

IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR STANISŁAW B. BARTKOWSKI (1933-2002)



Not until the moment I was asked to write this memorial sketch about Professor Stanisław Bartkowski did I realize that I belong to a handful of people who knew him so well, since I had the privilege of knowing him for over half a century, i.e. from the very moment we first met as first-year students, through a few decades of working together at the Medical Academy in Kraków and later at Jagiellonian University Medical College (CMUJ), until the moment he passed away.

I was in the same year with Staszek studying Dentistry (1951-1955), and what brought us closer together was our passion for maxillofacial surgery instilled in us by Professor Henryk Dorski, who ran the Student Research Club for Oral Surgery students, of which we were both members. I clearly remember that Staszek wrote a paper about Alfred Meissner, the first maxillofacial surgeon in pre-war Poland, and I wrote about Teofil Kaczorowski, a pioneer of the theory of the focal infection in the oral cavity. After becoming dentistry graduates we both worked as assistants in the Chair and we began training in the newly opened (by Henryk Dorski on 1 December 1955) Maxillofacial Surgery Unit of PSK located at 17 Kopernika Street. Simultaneously, we continued our studies in the Faculty of Medicine, as in those times only graduates of this faculty were allowed to enter the specialization procedure. We had a chance to learn the issues related to oral cavity surgery from experienced senior assistants (G. Wyrzykowska, H. Wachtel, J. Gugulski, M. Strona) whereas general surgery, surgical techniques and filling medical reports were learned from specialists in general surgery who worked in Dorski's ward (E. Hołdziewicz, H. Pawłowska, J. Deszczowa).

Although we constituted two different generations working together, we were like one big family: we enjoyed meeting together also after work, often celebrating birthdays or name days, meeting either in restaurants or at home. Sometimes we would meet at Staszek's parents'

place where he would sing beautifully traditional songs from Lviv and his father would play the guitar. And sometimes we would dance, too. So that is how I got to know the family and private life of the future professor.

Staszek was born on 8 May 1933 in Lviv in a family of teachers. During the Second World War he was deported with his mother to Siberia. His mother did not survive those harrowing years when they experienced extreme hunger and grinding poverty. After the war he settled down with his father in Kraków, where after finishing secondary school he took the final Matura exam and in 1951 began studying dentistry. In 1955 he got his degree, and in 1962 he got another degree from the Faculty of Medicine. All his later life revolved around the university where he continued his career path, climbing up the ladder of his academic development to ultimately reach the highest academic degree of a full professor. He was able to achieve so much thanks to his inborn talent, including his unquestionable talent for surgery, but also thanks to his systematic work and constant drive to develop his academic and surgical skills, his ambition, perseverance and determination in achieving the goals he had set for himself. He also had exceptional organizational skills and talent for people management, and he had a good eye for picking ambitious and responsible people to work with him as his colleagues. He was very consistent and determined in following his professional career path – from his very first place of work in the Oral Surgery Clinic of the Medical Academy (1955-1967), then in the General Surgery Clinic (where he was delegated to work in the years 1967-1971), finally becoming the Head of OFM Surgery Clinic of the Medical Academy, and later CMUJ (1971-1996). I was his deputy throughout those 25 years and we cooperated together very closely in academic, research and clinical work. Due to this fact I was able to get to know his personality, his attitude towards colleagues and

patients as well as his leisure time interests. I also knew Staszek's family very well, as I was a frequent guest at his name day parties, during which he loved to entertain his friends and relatives. Finally, in 1996 as the result of administrative and organizational changes within the structure of the CMUJ, a new Department of Oral Surgery was created (and I became the Head of the Department). Professor Bartkowski, until his death in 2002, was the Head of OFM Surgery Clinic and Chair; simultaneously he was also the Head of the OFM ward in Ludwik Rydygier Specialized Hospital in Kraków.

The academic degrees Professor Bartkowski was awarded throughout his life reflect his considerable achievements in clinical work and academic research. Here is a short history of his academic achievements given in chronological order: in 1965 he received his PhD degree, in 1976 he became a habilitated doctor in medical sciences, in 1989 he became an associate professor and finally in 2001 he was awarded the title of a full professor, the highest possible status available for academics in Poland. And here is the list of specializations he completed, again in chronological order: in 1962 first degree of specialization in general dentistry, in 1969 first degree of specialization in general surgery, in 1971 second degree of specialization in maxillary surgery, and finally in 1973 second degree of specialization in plastic surgery. It was this specialization in plastic surgery that was probably one of the most important professional achievements of Professor Bartkowski as it allowed him to introduce the principles and techniques used in plastic surgery into the practice of OFM surgery. After all, reconstructive surgery performed in the area of the face, the head and the neck is very often indispensable because of the crucial function these parts of the body perform and, understandably, also for aesthetic reasons. The most common would be reconstructive surgery following oncological operations, and when dealing with post-traumatic deformations and congenial malformations. One of the most significant achievements of Professor Bartkowski was introducing in Kraków Clinic all the latest reconstruction methods used in the world, which notably put Kraków on the map as the leading centre in Poland in this respect. The range of treatments and operations available for oncological patients was developed in close collaboration with the Oncology Institute and the Chair of Oncology of the Medical Academy. A wider range of ablative procedures became possible, together with simultaneous tissue reconstruction. Another concept introduced in the clinic was induction chemotherapy and adjuvant therapy; as for radiotherapy, patients received the type of radiotherapy that was individually adjusted and adequate to the condition they were in. In the Prosthodontic Laboratory Franciszek Serwatka, an outstanding prosthodontics specialist, was employed, which made it possible to implement immediate or delayed prosthetic rehabilitation (endoprosthesis after jaw resection or epithesis after enucle-

ation or orbital exenteration, resection of the nose or ear lobes).

