

## Polish Archaeologists in the face of Nazism and Communism (abstract)

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the impact of Nazism and Stalinism on Polish archaeology by examining the attitudes of archaeologists towards both types of totalitarianism, and to show the consequences of their choices on the development of this academic discipline in Poland. The basis of this research are the activities of scholars dealing with the prehistory of the Polish lands. The time frame of the thesis covers the period from the outbreak of The Second World War to the so-called 'thaw' in October 1956. For a full presentation of the issue it is also necessary to discuss briefly the organizational framework of archaeology in Poland in the interwar period. The territorial scope of this work coincides with the borders of the Second Polish Republic until 1945, and then with the territory of present-day Poland. The problem of archaeologists' attitudes towards the two imposed totalitarian systems that ruled in Poland between 1939 and 1956, and then the attempt to assess to what extent their worldview choices influenced the way they carried out their academic research, has not yet been the subject of an in-depth study. Addressing this issue required the organization of scattered information and archival searches.

Those archaeologists who began their careers when Poland was returned to the map of Europe presented diverse political views, but their choices did not influence their research direction. Against this background the figure of Jozef Kostrzewski stands out – in his academic and journalistic activities he fought Weimar revisionism and also warned against the negative influence of Nazism on German archaeology. In the light of the available sources it can be concluded that the archaeology of interwar Poland was free from politics, with the exception of the use of research in Biskupin for propaganda purposes, but here too the initiator of the state's involvement was Jozef Kostrzewski.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, archaeologists definitively rejected the possibility of collaborating with the German occupiers, and mostly became engaged in conspiracy, including above all taking part in secret teaching. Włodzimierz Antoniewicz, who while holding the position of rector of the underground University of Warsaw, at the same time collaborated with the para-academic *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit*, is an exception. Nazism, however, did not leave a lasting mark on Polish archaeology. The attitudes of the 316 vast majority of the scholars described in the thesis confirm the view that a particularly strong ethos prevailed among the pre-war Polish intelligentsia.

The nature of the Soviet occupation differed from the colonial approach of the Germans. Scholars with communist views saw in Marxism the potential for the development of archaeology. Others firmly rejected the possibility of collaborating with the occupier. Many, like Leon Kozłowski, were subjected to repression. There were also archaeologists among the victims of the Katyń massacre.

After the war Marxism had a limited influence on the way archaeology was practised in Poland. This trend and the related historical materialism associated with it were mainly superficial. The authorities of post-war Poland, like those in the interwar period, did not perceive any propaganda potential in archaeology. The situations in which the state did become involved and supported archaeological projects, as well as noticing their political potential (the pre-war research in Biskupin and the Millennium Research Programme after the war) were initiated by the archaeologists themselves, originating from the archaeological community in Poznań, and in both cases were based on anti-German sentiments. The activities of the Management of the Research on the Origins of the Polish State is – apart from all the shortcomings of this project – the last example of a systematic and comprehensive approach to archaeology in Poland. The thaw of 1956 highlighted the general resentment of the archaeological community towards the communist regime and once again revealed its ability to act in solidarity for the sake of certain principles.



The most important conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion is that the overwhelming majority of Polish archaeologists did not succumb to the totalitarian ideologies of the twentieth century – Nazism and Stalinism – neither in academic nor moral terms.

The most important postulates regarding future research include the need to formulate further projects in the field of the history of archaeology. An accurate identification of the activities of archaeologists under Soviet occupation, including the still not fully recognized role of Włodzimierz Hołubowicz, among other things, pose a real challenge. An equally interesting challenge seems to be research into the political context of the post-war phenomenon of Mediterranean archaeology, which in the public perception has overshadowed interest in native prehistory.

The history of academia requires an interdisciplinary approach. Many of the observations made about archaeology in the pages of this thesis concern the social sciences in the broadest sense, and the answers to the questions raised can often be found in studies on related fields. Most of the studies to date have also ignored the legal framework or political conditions in which archaeology functions. Taking these postulates into account may contribute to a better understanding of the context of the phenomena described, and thus the role played by archaeology in contemporary society.

*(tłum. Anne-Marie Fabianowska)*