



Barbara Rusczyk
1928-2001

Barbara Regina Rusczyk was born on September 18, 1928, in Vilnius as the youngest daughter of a known Polish painter Ferdynand Rusczyk.

Having survived the dark years of the war, she was forced to leave her native town. In Warsaw, where she came to live, she followed in the footsteps of her elder sister, art historian Dr. Janina Rusczyk, and began to work at the National Museum in Warsaw in 1949. In the meantime, she completed her studies, receiving a degree in Classical archaeology in 1955. In 1972 she submitted her Ph.D. dissertation on Egyptian temples of the Late Period.

During her years at the Museum she was promoted to the post of curator, which she filled from 1973 until 1990. Her duties centered on study and publication of the museum collections, including important objects like the False Door of Izi from the official's mastaba in Edfu and stone vessels of the Old Kingdom period. She was also the author of guides to the Museum's ancient art collections. As curator she organized a number of major museum exhibitions, such as, for example, "Ancient Cyprus" in 1968 and "Scythian Gold" in 1976, as well as countless regional shows. She coorganized exhibitions of wall paintings from Faras in Berlin, Essen, The Hague and Vienna.

Concurrently with her museum work, she filled in for Professor Kazimierz Michałowski as lecturer on ancient art at Warsaw University. Later (1973-1993) she lectured on the art and archaeology of the Ancient Near East at the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw. She published a number of scholarly treatises on objects from museum collections, as well as on the results of archaeological research. From 1957 she started gaining fieldwork experience with Prof. Michałowski at excavations in Egypt and Sudan and was soon entrusted with the exploration of Tell Atrib, an important site in the Nile Delta (1969-1984). Tell Atrib remained a focal point of her archaeological career. Having completed the exploration of the Pharaonic kom, she went on to work in association with the Coptic Church, searching for the vestiges of the oldest church known to have existed on the site. She remained a valued team member even after she withdrew from directing the Polish research at Tell Atrib. She also worked in Alexandria, as well as at Faras, where she had a hand in the discovery of the Early Christian cathedral with its world-famous murals.

Her enthusiasm, sense of duty and conscientiousness were appreciated by Professor Michałowski, as well as by her colleagues and associates. Even after retirement in 1990, she continued to work in the Museum's stores of ancient art as a volunteer, arranging material that there had never been enough time to study comprehensively before.

Throughout her professional life Barbara Ruszczyc was deeply involved in all kinds of volunteer services. For close to fifty years, starting in 1952, she served as librarian at the Jesuit College in Warsaw. In the last years, she worked with the Dominican Order of the Cracow Province, carrying books to the library of a local parish in the Ukrainian town of Chortkiv and helping to catalogue them there. Her visits to Ukraine were also devoted to recording Polish heritage at the ruined cemeteries in Czortków, Jagielnica and Jabłonowo. She was a member and associate of the Society for Promoting the Cult of St. Andrew Bobola, taking part in trips to places connected with the life and death of this saint. She was also associated with the Pontifical Institute of Ecclesiastical Studies. In appreciation of the results of her museum work, she was awarded in 1987 the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta. She was a member of the Association of Art Historians and the International Association of Egyptologists.

Dr. Barbara Ruszczyc died in Warsaw on September 11, 2001.

The archaeological community has lost a person of great goodness and honesty. At the cemetery, where she was laid to rest in the family tomb next to her siblings, she was bid farewell by numerous colleagues and associates.

Jadwiga Lipińska