

POLISH POLAR RESEARCH	19	1–2	4–6	1998
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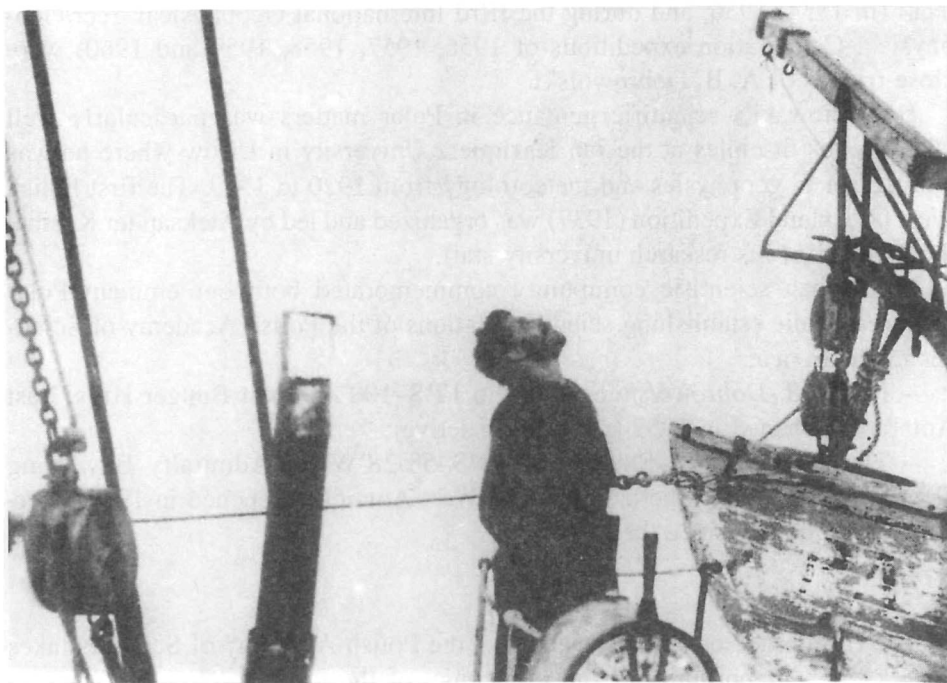
**CENTENNIAL OF PARTICIPATION
OF H. ARCTOWSKI AND A. B. DOBROWOLSKI
IN THE *BELGICA* EXPEDITION TO WEST ANTARCTICA
(1897–1899)**

The Polish Antarctic tradition goes back to participation of Henryk Arctowski and Antoni Bolesław Dobrowolski in the Belgian scientific expedition on *Belgica* to West Antarctica (1897–1899), led by Adrien de Gerlache de Gomery. Dr H. Arctowski, a geophysicist and geologist, was in charge of the expedition's scientific programme, A. B. Dobrowolski (then a university student) was first



H. Arctowski

Photo-collection of the Museum of the Earth, Warsaw.



A. B. Dobrowolski during cloud observations on *Belgica*
Photo-collection of the Museum of the Earth, Warsaw.

employed as a sailor, later – during wintering in Antarctica, turned meteorologist and specialist on snow and ice.

On his return from Antarctica to Belgium, H. Arctowski devoted most of his time to elaboration and editing of 10 volumes of scientific results of the *Belgica* expedition that were published by the Royal Belgian Academy of Sciences. In this work, he was assisted by A. B. Dobrowolski.

While back home in their native country, since 1918 set free from occupation by foreign powers of Russia, Prussia and Austria, A. B. Dobrowolski and H. Arctowski, though not actively participating in Polar research any more, continued their scientific interest in the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Dobrowolski's help, influence and good advice was invaluable at the time of the 2nd Polar Year, particularly with respect to scientific programme of the Polish expedition to Bear Island (1932–33) and, later, during preparation stages of the Polish Spitsbergen Expeditions in 1934 and 1938. As an author of an excellent monograph "Natural history of ice", and as a talented writer of popular-scientific books on history of exploration in the Arctic and the Antarctic, Dobrowolski quite naturally became a centre of knowledge in Polar matters in his native country. Leaders and organizers of the Polish Spitsbergen expeditions, such as Stefan Bernadzikiewicz (in 1934, 1936 and 1938) and Stanisław Sied-

lecki (in 1934, 1936, and during the IIIrd International Geophysical Year/Geophysical Cooperation expeditions of 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959 and 1960) were close friends of A. B. Dobrowolski.

H. Arctowski's scientific guidance in Polar matters was particularly well taken by his disciples at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów where he was a professor in geophysics and meteorology from 1920 to 1939. The first Polish West Greenland Expedition (1937) was organized and led by Aleksander Kosiba, the member of his research university staff.

The Polish scientific community commemorated both our eminent Polar explorers while establishing scientific stations of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Antarctica:

- The *A. B. Dobrowolski* Station ($66^{\circ}17'S-100^{\circ}45'E$) at Bunger Hills, East Antarctica, opened in 1959 (presently inactive);
- The *H. Arctowski* Station ($62^{\circ}09'S-58^{\circ}28'W$) at Admiralty Bay, King George Island, South Shetland Islands, West Antarctica, opened in 1977, operating continuously since then.

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The Committee on Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences takes this excellent opportunity of the Centennial of the famous *Belgica* voyage to West Antarctica (1897–1899) to commemorate this first international scientific expedition to the Last Continent. The expedition, during which arm-in-arm worked nationals of five countries: Belgium, Norway, Poland, Romania and the United States of America, to their great common goal – the Science.

Krzysztof BIRKENMAJER
Chairman of the Polish Committee on Polar Research