

**WOJCIECH BORKOWSKI**

State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw  
wborkowski@pma.pl  
ORCID 0000-0002-5793-6884

**ANDRZEJ KEMPISTY**

Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw (emeritus)

**KAZIMIERZ KUŹMA**

Independent Researcher  
sarmata7@tlen.pl

**RYSZARD F. MAZUROWSKI**

Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw (emeritus)  
rfmazurowski@uw.edu.pl

**KAROL SZYMCAK (ED.)**

Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw  
k.m.szymczak@uw.edu.pl  
ORCID 0000-0003-2735-3247

**PROF. STEFAN KAROL KOZŁOWSKI – OUR NEMRIK BOSS  
IN THE MEMORY OF HIS NEMRIK STAFF**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2022 was the day when Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski passed away. We said the last goodbye to him on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September in the Old Powązki Cemetery.

Professor was an outstanding, world-renowned archaeologist who specialised in the Stone Age. His many scholarly achievements include excavations at the pre-pottery Neolithic site of Nemrik 9 in Iraqi Kurdistan (1985–1989), the fully published results of which became a classic point of reference for the archaeology of the Near East.

To realise the fieldwork, as well as some parts of the laboratory research, Professor Kozłowski gathered a team of several people, including Andrzej Kempisty, Ryszard Mazurowski, Andrzej Reiche, Karol Szymczak, Wojciech Borkowski, and also Rafał Koliński, Włodzimierz Bogusz, and Kazimierz Kuźma. For all of us, participation in the Iraqi expedition of Professor Kozłowski was an extremely important experience and a marvellous adventure of a lifetime, because already at that time we were well aware of the utmost significance of the discoveries we participated in, and that we were writing new pages in the history of global archaeology. To the present day, the site of Nemrik 9 is cited as one of the few

earliest Neolithic locations with architecture excavated and documented with outstanding accuracy, together with detailed identification of the internal arrangement of certain dwellings.

At the same time, while visiting Iraq we had an opportunity to see many monuments and places of the highest importance for the world's heritage, and to meet many fascinating people, not necessarily representing the archaeological profession. In the case of some of us, the Nemrikian experience proved fateful even for further careers in the field of archaeology.

Certain responsibilities of all of us were quite quickly determined and, in general, everything went fairly smoothly. Early in the morning, the whole group would set out from our accommodation base in Mosul to the site, situated some km to the north-west. During the first seasons, the car was driven personally by Professor Kozłowski. Every one of us was in charge of an assigned part of the excavation, each assisted by about a dozen workers hired for the season. Our duty was to fully document the position of all the moveable artefacts, produce accurate drawings, and measurements, and describe the situation in our trenches in the field journal. All photographic documentation was managed by Andrzej Reiche.



Fig. 1. Polish Mission at Nemrik (standing from left to right: W. Borkowski, K. Szymczak, S. K. Kozłowski, R. F. Mazurowski, A. Kempisty and Iraqi representative Mr. Faadel, sitting A. Reiche), photo A. Reiche.

After coming back to our base in Mosul, all the archaeological material found during the day had to be described, catalogued, and documented (hand-drawn or/and photographed). It was Ryszard Mazurowski who looked after stone implements, flints were the job of Karol Szymczak, bone and organic remains were entrusted to Wojciech Borkowski, later (Assyrian) artefacts sparked the interest of Andrzej Reiche, while the remaining categories of finds, together with all kinds of samples, belonged to Professor Kozłowski. The whole inventory work was given to Andrzej Kempisty, who was also responsible for documenting and sampling the unearthed architecture. After being put into the inventory, select artefacts were separately described, hand-drawn and photographed. Not too much time for eating, resting and sleeping would remain. But, as we see now, our efforts paid off at least a hundred times.

