



Tributes

Dear Professor, Jubilarian, longtime Director of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology,

I have the distinction of continuing your work as Director of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology and it is in this role primarily that I address you. Your stamp on this institution is indelible, clear to its staff and evident beyond the walls of the University. That the Centre has kept its independence and its essential character in the difficult times of reform in Polish science is largely thanks to you. You gave us a sense of security in a changing world and faith in our capabilities. Your down-to-earth approach to the problems and your perspicuity have managed to steer us safely through troubled waters.

In face of the armed conflicts in the Near East, which terminated our research projects there, you sought alternatives for the team you had organized in the Centre, opening a precursory direction in Polish archaeology dedicated to the study of the material culture of countries lying in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula and in the Gulf. This vision, which you put into life, has made the Centre one of the leading research institutions in the region. The privilege of hosting the prestigious ICAANE conference in 2012, in which you were instrumental, was an international seal of approval recognizing the position of our institution.

Your farsightedness at the helm of the Centre was also expressed by the way you nurtured the scientific growth of young researchers gathered around the Centre and participating in its activities. I myself am in this group. I remember the day that I, a fresh doctor, approached you for funds to launch my first project in Ghazali. With time my project became financially independent, but it would have not been launched without your confidence in me and support, and my scientific career may have taken an entirely different path.

Today we celebrate your Jubilee. Passing time is in this case of no importance, as your continued activity as head of the Scientific Council of the Centre demonstrates. Your counsel and support are helping to shape this institution as it rises to face new challenges in the changing reality of Polish science today.

Artur Obłuski

*Acting Director, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology
University of Warsaw*



Dear Piotr,

My thoughts at this time run back to your first foray into excavations in the Orient, when you joined the team excavating in Palmyra. We were both young then (although you were younger) and we joined forces in 1974 to discover the temple of Allat. I must say that the three seasons that you were there were the most important ones. I remember how you escorted the statue of Athena to the local museum, riding a cart pulled by a donkey and I have pictures where your sheath knife (unfortunately lost later during an airport security check) marks the north. I have vivid memories of our discussions of the day's events over a glass of arrack on the terrace of our excavation house, where the presence of our great predecessors was still very tangible.

The origins of urban civilization in the Near East were already then at the center of your interests and you found them in those "earth sections", rather neglected then by the archaeologists who deemed themselves Classicists, and which you gave extensive attention to in your doctoral dissertation. With such research interests, it was only natural that your eyes fell on Mesopotamia, that land divided now between Syria and Iraq, to the study of which you dedicated the next thirty years of your life. Elsewhere in this volume are the names of all the different tells that you investigated, including the last and most important one, Tell Arbid, where you followed in the footsteps of no other than Max Mallowan. I had the pleasure once to spend an evening by the fountain, which has given this volume its title, and partake of the generous hospitality of your mission.

When you took the helm of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology from me, I knew we were in good hands. The institution has grown immensely since its founding by Kazimierz Michałowski, who was a Master for both of us. You faced an extreme challenge during your term in office. Your excavation at Tell Arbid, like my project in Palmyra, were brutally interrupted by war. You found a different place, first in Kuwait and, recently, in Oman. I wish you still many years there (perhaps again in Iraq?) and many even more interesting discoveries.

Michał Gawlikowski

*Former Director, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology
University of Warsaw*



Between the rivers—another great title that this volume dedicated to Piotr Bieliński on the occasion of his Jubilee could bear. It is there, on the Euphrates and Tigris, as well as other dried up rivers cutting the deserts of the Ancient Near East, that the Jubilarian's highly successful archaeological fieldwork took place for many years. It is on the Vistula, at the University of Warsaw, that he has succeeded in leading teams of researchers, heading the Department of the Ancient Near East in the Institute of Archaeology and being Dean of the Faculty of History and Director of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology. Personally, I deeply appreciate Piotr's role as teacher and friend, his willingness to help people and his role as a source of inspiration. All who meet him are struck immediately by the soundness of his judgment and breadth of vision, going beyond a superficial understanding of things.

At the root of the biggest discoveries is always the question 'why'. May our Jubilarian discover that round anniversaries are like a lucky turn of fortune, filling one with energy, opening the way to new challenges and giving the opportunity to close with satisfaction certain doors from the past.

Tomasz Waliszewski

Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw

Former Director, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology

University of Warsaw



Invited to address Professor Piotr Bieliński in a volume dedicated to him, I would like to speak of him in a deeply personal way—as a scholar, lecturer, archaeologist, and mentor for several generations of students.

Professor Bieliński was one of my first teachers at the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw. His passion for and his ever enthusiastic presentation of the magic of the past and present cultures of the Near East affected all who followed in his wake in their research. His unique way of sharing his extensive knowledge and experience, interjecting into his lectures personal observations and anecdotes about everyday life on the excavations and in the Near Eastern communities, took us, his students,



“traveling” to the far lands of Syria or Iraq. Many of us have been inspired by him to take this course and find our own way in this field.

