Before Poland regained independence in 1918, there had been two Polish universities where instruction was held in Polish: Cracow and Lviv. Both had their faculties of law. Within the borders of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy there was one more university town, where tens of thousands of Poles lived: Chernivtsi.

The development of civil law studies in Lviv needs to be credited to the efforts undertaken by Ernest Till. He habilitated at the Jagiellonian University, but from 1877 he taught civil law in Lviv. His greatest achievement is a multi-volume work which contains a study of the Austrian civil law. As such, Till’s work had no match in the German-language Austrian literature of the subject. In independent Poland, Till engaged in efforts to unify the law of obligations and he published a draft of the general part of this branch of law, supplemented with recitals. Also, he published a draft of regulations on legal persons. Till is the founder of the Lviv school of civil law studies. The representatives of this school include his successor at the chair of civil law at the Jan Kazimierz University (University of Lviv), Roman Longchamps de Berier, who is author of the classic Zobowiązania [Obligations]; Kazimierz Przybyłowski, Till’s younger, appointed professor at the Jagiellonian University in 1945; and finally, Alfred Ohanowicz, who was a researcher in Poznań. Works on private law were published by other Lviv lawyers: Leon Piniński, professor of Roman law, and Aleksander Doliński, professor of commercial law. The latter also researched cooperative law and discussed the provisions of the Austrian law on “profit and economic societies” in volume I of his textbook Zarys prawa handlowego. Nauki ogólne i prawo osobowe [An Outline of Commercial Law: General Issues and Personal Law], written jointly with Professor Antoni Górski of the Jagiellonian University (1911).

The development of civil law research in Cracow followed a different trajectory. In 1886, a talented lawyer, Stanislaw Madeyski, took over the university department
of civil law, but as he became an active politician (he was appointed member of
the Diet of Galicia, Lodomeria and the Grand Duchy of Cracow, the Vienna State
Council, Minister of Education, and a member of the State Tribunal) he resigned
the chair in 1893. From that moment onwards, he lectured as honorary professor
on civil and political law. The systematic research on civil law in Cracow began
with Fryderyk Zoll (called the younger), who habilitated in Vienna in 1895. He was
appointed head of the Department of Civil Law in 1898. Equally important is that
another, Department of Civil Law was established the following year, headed by
Władysław Leopold Jaworski, habilitated in Cracow in 1895. Zoll’s research covered
the entire scope of civil law, including its new sections such as intangible assets law
and private international law. In contrast, Jaworski’s interests reached beyond civil
law, to cover such topics as administrative, agrarian and constitutional law, as well
as philosophy of law.

The third prominent Cracow-based civil law researcher was Stanisław Wrób-
lewski – the youngest among them. Although cooperative law was not the central
topic of his scientific explorations, he made a fundamental contribution to its deve-
lopment. He was a chair of the commission in charge of the first Polish regulatory
solution on cooperatives and the commentator of its provisions.

He was born on 5 May 1868 in Tenczynek near Cracow to a patriotic (his father
was an active participant in the January Uprising 1863) intelligentsia family. One
of his brothers, Władysław, was a lawyer and served in government and diploma-
cy. The other brother, Wincenty, gained recognition as a medical doctor, while his
sister Maria was one of the first female students attending the Faculty of Philo-
sophy of the Jagiellonian University. Stanisław, who was the eldest of the siblings,
attended St. Anne’s and King John III Sobieski middle schools in Cracow, gradu-
ating in 1885. Then he studied at the Faculty of Law of the Jagiellonian University
in Cracow in the years 1885–1889. As a student, he developed a keen interest in
Roman law, which was then taught by Fryderyk Zoll (known as the elder). He re-
ceived his doctorate \textit{sub auspiciis Imperatoris} in 1891, and then moved to Berlin to
complete his education. In Berlin, he studied under the supervision of Roman law
specialists Alfred Pernice, Ernst Wilhelm Eberhard Eck, and the commercial
law expert Levi Goldschmidt. On his return to Cracow, he became a court lawyer to
finally become an assistant at the District Court for the Western Galicia in Cracow
in 1901. Simultaneously, he pursued his scholarly aspirations. In 1894, his treatise
was published in Vienna entitled \textit{Zur Lehre von der Collision der Privatrechte} [On
the Doctrine of Collision of Private Rights], in which he analysed two of the most
basic, and at the same time, most disputed concepts of civil law: subjective rights
and exercise of law. Positively evaluated by professors Fryderyk Zoll (the elder) and
Franciszek Ksawery Fierich, the monograph served as basis for his habilitation in the following year, earned in the field defined as the history and dogmatics of Roman law.