Besides other books and a good number of papers, the final results of the Nemrik 9 excavation project were presented in a comprehensive, monograph edited by Professor Kozłowski in 2002 ("Nemrik, an Aceramic Village in Northern Iraq", Warsaw), who dedicated it: "To my Nemrik staff". With the handful of memories

presented below, we, "his Nemrik Staff", would also like to make it known how much we owe to Professor.

The site Nemrik 9 was discovered in March 1985, and the first sounding trenches were immediately opened. This way, the range and perspectives of further work could be established for at least a few following years.

This is how Karol Szymczak remembers those days:

*In the first half of the 1980s, despite the still ongoing hard war against Iran, the Iraqi authorities decided not to delay strategic investments and, apart from a network of highways and other objects of military character, they initiated the construction of a great dam, which should bank up the water in the headwaters of the Tigris River. In consequence, it would flood a vast area where a great number of priceless archaeological sites were situated. Such a situation demanded extensive archaeological rescue intervention ahead of the investment. Many respectable archaeological institutions from the whole world were asked to take part in a campaign officially called "Saddam's Dam Salvation Project", with the University of Warsaw among them. The position of Director of one of the missions was eventually given to Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski.*





Fig. 2. Iraq; from the left: W. Borkowski, S. K. Kozłowski, R. Mazurowski (photo A. Reiche).

*By that time, already for a couple of years, I had been in a group of young graduates of archaeology regularly taken by our Professor to his excavations – at first in Poland (Rydno, Grądy Woniecko), then abroad (Riparo Gaban, Italy; Bijan, Iraq). Perhaps, I was doing not too bad, because, at the end of 1984, the Professor proposed me to accompany him on a pilot trip to Iraqi Kurdistan, to selecting sites for future stationary excavation. If only it worked, we could have at least a few seasons of fieldwork in one of the most attractive archaeological regions of the world. I was overjoyed to accept the proposal. The prospect of accommodation in Mosul alone – on the grounds of ancient Nineveh – was a wonderful attraction in itself.*

*The majority of the teams from other countries already undertaken their excavations earlier, so we were left with not too much choice as to the area of our research. Eventually, we were assigned to penetrate a strip of land, about a dozen kilometres wide, along the eastern edge of the Tigris River valley. Together with our representative and driver, Mr. Mohammad Zakhi, we started our prospection moving around in an old heavy off-road vehicle. We would simply stop the car in the most promising places – at our disposal, we had just a rough map of the northern part of Iraq, and in the war-torn country we could not count on anything better.*

*In the distance, we could see the Zagros/Kurdish Mountains where a dozen or so years ago Ralph Solecki uncovered the famous Neanderthal burials in the Shanidar Cave, so we secretly hoped for finds connected with that period. And indeed, we located some open-air Middle Palaeolithic sites but none of them could be qualified for further stationary excavation.*

*For safety reasons, we had to come back to our Nineveh base already in the not-too-late afternoon, much before dusk. On the third or fourth day of our survey, we found ourselves in the town of Faida, some 50 km north of Mosul. The paved road in this place drifted away from the edge of the Tigris valley, so Professor Kozłowski asked Mr Zakhi to turn left into a sandy and visibly unfrequented byway. After a few kilometres, we reached a village of a dozen or so clay houses, and right behind it, the village road ended on an impressive headland with a wide view over the valley. We could not drive any further. The Professor ordered me to stop and get out of the car just for a short break and a stroll. After opening the car's door, the first object we noticed laying on the ground among the sparse grass was a small, very regular flint core exploited with pressure technique, then another one, and another, accompanied by beautiful regular blades, retouched tools, and arrowheads. It appeared that the whole*

surface of the promontory was simply strewn very densely with flint tools and waste, worked stones, here and there also fossilized bones. Within a second, we exchanged glances and nods of agreement: 'Yes, this is here, we got it'. With the help of Mr Zakhi, we established that the name of the village was Nemrik, and the site we had just found was ninth on our list. We noted the details of the road to come back to this place the other day – at that time nobody had any idea what GPS was going to be.

