

MEMORIA UNIVERSITATIS

Commemorating the scholars of the University of Poznań from 1919 to 2019

The book marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the University of Poznań. It is a pioneering endeavour, a catalogue collating the commemorations of scholars associated with the university from its inception up until 2019.

The University was founded on the initiative of the Wielkopolska scientific community centred around the Poznań Scientific Society (now Poznań Society for the Friends of Science), which had been deprived of its own university for over 120 years due to the partitions of Poland.

The nucleus of the University of Poznań was the Faculty of Philosophy established by a decree of the Commissariat of the Supreme People's Council of 30 January 1919. The inauguration of the first academic year on 7 May 1919 is considered to be the birthday of the University, called the Piast University (*Wszechnica Piastowska*) on the initiative of this Council. From 10 April 1920, at the request of the Senate, it was called the University of Poznań. In 1955 it adopted the name Adam Mickiewicz University.

As early as 1920 there were already four faculties at the University. Their chairs were held by professors who had come from different universities in Poland and from Germany, Russia, Switzerland and the USA.

The outbreak of the Second World War II halted the development of the University. After invading Poland, the Nazi occupying forces began devastating university property and persecuting its academic community. On 21 September 1939, the University was closed. In spite of this, the professors, who had been deported by the German occupants to what was then called the zone of the General Government, established the underground University of the Western Territories in Warsaw in November 1940.

The university's classes took place in Warsaw and in its branches in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Krakow, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Częstochowa, Kielce, Jędrzejów, Milanówek and Radomsk. It also continued with research and conferred academic degrees. In the spring of 1941, the Polish School of Medicine was opened at the University of Edinburgh, which followed Polish academic rules and was established on the initiative of the Polish professors who had found themselves in the UK due to the war. From 1943 it also offered studies in veterinary medicine.

As a result of the repressions of the German and Soviet occupiers, who invaded Poland in 1939, many University staff died. Several scholars were murdered in Fort VII in Poznań, which was the first concentration camp organised by the Germans in Poland. Many were imprisoned

and some lost their lives in concentration camps, death camps, labour camps and POW camps. The Soviet occupying forces also claimed the lives of the educated officers, who were imprisoned in the camps of Kozelsk, Ostashkov and Starobelsk, or shot in Katyn and Kharkov.

Despite considerable personnel losses, the University authorities took steps to reactivate and rebuild it, and as early as April 1945, after the liberation of Poznań, teaching began even before the end of the Second World War.

After the war, the University and its staff were subjected to repression by the communist Polish state authorities of the time for political reasons, as a result of which courses and departments were closed down and many lecturers were dismissed from their university posts. After the so-called 'thaw' of 1956, they were able to return to their lost posts, but not all of them lived to see their return.

The reorganisation of higher education initiated by the Polish communist authorities in 1950 led to some faculties of the University of Poznań being transformed into independent universities. The Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy became the Medical Academy (currently Poznań University of Medical Sciences). The Physical Education College was turned into the Higher School of Physical Education (currently Poznań University of Physical Education), while in 1951 the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry became the Higher School of Agriculture (currently Poznań University of Life Sciences).

This publication contains over two hundred biographical entries of scholars, together with the descriptions of commemorations and the wording of inscriptions.

The commemorations are devoted to independent academics who obtained their *veniam legendi* at the University of Poznań or Adam Mickiewicz University, as well as those who continued their scholarly activity at universities originating from the former. Among the commemorations are also those of scholars who, in spite of having prepared their dissertations and having their defence dates scheduled, did not manage to take their postdoctoral examinations due to the outbreak of the war.

The catalogue includes immovable tangible commemorations (e.g. monuments, bas-reliefs, boulders, memorial trees), institutions and patronages (e.g. colleges, hospitals, schools, nature reserves), which also contain a variety of physical commemorations both immovable (e.g. plaques) and movable (e.g. medals, statuettes), other immovable tangible commemorations, intangible commemorations (e.g. names of streets, foundations and associations), street names, foundations and associations, and other immovable commemorations. The catalogue contains a wide range of immovable (e.g. commemorative plaques) and movable (e.g. medals, statuettes) commemorations, other movable tangible commemorations, intangible commemorations (e.g. names of streets, foundations and associations), commemorations in scientific nomenclature, titles of honorary and distinguished citizens of the city. The commemorations presented in the catalogue are located in Poznań and in other locations in Poland, as well as abroad. They include collective and individual commemorations, as well as those which implicitly honour the memory of people albeit not mentioned by name.

Depending on the type, the descriptions of the commemorations include physical data, the address and additional information (e.g. the material from which the commemoration is made, the name of the artist, the date of its installation). Images comprise a complementary part of the book.

The commemorations presented in this book are an expression of the memory bestowed on scholars and their achievements by both academic and non-academic circles. The commemorations honouring them are the tangible traces of the past that make up the history of the University, at the same time providing a source of inspiration for the generations to come.

Translated by Rob Pagett