

*Dedicated to the late Professor Jadwiga Siemińska*

## Jadwiga Siemińska-Słupska – the personification of Polish phycology (1922–2018)

Konrad Wołowski<sup>1\*</sup>, Magdalena Solarska<sup>1</sup>, Michał Adamski<sup>1</sup> & Lucyna Żak-Elshahed<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Professor Jadwiga Siemińska devoted her working life to biology, hydrobiology and phycology, and in particular the classification and taxonomy of algae, especially diatoms. She gained her academic education alongside the likes of university professors Karol Starmach, Bogumił Pawłowski, Franciszek Górski and Jadwiga Wołoszyńska – world-renowned algae researchers (Siemińska-Słupska 1976; Wołowski 1997).

An excellent knowledge of foreign languages (English, Latin, German, Russian, French) allowed her to form extensive contacts and to lead international research projects. She set very high expectations for herself and her students. Her talents, character, organizational skills and sense of responsibility enabled her to play an important role in the reconstruction and development of Polish phycology after World War II. Thanks to her foundational work done in cooperation with Professor Starmach, Polish phycologists are full partners in worldwide phycological research today.

She described numerous new species over a wide range of algal groups, writing important monographs on the identification of freshwater diatoms, researching the algal communities of rivers and waterbodies in Central Europe, identifying species of snow algae, advancing research on fossil diatoms, establishing Europe's second collection of images of algae from world publications (the Iconotheca of Algae, inspired by the British Fritsch Collection), establishing a phycological information centre which houses the Card Index of Polish Algae Sites, and authoring three volumes of *Polish Phycological Bibliography* through the year 2000.

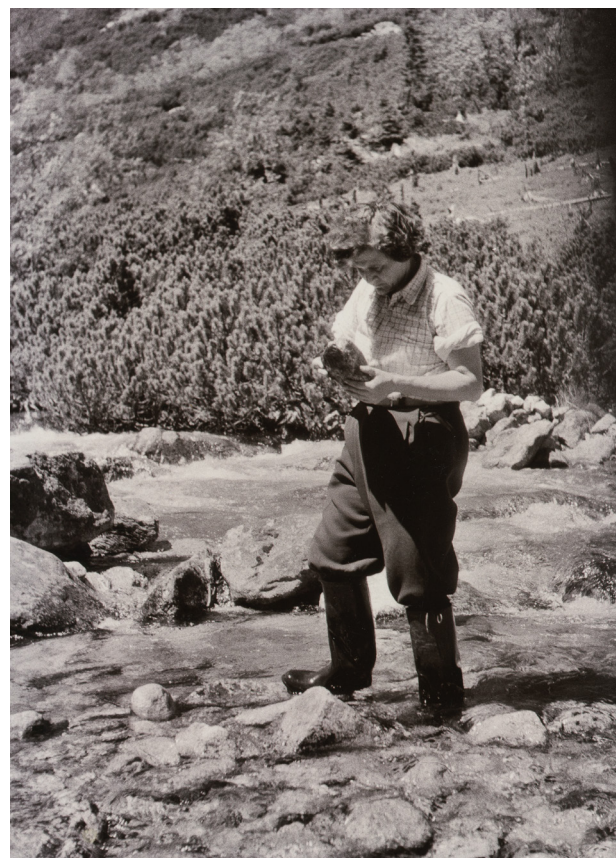
Jadwiga Siemińska was passionate about mountain hiking. On one of those trips she met her husband, Jan Słupski. She married him in 1963 but in her scientific works she usually kept the maiden name. She began climbing in 1949 in the Tatras; later her expeditions expanded to the Austrian, French, Swiss and Italian Alps, as well as the mountains of Sweden, Norway, Greece and

Spain. She was a member of the Polish Association of Mountaineering (Morawska 2018). During those hikes she also collected samples for observation.

The following is a short overview of Siemińska's contributions to Polish and world phycology in a career spanning more than half a century.

### Scientific activity

Professor Siemińska was fascinated with nature at a very early age, and pursued her interests and education even under the cruel conditions of World War II. After



Jadwiga conducting fieldwork in Tatra Mountains, around 1960. Photo: J. Słupski.

<sup>1</sup> W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences, Department of Phycology, Lubicz 46, 31-512 Kraków, Poland

\* Corresponding author e-mail: k.wolowski@botany.pl

completing clandestine high school studies during the German occupation, she declared to her parents that she wanted to work in a field related to her biological interests. Jadwiga first met Professor Karol Starmach in September 1940 in the Department of Ichthyology and Fishery, Faculty of Agriculture of the Jagiellonian University. There she had opportunities to use the microscope and to learn about hydrobiology and phycology. Her university education began in the spring of 1943 in a group of students enrolled in agricultural courses. Her aim was to join the biology group but there were no vacancies during that time. Near the end of summer or early autumn of that year, she learned that someone had left the biology group, so she contacted Jan Kornaś, the head of the group. With the war still going on, attending classes was very risky. The students and professors met in small groups, usually in apartments that belonged to one of the students or the professor who was teaching the course. Despite the danger, classes were held quite regularly and most of the courses were certified after the war ended.