Professor Bieliński has headed several projects that have paved the way to a better understanding of Near Eastern civilizations. His activity in Iraq and Syria has opened new perspectives for archaeologists from the University of Warsaw. His fascination with the origins of Near Eastern cultures has balanced two archaeological perspectives: research in prehistory and the more traditional historical studies. His personal conceptions of research as well as his academic approach have always reflected his will and deep interest in understanding the process of ancient Near Eastern urban development.

To describe Bieliński’s role as a member of the academic community in a mere few words is difficult. A very active scholar with a knack for organization, he has been involved as the chief organizer in numerous, mostly international conferences, seminars and other scientific events dedicated to various aspects of Near Eastern studies, ever keen to share the results of his work with a broad audience and eager to learn what’s new in the archaeological world. He has always welcomed innovation and a “fresh look” in archaeology.

At the same time he was also ready to take up duties involved in heading academic institutions. Dean of the Faculty of History and later Director of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology for many years, he proved to be the right person in the right place at the right time. His personal commitment and years of work has made “Polish” archaeology of the Near East one of the most important branches of science successfully developing in Poland.

Last but not least, I would like to speak of Piotr Bieliński as my colleague and friend. Without doubt he has been one of the most important people shaping my academic path. It has been a long time since I first met him as a very demanding teacher. Over the years Piotr has always been ready to help, to counsel and sometimes simply to cheer me up with his extraordinary sense of humor. Our relationship was more than just professional and for that I am truly grateful.

Dear Piotr, thank you for everything, and I hope you find the book we dedicate to you a very satisfactory reading.

Krzysztof Jakubiak
Director, Institute of Archaeology
University of Warsaw



Dear Professor Bieliński,

On behalf of the Committee on Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, I would like to congratulate you on this fine Jubilee and to express my best wishes. You have been an active member of the Committee for many years and also of the Board in a past term. You have been greatly appreciated, not only by me, for your wise participation in the Committee's work. Your competence, moderation and perspicuity—expected in an esteemed group like that of a Polish Academy of Sciences Committee—have equally been noted with appreciation, in the lectures that you have given as well as in the discussions that followed. During my two terms in office as president of the Committee, whenever difficult matters were discussed, I have always looked to you with hope for wise counsel. For this, I take this opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Your scientific achievement is appreciated not only by the members of the Committee. You are esteemed as an archaeologist, a scholar of the highest caliber. Personally, I have been convinced of this ever since reading your excellent book from 1985, *Starożytny Wschód. Od początków gospodarki rolniczej do wprowadzenia pisma*.

Dear Professor and Jubilarian, on behalf of the Committee members and my own, I wish you much satisfaction from your continued scientific work, hoping to partake of the results of your discoveries. Please accept my congratulations and best wishes.

Bogusław Gediga

*President, The Committee on Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences
Polish Academy of Sciences*



Professor Piotr Bieliński has been a member of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO for a number of years, representing an important field of UNESCO activity, namely, the protection of archaeological heritage.

Since the 1960s Poland has played a distinctive role in archaeological salvage operations, the most renown example of this being Professor Kazimierz Michałowski's involvement in the UNESCO international campaign to save



the monuments of ancient Nubia. His achievements in international scientific cooperation in the field of Mediterranean archaeology have been continued on an impressive scale.

Professor Piotr Bieliński's scholarly status and his experience in saving the archaeological heritage of the Near East were noted by the UNESCO General Directorate in 2004 when experts from 25 countries around the world were invited to sit on the international UNESCO Committee for the Safeguarding of Iraqi Cultural Heritage. Membership in this international advisory assembly for the Professor was at the same time a distinction for Poland.

With his extensive experience in conducting archaeological fieldwork, often at sites of international status confirmed by inscription on the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage, and his recognized status as an authority among archaeologists and conservators from other countries, Bieliński has—and is—contributing significantly to a number of initiatives concerning cooperation in UNESCO.

Events promoting the participation of Polish specialists in projects abroad, co-sponsored by UNESCO scholarships for young archaeologists and conservators coming from Near Eastern countries, an international debate on issues of reconstruction of sites destroyed either by war or natural catastrophes—these are only some examples of activities for which Bieliński with his knowledge, experience and generosity is an invaluable asset.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO to congratulate the Professor on the occasion of his Jubilee and to wish him many further scientific achievements in his research.

Sławomir Ratajski

Secretary General, Polish National Commission for UNESCO

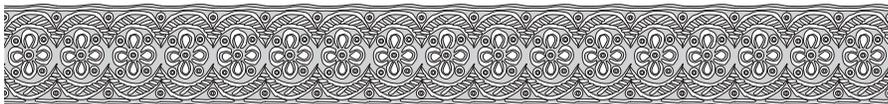


Dear Professor,

On behalf of the Department of Antiquities and Museums of Kuwait, I would like to congratulate you on your 70th Birthday wishing you a wonderful anniversary and many years of good health, happiness and success.

