

## HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN TOTALITARIAN TIMES. THE CASE STUDY OF WROCŁAW (BRESLAU)

**Abstract:** Based on examples from Wrocław (Breslau), we show the fate of archaeologists living in countries under totalitarian regimes. We present cases of bright scientists sent by the German Nazis to the war fronts and the persecution of the “enemies of the system” by post-war communists in Poland. German scholars were killed in the war. Persecuted during the Stalinist period, Polish professor E. Bulanda lost his job and the Chair of Classical Archaeology was closed after the war.

**Keywords:** *classical archaeology, prehistoric archaeology, totalitarianism, history of science.*

**Mateusz ŻMUDZIŃSKI**

University of Wrocław  
mateusz.zmudzinski@uwr.edu.pl

DOI: 10.14795/j.v7i3.552

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN–L 2360 – 266X

**B**efore World War II, Wrocław (then Breslau) belonged to Germany. It was the city where academic archaeology was born, created by Prof. J.G.G. Büsching<sup>1</sup>. Breslau’s archaeological research centre was one of the most important in Germany. Its scholars worked both on classical and prehistoric archaeology<sup>2</sup>. Consulting papers in the local journals, one can easily notice how young researchers spread their wings by publishing series of excavation reports and feature articles. These works show that years later, their names were bound to become those of important discoverers, outstanding professors, authors of major books. Unfortunately, the Nazis’ takeover of power led to the outbreak of World War II. Within a short time, in place of the young researchers’ papers, scientific journals such as the *Altschlesische Blätter* began to publish their obituaries<sup>3</sup>. It is a depressing reading. They usually show a picture of a man in military uniform. Obviously, for the Nazi regime, these young people were not talented researchers but mere conscripts. Their great scientific achievements meant nothing: they were fit to bear arms and fight, and they were sent to the war fronts. Such was the fate of many scholars. In 1940, Dr. H. Urbanek was killed on the Somme (Fig. 1)<sup>4</sup>. In 1941, Dr. W. Klammt died in Crete (Fig. 2). He had just defended his doctoral thesis, “*Die Wandalische Kultur des 3. Und 5. Jahrhunderts n. Chr in Mittelschlesien*”, during a leave from the front. In 1942, F. Hufnagel died on the eastern front (Fig. 3). Death also took the Nazi E. Petersen (Fig. 4), who was in the Waffen SS. Professor H. Seger, who had been the director of the museum for many years, died in 1943 (Fig 5). At the end of the war, when

<sup>1</sup> BURDUKIEWICZ/DEMIDZIUK/BOŃCZUK-DAWIDZIUK 2016, 180-206.

<sup>2</sup> BÜSCHING 1824, 622-628.

<sup>3</sup> DEMIDZIUK/ŻMUDZIŃSKI 2015, 155, 163-164.

<sup>4</sup> All photos in the article come from the Photographic Archive of the Archaeological Museum, Department of the Wrocław City Museum. Courtesy of Krzysztof Dzemidziuk.



Fig. 1. Dr. H. Urbanek

Soviet troops were pushing deep into Germany, the city was turned into a fortress (the *Festung Breslau*). Its defence was supposed to delay the Russians' conquest of Berlin, and Breslau actually fell after the capitulation of the capital. As a result of desperate fighting, the city was almost completely ruined. The museums' collections were dispersed. Scientific documentation was destroyed. The huge collection of plaster casts of ancient sculptures from the *Königliches Museum für Kunst und Altertümer* was almost completely destroyed. Its modest remnants – 68 items – are visible today at the Museum of the University of Wrocław<sup>5</sup>. The collection of glass slides and black and white photographs was relatively spared: hundreds of them have survived<sup>6</sup>. They show works of ancient art, including Greek vase paintings, Greek and Roman sculptures, ancient buildings. The photographs are most valuable today, because some of the presented items do no longer exist, have disappeared during the war or are now ruined<sup>7</sup>. Some of those photographs have been taken during excavations, e.g. in Troy or at the Athens Acropolis. Before and many years after the war, they have been used by both German and Polish archaeologists to give lectures on classical archaeology. After the war, as a result of the Potsdam agreements between the victorious powers, the borders of Poland changed. Poland received German territories along with the cities of Wrocław, Szczecin and Gdańsk, but lost Wilno and Lwów which were incorporated to the USSR.

<sup>5</sup> KUBALA/BOŃCZUK-DAWIDZIUK 2013.