Jadwiga Siemińska graduated in 1947, earning her first degree, a Master of Science in Botany. Only three years later in 1950, she earned her Doctor of Science degree in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science of the Jagiellonian University. Based on her habilitation dissertation she earned an assistant professorship in 1955. Both that dissertation and her doctoral thesis were widely appreciated by the Polish scientific community. In 1953 she was recognized by the Minister of Higher Education for her doctoral thesis, “Plankton jeziora zaporowego w Rożnowie” (The plankton of the artificial lake at Rożnow dam), and in 1956 by the Scientific Secretary of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) for her habilitation thesis, “Hydrobiologiczna i rybicka charakterystyka rzeki Brynicy” (The River Brynica from the point of view of hydrobiology and fishery).



J. Siemińska and J. Lund during the Congress of Limnology in Poland on the Dam in Poręba, 21st August 1965. Photo: B. Smyly.

She worked as an assistant in the Department of Ichthyology and Fishery at the Faculty of Agriculture of Jagiellonian University from 1947 to 1953. In 1953 the Faculty was transformed into the Agricultural College of Kraków, where in 1955 she became a docent (associate professor). During this time, the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences was formed (1953) and together with her mentor Professor Starmach she helped establish the Department of Phycology (first called the Algology Section, which, after a few name changes through the years, became the Department of Phycology). That department remained her workplace to the end of her career, and it is where she obtained her highest degrees. After Professor Starmach resigned as head in 1958, Jadwiga Siemińska was entrusted with this function until she retired in 1992. She remained involved in the life of the Institute for many



With friends from Czech Republic (from the left): J. Barica, J. Sanecki, J. Siemińska-Słupska, O. Lothsky and J. Komárek. Photo: J. Słupski.



years after her retirement. She also served as Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs from 1958 through 1962 in the Department of Freshwater Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and in the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences from 1979 through 1984.

Jadwiga Siemińska wrote or co-authored numerous hydrobiological and phycological publications (see bibliography below). Her research focused primarily on practical issues of fisheries and water management in southern Poland, and the communities of aquatic organisms in these habitats. As her career progressed, Jadwiga Siemińska became more focused on specific groups of algae. Some of her publications treat the algae of the Tatra Mountains; for example, she reported the occurrence of “watermelon snow” caused by *Chlamydomonas nivalis*. Together with Professor Starmach she co-edited the widely used series *Flora słodkowodna Polski* (Freshwater Flora of Poland), which included volumes of taxonomical keys to identify various algae. She also authored the sixth volume, on *Bacillariophyceae*.

In 1979, Jadwiga Siemińska became very interested in fossil diatoms and siliceous spores found *in situ* in Devonian graphite marble in Przeworno (Lower Silesia) by Professor B. Kwiecińska (from AGH Kraków). These findings appeared to shift the estimated date of the first appearance of diatoms by 260–300 million years. She attempted to publish this discovery in important phycological journals but, to her astonishment, several diatomologists rejected it. Eventually, most of the discoveries were included and published in *The origin and early evolution of the diatoms: fossil, molecular and biogeographic approaches*, a volume edited by Witkowski & Siemińska (2000). She shared her problems with her closest colleague, Professor John Lund (also deceased), who in one letter to her wrote, “I am very surprised that other diatomists/geologists have not wanted to confirm the age of this material. You know the 3 stages of acceptances of new discoveries: 1. I do not believe it; 2. It’s not original



J. Siemińska and L. Medlin during the Symposium entitled “Origin and Early Evolution of the Diatoms”, 1999. Photo: J. Słupski.

work; 3. Of course, of course! Everybody knows that” (from private correspondence between Jadwiga Siemińska-Słupska and John Lund, letter dated 03.09.2001).

Jadwiga Siemińska described a number of new species, given below:

*Chrysophyceae* s.l.