He was appointed private docent (Privatdozent) in 1895 and became lecturer of Roman law at the Faculty of Law of the Jagiellonian University. In 1901, he was nominated associate professor, and in 1907, regular professor of Roman law. In 1917, he was also nominated regular professor of Austrian civil law. He was elected dean twice: in the years 1910/11 and 1917/18. In recognition of his scientific achievements, the Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cracow elected him its correspondent member in 1910, while in 1918, he became active member. The year 1919 turned out to be particularly a turning point in his life and career. That year he became member of the team headed by Professor Michał Bobrzyński, responsible for a draft of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, which was developed at the request of Poland’s President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister). Later that year, Poland’s Chief of State appointed Wróblewski to the Codification Committee, while the members of the Academy of Arts and Sciences – with the adjective “Polish” added to its official name in 1918 – elected him delegate to the Board and appointed him Deputy Secretary General. The same year, he also refused to become rector of the Jagiellonian University, despite his being officially elected to the seat.

In 1921, the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences entrusted him with the post of Secretary General, which he occupied until 1926. In 1929, he was elected Vice-president, and in 1934, President of this most distinguished Polish research institution of the time. In 1894, he became member of the Commission of Jurisprudence at the Second Department of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and from 1920, he was chair of the Commission. He instituted the Modern Law Section as part of the Commission’s structures.

He also held important positions in the structures of the Polish state. He was president of the Supreme Audit Office from 1926 to 1930, and a senator from 1935 to 1938. His involvement in activities other than academic forced him to curtail his general teaching activities, but from 1927 he kept lecturing as an honorary professor.

Wróblewski died on 18 December 1938 in Warsaw, where he had arrived the previous day for a meeting of the Codification Commission. The first president of the Commission, Professor Franciszek Ksawery Fierich happened to pass away in similar circumstances ten years before him.

Wróblewski’s scientific endeavour proceeded in two main research areas. The former consists of works on Roman law, while the latter gathers his studies on then-current civil and commercial law: initially Austrian, then Polish. These two research areas cannot be viewed in either contradiction or opposition. As Stefan
Grzybowski put it succinctly, for Wróblewski, Roman law was a trajectory towards civil law. Wróblewski himself emphasised that “although modern concepts are closer to us and easier to understand than original Roman law, […] a thorough knowledge and proper evaluation of the contemporary ideas is only possible if one charts the path they followed from Roman times to the present day.”