We still had about ten days for the field work which we decided to spend organising a team of workers and performing a primary-sounding research. Its results were much more than promising: the thickness of cultural layers for sure reached at least 2 metres, heaps of artefacts, first traces of dwelling objects. For some time, the chronology of Nemrik 9 was unclear to us, but on our way back to Bagdad we were practically sure: we had to do with a priceless Pre-pottery Neolithic site, the archaeological problem of the highest tier. Thus, we started what would become four years of really intensive field and laboratory research involving many scholars and specialists.

The whole history of the cooperation between the University of Warsaw and then Iraq in the field of archaeology is best remembered by Ryszard Feliks Mazurowski. This is how he recalls that history and his relationship with Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski:

*I still cannot come to terms with the saddest fact that Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski has unexpectedly left us for good. He was an enormously distinguished scholar specialising in the archaeology of the Stone Age of Poland, Europe, and the Near East. He also made significant contributions to the studies of the history of Polish archaeology, being at the same time a teacher and tutor of several generations of archaeology students in Poland and abroad. He educated about a dozen PhDs and reviewed professorship applications and academic projects. His outstanding scholarly output has always impressed me – more than a dozen books, hundreds of papers, conference proceedings, expert opinions, and reviews. And the exceptional ability to organise the scholarly environment on both local and international levels – conferences, symposia, congresses. More to it, thanks to his personal management skills, incredible willpower, and the consequences of his actions, the results of his research and his views had a very wide, international impact. I think that all participants of the Nemrik team now appreciate how he encouraged us, or even obliged, to present our results at international as well as local meetings: our interpretations of architecture, flint and stone industry, animal and human remains, and art. Thanks to that, and thanks to our common publications, our names became recognisable in the global archaeological literature and helped us establish valuable personal contacts with archaeologists from other countries. The same effect was brought by the books on Nemrik, authored or co-authored by Professor Kozłowski, including the last one. During our last meeting, in June 2022, I passed to him the final version of*

*my contribution to that volume. "Nemrik – 30 Years After" should be published in the near future.*

*Even though we had worked in the same unit of the Department of Prehistoric and Medieval Archaeology (nowadays the Faculty of Archaeology at the University of Warsaw) since 1972, our scientific interests, though generally connected with the Stone Age, were rather distant. Suddenly, in April 1984, the then Director of the Institute, Professor Waldemar Chmielewski, proposed that I replace him in the fieldworks undertaken within the freshly-signed research agreement between the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, and the Department of Antiquities and Heritage, Ministry of Culture and Information in Bagdad, Iraq, and to take part in the "Saddam's Dam Salvage Project". I was pleased with that, and after some consideration, I accepted the proposal, especially since the replacement was to last only one season. Back then, little had I known that this decision was going to have so great an influence on my whole professional career and bring significant changes to my family life. As it appeared right afterwards, during the following 6 years, I was to leave home and take part in long (2 to 6 months) field campaigns to the country involved in a war with neighbouring Iran. At home, my wife would stay alone with two little children, while their father vanished for half of a year because also the Polish expeditions should be added to my absences. Just the prose of life of an "archaeological family". All professional, devoted archaeologists know this all too well. Every time, the curiosity to gain insight into the prehistory of humankind's most important region, where the foundations of the Old World's civilization were formed, overbalanced everything else. Now, I am well aware and have no doubts that my dreams were completely fulfilled, and the reality even greatly exceeded my previous expectations. At the same time, I have no doubts that I owe all of that first to Professor Waldemar Chmielewski, and then, especially, to Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski, who became the only manager of the Iraqi project in 1985 after the former resigned.*

