

FOREWORD

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AND

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1. INTRODUCTION

When Jerzy mentioned in Będlewo, on 17 August 2004, that George was the person who introduced him to the international scientific community, George was quite taken by that compliment, which, as we think, was not only a compliment. This happened in Będlewo, where Jerzy introduced George at a special session in honor of Jerzy's 60th birthday. This was a preliminary session related to the 13th International Workshop on Matrices and Statistics (IWMS), held in Będlewo 18–21 August 2004. The special session was the idea of Augustyn Markiewicz and we understand that it took a while before Jerzy agreed with it. Now, after realising how soon (8 March 2005) Jerzy passed away, our society can be pleased to have that session arranged.

Jerzy had a remarkable number of coauthors, 46; see Table 2.5 in O.M. Baksalary and Styan (2005). The obvious king in this bunch is of course Radosław Kala* with 50 papers published from 1973 to 1986. Jerzy indeed enjoyed doing things together: there was more fun to do things together.

The majority of Jerzy's coauthors are naturally Poles and definitely Radek Kala, Oskar Maria Baksalary, Anita Dobek, Jan Hauke, Augustyn Markiewicz, etc., have their own experiences about Jerzy as a coauthor. In this note we wish to present some glimpses of Jerzy as an international coauthor. For further personal comments on the life and publications of Jerzy we refer to the extensive article by O.M. Baksalary and Styan (2005) in *Linear Algebra and its Applications*.

The Tampere-Poznan-Montréal triangle has an interesting beginning in the following letter that Erkki Liski and Simo Puntanen wrote to Professors Baksalary and Kala on 18 December 1981:

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for very interesting research papers you have published in different journals. We have read them with great interest. Our interest lies to a great extent on the same topics and this is why we would like to contact you. We enclose here some technical reports and a doctoral dissertation and we would be very glad about any comments.

We think, by the way, that we have at least one common friend: Professor George P.H. Styan, who positively referred to your articles. He visited our department first in January 1976 and the second time on July this year. We felt him a very inspiring person.

Sincerely yours,

Erkki Liski and Simo Puntanen

*Coincidentally, according to O.M. Baksalary and Styan (2005, p. 10), Radosław Kala and Jerzy K. Baksalary defended their their Ph.D. dissertations on exactly the same day, 29 September 1975. However, this is not all: Oskar Maria Baksalary defended his Ph.D. in mathematics exactly 30 years later—29 September 2005.

George had met Jerzy first time in 1980, when he was invited by Andrzej Kozek to visit Poland and to give a lecture at the Institute of Mathematics of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Wrocław and Andrzej arranged for him, with help from Baksalary and Kala, also to give a lecture at the Agricultural University of Poznań. Both Jerzy Baksalary and Radek Kala met him at the main railway station in Poznań on Wednesday, 27 August 1980. On Thursday 28 August, Poznań's public transit went on strike (this was the beginning of the Solidarity movement) and everybody ended up walking to attend George's talk.

Jerzy was invited to Tampere in 1983, to the First International Tampere Seminar on Linear Statistical Models and their Applications, 30 August – 2 September 1983, but unfortunately, he could not make it. The participants of this event (keynote speakers being C. Radhakrishna Rao and George P.H. Styan) mailed a joint postcard to Jerzy regretting his absence. Later Jerzy was a VIP visitor to Tampere, like in the Second International Tampere Conference in Statistics, 1–4 June 1987, and in the International Workshop on Linear Models, Experimental Designs, and Related Matrix Theory (IWMS-1), 6–8 August 1990, and most importantly, as the visiting Professor of the Academy of Finland, September 1989 – August 1990.

On 3 June 1984, Erkki Liski and Simo Puntanen stepped out of the train in the Poznań Railway Station in order to attend the International Statistical Conference in Linear Inference, held in Poznań, 4–9 June 1984. That event was the first time they had an opportunity to meet alive the Dynamic Duo, Baksalary-Kala, which was known to everyone interested in linear models. The highlight for Erkki and Simo was the Nordic-Polish Session at the apartment of Jan Hauke. Jerzy, in his long hair, proposing toasts for “empty sets” (as he put it), smoking like chimney, was the Master of the Ceremonies: Jerzy appreciated good parties—in addition to serious hard research work.

Jerzy stepped on the North American continent first time on 3 May 1988 and George and Simo went to the Montréal-Mirabel Airport to welcome him. Jerzy was rather exhausted after the long flight, telling that through all his flight he had been reading and correcting the thesis of Augustyn Markiewicz. “Oh, those youngsters and their writings ...”, was Jerzy's comment.