Professor Bartkowski also initiated the collaboration with the Ophthalmology Clinic and the Chair of Ophthalmology of the Medical Academy, and in particular he cooperated with Professor Krystyna Krzystkova in the field of eyesight injuries. At first, the procedures for diagnosis and treating orbital fractures (especially blow-out fractures) were specified and implemented. Procedures which involved eyelids and tear ducts were also carried out. In this type of surgery the Kraków Clinic soon acquired the reputation of being the best in Poland. As regards OFM traumatology, there also developed the collaboration with the Neuro-traumatology Clinic of the Medical Academy and it particularly involved treatment of patients with facial fractures, especially when coupled with basilar skull fracture and damaged optic nerve leading to post-traumatic visual loss. Professor Bartkowski realized the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in the process of accurate diagnosis and subsequent treatment of many injuries and conditions related to the oral cavity, face, head and neck (injuries, inflammations, tumors, malformations and congenital defects) and therefore introduced internal inter-disciplinary clinical consultations for outpatients and those being qualified for operations. During such consultations specialists from various fields were present, depending on the situation discussed, e.g. the oncologist, neuro-traumatologist, ophthalmologist, orthodontist, microbiologist or radiologist. The significance of such consultations cannot be stressed enough, as they speed up accurate diagnosis and help to choose an adequate and effective treatment. Based on the research done for his habilitation project, Professor Bartkowski came up with a new method of polytherapy (i.e. fibrinolytic, anticoagulant and antibacterial) regarding treatment of chronic osteitis, which resulted in patients from all over Poland being reported to the clinic. A large portion of clinical work constituted surgery of jaw malformations (such as prognathism), post-traumatic deformations, malformations related to orofacial cleft, odontogenic tumors, cysts, soft tissue hemangiomas and facial bones. The results of numerous clinical tests, which were conducted on a fairly large cohorts, were published later in doctoral dissertations, or in specialist journals in Poland and abroad, often presented as papers during congresses and conferences. Beginning in the early 1980s, once every two years we took active part in the congresses organized by the European Association for Cranio Maxillo Facial Surgery (EACMFS), as well as conventions of the Polish Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Polish Dental Association (PTS) and many others. Staszek personally delivered around a hundred papers and presentations, both in Poland and abroad. He had a chance to visit numerous OFM clinics as well as plastic and aesthetic surgery center, e.g. in the USA, Mexico, Germany, Czech Republic and Sweden, gaining

a lot of experience and refining his surgical skills and operating techniques, which he later tried to introduce back home. He constantly developed his professional knowledge and demanded the same from his colleagues and subordinates. Seminars and surgical workshops aimed at perfecting operating techniques were held regularly at the clinic. Work discipline, punctuality, loyalty and dedication to work were the order of the day in the clinic. Professor Bartkowski had around him a team of long-serving experienced colleagues and the best specialists he could always depend on (M. Kurek, M. Panaś, M. Zaleska, J. Zapała, to name just a few). They are still working at CMUJ today and Professor Jan Zapała, who succeeded him as the Head of the Chair, continues to develop the work of Professor Bartkowski.

As for his scholarly output, it includes 112 articles, 26 of which were published in various prestigious specialist journals abroad. He was also the editor of an academic textbook published in 1978, later published as the coursebook for students of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS), printed again in 1996. Some parts of his coursebook are still used by medical students today. Moreover, he was the author of a number of chapters in other coursebooks dealing with OMS, as well as coursebooks for Ophthalmology and General Surgery. He introduced compulsory OMS seminars for the sixth-year students studying medicine at CMUJ (Jagiellonian University Medical College).

