

## A SHORT HISTORY OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN BRESLAU AND WROCLAV

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The European Congress of Anthropologists is predominantly meeting in a beautiful building from the 18th century., formerly called Steffens-Haus. Henrik Steffens (1773-1845), philosopher and naturalist, worked as a professor here from 1811 until about 1830. It is a strange coincidence that among the many books he wrote one is called 'Anthropologie', simply 'Anthropologie'. His book belongs to the long line of philosophical-anatomical anthropologies which begin with Magnus Hundt 1501 and end in the midst of the 19th century (Herrmann und Haedtke 1963). These kind of anthropologies were particularly frequent in Germany in the first half of the 19th century. The authors of these books were frequently anatomists of philosophers, who tried to give, based on their own science, a picture of whole man. The contents of these books vary considerably. Steffens for instance begins with the development of the earth, the fauna and flora. However, as these kind of books tried to comprise everything about total man, also more and more results of the natural history of man were taken into consideration. In the last chapter Steffens writes for instance on the question of fossil man, on races, on the differences of age and sex, and so forth.

A female Polish student – Mrs. Niemcewicz – listened to the lectures of Steffens and described them later as follows (Niemcewicz 858, cited in Eickstedt 1940, p. 296): In addition to philosophy he also taught physical anthropology. This was a science based on quite a new idea. When Steffens speaks about any country he first describes the geographical situation, "the climate, flora and fauna, and then about man" (English translation Schw.). It is remarkable that Mrs. Niemcewicz mentions physical anthropology when referring to with Steffens. This term was not usual in the period of Steffens, though it has been known since 1655 by the book 'Antropologia physica' of the German anatomist J. Sperling. Subjects and problems we include in the term anthropology were referred to 'natural history of man' – a term introduced by Buffon – in the period of Steffens.

The first true physical anthropologist in Breslau was Hermann Klaatsch (1863-1916), although in 1900 Georg Thilenius had already been in Breslau for 3 years. Later he became a predominant ethnologist. Klaatsch had been, like Steffens, the representative for a distinct phase in the development of anthropology. It began as a collective science including physical anthropology, ethnology and prehistory, as it still exists in many countries, particularly in the Anglosaxon ones. At the end of the 19th century, however, physical anthropology tried to become independent. The anatomist Gustav Schwalbe gave the first institution to this understanding of anthropology by the

founding of the "Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie" 1899. He called anthropology the "youngest daughter of anatomy" and appealed to anthropologists to work as precisely as anatomists did. During the next decades anthropology emerged as a new academic branch of the biological sciences "under the protection of anatomy". It is remarkable that the Anatomical Department of this University was the first of its kind which included physical anthropology into teaching and research. The chair of Klaatsch was called 'Anthropology, Ethnography and Anatomy'. Klaatsch began his activities after his Australian expeditions of 1903-1907.

The first half of Klaatsch's papers are purely anatomical. Later he turned to anthropology, particularly evolution. There is a very concrete relation between Klaatsch and modern Polish anthropology in Wrocław. The Australian skeleton collection of Klaatsch, which now belongs to the Anthropological Institute of the Academy had been saved during the war and was returned to the University after the war. The Polish anthropologists Milicerowa and Kruczkiewicz-Kozala made a modern publication including a lot of measurements and excellent photographs. Many other students studied this rare material for special problems.

After the much too early death of Klaatsch in 1916, Mollison – a student of the famous anthropologist Rudolf Martin – was his successor.

At this time he was an anatomist in Heidelberg, and by the call to Breslau he was saved for anthropology. He is also well known among Polish anthropologists in Wrocław and elsewhere, for instance, by his graphic method, called diagram of deviations. He had, however, no special relations to Polish anthropology and Polish questions.