Undoubtedly, Wróblewski’s greatest achievement in the field of Roman law research is the work bearing a modest title *Zarys wykładu rzymskiego prawa prywatnego* [An Outline of Roman Private Law]. The two volumes total approximately 750 large-format pages and were published by the Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1916 and 1919. The author intended the work to cover two unevenly sized sections. The first presented the framework of internal relations in ancient Rome as well as the sources and the history of Roman law up to contemporaneity. The second discussed the variety of institutions under Roman private law, with an indication of whether, in what direction and under what influence modern legal regimes departed from the original Roman principles. Unfortunately, Wróblewski did not manage to complete the work. Apart from the first section, only general issues (including subjects and objects of legal relations, legal events and legal protection) and property law were dealt with exhaustively. Designed by its author as a university textbook, the *Outline* was never used in that capacity. The needs of an average student of law could find their complete satisfaction in the Polish translation of the well-known German textbook by Rudolf Sohm, prepared by Rafał Taubenschlag and Włodzimierz Kozubski (1925). It was the preface to this latter textbook where the translators referred to Wróblewski as the “Polish Papinian,” which was because of the richness of his thought and the splendour of the form. These qualities made the translators observe that Wróblewski’s work “is undoubtedly the best work that not only Polish, but also European literature has produced in this field.” Contemporary evaluation of Wróblewski’s legacy by Janusz Sondel upholds a high opinion of the *Outline* and recommends including the work in the canon short-list for every student, researcher or practitioner in the legal dogmatic area at the early stage of their professional career. Stefan Grzybowski expressed the following assessment of Wróblewski’s work: “The globally taken field of studies on Roman law does not offer a more profound, and at the same time, so broad and detailed, insight than that bestowed on us by him, unveiling the developmental paths of that law and of the legacy of the Roman jurists.”

Among Wróblewski’s earlier works on Roman law, one should mention his monograph entitled *Posiadanie na tle prawa rzymskiego* [Possession Against the Background of Roman Law], published in 1899. Referring to his own earlier findings outlined in the work on the collision of subjective rights, Wróblewski dealt with the
definition of possession (including the possession of rights), its acquisition, loss, protection and wielding. The monograph expressed views that were introduced into European science a dozen years later by the Italian scholar Silvio Perozzi. Continuing his research on Roman law, Wróblewski published works on the limitations of donations (1911) and the institution of usucapio pro herede (1923).

The vast majority of Wróblewski’s works were written in Polish and for this reason they are not known to foreign audiences. One of Wróblewski’s students, Rafał Taubenschlag held his scholarly master in high esteem and intended to translate his works into a foreign language, but was unable to do so in the end.

When Poland regained independence, Wróblewski evidently shifted his scholarly interests towards contemporary law, as a person who was heavily involved in the efforts to unify a new Poland’s legal regime. This was symbolically reflected in his abandoned efforts to complete An Outline of Roman Private Law. In consequence, the work failed to include the law of obligations, family or inheritance law. A lecture devoted to arbitration (amicable) courts in the history of law, delivered at a public meeting of the Polish Academia of Arts and Sciences in 1928, marked a continuation of the historical trend of Wróblewski’s research at that time. The same year, the lecture was published in print. Another lecture, delivered in May 1921, is worthy of a mention here as it expressed Wróblewski’s support for the initiative of implementing court control of regulatory compliance with the Constitution of Poland, even though he did not provide decisive measures for exercising this type of control. The lecture was published as a chapter in the collective work entitled Nasza Konstytucja [Our Constitution].

Wróblewski dealt with problems of applicable law in the period before World War I and published several commentaries on these issues. The most outstanding of these is the voluminous (950 pages) commentary to inheritance law, published in 1904 as the third volume of the commentary to the Austrian civil code, commenced by Władysław Leopold Jaworski. This commentary stands out from both earlier and later commentaries on the issue because of its unique approach. The richness of thought and the meticulousness of Wróblewski’s insights turned arguments about individual institutions into short monographs on their own. Wróblewski’s articles addressing that topic written in German are referred to in Austrian inheritance law textbooks until today.

Of a completely different character, but no less original, is the two-volume commentary on the entirety of provisions under the Austrian civil code, published between 1914 and 1918, and supplemented later on. Wróblewski made an intricate use of the claims made in judicature, aligning them into a uniform line of argument, yet not at the expense of withholding his own, often critical, position of the matters under discussion. Sometimes his remarks are only signalled with punctuation: a question
or an exclamation mark. In another publication, published in 1916, he discussed the changes introduced to the civil code by the so-called partial amendments.

In a voluminous commentary on the commercial code, published three times in the period 1898–1917 (including the Limited Liability Company Act and the Cheque Act), supplemented by a commentary on the Bills of Exchange Act, Wróblewski commented on the entirety of Austrian commercial law framework.

