

Memories of Professor Jerzy Kruppé



Professor Jerzy Kruppé (1931–2022).
Photo by M. Milewska

It is with deep regret that the Torun medievalist community has received the news that Professor Jerzy Kruppé, an outstanding expert on the late Middle Ages and modern times and a pioneer of the so-called historical archaeology, passed away on 9 February 2022. Professionally, he was associated with the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Archaeology at the University of Warsaw. As an academic teacher and mentor to several generations of students, he was demanding and highly regarded, inspiring reflection and creative thinking about the past. He left behind very valuable works in the field of archaeology. The results of his research on vessel ceramics, especially medieval and modern, and the systematics and classification he defined, are to a large extent still relevant today, used by young researchers of this period of history. Specifically the study of medieval ceramics from the Old Town in Warsaw, had fundamental importance and became a reference point for all research in this field in Poland.

The Professor trained many researchers of the late Middle Ages and modernity, a period a few decades ago that was not very popular among archaeologists, who preferred an interest in earlier history.

Since 1991, i.e. since the establishment of the University Centre for Archaeology of Middle Ages and Early Modern Period the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, he was closely associated with the Centre's Scientific Council, of which he was a very active member. From the very beginning of the Centre's existence, he participated in shaping the forms of the unit's work and its level of content. All the members of the Council, greatly valued the critical remarks of the Professor and his insightful assessments of the level of our activities, influencing the profile and shape of the cyclical conferences and accompanying publications.

Particularly significant was the influence of the Professor on the level of the series edited by him Centre's publication series, now a journal, "Archaeologia Historica Polona". Authors, often, especially of the younger generation, feared his harsh assessments of their texts, but in the end they usually took them seriously, which had a significant impact on their final form.

His merits in the field of research and the protection of archaeological heritage have been recognised by the Archaeological Commission of the Polish National Committee ICOMOS and the University Centre for Archaeology of Middle Ages and Early Modern Period at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, which last year jointly decided to honour Professor Jerzy Kruppé with a medal in memory of the eminent archaeologist Professor Leszek Kajzer. The symbolic yet not coincidental No. 1 of the personalised medal reflects well the importance of the Professor in the circle of so-called historical archaeologists.

It should also be remembered that Jerzy Kruppé participated in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. In 2013, he was awarded the Cross with Swords of the Order of the Cross of Independence for his outstanding merits in the armed struggle for the independence of the Polish State. In 2015, he was also awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta.

For me, Professor Jerzy Kruppé was a long-standing Friend on whose help I could always count despite the serious illness with which he had been struggling for many years. He was always smiling and joking, and our conversations, unfortunately lately only on the phone, always gave me a boost of positive energy and the will to act.

Every death is premature, especially that of a man like Professor Jerzy Kruppé, whom we will always remember.

Jadwiga Chudziakowa