*In the seasons 1984 and 1985, within this project, I conducted a systematic survey of the Raffaan microregion on the right bank of the Tigris River, just opposite the pre-pottery Neolithic site of Nemrik 9, which was yet to be discovered in the nearest future. At the same time, I also assisted the Mission of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, under the direction of Professor Piotr Bieleński, in documenting the results of excavations in Tell Rijim and Tell Raffaan. The above-mentioned survey investigations eventually led to the discovery of as many as 68 previously unknown archaeological sites situated on the two right-bank fluvial terraces of the Tigris River. They are dated from the most ancient periods of prehistory, starting from the Lower Palaeolithic, up to the end of the Epipalaeolithic, together with some younger locations. Today, I realise that these two first seasons on the Iraqi land had an enormous impact on me, because they introduced me to the world of*





Fig. 3. Iraq; from the left: S. K. Kozłowski, A. Kempisty (photo A. Reiche).

*Arabic culture, the customs, especially in the village life, and at least the basics of the Arabic language. The last skill became really important because it allowed me to communicate with our collaborators working in the trenches, local officials, and villagers. It built up a good, favourable attitude between me, as the manager, and the staff working in my section of the excavation. It turned out priceless when, some years later, I became the main director (Arabic: “mudir”) of the Caramel Expedition in Syria.*

*During the excavations in Nemrik, I acquired many new professional skills, such as an ability to tell natural mud layers from architectural structures in the “tauf technique” or sun-dried mud bricks, knowledge of the ways in which mud could be arranged in the external and internal surfaces of walls of dwellings, an eye for distinguishing houses primarily dug into the ground from those built on the surface, etc.*

*Before the 1986 campaign, Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski invited me to take part in the works of the Iraqi Mission in the early Pre-pottery Neolithic village in Nemrik 9. I stayed with that team until 1989 when the outbreak of the Gulf War brought a halt to our activity. This conflict resulted in a destruction of our excavation trenches and the loss of all equipment, also including some personal belongings. But worst of all, from that moment onwards, the Polish Archaeological Mission to Iraq lost all prospects of coming back to Iraqi Kurdistan, as it became a zone of highest danger.*

*I would like to add that thanks to Professor Kozłowski I also had the opportunity to visit a widely known classical aceramic settlement in M'lefaat twice (spring 1989). There, I documented and hand-drawn the uncovered dwellings, and then elaborated all the stone artefacts discovered at the site by the Polish team as well as by Robert John Braidwood's expedition of the 1950s.*

*During our excavations in Nemrik, I was responsible for managing the exploration of two archaeological trenches and their hand-drawn and descriptive documentation. In addition to that, I also elaborated (detailed description, hand drawing, preparation to photography) all the stone artefacts and objects – some 3000 items in total. In the course of our cooperation, which included living together in the Nabi Younis guest rooms of the Department of the Directory of Antiquities in Mosul, exactly wall to wall with a famous mosque, I had an opportunity to get to know the personality of Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski a little closer. In my own, perhaps subjective, impression he was a great, prominent figure of Polish and world archaeology, though sometimes showed difficult character which would make the everyday cooperation hard. At the same time, he was an impressive titan of work, demanding much from himself, but also from his collaborators and people around. He would always set the most ambitious, important, and in many cases extremely demanding scholarly goals which he wanted to obtain as quickly as possible with as little labour and costs as*

possible. Yet, in pursuit of these goals, he was able to listen to his collaborators, draw proper conclusions, and even revise in part or fully reject his own *a priori* assumptions. I consider it a great virtue of Professor S. K. Kozłowski. In those moments when some idea formed in his mind, he would start to be somewhat animated, walking nervously here and there around the trenches making short notes in his ever-present one-hundred-page notepad. In the course of exploration on the site, he used to discuss his new ideas with every manager of a particular trench, expecting to confirm them as quickly as possible. If the results of the exploration stood in contradiction with his concept, he was ready to accept that, and after a period of sadness, he would come back to the issue with a new hypothesis. This active, hot-headed I would say, but creative way of being appeared strange to many people, or even annoying, but for sure it was effective.