After regaining independence, the primary task of Polish lawyers was to create a native, national law to substitute the legal patchwork enforced in the former districts of Poland during the Partitions. The preparation of the drafts of the uniform civil and penal (criminal) law was placed under the charge of the Codification Commission, which was created pursuant to the Act of 3 June 1919, and which gathered the most eminent Polish lawyers of the time.

From the early days of the Codification Committee’s operation, Wróblewski was deeply committed to its efforts. Like its other members, he approached his engagement in terms of a patriotic duty. The comprehensive nature of Wróblewski’s engagement in this field is nothing but admirable. He served as a drafter on bills of exchange law, insurance law and inheritance law. He chaired subcommittees on general civil law, inheritance law, maritime and river law, and he participated in numerous other subcommittees. Particularly momentous was his role as chair of the section, then the subcommittee on commercial law, responsible for ensuring the uniformity of the draft developed by five project clerks. He also contributed to other drafts, publishing comments on drafts of e.g. private international and inter-regional law or copyright law.

In 1926, Wróblewski joined the then-established Law Council, holding a position of a regular advisor there and staying active until 1928, when the Council ended its activities. In this context, worth remembering is a short text written by Wróblewski devoted to what is a topical issue nowadays, i.e. law-making methodology. The text was published in a memorial book in honour of Edmund Krzymuski (1929).

The works on unification of the legal solutions in the field of cooperative law that had been in force on the territory of partitioned Poland were conducted outside the Codification Commission. In June 1919, an interregional conference took place in Warsaw to deliberate on the project of a cooperative law, initiated by the Ministry of Treasury. The final draft was developed by a multi-member legal committee headed by Stanisław Wróblewski. The draft prepared by the committee was brought to the Legislative Sejm (Parliament) on 11 November 1919 as a government project. A comprehensive rationale for the project was submitted by Dr. Bronisław Helczyński and Dr. Bronisław Kuśnierz. Members of Parliament were also provided with transcripts of the proceedings of the June conference. The act was processed
by a dedicated committee, which made a number of amendments, yet none of them essential in kind. On behalf of the committee, the project was presented to the Sejm by Ernest Adam, a member of Parliament from Lviv. The law was passed on 29 October 1920 and effected as of 1 January 1921.

A few months later, a well-known Cracow publishing house of Leon Frommer, published a 162-page volume containing the text of the act and the related executive regulations with explanations, authored by Stanisław Wróblewski. When the Cooperative Merger Act of 7 April 1922 and its amendment of 4 December 1923 were issued, Wróblewski expanded the volume to cover the amendments and explanations to the new provisions, and then, after another few years, he produced a supplement (consisting of thirty-two pages).

There is no word “commentary” to be found on the title page of the book. The role of the author is defined as “published and expounded by…” This is not only an expression of the author’s modesty, but also a proof that at that time the notion “commentary” was assigned a stricter meaning than the one accepted today.

Wróblewski’s study has a form typical of the commentaries published at the time. The individual words of each provision are numbered, referring to explanatory notes printed in a different font below the text of a given article (section).

On the initial pages of the book, numbered with Roman numerals, there comes a preface, dated March 1921. In the preface, Wróblewski drew the readers’ attention to the importance of the cooperative movement and to his hopes connected with its development. He explained how the works on preparation of the Act proceeded (yet without mentioning his own participation in these endeavours). He ended the preface with the following comment: “In my explanations, I tried to elaborate on the main principles of the new cooperative law in theoretical terms, but at the same time, I tried to point out the practical consequences of these provisions. The task was all the more difficult as Polish law differs not only in details, but also in a number of fundamental issues from German legislation, which served as a source for a relatively large number of regulatory provisions. I tend not to delude myself into thinking and hoping that the results I have arrived at will gain general recognition among the researchers. I am also fully aware that life will soon raise many practical questions to which my work gives no answers. Nevertheless, I believe that the development of this important section of Poland’s legislative order was crucial, and consequently, I trust that even in this imperfect form, the work will be of benefit to the Polish cooperative movement.”

