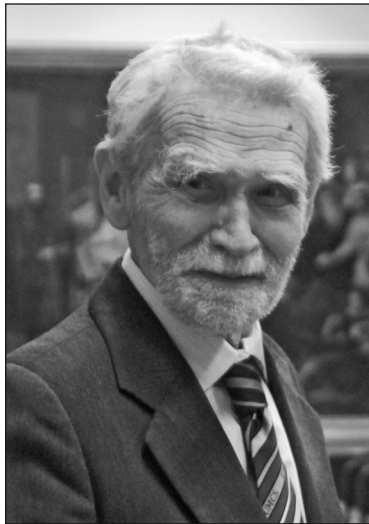


## CHRONICLE

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**JAN GURBA PHD, DSC**  
(15 February 1929 – 30 October 2021)

30 October 2021 was marked by the death of Jan Gurba PhD, DSc – our Teacher, Boss for many years and Friend – who left us at the age of 92. Crowds bid him farewell on a sunny Tuesday, 16 February, first in the Academic Church of the Catholic University in Lublin and then in the ‘Lime Park’, at the cemetery by Lipowa Street in Lublin, where he was buried next to his wife Stefania and his parents.

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Jan Gurba was born in Lubartów, but his whole life was related to Lublin, where his parents moved in the middle of the 1930s. It was here where he received his entire education. He studied in the primary school and then at the Union of Lublin Secondary School, where he passed his matura exam in 1948. Next, Jan started two degree courses at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences – prehistory and geography. He defended his Master's thesis *Kultura wenedzka na Lubelszczyźnie (The Venedian culture in the Lublin Region)* in 1951. The work was written under the supervision of Prof Stefan Nosek. Jan Gurba graduated in geography in 1952 – specialisation in cartography – with the defence of his Master's thesis – *Geograficzny obraz świata w atlasach: Powszechny atlas geograficzny E. Romera (wyd. II) i Sydow-Wagnera Methodischer Schulatlas (wyd. XXIII) (Geographical Image of the World in Atlases: Romer's General Geographical Atlas [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.] and Sydow-Wagner's Methodischer Schulatlas [23<sup>rd</sup> ed.])* – supervised by Prof. Franciszek Uhorzczak. The same year, Jan Gurba started working as an assistant lecturer at the Department of Polish Archaeology, Humanities Faculty, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS). In 1961, he defended his PhD thesis *Wpływ środowiska geograficznego na kształtowanie się neolitycznego osadnictwa w Małopolsce (Influence of the Geographical Environment on Shaping the Neolithic Settlement in Lesser Poland)* (Gurba 1961) – written under the supervision of Prof. Stefan Nosek – and then was employed as an assistant professor. In 1969, Gurba obtained the title of the Doctor of Science in the Department of Polish and General Archaeology (from 1970 – Department of Ancient History and Archaeology at the Institute of History UMCS, from 1983 – Department of Archaeology, from 2003 – Institute of Archaeology).

Jan Gurba – archaeologist and geographer, scholar, academic lecturer, regionalist and bibliophile – spent his professional life researching the earliest history of the Lublin region. The period of his university studies was the time directly after the Second World War, when new centres were being created in Lublin and the Lublin region: the scientific archaeological centre at the university and monument preservation offices in central and local administrations. Therefore, working together with Prof. Stefan Nosek PhD, and Jan Kowalczyk, PhD, he was one of the pioneers of the local archaeological research, which was initially concentrated on gathering materials and exploring the previously unknown territories of the Lublin region, neglected during the interwar period. He consecrated his entire professional activity to these tasks. Before he became an assistant lecturer at the Department of Archaeology, UMCS in 1952, in January of that year he had started working as an inspector-expert of the Ministry of Culture and Art, that is the conservator of monuments for Lublin and Kielce voivodeships (until 1961). He spent nearly all of his professional life on monuments conservation, researching and rescuing many sites. In 1975-1990, he also presided in the Archaeological Research and Conservation Centre in Lublin.