<sup>6</sup> ŻMUDZIŃSKI 2004, 67-70.

<sup>7</sup> ŻMUDZIŃSKI 2006, 247-249.



Fig. 2. Dr. W. Klammt

Polish populations were forced to leave their homeland and travel in cattle wagons, among others, to ruined Wrocław. The fall of Nazism did not mark the beginning of a golden age. The victorious soldiers of the Red Army were followed by NKVD officers and communist party activists. Among the newcomers to ruined Wrocław, there was also a group of scholars who wanted to quickly reactivate the University. The Baroque main building of the University had been bombed, and many buildings were rubble. Polish scholars were controlled by a member of the post-war government, Prof. Stanisław Kulczyński, who was a botanist and a staunch communist<sup>8</sup>. Among the repatriates, there were also archaeologists from the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów. One of them was the renowned classical archaeologist Prof. Edmund Bulanda, who was forced to leave Lwów in 1945. Before the war, he had published tens of scientific papers on Greek architecture and sculpture<sup>9</sup>, Etruscan art and ancient weapons, some of which have become a major reference for researchers<sup>10</sup>. He published in several European languages and gained international renown. He was president of the Polish Archaeological Society. He was also a member of several scientific associations, including the Numismatic Society. During her query in the archives in Lviv, N. Bilas found a vast documentation about the didactic activities of

<sup>8</sup> MAŁDAŁSKI 1980, 181.

<sup>9</sup> E.g.: BULANDA 1913, 94-95, BULANDA 1929, 377-388, BULANDA 1936, 149-161.

<sup>10</sup> E.g.: BERNHARD 1992, 433, BERNHARD 1993, 295, 569.

**Friedrich Hufnagel †**

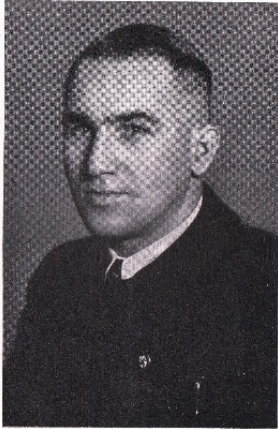
Als dritter aus den Reihen der schlesischen Vorgeschichtsforscher fiel am 25. 5. 42 in den Kämpfen am Denez der Rufos am Landesmuseum in Beuthen OS, Dr. Friedrich Hufnagel. Am 28. 12. 1911 in Ansbach in Mittelfranken geboren, besuchte er dort die Volksschule und das Gymnasium. Ostern 1931 bezog er die Universität Tübingen, um Vorgeschichte, klassische Archäologie, Anthropologie und Geologie zu studieren. Auf einer Studienreise nach dem Norden nahm er als Gasthörer an Vorlesungen der Universität Stockholm teil. Im Wintersemester 1934/35 folgte er seinem Lehrer Prof. Dr. Reinerich von Tübingen nach Berlin, wo er im Februar 1936 die Doktorprüfung mit einer Arbeit über den vorgeschichtlichen nordischen Schiffsbau ablegte und im Mai des gleichen Jahres promovierte.

Den Weg zur Vorgeschichte fand Dr. Hufnagel bereits als Schüler des Gymnasiums durch den fränkischen Heimatforscher Carl Gumpert. Schon als Fünfzehnjähriger nahm er an Grabungen auf steinzeitlichen Wohnplätzen und vor allem an Gumperts Untersuchungen von hallstatt- und latènezeitlichen Gräbern seiner Heimat teil. Während seiner Studienzeit war er als wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter an den Ausgrabungen in den steinzeitlichen Siedlungen des Bauwiler Moores, der Hallstatt-Grabhügel im Kanton Aargau und der jungsteinzeitlichen Höhenfiedlung bei Horw am Vierwaldstätter See beteiligt. Auch an der Grabung im Gutsdorf Westerholz bei Detmold nahm er teil. Im Auftrage seines Lehrers ordnete und verzeichnete er als Stipendiat der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft die Funde aus den Grabungen Reinerichs im Baumwiler Moos in Luzern. Vom 1. 4. — 30. 9. 1937 war er als wissenschaftl. Hilfsarbeiter am Landesamt für Vorgeschichte in Rastatt tätig, wo er eine Anzahl Ausgrabungen durchführte. Am 1. 10. 1937 wurde er als Assistent an die vorgeschichtliche Abteilung des Oberschles. Landesmuseums in Beuthen OS. berufen, deren Leitung er übernahm, und wo er am 1. 2. 1942 zum Rufos aufrückte. Seit 1937 verheiratet, lebte er in äußerst glücklicher Ehe, der zwei Kinder entsprossen sind.