In 1988 Jerzy spent the month of May in Montréal, while Simo was also visiting George. At the end of May, we all went to Madison for a conference,

and thereafter Jerzy visited also Kirti Shah in Waterloo and C. Radhakrishna Rao in Pittsburgh; so it was an eventful period and included several ongoing projects.

On 13 January 1988, Simo wrote a letter to Jerzy about the forthcoming arrangements. From this letter we may borrow the following interesting excerpt:

Tampere, 13 January 1988

Dear Jerzy:

... I have an extremely convenient and fast communication way with George: electronic mail. Since last summer we have been using it almost daily. As you may know, it is a computer network, very simple to use and quite reliable. Sometimes my memos go to Montréal only in some minutes but usually it takes an hour or so; during the weekends the systems are, however, sometimes down. On best days I have sent a memo to George in the morning, he has received it and replied and once again I have replied to him—and all this within one day!

... During the weekend I received a memo from George where he states that he has reserved for you and me apartments in a building called a Greek Center, or "Chateau Poppy". It takes only five minutes from there to walk to George's apartment.

*...
Simo*

Jerzy had a good sense of humor, but there was one episode in Chateau Poppy in May 1988, when it was heavily tested. One afternoon Jerzy and Simo agreed that they will meet in the morning at 9 o'clock in order to go to McGill. Then, in the same evening, at 9 o'clock, Jerzy knocked Simo's door, carrying his bag and saying that let's go. Simo looked very surprised and then Jerzy realized that after having afternoon naps, he had understood that it is now morning and time has come to go the Burnside Hall. – Later that same evening Simo went to the neighboring grocery shop to buy some breakfast stuff. The shop owner said that "Your friend was here an hour ago and was very disappointed that we had no more today's newspapers. He was thinking that it was far too early to run out of the day's newspaper!"

Jerzy was extremely independent. He was definitely a great collaborator but in many every-day matters he really appreciated independence.

To tell an example, in Madison in May 1988 (attending the Third SIAM Conference on Applied Linear Algebra with George and Simo), Jerzy had his own kettle. He was cooking tea on that while he was working in his hotel room.

We guess that many of Jerzy's collaborators learnt to know him as a dynamo of the paper in progress. He was running the show, most of the time. Augustyn Markiewicz just recently mentioned that as regards his early papers with Jerzy, Jerzy was so keen on putting them into words that Augustyn later realised that he was not fully aware what it is to put the research results into a form of a manuscript, and later on he has requested that his students do write the ideas onto the draft at the very early phase.

In spring 1988, Simo expressed his concern to Jerzy for having too little time to devote for the latest project.

Jerzy's reply (6 April 1988) was as follows:

Poznań, 6 April 1988

Dear Simo:

... First of all, I am taking the liberty of commenting on the last paragraph of your letter of March 29, 1988. I must explain that my understanding of joint work in mathematics is completely free from measuring (how?) contributions of each of the coauthors to a project. As you know, a lot of various impulses, in most cases rather unpredictable, are needed to complete a paper, and when this stage is achieved, all the details concerning the development process become negligible.

...

Jerzy

In autumn 1989 in Tampere, there was once a several days' period when Jerzy was occupied by fulfilling several forms and documents, administrative ones, for his Polish headquarter. After completing the forms, he was rather exhausted and said that now he will need some heavy mathematics to recover. A typical Baksalarian statement.

One Friday in Tampere in autumn 1989 Jerzy was reading an article in the *Canadian Journal of Statistics*. After 5 minutes he said: "I know how to generalize this. We can do it this afternoon." And so it was done. When Jerzy got an idea about something that was interesting to him, he had a remarkable capacity to go ahead and write up the first draft.

In Wilderton Avenue (George's apartment) in 1988 George one evening proposed Jerzy that we three should write a commentary paper for *T.W. Anderson's Collected Papers*: immediately Jerzy said yes, give me a pen and paper and some oil, and then he indeed started.

Jerzy's rectorship took him out of research for about 10 years, but after that it was delightful to meet him and Oskar in IWMS-9 in Hyderabad, India, December 2000. George almost lost his temper with the receptionist when he believed that somebody had occupied his room in Secunderabad Club: that somebody was not just anybody—it was Jerzy. Jerzy was back in matrices: it was quite a remarkable achievement to return back to the top research after 10 years, achievement showing again the uniqueness of Jerzy K. Baksalary.

We were very delighted to learn that *Discussiones Mathematicae* is devoting a special memorial issue for Jerzy: he earns that extremely well.

REFERENCE

- [1] O.M. Baksalary and G.P.H. Styan, *Some comments on the life and publications of Jerzy K. Baksalary (1944–2005)*, *Linear Algebra and its Applications* **410** (2005), 3–53.

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