

PRO MEMORIA

URSZULA PERKOWSKA (7 NOVEMBER 1942 – 25 AUGUST 2017)

I

What has turned out to be my last conversation with Urszula Perkowska took place during the summer holiday of 2017. We talked about her study on the Rev. Professor Władysław Chotkowski, which was humbly yet proudly presented by the author, who stressed that it was her tenth (including the monographs authored only by her), and last, book. Knowing Urszula for years, I could be certain that she had a number of ideas in her mind about more studies to come out. I remarked to her that she has contributed to the eight-volume *Corpus studiosorum* ..., and then, to say she had ten books to her credit was an understatement. She replied she would not count these volumes in as they have been compiled by a dozen of authors. The discussion I am referring to clearly shows Perkowska's modesty, honesty, and sheer decency. She would never stun her interlocutors with statistics, numbers of volumes, or parameterisation points, which she had the right to do, given her significant output. Her studies on the history of the Jagiellonian University in the nineteenth and twentieth century have entered the academic circulation for good.

II

Urszula Mieczysława Perkowska was born on 7 November 1942 in Cracow to Janina (née Wiecheć) and Mieczysław Perkowski. She remained loyal to her birthplace by pursuing her career and living there. In 1955, she completed her education at the local Elementary School No. 9 and subsequently frequented the Grammar School no. 8 in 1955/6 to 1958/9, completing her high-school finals on 4 June 1959. Urszula started her studies in History at the Catholic University of

Lublin in the academic year 1959/60 and switched to the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, where she remained for the academic years of 1960/61–1963/64. She prepared her master thesis, entitled *Żegota Pauli: his life and activities, 1814–60* under the tutelage of Professor Henryk Barycz, successfully submitting it on 21 July 1964; extensive fragments of this study appeared in print. The thesis was reviewed by Professor Leszek Hajdukiewicz. The two scholars probably influenced Urszula Perkowska the most. Barycz was her unquestioned master, which she repeatedly stressed with pride. Hajdukiewicz was her direct superior for several years, as manager of the Jagiellonian University Archives [AUJ]. A demanding principal, he all too often undeservedly retarded Perkowska's scholarly activity.

Immediately after completing her studies, Urszula worked as a primary and secondary school teacher in Grzegórzki District of Cracow. From 1 June 1966 onwards, she joined the State Archives of the City and Voivodeship of Cracow as Junior Archivist. Since 1 March 1970 she was employed with the AUJ, where she was invited by Professor Barycz. It was under his tutelage that she wrote a dissertation on *The evolution of the Jagiellonian University's academic staff from 1860 to 1920*, based on which she obtained her doctor's degree on 10 November 1972. The study was published shortly afterwards (as *Kształtowanie się zespołu naukowego w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 1860–1920*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk, 1975). Promoted to the position of adjunct, she remained member of the AUJ staff.

As part of her responsibilities, Perkowska rearranged and inventoried a number of fonds, notably the legacies of professors and other scholars associated with the Jagiellonian University. She exercised custody of the AUJ reading room, pursued numerous scientific search queries, delivered archival presentations for tertiary students from Cracow and other academic centres, and pursued her own research, in parallel. She had her study on Jagiellonian University's women students on the centenary of matriculation of first such students (*Studentki Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w latach 1894–1939. W stulecie immatrykulacji pierwszych studentek* [Kraków, 1994]) published within the series 'Biblioteka Krakowska'. The monograph includes five chapters, discussing the organisation of women's studies in the period 1894–1939, the social background and financial position of these students, the majors studied and efficiency of the studies, and, the social, political, and educational activities; abundant statistics complements the study. Whereas objec-

tions might be made with respect to the study's content and the arguments proposed therein scientifically debated, it has not ceased to inspire generations of researchers; the author has become one of the first scientists in Poland to touch upon the gender perspective in historical research. The monograph in question was submitted as the dissertation for Perkowska's postdoctoral degree, whose contextual focus was the history of Polish education in the nineteenth and the former half of the twentieth century. Apart from this particular study, Perkowska's scientific output includes three other monographs (one of them forthcoming) and a number of articles – monographic as well as biographical notes. The Council of the Faculty of History as well as the reviewers have deemed this output to be satisfactory; following a colloquium and a postdoctoral-qualification lecture, the postdoctoral degree (*habilitation*) in the humanities – in history of Polish culture and science, to be specific – was conferred on Urszula Perkowska. The Central Commission approved the Council's resolution to this end on 27 May 1996.

