dziegiel]),<sup>7</sup> Eugeniusz Jaworski and Ewa Kosowska (*Leszek Dziegiel (1931-2005)*),<sup>8</sup> Maciej Kurcz (*Profesor Leszek Dziegiel – antropolog niezapomniany* [Professor Leszek Dziegiel – the unforgettable anthropologist])<sup>9</sup> and Marek Tracz (*Prof. dr hab. Leszek Dziegiel: 15 IX 1931 – 19 IV 2005*).<sup>10</sup> They testify to Leszek Dziegiel's high position within the Polish academic world as a renowned anthropologist and distinguished expert on Kurdish issues. In turn, the author of this article, academically associated with African issues, was also able to become acquainted with the Professor's achievements and came to appreciate him as an expert on the issues of East Africa.<sup>11</sup>

The profile and academic achievements of Andrzej Waligórski, who was generation older than Dziegiel, were presented in the publication *Etnografowie i ludoznawcy polscy. Sylwetki, szkice biograficzne* [Polish ethnographers.

<sup>6</sup> IDEM, *Paradise in a Concrete Cage. Daily Life in Communist Poland. An Ethnologist's View*, Wydawnictwo Arcana, Kraków 1998.

<sup>7</sup> K. LALIK, *Wspomnienie o profesorze Leszku Dziegłu*, "Arcana" 2005, no. 3, pp. 85-88.

<sup>8</sup> E. JAWORSKI, E. KOSOWSKA, *Leszek Dziegiel (1931-2005)*, "Lud" 2005, vol. 89, pp. 384-394.

<sup>9</sup> M. KURCZ, *Profesor Leszek Dziegiel – antropolog niezapomniany*, "Arcana" 2006, no. 2, pp. 169-174.

<sup>10</sup> M. TRACZ, *Prof. dr hab. Leszek Dziegiel: 15 IX 1931 – 19 IV 2005*, "Etnografia Polska" 2005, vol. 49 (1/2), pp. 219-222.

<sup>11</sup> A full list of Leszek Dziegiel's publications on African issues has been included in the bibliography.

Profiles, biographic overviews], in the first volume, in a biographical note written by Leszek Dziegiel,<sup>12</sup> as well as in numerous commemorative articles, written both by Dziegiel himself (including *Andrzej Waligórski 1908-1974*,<sup>13</sup> *Andrzej Waligórski – etnograf szybko zapomniany* [Andrzej Waligórski – the quickly forgotten ethnographer],<sup>14</sup> *Z perspektywy ucznia* [From the perspective of a student])<sup>15</sup>, and by his co-workers and students, including: Barbara Olszewska-Dyoniziak (*Profesor Andrzej Waligórski 28 XII 1908 – 8 VIII 1974*)<sup>16</sup> and Andrzej Paluch (*Wspomnienie o profesorze Andrzej Waligórskim* [Remembering Professor Andrzej Waligórski]).<sup>17</sup> The collective work *Antropologiczne wizje kultury. Praca zbiorowa poświęcona pamięci Profesora Andrzeja Waligórskiego (1908-1974)* [Anthropological visions of culture. Collective work in memory of Professor Andrzej Waligórski (1908-1974)] was also dedicated to commemorating his life and work.<sup>18</sup> Among Andrzej Waligórski's

<sup>12</sup> L. DZIEGIEL, *Andrzej Waligórski (1908-1974)*, [in:] *Etnografowie i ludoznawcy polscy...*, pp. 298-302.

<sup>13</sup> IDEM, *Andrzej Waligórski 1908-1974*, "Etnografia Polska" 1975, vol. 19 (2), pp. 19-23.

<sup>14</sup> IDEM, *Andrzej Waligórski – etnograf szybko zapomniany*, [in:] *Na egzotycznych szlakach. O polskich badaniach etnograficznych w Afryce, Ameryce i Azji w dobie powojennej*, ed. by IDEM, Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, Wrocław 1987, pp. 11-22.

<sup>15</sup> IDEM, *Z perspektywy ucznia*, [in:] *Autorytety polskie*, ed. by B. GOŁĘBIEWSKI, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Stopka", Łomża 2002, pp. 70-71.