Jan Gurba's entire professional life was linked with the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin, where he worked for 42 years, until he retired in 1994. His work at the University was not limited to research activity and education (he supervised 115 MA

and 5 PhD theses), but it also encompassed occupying different positions in the administration of the university. In 1969-1970 and 1975-1981, he was the associate dean of the Humanities Faculty at the UMCS. In 1970-1975, Gurba was the head of the Main Library at the UMCS. In 1974, he took the post of the director of the Department of Polish Archaeology at the Institute of History, UMCS. In 1981-1983, he was the vice-director of the Institute of History at the UMCS, and in 1986-1987 – once again the associate dean of the Humanities Faculty, UMCS. In 1987-1990 he occupied the post of the dean. He was the head of the Department of Archaeology continuously until 1994.

In an enormous number of publications – over 1150 titles – the late Jan Gurba tackled the cultural development of the interfluvium of the Vistula and Bug Rivers, starting with the arrival of the first human groups in the Palaeolithic to the beginnings of the Polish state (Goworczyk 1988; Kurzątkowska 2007). He contributed to the archaeology of our region, country and Central Europe with numerous important discoveries and publications. We owe to him the discovery of the first site of the Chłopice-Veselé culture in the Lublin region (Gurba 1955), distinguishing the materials of the Madarocve culture from the Early Bronze Age (Gurba 1957a), the first publication on Roman imports from the Lublin region (Gurba 1958), identification of the first monumental tombs of the Funnel Beaker culture in the Nałęczów Plateau (Gurba 1957b; 1959), the first description of the Eneolithic Lublin-Volhynian culture of Painted Pottery (and the introduction of this name into the archaeological literature – Gurba 1973). Among Jan Gurba's professional achievements, most noteworthy are his settlement research aimed at explaining the relationship between human communities and the environment. He started them early, when writing his doctoral dissertation – he published the most important theses of this work in an article *Neolithic Settlements on the Lublin Loess Upland* (Gurba 1961) – and later he continued these studies, also in relation to the Early Middle Ages (Gurba 1978; 1983). In Polish archaeology, but also in geomorphology, he was the pioneer in ecological studies of settlements, which were later developed by Janusz Kruk (1973), Jolanta Nogaj-Chachaj (1993; 2004) and many other scholars (*e.g.*, Rydzewski 1986; in geomorphology: Śnieżko 1995). Later, this research direction attained the status of a subdiscipline of archaeology. Gurba was the author of chapters consecrated to the Funnel Beaker and Globular Amphora cultures in the monograph on the prehistory of Poland (Gurba 1989a; 1989b). An important place in his professional life was occupied by bibliographical notes announcing new, important publications, especially those about the archaeology of Eastern Europe (Goworczyk 1988; Kurzątkowska 2007).

Jan Gurba's archaeological excavations and scholarly achievements are mainly associated with the Younger Stone Age and early Middle Ages across the Lublin region. Research devoted to the former period include expeditions to Chruszczów Kolonia, Nałęczów Kolonia, Strzelce Kolonia, Drzewce Kolonia, Las Stocki, Stok, Wąwolnica and Bochothnica, research at the sepulchral sites of the Funnel Beaker and Globular Amphora cultures, excavations of the multicultural settlement in Strzyżów, in Gródek, Werbkowice,

Żuków, Moniatyczne Kolonia and at many other sites of the Hrubieszów Basin. Researches on the early Middle Ages in the region focused mainly on the stronghold in Czeremno-Czerwień along with the adjacent settlement and cemetery (1986; 2004). Among many spectacular discoveries of the expeditions to Czeremno, the most important is a famous icon with the image of Christ Pantocrator (Gurba 1982).