I also liked the informal discussions with Professor S. K. Kozłowski in our accommodation base, which took place when he visited the room we shared with the late Andrzej Reiche. We were busy all the time, documenting stone and ceramic artefacts, but we would always offer him tea and engage in long discussions not only on certain archaeological subjects but also non-professional and even private issues. At those times, Professor would change into a different man – open, smiling, talking about problems which bothered him as the boss of the whole enterprise, troubles with the organization, and relationships with local officials. On many occasions, we could observe how much it cost him to direct the whole expedition, even though he would not personally supervise any particular trench. Sometimes, we honestly sympathised with him.

But the next day, in the very, very early morning, some 5.30 or 6.00 o'clock at best, his booming voice could be already heard, as he bustled around in the dining room, calling us up before leaving to the site of Nemrik, located in a distance of some 55 km. Karol Szymczak mentioned that Professor liked to drive our off-road Toyota Land Rover by himself, which he did quite efficiently, and for many years he did not cause any collisions. Nevertheless, those rides were sometimes quite stressful for us. We would drive along the most strategic and busy road with thousands of Turkish tank trucks transporting Iraqi fuel. Sometimes, among the endless row of trucks, Iraqi military vehicles and private cars could also be seen. Even just entering into this miles-long line of vehicles demanded much cunning and courage, not to mention what was needed afterwards. Dramatic. The roadsides were scattered with crashed or burned tank trucks, because there was neither time nor means to remove them. This was why all of us were fully concentrated on the ride – especially that while driving, Professor had a habit of holding a lively conversation with wide gesticulation, habitually raising both hands and letting the driving wheel go (*sic!*). In such moments, some of us would get really nervous and then it could come to serious clashes and heated exchanges of words. I write as it was because I have no intention to artificially

make Professor S. K. Kozłowski look like a bronze or stone statue. Anyway, his personality merits defend themselves, particularly in the context of his comprehensive achievements and integrity in other situations. I recall how during one of our excavations season the representative of the Department of Antiquities in Mosul, Mr Danoon, a person much-liked and valued highly by us, was forced to drive us to Nemrik in a car with defective brakes! It is easy to anticipate that poor Mr Danoon was not able to stop at the first red light and eventually struck a private car. It came to a terrible row with the aggrieved driver and a policeman, and immediately after returning to our accommodation base Mr. Danoon was punished with a fine equalling his three months' salary. Our explanations and testimonies that driving of this defective car was forced by the manager of the transport base were of no help. Our Boss, though upset himself, tried to cheer Mr Danoon, and the next day, already on the site, he passed him in private the sum equivalent to his lost earnings. He was aware that Mr. Danoon had to support his wife and five children. So human, so endearing, so sympathetic gesture from, outwardly, such a tough person! I could quote more examples of similar actions by Professor.

Sometimes these high demands brought pretty funny results, especially when relationships with the officials of the local Department of the General Directorate of Antiquities in Mosul were concerned. The Professor was always of the opinion that if six or seven archaeologists from a foreign country visited Iraq to save its cultural heritage, the local civil workers were obliged to meet all their formal and organisational needs. Urgently – here and now, I would say. All should be ready and waiting for us: a car to drive our team to the site, all the excavation equipment, a furnished office, and a laboratory. The situation always looked more or less like this: the Professor vigorously entered the office and asked for a certain clerk to arrange a particular thing quickly and satisfactorily. At that moment, sounds of multiple slamming doors could be heard in the neighbouring rooms, as the rest of the Department's staff tried to slink out, escape, and avoid being caught. The person Professor turned to was sitting full of fear and tried to explain themselves awkwardly. This way or another, the case had to be solved.