Dr. Hufnagel war ein begeisterter und begabter Jünger der Vorgeschichtswissenschaft, dessen Leben sich zwischen den beiden Polen Familie und Beruf restlos erfüllte. Auch sein letzter Feldpostbrief enthielt Berichte und Meinungen von neuen Funden im Denezgebiet. Durch gründliche und vielseitige Ausbildung auf das Beste für seine Tätigkeit ausgerüstet, hatte er sich für seine Lebensarbeit weite Ziele gesetzt, so daß von ihm noch wertvolle Beiträge für die Vorgeschichte Schlesiens und des Osttraumes zu erwarten gewesen wären. Nun hat sein Leben auf vorgeschobenem Posten durch einen Granatvolltreffer höchste Vollendung gefunden. Die schlesische Vorgeschichte hat an ihm einen tiefgründigen, fleißigen Forscher, die Gesellschaft des Landesmuseums einen guten Kameraden, der Unterzeichnete darüber hinaus einen lieben Freund verloren.

Franz Pfützenreiter

216



Dr. phil. Friedrich Hufnagel  
gefallen am 25. 5. 1942

217

Fig. 3. Obituary of Dr. F. Hufnagel (photo in military uniform)



Fig. 4. Dr. E. Petersen

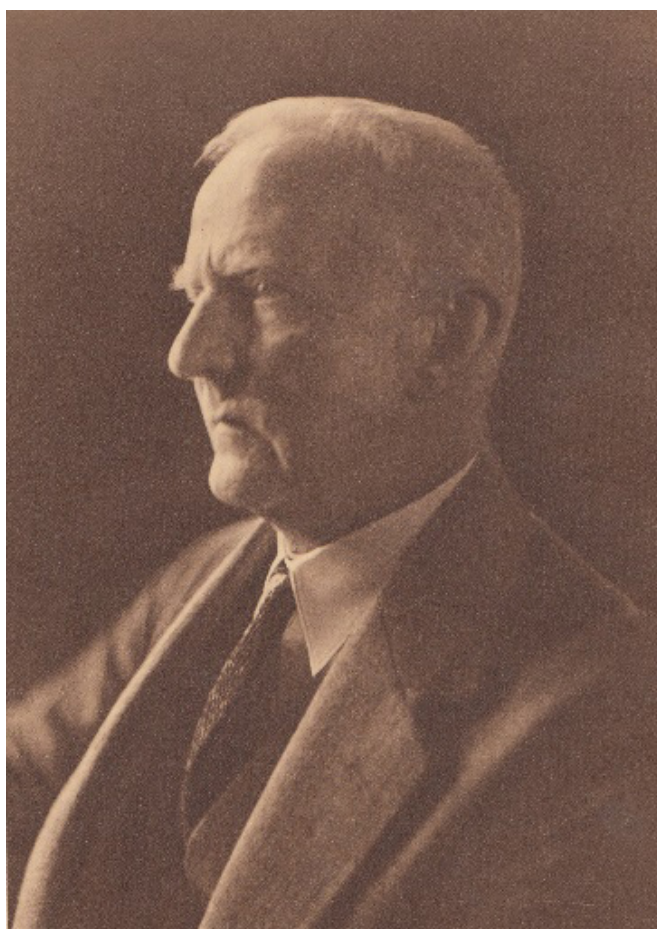


Fig. 5. Prof. Hans Seger

pre-war Polish scholars<sup>11</sup>. It shows that before the war, Prof. E. Bulanda gave various lectures in archaeology. Every year, he prepared new cycles of lectures. He had teaching courses e.g. on Pompeian Art, ancient theatre, Roman epigraphy, Aegean culture, Christian art, history of Greek religion. After the war, he had the intention to continue his research at the University of Wrocław where he created a Chair of Classical Archaeology. Unfortunately, in the times of totalitarianism, the researchers' works were not important: what really mattered was their attitude towards the political regime or rather the sympathies of the party's insiders for them. The Rector of the University knew that Prof. E. Bulanda was a true Polish patriot: he had been a soldier, he had fought for Lwów. He also knew that he was a supporter of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the pre-war strongman who had defeated the Soviet army in the Battle of Warsaw in 1920. For the communists, anyone who recognised the authority of J. Piłsudski was an ideological enemy. This was enough to become an enemy of the regime and be persecuted. In 1950, by decision of the rector and the communist senate of the University of Wrocław, Prof. E. Bulanda lost his job. He died in poverty a year later, probably due to stress. The Chair of Classical Archaeology was closed. In the Stalinist era, socialist realism was dominant at the university, and classical art had lost importance. Today, Prof. Bulanda is an almost forgotten figure. As for Rector S. Kulczyński, it took years to notice that he was an ambiguous character. Nobody questions the merits of the first post-war rector of the University, but old documents throw a new light on those dark times today. They show, among others, the drama of Prof. E. Bulanda and some other scholars who lost their jobs in the same years, as "enemies of the regime". Those were the years of Stalinist terror, when people could be sentenced to long-term imprisonment or shot for the slightest reason. Prof. E. Bulanda was already an old man at the time of his dismissal. Today, it is difficult to explain why the NKVD had not sent him to Siberia before, which was the lot of thousands of Polish intellectuals and their families. He had not been shot by the Germans either, like many Polish professors in Lwów. But this graciousness of fate in the era of totalitarianisms proved to be temporary, as evidenced by the professor's post-war fate in Wrocław. For a scholar, work is life, and although he was not murdered, he was not allowed to live.