Since 1 January 1995, Perkowska took the newly established post of Deputy Manager of the AUJ. Apart from continuing her previous duties, she managed the preparation and editorial work of a guide to the institution's collection, which was published in two language versions (U. Perkowska [ed.], *Przewodnik po Archiwum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* (Kraków, 1998); *eadem* [ed.], *A guide to the Jagiellonian University Archives*, transl. by I. Polańska, [Kraków, 2000]). From 15 November 2000 on, she was moved (together with her full-time post) to the Institute of Library Science and Scientific Information at the University's Faculty of Management and Social Communication, where she lectured and tutored discussions in archival science and librarianship, among other fields. The motion for employing Perkowska as associate professor, submitted in 2003, was not approved by the Academic Senate. Regrettably, the minutes of the body's meetings specify no rationale behind that decision whatsoever. Perkowska eventually retired in 2011 as adjunct with postdoctoral qualification.

Perkowska has supervised a number of MA theses. She was several times awarded a mention by the Faculty Dean or a prize from the Jagiellonian University's Rector in recognition of her teaching and scientific achievements. She was member of the Society of the Admirers of History and Landmarks of Cracow and the Polish Bibliological Society, among others. Let us remark that she presided the historical

committees for beatification of Sister Maria Magdalena Epstein, the Rev. Władysław Bukowiński, Father Justyn Spyrlak and his seven companions; she was moreover a member of such committees in four other such processes. Added to all these activities, she edited the parish chronicle of St Anne's Academic Collegiate Church in Cracow.

Urszula Perkowska died on 25 August 2017 in Cracow. The funeral ceremony was held on 1 September 2017 at the aforementioned Academic Collegiate Church; she buried at the Rakowicki Cemetery.

III

The conviction prevails in humanities academic circles that the monograph submitted as part of the postdoctoral qualification procedure may prove to be the author's *opus vitae*. The reviewers who dealt with Urszula's dissertation have identified three areas of research she conducted, namely: (i) the history of the Jagiellonian University in the nineteenth and twentieth century, covering the institution, its teaching staff, and the student community; (ii) biographical writing; and, (iii) regional history. The University's history was the major field of her interest as a scholar. To paraphrase what has already been said, it all began with the history of the Jagiellonian University: it was there that this author originally traced other topics, such as writing biographies of people more or less strictly associated with the University, as well as regional, social, and cultural history.

Apart from the already covered doctoral and postdoctoral theses, I would like to further discuss Urszula Perkowska's scientific output starting with the *Corpus studiosorum ...*, a publication that was proved the most labour-consuming but the least appreciated of all (I will refer to the other items in a chronological order). The history of the project to compile a biographical dictionary of the Jagiellonian University's employees and students has a long tradition behind it. The idea to publish an extensive list of students took real form in the 1990s. Finally, eight volumes were published, edited by Professors Jerzy Michalewicz and Krzysztof Stopka, with contributions of six authors. The team initially consisted of Mieczysław Barcik, Adam Cieślak, Danuta Grodowska-Kulińska and Urszula Perkowska (*Corpus Studiosorum Universitatis Jagellonicae 1850–1918*, iii: A–D, ed. by Michalewicz [Kraków, 1999]; iii: E–J, ed. by Stopka, Kraków, 2006; iii: K–Ł, ed. by Stopka [Kraków, 2009]). Thereafter, it was joined

by Paweł Gaszyński and Przemysław Marcin Żukowski (*Corpus Studentium Universitatis Jagellonicae 1850/51–1917/18*, iii: M–N, ed. by Stopka [Kraków, 2011]; iii: O–Q, ed. by *idem* [Kraków, 2011]; iii: R, ed. by *idem* [Kraków, 2013]; iii: S–Ś, ed. by *idem* [Kraków, 2014]; iii: T–Ż, ed. by *idem* [Kraków, 2015]). The edition contains biographical notes of nearly 30,000 students. Urszula Perkowska was tasked with preparing the notes for the Faculty of Philosophy, including the majors of Pharmacy and Agriculture. To give an idea of how enormous the effort was, let me emphasise that to compile a single entry one had to look through a dozen-or-so of reference files (unlike today, it was not customary in the past to arrange the student documentation into folders): from the matriculation register, through the entry sheets updated each term (for the Dean and the bursary), to the examination protocols and promotion registers. The work on the edition started in the time of ‘pencil and paper’, rather than PCs. The records appear in at least three languages (Polish, Latin, and German), hence the rather considerable risk of inaccuracy or imprecision. Perkowska has moreover participated in an AUJ project that has not come to a complete fruition: as part of the ‘The corps of research workers of the Jagiellonian University’, her assignment was to compile the section on the research workers of the Faculty of Philosophy, and the volume prepared by her has been the only one to appear in print (*Corpus Academicorum Facultatis Philosophiae Universitatis Jagellonicae 1850–1945* [Kraków, 2007]).