No doubt, Professor S. K. Kozłowski earned my highest recognition and respect with his care and ability to make the fieldwork of the Nemrik mission effective, efficient, and safe. Because of that, we had lively and very friendly contacts with the Polish Embassy in Bagdad, with its unforgettable head, the late Ambassador Witold Jurasz – a great supporter and promoter of our activity. It is owing to his help that Professor could establish relations with Polish construction, agricultural, and geodesic companies operating in Iraq and employing about forty thousand Poles. Thanks to the efforts of His Excellency and our Professor we had at our disposal the off-road car, a Toyota Land Cruiser, with a guarantee of full service in the Polservice garage in Mosul. Good relations with Polservice gave us a very important sense of security, as





Fig. 4. Mosul, Iraq; from the left: local Christian Chaldean family, S. K. Kozłowski with R. Mazurowski (photo A. Reiche).

well as medical care and assistance in case of emergency. We tried to repay by receiving workers of many Polish companies as guests in Nemrik – Professor would give speeches on our excavations and Near-Eastern archaeology, we demonstrated the technique of production of certain artefacts: adornments, stone and bone tools, etc. Sometimes we even guided Polish groups showing them around Nimrud or Babylon.

In my opinion, the life at and work of the Polish Archaeological Mission to Iraq in the Kurdish zone of the war-torn country, the unique experiences of our team, and its members deserve to be written down in a separate book, popularising in character or a novel. Above all, we, members of the Polish Archaeological Mission to Iraq excavating the Neolithic village in Nemrik, already at that time – and even more so at the present day – realised that thanks to Professor S. K. Kozłowski we participated in an extraordinary, seminal scholarly enterprise which was going to make a very significant contribution to the understanding of the beginnings of farming in the Near East – one of the crucial processes in the whole human history. Also, thanks to Professor Kozłowski, the problems of the Pre-pottery Neolithic fascinated me so much that eventually, I wrote my professorial dissertation on “Ground and Pecked Stone Industry in the Pre-pottery Neolithic of Northern Iraq”, published as the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of

the Nemrikian series in Warsaw, 1997. What is more, he was appointed to be one of my reviewers. I have to admit that many parts and phrases of his generally favourable review were a source of great satisfaction and enjoyment for me.

Finally, together with all my Nemrikian baggage of experiences and fascination, I decided to devote my further professional career mainly to problems of the earliest productive economy in the Near East. After 10 years of unfulfilled hopes to come back and comfortably continue excavation in Iraq, I hit upon a site of my life. It was Tell Qaramel near Aleppo in Syria. During twelve seasons of exploration, I uncovered there a Pre-pottery Neolithic settlement much larger than Nemrik, with spectacular architecture (at least five stone towers older than the one known from Jericho), together with numerous pieces of art, sculptures and reliefs. All that was made by hunters and gatherers, who by that time still knew nothing about the domestication of plants and animals. Thank you, Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski for opening the door to Qaramel for me!

Some personal words directly to Professor: Honourable Professor, it is hard to believe that now you are so far from us and Nemrik. I like to think that even after your passing you continue to stride vigorously with the inseparable notebook in your hand, looking for another captivating adventure in

*the New Land, which is probably poorly known from the archaeological point of view. Or maybe you are just taking advantage of your indefinite leave. Rest.*

Wojciech Borkowski recalls:

Six excavation campaigns in the northern-Iraqi Nemrik were undoubtedly my life's adventure. It was half of the 1980s when, after doing my obligatory year of military service, I came back to continue my work at the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw. I was studying the Neolithic banded flint mines in Krzemionki Opatowskie and that subject fully captured my imagination. I did not suspect that there are more intriguing issues than prehistoric flint mining and secrets of five-thousand-year-old underground shafts. Unexpectedly, Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski suggested that some young museum workers should join the University of Warsaw's mission to Iraq. The director of the Museum, Dr Jan Jaskanis, chose me, even though I was the youngest employee of the Department of the Stone Age. My six excavation campaigns between 1986 and 1989, which I have mentioned earlier, four in the spring and two in the autumn, amounted to a total of a year and a half spent in the land previously known to me only from the Scheherezade's 'Tales from the Arabian Nights'. I absorbed the fascinating landscape of Mesopotamia with my heart and soul, monuments of the world's most ancient civilizations, graves of the Old Testament prophets, the oldest Christian monasteries, and even much older than all of them – the villages of the first farmers in Nemrik and M'lefaat.

