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PROFESSOR ROMAN STOPA (1895—1995)

Roman Stopa was born on Aug. 8, 1895 at Wola Batorska, a little village close to Bochnia, not far from Cracow, in the part of Poland which was then under Austrian rule. He first attended the village school and then went to Bochnia for his secondary education. In 1914 he was drafted as a so called "one-year volunteer" and was released a year later for reasons of health. He then entered Cracow's Jagiellonian University to study classical philology. This was his daytime occupation; at night, he had to earn his living by working at the Wieliczka salt mine. After completing the undergraduate program, he took employment as a teacher and tutor and started working on his doctoral thesis under the direction of Professor Jan Rozwadowski. In 1927 he was awarded his Ph. D. for a dissertation on the "Meaningfulness of the sounds of Common Proto-Indo-European as an example of speech making process" (in Polish).

With his Ph. D., Stopa continued to teach in schools in Southern Poland, but, spurred on by Rozwadowski, he found time to study clicks and was therefore granted a fellowship to work in Hamburg, under Professor Meinhoff. The results of his research led to the publication of "Die Schnalze ihre Natur, Entwicklung und Ursprung" (Cracow, 1935). In the meantime, he had spent a year in South Africa (1930), studying local dialects and interviewing simple people, including prison inmates. In 1935, he was awarded his "habilitation" in Lwów on the "Hotentot Texts". From 1937 to 1939, he travelled through Europe as a visiting scholar (Berlin, London, Leiden, Paris) where his ideas drew great interest and received acceptance, and he was in Brussels when World War II broke out. Back in Poland, he taught languages and wrote on peoples and cultures of South Western Africa. In 1945 he was appointed "docent" at the Jagiellonian University to give lectures on Suahili, Hausa, Eve, and their ethnography and ethnology, as well as their musicology (he himself was a gifted