

IN MEMORIAM

Professor Tadeusz Chojnicki, (1932 – 2003).

On 7 September 2003 our colleague and friend Professor Tadeusz Chojnicki, the member of the Department of the Planetary Geodesy of the Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences, passed away after the long and grave disease.

He started his scientific career in the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography, the Gravimetric Laboratory where he participated in establishing of the gravity network of Poland and the preparation of the map of gravity anomalies. There, he encountered first time the problem of the Earth's tides that became the topic of his research until the end of his days.

In 1966 he moved to the Polish Academy of Sciences, where he was invited to organize the research group on Earth's tides. The late Director of the Planetary Geodesy Laboratory, Professor Ludosław Cichowicz, requested him to create the modern tidal service in Poland and to establish the international cooperation with the world laboratories leading in this domain. He started with the organization of the measurement station of tides in the basement of the Palace of Science and Culture, the tallest building in Warsaw. The station was equipped with the Ascania gravimeter adapted to the permanent service in stable conditions. The station started its operation in 1968. However, the really great achievement of Chojnicki in the field of tides was the elaboration of the method of analysis of the tidal data based on the Gauss least squares rule. In 1977 he published his work "Sur l'analyse des observations de marees terrestres" where the method is described. Very soon, it was accepted by Professor Paul Melchior, the Director of the International Earth Tides Service, as the standard method for the tidal data analysis.

In 1970 Tadeusz Chojnicki started with the organization of the tidal observatory in the caves of the Ksiaz Castle, in Silesia, South West of Poland. This unique place offered some particular advantages for the investigation of the Earth crust. In cooperation with French and German experts the modern instruments were installed, including horizontal pendulum tiltmeters and gravimeters. Today, this Observatory belongs to the first rank of the world tidal stations.

Chojnicki combined his skill of instrumental inventiveness with the ingenuity in theory and methodology in a very creative way. It helped him to discover some new effects in Earth tides: the resonance of tidal waves of plumb line variations with the earth core as well as seasonal and non-seasonal modulation of tidal waves. These phenomena have been detected on the base of many years long series of plumb line variations from Ksiaz Observatory. In 1984 Chojnicki created the new tidal station equipped with the LaCoste&Romberg gravimeter in the building of the Space Research Centre in Warsaw in the building of the Space Research Centre in Warsaw. Data from both stations were constantly provided to the International Centre for Earth Tides. Prof. Chojnicki helped to develop the research of the Earth tides in other institutes in Poland and abroad, too.

Professor Tadeusz Chojnicki was an author of above hundred of scientific publications. During his life he was a member of numerous scientific commissions and committees, national and international. In last years he was active in the Scientific Council of the Space Research Centre and the Institute of Geophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He was awarded with the Knight Cross of the Polonia Restituta Order, the Golden Cross of Merit and the Medal of Merits for Geodesy and Cartography.

Not only he was the prominent scientist but also the exceptional personality. His liking for music, poetry and arts made him the desired participant of any meeting, scientific or social. His sense of humor was helpful in the hard reality of the everyday life.

We, his colleagues from the Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences, will remember his invaluable contribution to our joint work and to the geodesy in Poland and in the world.