<sup>16</sup> B. OLSZEWSKA-DYONIZIAK, *Profesor Andrzej Waligórski 28 XII 1908 – 8 VIII 1974*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Etnograficzne" 1976, vol. 9, pp. 11-17.

<sup>17</sup> A. PALUCH, *Wspomnienie o profesorze Andrzej Waligórskim*, "Przegląd Socjologiczny" 1976, vol. 28, pp. 342-344.

<sup>18</sup> *Antropologiczne wizje kultury. Praca zbiorowa poświęcona pamięci Profesora Andrzeja Waligórskiego (1908-1974)*, ed. by B. OLSZEWSKA-DYONIZIAK, Wydawnictwo "Studeu", Ustroń 2004.

African studies publications, only the most important monograph *Spółeczność afrykańska w procesie przemian 1890-1949 r. Studium wschodnioafrykańskiego plemienia Luo* [African society in the process of transformation 1890-1949. A study of the East African Luo tribe]<sup>19</sup> will be mentioned here, while a list of the remaining texts on African topics has been included in the bibliography.

Andrzej Waligórski was born in 1908 in Kraków. In 1926, he began his studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, studying simultaneously philosophy, general linguistics and English philology. In 1931, he obtained a master's degree in philosophy with a specialisation in linguistics, after which – thanks to the support provided by Professor Roman Dyboski – he received two year-long scholarships from the National Culture Fund to study in London.<sup>20</sup>

During his studies at the London School of Economics, fascinated by the seminars taught by Bronisław Malinowski, in which a group of members of the African intelligentsia participated, including the future president of independent Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, Andrzej Waligórski decided to focus his interests on a new area of research: African studies and anthropology – especially applying the approach of functional and economic anthropology.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> A. WALIGÓRSKI, *Spółeczność afrykańska w procesie przemian 1890-1949 r. Studium wschodnioafrykańskiego plemienia Luo*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 1969.

<sup>20</sup> L. DZIĘGIEL, *Andrzej Waligórski 1908-1974*, p. 298; the cited biographical note was the basic source of the herein cited data on A. Waligórski's biography and scholarly activities.

<sup>21</sup> A. KUCZYŃSKI, "Eleganci w białych garniturach, często z własnym rowerem...", *relacja Andrzeja Waligórskiego*, [in:] *Wśród buszu i czarowni-*

These were the years which best shaped both his research approach and his academic possibilities. He completed his studies at the London School of Economics by obtaining a PhD degree in 1938, after defending the dissertation "Język sugestii, magii i propagandy we współczesnym społeczeństwie brytyjskim" [The language of suggestion, magic and propaganda in modern-day British society], written under the supervision of Bronisław Malinowski.<sup>22</sup>

Upon returning to Poland shortly before World War II broke out, Andrzej Waligórski began work at the State Institute of Rural Culture in Warsaw, while simultaneously giving lectures at the Faculty of Agriculture at the Jagielloonian University. After the war broke out, he participated in the 1939 September campaign. After escaping from a POW camp, in 1940 he joined the Polish Armed Forces in Paris, which were in the process of forming. However, due to his educational and academic contacts he was delegated to proceed with academic and political work in the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, where through various activities of an informational character, including giving numerous public speeches, he worked to further the cause for Poland.

After the war ended, he did not return home immediately, for one, because he was given the opportunity to undertake field studies in Africa, commissioned by the University of London. His trip to the province of Nyanza, located within the territory of what was then British East Africa, currently Kenya, was possible thanks to the me-

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*ków. Antologia polskich relacji o ludach Afryki*, ed. by IDEM, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1990, p. 418.

<sup>22</sup> L. DZIĘGIEL, *Andrzej Waligórski 1908-1974*, p. 299.

diation of Audrey I. Richards, already then a well-known researcher of Africa, who he had met through his participation in Malinowski's seminars.