It is quite hard to express in a few words what I felt during those fantastic years. By that time in Poland, the communist system was collapsing in terrible convulsions, but I did not really experience that, living with my wife and newborn-son, and waiting for the next Iraqi adventure.

Undoubtedly, the excavations in Nemrik were a seed-bed for all my later archaeological imagination. I realised the Neolithic revolution was one of the most important processes in the development of human civilization. While digging deeper and deeper into more than two thousand years of history of the world's oldest agricultural village – or what we then believed to be the oldest – I had to ask myself many basic questions referring not only to scholarly knowledge but also to my faith and what I believed in. Concerning such problems, it is hard to imagine a better tutor than Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski. He was our guide to the archaeological sites of Mesopotamia as well as a spiritual mentor. He would take us for excursions to places of famous excavations (Nimrud, Khorsabad, Babylon, Ur), but found time also to show us the legendary graves of the Old Testament prophets, the holy temple of the Yezidis in Lalish, or monasteries reaching the earliest centuries of Christianity. Indeed, he was leading me along the path of expulsion from paradise, the sin of our primary parents. These were many hours of evening discussions after the whole day of work in the heat usually exceeding 40°C. I was 26 at the time, while he reached his fifties, but he never denied us a trip to the desert regions

of Iraq in a red-hot car. Or even a night tour after a long day of back-killing work. He would always have limitless patience and liking for me, and it was not only him, I have to admit. I was the youngest member of the team and I felt great. Perhaps, I was treated more as the Old Testament Benjamin, but these were the most intensive months of my life. And it was exactly the kind of time when you can gain the most. The present professors: Andrzej Kempisty, Ryszard Mazurowski, Karol Szymczak, the late Andrzej Reiche, and Kazik Kuźma completed that wonderful research team which for me was a truly fantastic university of field excavation and archaeological skills.

The conditions in which we lived and worked (sometimes extremely dangerous and demanding complete devotion) naturally got us closer to each other, including me to my more experienced and wiser colleagues.

During the last three seasons in Iraq, Professor Kozłowski somehow became the second supervisor of my doctoral thesis, which I wrote about the Krzemionki flint mine. We spent much time together on polishing certain chapters. Professor had a specific, well, hulking style of handwriting. Practically illegible for someone uninitiated. But, on the other hand, he was able to fluently decipher similar doodles left, for example, by the first explorer of Krzemionki, Józef Żórowski, in the 1920s. During the hours spent reading Żórowski's cryptic notes in our Nineveh residence in Nabi Younis, Professor deciphered for me priceless information concerning the already non-existent parts of the unique mining field of Krzemionki.

When a close person is leaving us for good, the void could be filled only by memories. The warmest, tremendous, and connected with Stefan Kozłowski, "Funio", the memories which I will cherish for the rest of my days.

Kazimierz Kuźma, another member of Nemrik and M'lefaat staff:

I joined the Iraqi excavation team of Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski relatively late, in 1989. After some years of exploring the dunes and sandy fields of our Polish Mazovia in search of the Bronze Age Trzciniec culture sites, it was a refreshing change. Our stay in Iraq lasted a little short of three months (March-May). At first, we had to complete the excavations at Nemrik 9 site, exploring trenches to the virgin soil as well as documenting those opened in previous seasons and containing residential features. After that, we started our fieldwork in M'lefaat.

We were accommodated in Mosul, in a part of ancient Nineveh, on the Nabi Younis Tell. In the nearest neighbourhood, there were two mosques with original tombs of Prophet Jonah, as it is believed. Every morning, at 6 o'clock sharp, we would be woken up by the incisive call of the muezzin from the minaret nearby, who summoned the Muslims for the first prayer of the day (namaz). Our living conditions were rather Spartan, with geckos wandering over the walls a common occurrence. It all was so exotic that I sometimes felt like in the scenery of the "Tales of the Arabian Nights".