Sultan Al-Duwaish

Director, Department of Antiquities and Museums of Kuwait



Dear Professor Bieliński,

On the occasion of this esteemed Jubilee I would like to thank you for your longtime involvement in the development of Polish archaeology, especially within the frame of your directing of the Kuwaiti–Polish Archaeological Mission (KPAM). Your work has led to breakthrough discoveries in the field and has fomented scientific cooperation between Poland and Kuwait. The achievements of the expedition that you direct are helping to build the good repute of Polish science in Kuwait, the Gulf and the world. They are also instrumental in shaping a positive image of Poland and Polish people abroad.

I am happy to congratulate you on your significant scientific achievement and your contribution in creating an exceptional bridge between Poland and Kuwait, priceless because based on the cultural, historical and scientific heritage of both countries.

Paweł Lechowicz

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Kuwait

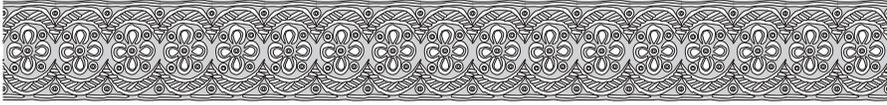


Dear Professor Bieliński,

On behalf of the Board of the Kazimierz Michałowski Foundation I would like to congratulate you on the occasion of your Jubilee and thank you for your longtime involvement with the Foundation's work and your immeasurable contribution as one of the Founders and a member of the Board of Founders. Please accept our best wishes for your continued scientific research and your personal and professional life.

Dorota Dzierzbicka

President of the Board, The Kazimierz Michałowski Foundation



Dear Piotr!

I take the opportunity to congratulate you on the occasion of your Jubilee. I retain fond memories of the expedition to the Near East that you took me on, giving me a chance to admire and enjoy your knowledge and erudition. That trip was one of my most pleasant “duties” as Rector.

My best wishes.

Piotr Węgleński

Former Rector, University of Warsaw



Dear Professor, Dear Piotr,

Our acquaintance goes back to the Neolithic! Literally! It was 49 years ago, in July, that we first met on an archaeological site at Iwanowice near Kraków. It was a Neolithic site, as you should remember. And then time flew quickly—to our times. Quite half a century—and successive layers of reality, not only Polish reality in your case. But still close. So let it stay that way...

Tadeusz Cegielski

*from the next-door Institutes of History and History of Art
University of Warsaw*



Many archaeologists wear scarves in the Middle East, but you wear your scarf with a truly unique elegance!

Congratulations Piotr, and thanks for the closeness you showed me in the most difficult moments of my career as an archaeologist.

Stefano Valentini

*Co-director, Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies
(CAMNES, Florence), Università di Firenze*



On this happy occasion, I would like to celebrate not only a colleague with whom I shared more than twenty years of field activity in Iraq and Syria—from Eski Mosul, my first excavation experience in the Near East, to the Upper Khabur—and a common interest for the archaeology of Upper Mesopotamia, but above all a very special friend. I wish that our friendship will continue for a long time, and that old memories will be joined by future occasions of encounter and collaboration.

Elena Rova

*Professoressa Associata, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici*



My congratulations to Professor Piotr Bieliński, one of the greatest scientists who has led a great Polish team in Kuwait for more than 10 years.

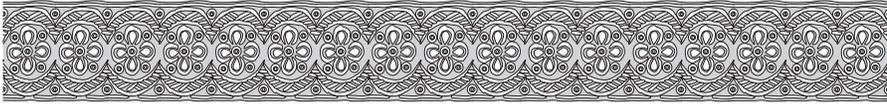
Shehab A. Shehab

*Former Assistant Secretary General, National Council for Culture,
Arts and Letters (NCCAL) in Kuwait*



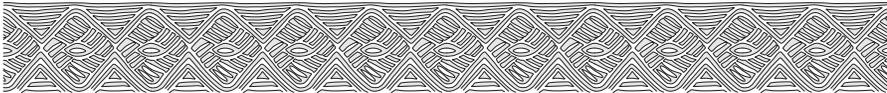
Prof. Bieliński is one of the most famous archaeologists to work in Kuwait. I am very happy for his friendship since 2007. Happy Birthday, Prof. Bieliński!

Hamed Al-Mutairi



I congratulate you on a very fine Jubilee, wishing good health and unceasing enthusiasm for new discoveries.

Ewa Parandowska



Dear Piotr,

It is a truism to say that I learned a great deal from you, starting from my freshman year in archaeology at the University of Warsaw (I vividly remember, my first student essay on the discoveries in Hama, which you appreciated), through the years in the Warsaw office of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, when you stood firmly in support of my “publishing voyage” as managing and then chief editor of the publications of the Centre. The current success of the Centre’s publications, including the journal *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, is partly due to those many hours of constructive discussions, shaping our publishing policy.

Thank you also for the confidence you had in me, and for believing that I had a role to play as a caretaker of the Centre’s great traditions starting from Kazimierz Michałowski.

Iwona Zych

*Former Deputy Director, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology
University of Warsaw*