This was quite different concerning the next and last physical anthropologist in the German period, Egon von Eickstedt (1892-1965). He had just started his 3-year-expedition to India, Ceylon and Birma and when he returned in 1929 he immediately went to Breslau. His chair comprised anthropology and ethnology. For the first time it was not joined with anatomy, and also for the first time an independent Anthropological Institute came into being. It was accommodated in the roomy villa near the Odra-bridge, within the area of the Medical Academy. At the beginning of World War II the medical faculty needed the building and the anthropology had to move to Martini-Strasse, where rooms were made available in the same building with the small Ethnological Institute and its small Museum. Von Eickstedt built up a good library, reorganised the collections and began to teach. Since 1933 he had an assistant, namely I. Schwidetzky. The relation of von Eickstedt to Polish anthropology was established by the fact that von Eickstedt as well as the head of the Polish anthropology, Jan Czekanowski, were students of the same anthropologist: Felix von Luschan in Berlin, though not at the same time and during the whole time of their studies. For both, racial science was the center of physical anthropology as for many anthropologists of this period and both tried to objectify and quantify the methods of racial analysis of populations. They both used them for anthropological surveys with ethnogenetical aspects.

When von Eickstedt in 1935 founded his *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde* Czekanowski was one of his co-editors. At the beginning of World War II, the co-editors from abroad had to be removed from the front page of the journal. Nevertheless, v. Eickstedt tried to preserve as long as possible, his connections with non-German anthropologists and this way was able to maintain contact with his Polish colleagues during the war.

All these connections severed with the bombing and destruction of Breslau. The Anthropological Institute in Martini-Street disappeared completely, also including the library and many valuable materials.

There is a certain continuity between German and Polish anthropology mainly because of the Klaatsch collection, which I have already mentioned earlier. But there had been no continuity as to rooms, staff, materials and projects. The Polish anthropology in Wrocław had to begin from the beginning.

Anthropology has a long and good tradition in Poland. Before World War II it was represented at each University, though not everywhere by a full chair and department. Thus already in 1946 the University of Wrocław created a chair for anthropology. K. Stojanowsky from Poznan was the first University anthropologist in Wrocław. He still met with von Eickstedt, who went back three times after the war in order to save parts of his private library. He helped Stojanowski, who did not yet know the city and several Polish colleagues in turn helped von Eickstedt to safely get back to Germany with bags filled with books and art objects. This was, I think, a short but very fine chapter of European collaboration in a bombed city.

Stojanowski already died two years later in 1947. The next full professor on the chair of anthropology was Jan Mydlarski in 1949. Meanwhile Wanke and Kocka, students of Czekanowski, cared for anthropological teaching.

Mydlarski was certainly the most important and most eminent Polish anthropologist of his generation. He had been forced to leave Warsaw and his comprehensive anthropological activities there at the beginning of World War II. For some years he survived by working in a forestry administration. Immediately after the war he was offered a chair in Lublin and from there he came to Wrocław. It was through his efforts that Wrocław became the largest center of anthropology in Poland. He was accustomed to very broad anthropological research activities and not satisfied with just teaching. As a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a very powerful institution, he tried to establish an Academy Institute of Anthropology and he was successful. Let me add to this a quotation from Bielicki, Krupinski and Strzalko (1985, S. 1-314) who are more competent to characterise Mydlarski: "During the early 1950s Mydlarski ... rapidly rose to the number one position in the official hierarchy of the discipline in Poland, and official hierarchies were of paramount importance in those days. He became a member of the newly reorganised, powerful Polish Academy of Sciences; president of the Polish Anthropological Association; chairman of the influential Anthropological Committee of the Academy..., editor-in-chief of the only two Polish anthropological journals (the old "Przegląd Antropologiczne"); director of the newly established Institute of Anthropology of the Academy of Sciences; chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Wrocław University, and Rector of that university. – It was fortunate that a man who during those stormy years accumulated so many functions of influence was at the same time an authentic, first-class scientist, and a person of undisputed integrity."

The Anthropological Institute of the Academy worked from the beginning in 1953 in the old Steffen-House. It is that institution with the highest number of research anthropologists in the world and it is completed by the chair for anthropology of the university with its good staff.

The congress members could get their own impressions from the large academy institute, led since 1969 by Bielicki with the University Institute in the same building, now led by Krupinski. And the members have in their congress-bag the paper of

Bielicki, Krupinski and Strzalko on the "History of physical anthropology in Poland", published by the International Association of Human Biologists and edited by our congress member Roberts.

The purpose of this short presentation was to give a certain local background for the European Congress. In the author's opinion the subject as a certain European touch. Prof. Bergmann helped me with information and discussion on the text. The author wished to thank him very much for his help and assistance.

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