In spite of these reservations, Wróblewski’s book deserves to be assessed as the most successful study of the Polish cooperative law created in the period of the regulatory power of the Act of 1920.
In the years to come, Wróblewski prepared other commentaries to the bills of exchange law and cheque law, which he published in 1924 and then in 1936. A thorough commentary to Part I of the Polish commercial code, published in 1934, remained unfinished, ending at the provisions on the sale of the enterprise.

Contemplating the commentaries developed by Wróblewski, one needs to highlight the extraordinary meticulousness of their author, who takes into account all the regulations related to a given act under analysis, along with the full list of related judgements and statements made by experts. What is more, following Fryderyk Zoll’s (the younger) view of Wróblewski’s oeuvre, it should be added that he “always deeply and critically thought through all the material he had painstakingly collected in order to express his clear and well-founded views. This was especially so when it came to problematic or doubtful issues. And all that was done without a shadow of language excess, which he carefully avoided as a genuine man of science.” Thanks to that, in Wróblewski’s commentary, “the practitioner finds valuable explanations and guidance on all key issues, while the theorist also finds a way to get acquainted with the pragmatic aspect of legal problems and an inspiration for their own research work of discovery and construction.”

During his lifetime, Wróblewski was widely esteemed as a most eminent luminary, a scientist who surpassed others in originality, imaginativeness, wide horizons as well as boldness of consistently constructed texts. When discussing Wróblewski’s scientific legacy, Fryderyk Zoll made a parallel to the field of fine arts, stressing that the characteristic feature of Wróblewski’s oeuvre is “an exceptionally strict and remarkably detailed, artistic manner of presenting things, reaching the most subtle details of the exposition. What is striking in his works is his utterly extraordinary care to say exactly ‘what comes to mind,’ not only in the general concept, but in the most minute of details. This is why Wróblewski’s works sometimes reminded me of Memling’s paintings, which I used to admire […], and which display how this great painter worked out the smallest details with the greatest meticulousness – so that there is not a single unnecessary or inappropriately line drawn, where everything has its purpose, and finds its place exactly as intended.”

Another commentator of Wróblewski’s legacy, Jan Gwiazdomorski, described him as follows: “He was, in the full sense of the word, a scholar-artist […]. Each of his works, whether it was a lavish volume of the *An Outline of Roman Private Law* or a four-page gloss on some Supreme Court’s judgement, was a complete work of art. Wróblewski was an extremely harsh judge of himself until the last moments of his life and his extremely productive career. He worked with significant effort and sculpting the style of each written sentence came with considerable difficulty. As a result of his extraordinary intellectual precision, he could discern even the
subtlest differences between a thought and its written formulation. He tried to do away with these discrepancies, to bring the words to a completely accurate reflection of the thoughts. He reworked and revised each text many times before submitting it to print. He used to say that you can only release a work of art into the world when you are convinced that you are not able to improve it any longer. There is no work by Wróblewski that would not be finished down to the last detail. His talent inspires the greatest admiration, while his diligence and care, his sense of responsibility for every written word evokes the highest respect.”

He was also known for his extraordinary modesty. Jan Gwiazdomorski recalled that Wóblewski “did not know the value of money at all, he did not care about his appearance, he did not seek honours, nor did he wear the large ribbon of the Order of Polonia Restituta he was awarded. He was much above all human weaknesses and frailties. Small in stature, extremely modest man, sneaking as if stealthily along the streets of Cracow, usually with his eyes fixed on the ground. In spite of this modesty, of his constant retreat into the shadows, in spite of this uncommon simplicity of manner, he emanated with an air of greatness.”

Immediately after Wóblewski’s death, the most prominent jurists of the time – Fryderyk Zoll, Roman Longchamps de Berier, Stanisław Kutrzeba, Franciszek Boscowski, as well as Wóblewski’s younger followers – Jan Gwiazdomorski and Adolf Liebeskind – published memoirs dedicated to him. The war, which broke out a few months after Wóblewski’s death, thwarted the efforts to honour him with a memorial book. The typeset manuscript prepared for print did not survive the occupation.