It could seem that archaeology is a science which has little to do with politics. The above examples show that, unfortunately, in the totalitarian periods of both Nazism and Stalinist communism, even the most eminent researchers were just small pawns in the game. Hitler and Stalin decided the fate of millions, and a pyramid of people at their orders efficiently realised their whims. Intellectuals, among which the archaeologists, were their victims in all totalitarian countries.

## REFERENCES

- BERNHARD 1992  
Bernhard, M.L., *Sztuka Grecka IV wieku p.n.e.* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN).
- BERNHARD 1993  
Bernhard, M. L., *Sztuka hellenistyczna*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN).
- BILAS 2015  
Bilas, N., Pedagogična ta administrativna dijnost profesora Edmunda Buljandy u Lvivskomu Universiteti, *Lviv University Archaeology Series* 16, 350-381.
- BULANDA 1913  
Bulanda, E., Bogen und Pfeil bei den Völkern des Altertums, *Abhandlungen des archäologisch-epigraphischen Seminars der Universität Wien* 15, 94-95.
- BULANDA 1929  
Bulanda, E., Étude sur la tête du Dèlos, *Eos* 32, 377-388.
- BULANDA 1936  
Bulanda E. Venus Medici, [in:] *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Leona Pinińskiego*, Lwów, 1, 149-161.
- BURDUKIEWICZ/DEMIDZIUK/BOŃCZUK-DAWIDZIUK, 2016  
Burdukiewicz J.M./Demidziuk K./Bończuk-Dawidziuk U., Profesor Büsching na Uniwersytecie Wrocławskim – początki archeologii akademickiej w Europie, *Śląska Republika uczonych* 7, 180-206.
- BÜSCHING 1824  
Büsching J.G.G., *Antiken-Sammlung der Universität zu Breslau*, *Schlesische Provinzialblätter* 80/12, 622-628.
- DEMIDZIUK/ŻMUDZIŃSKI 2015  
Demidziuk, K./Żmudziński, M., Straty wojenne archeologii wrocławskiej, *Rocznik Łubowicki* 13, 147-165.
- KUBAŁA/BOŃCZUK-DAWIDZIUK 2013  
Kubała, A./Bończuk-Dawidziuk, U., *The Catalogue of Plaster Casts in University of Wrocław Collection*, (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski).
- KRZYSZOWSKA-WYPUSTEK 1995  
Krzyszowska-Wypustek K., Archeologia klasyczna na Uniwersytecie wrocławskim (1811-1945), [in:] *Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego* 4, 47-73.
- MAŁAŁSKI 1980  
Małalski J., *Stanisław Kulczyński*. In: Trzynadłowski, J. (ed.), *Uczni wrocławscy: (1945-1979)* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich), 181.
- ŻMUDZIŃSKI 2004  
Żmudziński M., Archäologische Funde auf den vorkriegszeitlichen Fotos des Archäologischen Seminars in Breslau, *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis 2699 Classica Wratislaviensis* 25, 67-70.
- ŻMUDZIŃSKI 2006  
Żmudziński, M., Zabytki archeologiczne na przedwojennych fotografiach w zbiorach Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, *Silesia Antiqua* 43, 247-249.

<sup>11</sup> BILAS 2015, 350-381.