Professor Bartkowski was the academic supervisor of the habilitation of Professor Jan Zapała, who succeeded Bartkowski as the Head of the Clinic and the Chair of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, and developed clinical research in many directions based on interdisciplinary collaboration with laryngology (endoscopy), oncology (including chemotherapy and radiotherapy), plastic and reconstructive surgery. Thanks to training his own team of collaborators, the scope of treatments offered by the clinic has been widened by reconstructing tissue losses by novel methods. It is also worth mentioning that there are already some senior academic staff members (habilitated doctors) actively involved in this field including such specialists as Grażyna Wyszynska-Pawelec and Mariusz Szuta; they take pride in being Professor Bartkowski's followers and continuing his work. Another thing worth mentioning is the fact that he was the academic supervisor of 6 doctoral dissertations, and was the reviewer of 4 habilitation and 8 doctoral dissertations. He acted as a oral surgery specialization supervisor for 20 doctors and as an OFM surgery specialization supervisor for 8 doctors. He was an active member of numerous societies and associations in Poland and abroad, including the following: the Polish Dental Association (PTS) acting as the Chairman of the PTS Kraków Branch and receiving PTS Honorary Membership, Polish Surgeons' Association, Polish Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery; he was also a co-founder of Polish Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery,

a member of the European Association for Cranio Maxillo Facial Surgery (EACMFS), the Polish Ophthalmological Society, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, and many more. All this point to the fact that Professor Bartkowski, thanks to his extraordinary talent and hard work, contributed enormously to the development of OFMS not just in Kraków, but in the whole of Poland.

The portal of Jan Długosz House in Kanonicza bears a Latin inscription which says: *Nil est in homine bona mente melius* (There is nothing better in man than his mind). And I do believe that the late Professor Bartkowski not only possessed this treasure, but he also knew how to make the most of it, and therefore he deserves to stay in our memory.

And what was he like as a university professor to his students? Professor Jerzy Wetulani once remarked: A teacher is worth only as much as his students will be in the future. In other words, a teacher's merit can only be judged by the merit of his students. In the case of Professor Bartkowski, one can have no doubts about his merit judging by the sheer number of exquisite surgeons, medical consultants and academic staff who were once the professor's students. Additionally, I personally know dozens of first-class doctors working outside the Medical College now who keep Professor Bartkowski in their fond memory and who would always refer to him as their Master.

One should also ask what kind of person was Professor Bartkowski in private? I suppose Staszek had a very strong personality, he was very hard-working and determined to achieve the goals he had set for himself. He did not like people who would complain about encountering objective difficulties, not having enough time or being tired. He would call such people 'moaners' or 'wimps'. He himself worked really hard, always reading a great deal and preparing himself before difficult operations. At the same time he was always full of humbleness towards any surgery he performed. He showed particular interest in plastic and reconstructive surgery. Having visited a number of clinics specializing in plastic surgery, he opened his own private clinic.

He also knew how to relax, usually preferring things which required physical activity, and he was an ardent propagator of actively spending leisure time among his colleagues. It was thanks to his initiative that regular football matches were organized in the 1970s and 1980s. He played tennis and went swimming regularly. In the winter he went cross-country skiing and in the summer he loved spending time picking mushrooms in the forest. He encouraged his colleagues to go skiing together in Koninki or Poręba Wielka, and in the summer he organized weekend trips to Zarabie, Limanowa or Nowy Targ, often with the traditional lamb-roasting event. He enjoyed good food, particularly traditional Polish cuisine (e.g. roasted pig, traditional Polish gołąbki or beef roulade served with groats). He enjoyed watch-

ing good films, singing and music, not only classical). He was very sociable, he appreciated the company of people who had a good sense of humor. Always courteous towards women, but at the same time very demanding at work in professional matters, some would say perhaps that he would demand more from women than his male colleagues. He took great care about his physical appearance, he would wear smart ties and shirts, always good suits. He was the kind of person other people often admired not just for his extensive professional knowledge and unparalleled surgical talent. He enjoyed good cars, expensive restaurants and hotels – perhaps because he remembered only too well the famine and the ordeal he had gone through during the difficult childhood years in Siberia. He took great pleasure in getting to know other people and cultures, but most likely would never be able to live abroad. He was a family man, his sons were always the apple of his eye and he cared about their future enormously. They both graduated from our Medical College: the older one, Andrzej, is a medical doctor and Paweł is a dentist. They have been living and working in the USA for a long time now; their father would often visit them in America.

Obviously Staszek was not someone without his faults, he made mistakes as we all do, but I shall not dwell on them here, as suggested by the Latin phrase *De mortuis nihil nisi bene*. Sadly, he fell victim to his smoking habit and a terminal disease that he was unable to conquer despite undergoing treatment. But he would never complain about his life, even when he suffered a great deal and when he knew his life was coming to an end. When I had a chance to talk to him in hospital shortly before he passed away, he did not have any fear or anguish before dying, he seemed to have no regrets regarding his fate. One could definitely say that Staszek was a man of success as he achieved all he had planned, he had a remarkably successful academic and professional career, he had a job which was hugely rewarding in every aspect, he built around him a team of highly qualified and utterly loyal colleagues. And last but not least, he built his own plastic surgery clinic, a beautiful house which he enjoyed living in, he had a loving family and a huge circle of true friends and eternally grateful patients.

He knew how to enjoy life and he tried to make the most of it. The only problem was that his life ended prematurely. There is a famous adage which says that you live as long as you stay in the memory of others. And be assured, Staszek, that you will always stay in the fond memory of your dear ones, your colleagues, your students and grateful patients, as is aptly summed up in the famous line by Horace: *'Non omnis moriar'* (Not all of me shall die).

Prof. Jadwiga Stypułkowska