The post-war transformations in Poland and the resultant detriment to the quality of legal research gradually sent Wóblewski’s scientific achievements to oblivion. In his memoirs, Professor Józef Górszki described a national convention of civil lawyers held in 1948 with the view to condemning bourgeois science. At the conference, the scientific achievements of two scholars – Wóblewski and Zoll – were denounced. Górszki noted ironically that “this did no harm to the deceased, but it helped us have the problem sorted out for good.” It was not until twenty-five years after Wóblewski’s death that the commemorative publication Studia z dziejów Wydziału Prawa Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego [Studies in the History of the Faculty of Law at the Jagiellonian University] occurred. It was published on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the Jagiellonian University and its editor was Michał Patkaniowski. The publication features an article presenting Wóblewski’s biography and his scholarly legacy. The text was composed by Jan Gwiazdomorski, who was not a student of Wóblewski, but was fascinated with his work. Gwiazdomorski wrote that Stanisław Wóblewski “was an extraordinary man, a scholar of
the most excellent kind, the most outstanding lawyer among the outstanding ones, and a source of pride and glory for the Jagiellonian University.”

Five years later, the scholarly output of the “Polish Papinian” was presented to foreign readers by Kazimierz Kolańczyk (in an article entitled Stanislas Wróblewski – le “Papinien polonais” et son “Précis de cours de droit romain”, published in volume 6 of the memorial book in honour of the eminent Italian Roman law expert Edoardo Volterra). In 1986, during the Polish-Italian scientific conference in Jabłonna, Władysław Bojarski, Henryk Kupiszewski and Witold Wołodkiewicz presented papers on Wróblewski’s scientific oeuvre. The proceedings of this conference were published in the Roman law journal “Index” (Naples, 1988). On the fiftieth anniversary of Wróblewski’s death, in December 1988, a scientific session of the Commission of Legal Sciences of the Cracow Branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences was held, during which Witold Wołodkiewicz spoke about Wróblewski as a codifier, and Janusz Sondel explored the value of Wróblewski’s output as a specialist in Roman law. These papers were later published in volume 30 of “Krakowskie Studia Prawnicze” [Cracow Legal Studies]. On the sixtieth anniversary of Wróblewski’s death, a beautiful memorial article about him, written by a doyen of Polish civil law research, Rector Stefan Grzybowski, appeared in “Kwartalnik Prawa Prywatnego” [Private Law Quarterly], published by the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. Published in 2000 to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the restoration of the Jagiellonian University, Złota księga Wydziału Prawa i Administracji Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego [The Golden Book of the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University] contains a biographical entry dedicated to Wróblewski. In his biographical work, Krzysztof Pol listed Wróblewski in “the pantheon of Polish lawyers.” The work under the very same title was published in 2000, with the second edition of 2011.

On 21 November 2008, the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences organized a commemorative scientific session devoted to Stanisław Wróblewski. During the session, Roman law experts presented papers: Janusz Sondel and Franciszek Longchamps de Berier; civil law experts: Andrzej Stelmachowski and Stanisław Sołyński; and law historians: Stanisław Grodziski, Jan Piskurewicz and Leonard Górnicki. Their texts were included in volume 19 of the series W Służbie Nauki [In the Service of Science], published in 2011. The volume also contains a reproduction of Wróblewski’s portrait, painted in 1971 by Alojzy Siwecki, a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts on the basis of a photograph. Other several archival photographs are included.

One of the historic university buildings that has for nearly 70 years been home to the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University is now
called the Stanislaw Wróblewski College. It is located in Olszewskiego Street. Previously, the premises housed the university’s chemical works, which is probably why the building’s name is often associated not with the lawyer, but with Zygmunt Wróblewski, a chemist and Karol Olszewski’s research associate.

*Translated by Konrad Klimkowski*