Waligórski spent the period from June 1946 until April 1948 in one of the villages of the Nilotic Luo – the second tribe in Kenya in terms of its size. He was well prepared to conduct such research, not only thanks to the educational background he had obtained but also due to his knowledge of the language of the studied community. For two years, he studied the group using the participatory observation method, analysing the yearly cycle of work of the agricultural community. The subject of his research was broadly-understood economic anthropology, the processes of transformation linked to social and cultural modernisation and the cultural consequences of the economic transformation promoted by British colonial authorities; involving the transition from the traditional pastoral nomadic tribal economy to a commodity and monetary-market economy of sedentary farmers. As his student wrote many years later, "These were the first modern stationary empirical studies on the Dark Continent in the history of Polish ethnology".<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "Były to pierwsze w dziejach polskiej etnologii nowoczesne, stacjonarne badania empiryczne na Czarnym Kontynencie": *ibidem*; it is worth noting that in 1907-1909 Jan Czekanowski conducted anthropological fieldwork in Africa, but these were studies of a different character. During his two-year-long stay, Czekanowski travelled a distance extending from Mombasa via Lake Victoria to Rwanda, and then along the Central African Rift to Lake Albert, then further in the direction of the Ituri-Aruwimi and Uele river basin, thus dedicating only a few days at best to the studied communities. The type of exploration conducted by Czekanowski could be qualified as a "survey study", as such types of studies were later called by the British researcher W.H.R. Rivers. These involve staying among tribes inhabiting more extensive territories in

After completing the research, despite being offered employment at the University of London, Waligórski decided to return to his own country and his hometown of Kraków, where he took a job at the Department of Slavic Ethnography at the Jagiellonian University, from 1948 as an adjunct, and from 1955 as a docent, while simultaneously being active in the Polish Folkloric Society (PFS).

In evaluating his academic achievements from this period, one should take into account a number of important facts, primarily linked to the fact that as a result of the situation at that time Polish humanities were cut off from the international academic mainstream. There was no access to newly published Western books and specialistic scientific journals. In the shadow of the growing pre-eminence of Marxism, the influence of the theoretical approaches that had been dominant before the war and vibrant in Polish scholarly discourse began to diminish, a situation in which – according to Jerzy Damrosz’s acute comment – “[...] disputing parties included the Marxists and all others”.<sup>24</sup>

Research into non-European areas were abandoned, both due to the lack of any practical means of conducting them and for ideological reasons. African studies were linked with the colonial success of Western states, and

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order to specify the issues requiring research. “Survey studies” are thus the opposite of “intensive studies”, which only became popular after Bronisław Malinowski.

<sup>24</sup> “[...] stronami sporu byli marksiści i wszelcy inni”: J. DAMROSZ, *Myśl teoretyczna w polskiej etnografii i etnologii w okresie powojennym (1945-1989)*, Instytut Kultury, Wyższa Szkoła Rolniczo-Pedagogiczna, Warszawa – Siedlce 1996, p. 76.



thus with imperialism, which functioned antagonistically to socialism.

Being cut off from foreign contacts imposed directing one's research interests towards national topics, but also in a limited scope. During the Stalinist period, sociology was also always in disfavour; it was impossible to do any work that would be on the basis of studies of public opinion. In practice, the social sciences were left with conducting research in a limited scope into the changes in urban and rural communities as a result of socialist transformations, as well as studies of material culture. In accordance with the spirit of the times, in 1950, the Material Culture History Centre was established at the Jagiellonian University Faculty of Philosophy and History. The Department of Ethnography was only brought back as an independent entity in 1956.<sup>25</sup>

How then could Andrzej Waligórski, Bronisław Malinowski's student and a graduate of the London School of Economics, a British fellow in Africa, a proponent of functionalism – criticised by Marxism, have been perceived by the authorities?

This difficult situation only changed somewhat in the late 1950s, when – along with the competition over spheres of influence in the newly-founded African states – political correctness enabled directing one's interest towards the Dark Continent. In academic and popular science literature in Poland, increasing amounts of articles and dissertations dedicated to Africa paved the way, and the first monographs began to appear.

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<sup>25</sup> *Historia Instytutu*, [on-line:] <http://www.etnologia.uj.edu.pl/institut/historia> – 15.04.2015.