*Pseudokephyrion pawlowskii* Siemińska, *Fragm. Flor. Geobot.* 16(1): 184 (1970)

*Xanthophyceae*

*Rhizochloris tatrica* Siemińska, *Acta Hydrobiol.* 6(4): 323 (1964)

*Bacillariophyceae*

*Stephanodiscus rugosus* Siemińska & Chudybowa, *Fragm. Flor. Geobot.* 25(3): 459–464 (1979)

*Bolewsikia reymanownae* Kwiecińska & Siemińska, *Acta Paleobot.* 40(1): 4 (2000)

*Horstia renatae* Siemińska & Kwiecińska, *Acta Paleobot.* 42(1): 5 (2002)

*Protorhaphoneis stanislai* Kwiecińska & Siemińska, *Acta Paleobot.* 40(1): 5 (2000)

*Xanthiopyxis polonica* Kwiecińska & Siemińska, *Acta Paleobot.* 40(1): 6 (2000)

*Chlorophyta*

*Chlamydomonas vacuolata* Siemińska (now *Chloromonas vacuolata* (Siem.) Ettl), *Bull. Acad. Pol. Sci.*, 17(7): 463–465 (1969)

*Oedogonium polonicum* Siemińska & Sieminiak, *Bull. Acad. Pol. Sci.* 27(7): 561 (1980)

*Pediastrum taylorii* Siemińska, *Trans. Amer. Micros. Soc.* 84(1): 100 (1965)

*Trochiscia prescottii* Siemińska, *Trans. Amer. Micros. Soc.* 84(1): 101 (1965)

*Cosmarium asphaerosporum* var. *montanense* Siemińska *Trans. Amer. Micros. Soc.* 84(1): 101 (1965)

Professor Siemińska was involved in many scientific bodies, including the Hydrobiological Committee of PAS (secretary), the Biological Committee of PAS (secretary) and the Committee of History of Botany of PAS. She served on the Scientific Councils of the K. Starmach



In the front (from the left) J. Siemińska, B. Kwiecińska and A. Witkowski during party at Symposium in Dziwnów (Poland), 1999. Photo: J. Słupski.





Jadwiga and Pertti Eloranta during one of the Phycological Conferences in Poland. Photo: J. Słupski.

Laboratory of Water Biology of PAS, the W. Szafer Institute of Botany of PAS, and the Department of Ichthyology and Fishery of PAS. She was a member of the Polish Botanical Society and she co-founded its Phycological Section. She participated in a number of societies, including the Polish Hydrobiological Society, Societas Internationalis Limnologorum, International Phycological Society, and International Society for Diatom Research.

### Educational activity of Jadwiga Siemińska

Jadwiga Siemińska taught many generations of Polish phycologists. Between 1953 and 1955 she taught hydrobiology classes in the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences

of the Jagiellonian University. Her active engagement in educating young phycology students helped her to master many topics in the field. The measure of her achievements is the number of those she educated who continue to carry out her work. Under her direction, doctoral degrees were earned by Krystyna Hojda, Irena Kaczmarska, Teresa Skalska, Ewa Skalna, Barbara Tarnowska, Konrad Wołowski, Czesław Mrowca and Dorota Siemiński.

Professor Siemińska's contributions to phycology have been honoured by many scientists, who have paid tribute to her work by using her name in the nomenclature of new species. Among them are *Aulacodiscus sieminskae* Geroch 1978, *Coleochaete sieminskiana* Szymańska 1988, *Euglena sieminskiana* Wołowski 1992, *Chrysosphaera sieminskae* Matuła 1994, *Gomphonema jadvigiae* Lange-Bert. & Reichard 1996, the diatom genus *Sieminskia* Metzeltin & Lange-Bert. 1998 and *Leptolyngbya sieminskae* D. Richter & Matuła 2013.

In recognition of her services to Polish science, Professor Siemińska received many awards. In addition to the awards mentioned earlier for her doctoral thesis in 1953 and her habilitation thesis in 1956, she was honoured by the Secretary of the Second Section of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and awarded the Golden Cross of Merit, Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Commemorative Medal on the 100th Anniversary of Professor W. Szafer's Birth, and the Commemorative Medal on the 40th Anniversary of the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

At the turn of 1956/57, during her stay at the Windermere Laboratory in England (now the Institute of Freshwater Ecology), Professor Jadwiga Siemińska became



Jadwiga with broken leg among her pupils and colleagues during the 10th Jubilee Conference of the Phycological Section of the Polish Botanical Society in Bukowno near Cracow, 1991. Photo: J. Słupski.

fascinated by the Fritsch Collection of Freshwater Algae Illustrations. After her return to Poland, with the aid of her sister Anna Siemińska she began to accumulate her own collection, following the pattern of the English collection. The collection includes algae living in inland waters, growing aerophytically and in the soil, as well as fossil remains. The illustrations include freshwater, marine and fossil algae. The collection currently consists of nearly half a million illustrations (drawings and photographs made using light and electron microscopy) from Polish and foreign publications. The descriptions of some newly identified taxa (Latin diagnoses) have been included in the Iconotheca. In comparison to the English collection, our Iconotheca includes much more material from the literature of the former Soviet Union. The whole database is now being digitalized. The Iconotheca is still an important fundamental source of information for taxonomic research.