*Professor Kozłowski looked after the social facilities of his team, so the first step after setting up our lodgings was to hire a cook who was responsible for feeding our group. Professor Kozłowski had also a rare ability to smoothly enter into relations with local inhabitants. I remember him talking for hours (through an interpreter) with the oldest resident of the village of Nemrik. This old man, named Mr. Mela, was a rich source of interesting information about the changes of the natural local environment over the last decades. The Professor was able to use all the possible sources of information to reconstruct the biological context of the excavated site.*

*Right after finishing in Nemrik, in the spring of 1989, we started to excavate the site of M'lefaat, also representing the Pre-pottery Neolithic. In the following season (1990), Professor Kozłowski continued exploring M'lefaat. The site is situated some 35 km east of Mosul, and some 90 km south-east of Nemrik. Before that, in 1954, the site was preliminarily explored by Robert Braidwood. During our field research, I was responsible for the exploration of one of the most characteristic rounded dwellings. At the same time, I documented all the uncovered stone artefacts, replacing Ryszard Mazurowski in this capacity, as he could not participate in that season. Meanwhile, Karol Szymczak together with Jolanta Kamińska carried out an extensive archaeological survey of the area, driving around in a white Toyota Land Cruiser.*

*The hut I explored was built of very characteristic cigar-shaped sun-dried mud bricks and was one of the oldest constructions of that type in the whole Near East, eventually dating to the 9<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.*

*It was, and still is, the greatest privilege and satisfaction for me that I could be a part of Professor Kozłowski's team in Iraq, and that I could contribute a little to the project which became a classic and has had so much impact on the research on Near-Eastern Pre-pottery Neolithic.*

*I also cannot miss an opportunity to express my warmest thanks to Professor Andrzej Kempisty, who recommended me to Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski. That recommendation allowed me to experience one of the greatest adventures of my life, especially that a few years afterwards I had to abandon archaeology and devote my time to something else.*

Karol Szymczak:

*Participation in archaeological investigations conducted by Professor Stefan Karol Kozłowski, and especially those of the Polish Archaeological Mission to Iraq, not only taught me essential skills in managing large-scale archaeological fieldwork, competence in keeping records, be it in the field or the office, but also made it crystal-clear to me that in archaeology, just as in other scholarly disciplines, the highest satisfaction comes when one copes with problems of utmost importance, crucial for the history of humankind. One such problem is undoubtedly the process of Neolithisation, whose dynamics ought to be recognised as thoroughly as possible.*

*Since 1989, due to political reasons, the archaeological excavation in Iraq could no longer be continued. At that time, I managed to complete my professorial thesis, where I summed up my previous archaeological projects connected with the oldest periods of prehistory in the north-eastern part of Poland. And then, in 1993, I was unexpectedly invited to conduct a joint archaeological investigation in Uzbekistan. It was a new republic, still in the process of establishing itself as an independent country after the fall of the Soviet Union. Being conscious of how little is known in the western archaeological world about the Central Asian Stone Age (owing mostly to obstacles in exchanging information, deepened by the language barrier), I did not think too long before I accepted this proposal. Thus, two years later I was already exploring the fantastic early Neolithic site discovered by our Polish-Uzbek Archaeological Expedition in the Kyzyl-kum Desert. Its name is Ayakagytna and it represents not farming but rather a nomadic community, that is, a type of Neolithisation based on breeding (cattle, camel, and horse). Today, we are planning to continue the research towards reconstruction of the Early Holocene natural environment in which the local Neolithic communities lived. What is more, in the meantime Central Asia became a crucial region to study the mutual relations between the Neanderthals, Denisovians, and modern men at the turn of the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic. This issue is also intensively investigated by our team. Professor Kozłowski and Nemrik gave a start to all that.*