This was when Andrzej Waligórski undertook giving lectures at the University of Warsaw to students of ethnography and in the newly-formed African Studies centre there. His position within the organisational academic structures also improved. In Warsaw, he became a member of the scientific council of the aforementioned African Studies centre, the Scientific Council of the Laboratory of Social and Cultural Issues of Modern Africa at the Polish Academy of Sciences. In Kraków, he was nominated to be a member of the Sociology Commission, the Oriental Studies Commission and the Ethnographic Commission at the Kraków department of the Polish Academy of Sciences. In 1962-1963, he held the post of chair of the Kraków branch of the Polish Folkloric Society, while as of 1966 he was a member of the Board of the American Studies Section of the Polish Folkloric Society. In 1968, Andrzej Waligórski was nominated to be associate professor at the Jagielloonian University.

Even though only a few months after he returned to the country, Waligórski submitted to a publisher his first article, which was linked thematically with his stay in Kenya (*Gleboznawstwo pierwotne* [Primary pedology]),<sup>26</sup> it was not until the 1960s that his first African studies-related publications were published (respectively: *Gospodarka chłopska na terenach kolonialnych i pokolonialnych* [Peasant economy in colonial and post-colonial territories],<sup>27</sup> *Studia nad więzią terytorialną i rodzinną wschodnioafrykańskiego plemienia Luo* [Studies into the territorial and familial

<sup>26</sup> A. WALIGÓRSKI, *Gleboznawstwo pierwotne*, "Lud" 1948-1951, vol. 39, pp. 181-227.

<sup>27</sup> IDEM, *Gospodarka chłopska na terenach kolonialnych i pokolonialnych*, "Przegląd Socjologiczny" 1965, vol. 19/1, pp. 61-95.

bonds of the East African Luo tribe],<sup>28</sup> *Kinship Terminology of the Luo*<sup>29</sup>). It was not until 1969 that Andrzej Waligórski's monograph was published – printed by the Warsaw University Press, which summarized the results of his research conducted in Kenya, entitled *Spółeczność afrykańska w procesie przemian 1890-1949 r. Studium wschodnioafrykańskiego plemienia Luo*.<sup>30</sup>

However, it is worth noting that in publishing his articles and monographs over the period of twenty years that passed from when he conducted his field studies, Andrzej Waligórski was capable of referring his results to the current state of research, probably thanks to his private contacts and obtaining access to newer publications. He was able to confirm the knowledge he thus gained about current issues in Kenya and thanks to his own observations that even on the eve of independence, the Luo, like no other tribe in the country, were able to adapt to the conditions created by the Europeans. They were able to increase the acreage of cultivated land, as well as benefit from a monetary economy, by selling agricultural and animal farming surplus and by becoming a labour force – as police officers, labourers, dockers. Thanks to their educational aspirations, they took over administrative posts and were involved in political activities and those aimed at achieving emancipation. By concluding that the social and economic system of the Luo he had observed “had been shaped based on three separate tendencies, springing from different sources and not har-

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<sup>28</sup> IDEM, *Studia nad więzią terytorialną i rodzinną wschodnioafrykańskiego plemienia Luo*, “Etnografia Polska” 1964, vol. 7, pp. 299-362.

<sup>29</sup> IDEM, *Kinship Terminology of the Luo*, “Africana Bulletin” 1968, no. 8, pp. 57-63.

<sup>30</sup> IDEM, *Spółeczność afrykańska w procesie przemian...*

monized with each other: the Nilotic – pastoral tendency, the Bantu – agricultural tendency and – the much later – European technological civilisation”,<sup>31</sup> he studied their interdependencies.

The abovementioned monograph *Spółeczność afrykańska w procesie przemian...*, published in the form of a coursebook/script, was simultaneously his last text to be dedicated to Africa. In his post-war research, Andrzej Waligórski explored three different thematic areas. As already mentioned, he analysed the results of his research in East Africa; he assumed that this was a model area for the future development of rural communities in Africa. He considered issues linked to the theory of culture, emphasizing the value of the functional method, and – finally – he analysed the history of cultural anthropology and was the author of the first Polish coursebook on this topic, entitled *Antropologiczna koncepcja człowieka* [The anthropological concept of the human being].<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, he wanted to popularize the ideas and scholarly achievements of his mentor, Bronisław Malinowski, in Poland. Before the war, in 1937, he translated *The Sexual Life of Savages*, together with Józef Chałasiński.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> “...ukszałtował się w oparciu o trzy odrębne, wyrastające z różnych źródeł i zgoła niezharmonizowane ze sobą tendencje: nilocką – pasterską, bantuską – rolniczą oraz – znacznie zresztą późniejszą – europejską cywilizację techniczną”: *ibidem*, p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> IDEM, *Antropologiczna koncepcja człowieka*, PWN, Warszawa 1993.