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1990 saw the publication by the Universitas publishing house of the monograph entitled *Uniwersytet Jagielloński w latach I wojny światowej* (Kraków, 1990), on the Jagiellonian University during the First World War. Professor Julian Dybiec mentioned this book during the Faculty Council discussion while proceeding with Ms. Perkowska’s postdoctoral degree. As he remarked, her strife to increase her otherwise already considerable output needed being appreciated all the more that Professor Hajdukiewicz, then head of the University’s Archive, had withheld the publication for eight years, allegedly working on its review. This fact did not discourage the postdoctoral candidate from following up her pursuits. I remind this fact in order to defend Perkowska against the accusations that she was promoted to habilitated doctor a long time after got her PhD. As is thus apparent, she was not in control of everything. Her book reports on the major occurrences of the period

concerned, pointing out, among other aspects, to a change in the social mix of the students and increased number of attending women.

The book *Studia i kursy zawodowe na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim w latach 1868/69–1938/39* (Kraków, 1995), on vocational studies and courses at her *Alma Mater*, apparently came out as aftermath of Urszula's employment with the AUJ. The study discusses some of the professional courses; not exhausting the topic, it offers the basis for further research – for instance, into the debate between 'science-oriented' universities versus 'profession-oriented' universities of technology, which was quite hot in the Second Republic years.

In 2000, the year the Jagiellonian University celebrated its subsequent anniversary, Urszula Perkowska published a book on the University's jubilees (*Jubileusze Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* [Kraków, 2000]). Based, as usual, on reliable records, the book is a readable contribution. A year later, another book penned by her came out – this time, on the early post-war University students (*Studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w latach 1945–1948/49* [Kraków, 2001]).

Perkowska's contribution as scientific consultant to beatification processes inspired her valuable monographs: *Ty, Panie wskazujesz mi drogę życia. Maria Epsteinówna, siostra Magdalena Maria (1875–1947), założycielka i dyrektorka Uniwersyteckiej Szkoły Pielęgniarek i Higienistek, dominikanka z krakowskiego Gródka* (1 ed.: Kraków, 2005; 2 ed.: Kraków, 2014), and *Anna Rydlówna (1884–1969). Organizatorka szkolnictwa pielęgniarskiego, działaczka społeczna i niepodległościowa* (Kraków, 2010).

Her aforementioned monograph on Chotkowski (published as *Ksiądz profesor Władysław Chotkowski [1843–1926]. Historyk Kościoła, działacz społeczny i kaznodzieja* [Lwów and Kraków, 2016]) turned out to be her last.

She has moreover authored numerous biographical notes, articles, and source editions. The latter included the memories of the first woman to have studied law at the Jagiellonian University and obtained a doctorate at the Law Faculty ('Zofia Majmeskuł Mastalerzowa: *Moje wspomnienia. Wspomnienia pierwszej absolwentki Wydziału Prawa Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*', *Krakowski Rocznik Archiwalny*, xii, 2006). A volume on the history of the Jagiellonian Library, to which Urszula has contributed, appeared in print posthumously (Krzysztof Frankowicz, Małgorzata Galos, Żaneta Kubic, Beata Kurek, Piotr Lechowski, and Urszula Perkowska, *Historia Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, ii: 1775–1918, ed. by Piotr Lechowski [Kraków, 2017]).

IV

Albeit retired, Urszula remained almost a permanent employee of the Jagiellonian University Archives, rather than a visitor or habitué. She would continually use the same desk at the Reading Room most of the time, and a cabinet where she kept the documents she worked on. An unexpected fast-progressing illness led to her passing. She has left an empty place in the hearts of many, but it is being filled with memory cherished among her family, friends, colleagues, and those innumerable people whom she helped complete archival search. I believe it would not be an overstatement to say that we have bid farewell to a devoted Employee and passionate Scholar, a good, obliging and helpful Colleague – and, primarily, a cheerful and smiled Human Being. On the other hand, we can enjoy and share her valuable scholarly studies, the monographs, articles, described as “pioneering in our historiography … as far as intellectual advancement of women is concerned” in the appraisal of Perkowska’s scientific work within her postdoctoral procedure.

trans. Tristian Korecki

Przemysław Marcin Żukowski