Professor Jadwiga Siemińska's last public appearance was on 21 June 2017 at the meeting of the Scientific Council of the W. Szafer Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków. During the meeting she was awarded an Honourary Membership of the Polish Phycological Society. On that occasion she recounted her participation in the founding of the International Phycological Society (IPS), which held its first congress in Madison, Wisconsin, during the 15th Congress of the International Society of Limnologists (SIL) in 1961. She said that she had felt obliged to establish such a group in Poland; that happened ten years later in the summer of 1971. Today more than a hundred phycologists are members of that society.



Jadwiga and her husband Jan Słupski during the 60th anniversary of IB PAS, Krakow 2013. Photo: K. Wołowski.

Professor Jadwiga Siemińska's legacy lives on in her students, colleagues, and the field of phycology as a whole. Her work is appreciated and put to practical use in Poland and abroad. The excellent state of Polish phycological research is due in no small part to her deep commitment and ambition. The work that she did with Professor Starmach immediately after the war laid the foundation for the work of Polish phycologists in all Polish laboratories and other centres of this research, from Szczecin to Rzeszów and from Białystok to Wrocław. In the current generation of phycologists, there is no one who did not meet her at some time or another.



At Iconotheca of Algae IB PAS (from the right) Irena Kaczmarek, Jadwiga, Konrad Wołowski and Jimmy K. Ehrman (son of I. Kaczmarek). 2010. Photo: J. Ehrman.

Professor Jadwiga Siemińska-Słupska continually impressed us with her competence, simplicity and kindness. We shall cherish her memory.

### Bibliography of Jadwiga Siemińska (1947–2015)

Professor Siemińska published a great number of research papers in Polish, European and American journals. They reflect her broad interests in freshwater and soil algae and their ecology, and contain the results of her studies of algae from Poland and foreign countries. She had a knack for explaining difficult and complicated problems in phycology and hydrobiology in an accessible, simple way, and did so in dozens of popular science articles. Through her work and her contacts we were kept up to date on many important discoveries in phycological research around the world. Her brief, pithy reviews of domestic and foreign publications familiarized us with the latest work in the field.

The following is a complete list of Professor Siemińska's scientific and popular-science publications, including book reviews and reports. The list is arranged chronologically.

- Siemińska, J. 1947. Zimowa flora okrzemek w stawach Rybackiej Stacji Doświadczalnej UJ w Mydlnikach koło Krakowa [The winter flora of diatoms in the ponds of the Fishery Experimental Station of the Jagiellonian University at Mydlniki by Cracow]. *Archiwum Hydrobiologii i Rybactwa* 13: 181–220.
- Siemińska, J. 1948. Co robią okrzemki w zimie [What diatoms do in winter]. *Wszecławiat* 1: 24–26.
- Siemińska, J. 1948. Z biologii topika *Argyroneta aquatica* L. [The biology of *Argyroneta aquatica* L.]. *Wszecławiat* 2: 51–54.
- Siemińska, J. 1948. Gdy woda kwitnie [When water blooms]. *Wszecławiat* 6: 177–179.
- Siemińska, J. 1948. Sieć wodna [On *Hydrodictyon reticulatum*]. *Wszecławiat* 9: 287–288.
- Siemińska, J. 1949. *Naegeliella flagellifera* Correns in Poland. *Bulletin international de l'Académie polonaise des sciences*





Receiving the honor of the Honorary Member of the Polish Phycological Society, prof. Jadwiga Siemińska-Słupska together with younger colleagues from the Department of Phycology: K. Wołowski, J. Lenarczyk, M. Solarska, J. Piątek, 2017. Photo: J. Słupski.

*et des lettres, Classe des sciences mathématiques et naturelles. Série B, Sciences Naturelles* 1949: 15–22.

- Siemińska, J. 1951. O czerwonym zakwicie na śniegu w Tatrach (*Chlamydomonas nivalis* Wille) [The red snow in Tatra Mts. (*Chlamydomonas nivalis* Wille)]. *Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae* 21(1–2): 1–6.
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- Starmach, K., Starmachowa, B. & Siemińska, J. 1955. Bibliografia flory glonów Polski [The Polish Phycological Bibliography]. Kraków, 55 pp.
- Siemińska, J. 1956. Dwa nowe dla Polski i Europy kryobionty w Tatrach [Two kryobionts in the Tatra new for Poland and Europe]. *Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae* 25(3): 513–515.
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