<sup>33</sup> B. MALINOWSKI, *Życie seksualne dzikich w północno-zachodniej Melanezji. Miłość, małżeństwo i życie rodzinne u krajowców z Wysp Trobrianda Brytyjskiej Nowej Gwinei*, Wydawnictwo J. Przeworskiego, Warszawa 1938.

The idea to publish Malinowski's *Complete Works* only came to pass after Waligórski's death.

Andrzej Waligórski's last years were spent on intensive scholarly and organisational activities. In 1973, he became the director of the Department of Culture and Education in the Institute of Sociology at the Jagiellonian University, the chair of the reactivated that same year Commission of Ethnography affiliated with the branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków, while simultaneously holding a seat in the Scientific Council of the Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry at the Agricultural Academy in Kraków. He had many publishing plans and was in the process of preparing new study programmes. These plans were disrupted by his death. Andrzej Waligórski died in 1974. He left behind a group of students, fascinated by both the extensive knowledge and unique personality of a scholar who had pursued issues linked to non-European cultures. African studies topics were undertaken and continued by such scholars as Andrzej Paluch, the future founder of the Department of Social Anthropology at the Jagiellonian University Institute of Sociology, the director of the JU Institute of Sociology in 1988-1990, and the continuator of the concept to publish Bronisław Malinowski's *Complete Works* in Polish, as well as by Leszek Dziegiel, the director of the JU Institute of Ethnology in 1987-1999, who cooperated in the works to prepare the field material brought back from Kenya by Waligórski and the co-author of a publication on the subject.

Leszek Dziegiel was born in 1931 into a family from the intellectual circles of Mysłowice. In 1950, he passed his graduation exam and completed his education at the Adam

Mickiewicz Lyceum in Katowice. He had planned to begin his studies at the Jagiellonian University and to specialize in History. However, due to his social background and the fact that he did not belong to any of the pro-system youth organisations, and also despite his excellent results in the entrance exams, he was assigned to the department of Studies into the History of Material Culture. He graduated in 1955, upon defending his master's thesis, written under the supervision of Prof. Kazimierz Moszyński, and obtained an MA degree in ethnography.<sup>34</sup>

In 1972, he received a PhD degree in historical studies at the Jagiellonian University Faculty of Philosophy and History, after defending a dissertation entitled "Rolnictwo chłopskie w Afryce Wschodniej – studium z zakresu etnologii antropologicznej" [Peasant agriculture in East Africa – a study in anthropological ethnology], with Professor Andrzej Waligórski as his thesis supervisor.

The relatively extensive, seventeen-year-long interval between the end of his studies and the defence of his doctoral dissertation was linked to the problems he had with finding work in his profession. The department of Studies into the History of Material Culture, formed in 1950 for ideological and political reasons, did not ensure its graduates either work in Kraków or the possibility of further academic development.

A job that was in accordance with the education he had acquired could only be found in provincial museums. Work allocation orders had during this period already begun to

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<sup>34</sup> As has already been mentioned in the introduction to this article, the interviews done for the FOROST programme, conducted in 2001 and 2005 are the basic source of the data cited in the description of Leszek Dzięgiel's biography and his scholarly activities.

be a thing of the past, but – due to the even then proverbial “overproduction of representatives of the humanities” – they had in practice never included either ethnographers or archaeologists.

The Kraków university centre had at its disposal only a very poor range of jobs to offer its graduates, especially representatives of the humanities, while the city itself remained administratively closed off at that time. Almost all those who could not prove that they held permanent work positions had difficulties with registering as an inhabitant of the city, while – on the other hand – it was also hard to employ any person who could not certify that he or she had registered permanent residency in Kraków.