Jan Gurba presented the results of his field research and cabinet studies at numerous conferences and scientific congresses in Poland and abroad. He participated, *e.g.*, in the international congresses of the Prehistoric Union in Belgrade (1971) and Nice (1976) as well as in international congresses on Slavic archaeology in Warsaw (1965), Berlin (1970), Bratislava (1975), Sofia (1980) and Kiev (1985). Other events in which he took part include the Congress on Ancient History in Tokyo (1987), International Congress of Historians in Bucharest (1980) and International Palaeontological Congress in Nice (1982). He was an active scholar – in Poland and abroad – and initiator of various scholarly projects, which were not limited to the archaeological circles of Lublin. In 1954-1959, 1974-1987, he was a member and the president of the Lublin Branch of the Polish Archaeological and Numismatic Society and member of its main board. He was also included in the editorial staff of a popular science magazine *Z Otchłani Wieków*, which was issued by the Society. Gurba was also a member of the Association of Art Historians, Polish Historical Society, Polish Geographical Society, Scientific Society of Lublin, Social Commission for the Protection of Monuments at the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (PTTK), honorary member of the Regional Society of Hrubieszów (he also belonged to the editorial board of the Society's bulletin), Society of Enthusiasts of Lublin and the board of the Society in 1969-1970; member of the Polish Teachers Association, Scientific Board of the Institute for the History of the Material Culture at the Polish Academy of Sciences and Council for Archaeological Monuments at the Ministry of Culture and Art. He actively worked with the museums of our region and country as the co-author of numerous archaeological exhibitions and publications and as a member of museum councils (including the National Archaeological Museum, Lublin Museum, Zamość Museum and Vistula River Museum in Kazimierz Dolny).

The popularisation of the archaeological heritage of the Lublin region was always an important part of Jan Gurba's work. He was an author of many popular science publications and chapters on archaeology in monographs describing various towns of our region. He gave an enormous number of lectures for various people, he was a frequent guest of the local media. His cooperation with regional associations operating across the Lublin region – especially the Regional Society of Hrubieszów – where he actively worked as a member and the honorary chairman – was another aspect of this activity.

Jan Gurba was a great admirer of books and literature. For many years, he held the position of the chairman of the Lublin Society of Book Enthusiasts. He was decorated with the Order of the White Raven with Sunflower. Gurba was a collector and expert in small graphic forms – especially *ex libris*. He popularised archaeological *ex libris* in various pub-

lications – especially in the magazine *Z Otchłani Wieków*. He himself was an owner of *ex libris*– especially those linked with archaeology– made for him by various artists.

He was decorated with the honorary distinction of the Polish Student Association. Other accolades include the Gold and Silver Cross of Merit, order of *Polonia Restituta*, medal of the Commission of National Education, medal of the Polish Archaeological Society *Meritorious for the Polish Archaeology*, UMCS medal *Science at the Service of People*, medal *Meritorious for the UMCS*, silver and gold medal *Meritorious for the Hrubieszów District*, gold badge *For Monument Protection*, gold badge of the *Polish Teachers Association*, gold honorary badge of the PTTK, distinction *Meritorious Activist of Culture*, distinction *For Merits for the Lublin Region*, medal and prize awarded by the Mayor of Lublin. Jan Gurba was the laureate of individual and collective prizes of the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology. The students of the Humanities Faculty, UMCS honoured him several times with the title of *Homo didacticus*. In 2020, he was awarded by the creative circles of Lublin with the *Angelus Lubelski* prize in the category ‘Lifetime Achievement’ for ‘active, brave and successful people and for those whose attitudes give hope and restore respect for every person’.

The late Jan Gurba was a broad-minded man with a great heart, thoroughly honest and modest, kind to everyone he met in his life, always smiling and with a great sense of humour. He did not pay attention to titles and honours and he did not expect much from life. At the same time, he was extremely sensitive to others’ needs. He always had time to pay attention to them and offer pieces of advice. He helped many and many owe him what they are today.

Rest in peace, Boss. We miss you dearly.

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