In the case of Dzięgiel, who was not from Kraków, hopes for being given the opportunity to stay in Kraków and continue the academic work he had initiated during his studies were linked to the theoretical possibility of undertaking doctoral studies, which – at that time – for a short period, were referred to as “aspirantura”, according to Soviet terminology. His excellent academic results, the field research he conducted during his studies under the supervision of the prominent Kraków-based professors: Kazimierz Moszyński, Roman Reinfuss, Kazimierz Dobrowolski, Andrzej Waligórski, and academic publications provided him – as it would seem – with real support for these ambitions. However, the negative result of the interview was caused by political issues and the lack of any backing from the appropriate party unit for the non-partisan graduate.

Over the next few years, Leszek Dzięgiel did various jobs, including as an editor of the travel journal “Ziemia” [The Earth], at the archaeological excavations near Nowa Huta, as an installer of lightening arrester equipment in

villages near Kraków, a Polish and history teacher in the Lower Theological Seminar in Katowice, a tourism and sightseeing instructor in the Youth Palace in Katowice or in the Upper Silesia Museum in Bytom, in which he performed the function of the supervisor of the construction of an open-air heritage museum (Skansen).

Despite his difficult life circumstances, his personal determination led to him maintaining contacts with the academic world. Thanks to keeping his friendship with Prof. Andrzej Waligórski, he received a proposal to prepare a query and a scholarly study of some of the research results the latter had brought back with him from Kenya.

As already mentioned, after 1969 Andrzej Waligórski decided to temporarily suspend further work on the publication of the studies dedicated to Africa, while the remaining uninterpreted material from the fieldwork was handed over to Dzięgiel. These were used in the doctoral dissertation Dzięgiel wrote, in which they were the basis of the introductory chapter, as a point of departure for considerations about the later evolution of the East European peasant,<sup>35</sup> as well as in the article published as authored by both scholars *Roczny cykl produkcyjny chłopskiej zagrody zachodniokenijskich Luo* [The annual production cycle of a West Kenyan Luo peasant farm].<sup>36</sup>

Even though Andrzej Waligórski gave lectures on social anthropology at the Jagiellonian University until 1974, he did not have too many possibilities to help his doctoral student in his university career. However, he helped him

<sup>35</sup> A. KUCZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

<sup>36</sup> L. DZIĘGIEL, A. WALIGÓRSKI, *Roczny cykl produkcyjny chłopskiej zagrody zachodniokenijskich Luo*, "Lud" 1974, vol. 58, pp. 41-72.



get his first permanent job of an academic nature – in the newly-formed Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry at the Agricultural Academy in Kraków. Leszek Dzięgiel worked there until 1983, first as a research and technical worker, then as an adjunct and finally as a docent. The research unit offered its employees the possibility to develop themselves academically, by providing access to their collection of books with a series of valuable thematic publications in English acquired from abroad; to a large extent referring to Africa. The institute also made it possible for its employees to learn and become more fluent in English. However, despite such plans and preparations, Dzięgiel never went to Africa. By coincidence, Asia became the area of his later research interests.

In 1974, Leszek Dzięgiel received a year-long scholarship from the government of the Republic of Afghanistan. Yet another opportunity to make a research trip appeared three years later, in 1977. At that time, he was able to execute the first in a series of three trips to Iraqi Kurdistan, where he collected original field material, acquired in about 80 villages in the north-eastern province of Iraq, which aided in the preparation of his habilitation dissertation “Społeczność wiejska współczesnego Kurdystanu irackiego u progu modernizacji”, defended in 1982 at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The dissertation was later published in English under the title *Rural community of contemporary Iraqi Kurdistan facing modernization*,<sup>37</sup> as a result of which its content met with a lot of interest among

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<sup>37</sup> L. DZIĘGIEL, *Rural community of contemporary Iraqi Kurdistan facing modernization*, Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry, Agricultural Academy in Kraków, Kraków 1981, *Studia i materiały*, no. 7.

the Kurdish diaspora in the West. After being translated into the Kurdish language – Sorani, it remains to this date an important position among the books discussed at universities in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The habilitation was the final step in gaining the status of a senior (independent) member of the academic staff. Its defence coincided with a personnel and organisational crisis in the Department of Slavic Ethnography at the Jagiellonian University, which was in danger of being dissolved due to the lack of a sufficient number of senior academic staff members. In 1982, Leszek Dziegiel took up employment at the Jagiellonian University Institute of Ethnology. In 1987, due to Prof. Anna Zembrzycka-Kunachowicz falling seriously ill, he assumed the position of director of the unit (which in 1995 was renamed the Institute of Ethnology) and remained in this post until 1999. After retiring in 2001, he continued to perform the function of the director of one of the Institute's departments, at that time called the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. It is during his time working at the Jagiellonian University that he was awarded the degree of professor: the post of associate professor at the Jagiellonian University in 1992, the title of associate professor in the humanities at the Jagiellonian University in 1995, and finally the post of full professor in 2000.

During this period, Leszek Dziegiel became interested in yet another area of study, the third in his professional career, which he himself referred to as research into the influence of "real socialism" on the daily lives and culture of Poland and other post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (especially in urban areas and among the intelligentsia), also conducted on the basis of his own experiences.

Leszek Dzięgiel was actively involved in the Polish Folkloric Society, a member of the Commission of Ethnological Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences and of the Kraków Branch of the Ethnographic Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He died in 2005. The author of these words was his doctoral student, one of a group of people, whom he infected with his passion. Dzięgiel contributed to directing the author's research interests towards Africa.

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In conclusion, it would be worthwhile to draw some attention to the contemporary significance of knowledge about the tribes inhabiting Kenya and South Sudan. It is extremely important in order to gain an understanding of the genesis and specific conditions of the ethnically-motivated disputes and conflicts that cyclically break out in this region. In East Africa – similarly as in other regions of this continent – the citizens of individual states frequently place more value in their tribal identity than their national one. It suffices to recall that in practice during the presidential elections that took place in Kenya on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2007, the choice of the president was decided by two ethnic groups. Mwaki Kibaki, who was running for re-election, represented the interests of the Kikuyu tribe, while Rail Odinga, the leader of the opposition party, the ODM, Orange Democratic Movement, was sure of gaining the votes of the Luo tribe. The Luo, having lost their privileged position from the colonial period, have for years accused the Kikuyu that they have dominated the political landscape in the country since Kenya's independence was announced in 1963. In December 2007, as a result of acts of violence

caused by ethnically-motivated political conflicts, about 300 people died, while more than 800 over the course of the next month.

Knowing the genesis of intertribal conflicts breaking out in this part of Africa between the previously migratory Nilotic pastoral population and the sedentary Bantu farmers is also important for gaining an understanding of the background of the civil war in South Sudan. It also explains South Sudan's presently observed gravitational pull towards the states of the East African Community, considered to be the result of the centuries-long tradition of the migration of Nilotic peoples across territories without any clear-cut geographic obstacles.

In contemporary times, all signs of instability, both in South Sudan and in Kenya, have a lot of significance, for instance, for US foreign policies, due to the strategic importance of both these countries in the face of the growing threat of Muslim fundamentalism. The network of dependencies is nonetheless exceptionally complex, as the fact that President Obama's family comes from the Luo tribe shows.

Andrzej Waligórski and Leszek Dziegiel's research into the social and economic transformation of the Luo during the 1940s, a breakthrough moment for many African countries, constitute not only a valuable contribution to developing our knowledge of the processes of social and economic change in the studied period, but also aid in understanding the contemporary ethnic conflicts in the region.

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Professor Andrzej Zaborski,  
Photograph from Maria Gawron-Zaborska's archive



For Kraków-based African studies, the 1930s were a turning point, during which the developing interest in Africa would bear fruit in the form of the first independent research projects conducted in the field – on the African continent. The best example would be the studies conducted by Roman Stopa (1895-1995), considered to be the father of Polish research into African linguistics, a professor of the Jagiellonian University, a world-renowned expert on click languages. In 1935, Roman Stopa conducted linguistic studies for a few months in the area of modern-day Namibia and Botswana among its indigenous inhabitants: the San and the Khoikhoi, at the same time collecting a significant amount of ethnographic material on the culture of the San peoples. Today, this unique collection is housed by the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków.

In reference to the rich tradition of African studies at the Jagiellonian University and in response to the increasing interest in Africa and Africans, the idea emerged to form a research centre that would bring together Kraków-based Africanists, scattered across various University units. In 2014, by the decision of the Jagiellonian University Senate, the Jagiellonian Research Center for African Studies was created as an interdepartmental unit of the University.

Excerpt from *Introduction* by Prof. Robert Kłosowicz

