

Elżbieta Dąbrowska-Smektała
1930-2000

All her scholarly life Egyptologist Elżbieta Dąbrowska-Smektała, who died on February 13, 2000, was connected with Warsaw University. She received her MA degree from the Philological Faculty, Oriental Institute in 1959 and embarked forthwith upon an academic career, briefly in the Institute of Papyrolog and then for the better part of thirty years in the Egyptological Section. Apart from lecturing and developing her academic studies, she took a strong interest in extending the modest library resources of the department.

In 1963-1966 she joined the team directed by Prof. Kazimierz Michałowski to work on the reconstruction of the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari and the excavation of the neighboring temple of Tutmosis III. She also worked with the Polish archaeological teams on Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria and at Tell Atrib in the Nile Delta. Her objective was to prepare for publication the hieroglyphic texts on coffins and the hieratic papyri. She also assisted the recently demised conservator Józef Gazy in the taking down of the wall paintings from the Cathedral at Faras in Sudan. Having received a scholarship from the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies in Leiden she spent a year in 1972 in Holland. In 1981 she was back again in Egypt.

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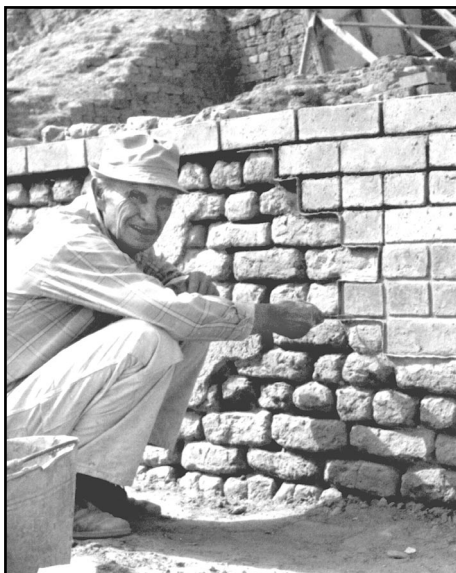
In 1979 she received a Ph.D. degree from Warsaw University for her study on the "Character of the inscriptions on Middle Kingdom coffins in the National Museum in Warsaw". For this work she was awarded the highest scholarly distinction of the times, granted by the State Ministry of Higher Education.

Her scholarly oeuvre covers several dozen books, articles and translations, as well as reports from the excavation and reconstruction work at Deir el-Babari. Of special importance are her studies of the Coffin and Pyramid Texts published in Poland (by the National Museum in Warsaw, among others) and abroad, in the periodicals of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo, Humboldt University in Berlin, and the University in Göttingen. As a member of the International Association of Egyptologists she took an active part in the congresses held in Cairo and Grenoble.

Events connected with the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981 had a severely detrimental effect upon her health. She never recovered. Her scholarly and academic career ended prematurely with her retirement in 1987.

Inquisitive and factual in her research, straightforward and generous in her contacts with people, she was always ready to share her knowledge and to help. A woman of absolute honesty and goodness, she was an excellent and forbearing teacher of ancient Egyptian. Her death is a deep loss to Polish Egyptology in general and her friends and students in particular.

The Editors



Jan Borkowski
1919 - 2000

I first met Jan in 1985 in Alexandria.

A slender man with gray hair, a keen look and strong hands. He joined the staff of the Polish Archaeological and Conservation Mission on Kom el-Dikka under my direction. I knew of him as being an upright, objective and modest man. His views on the issues of structural mechanics and conservation revealed his extensive professional knowledge, but also a deeply ingrained passion for the subject. Despite being several years my senior, he never caused any difficulties, not in our job relation and definitely not in the work itself.

He was one of a generation decimated by the war that showed admirable enthusiasm for the task of reconstructing the country, a drive to learn, great responsibility, diligence, reliability and a work ethos, characteristic of a generation that has, alas, passed away.

Working to an extent not encountered today, Jan began his professional career in the building industry, at the same time continuing his studies, rearing his children and building his family home. He rose at dawn to reach far-off construction sites, was responsible for the work of hundreds of staff, undertook stressful decisions. He upgraded his qualifications continuously, ever interested in new

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methods for curbing natural processes of destruction, new conservation techniques, implementation of new conservation materials (the Janowiec Castle in Poland). A high point of his career came when he received his Ph.D. degree from the Warsaw University of Technology. He was a member of the Association of Building Experts in Poland and the Scholarly Technical Organization. A separate page in his career was his association with the program for commemorating sites of the national struggle for independence and of martyrdom in 1939-1945 (the Wawer site).

As a member of our mission on Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria he restored the Baths and Cisterns, applying the method of pre-stressing to the disintegrated walls of the grand Roman structures destroyed by earthquakes. In the mission at Medum, which he directed, he was charged with preserving the ruins of the famous Old Kingdom mastaba of Nefermaat. In this highly difficult task – the treatment of mudbrick structures with still adhering fragmentarily preserved ancient plaster is one of the most difficult conservation problems existing – he presented an admirable range of ideas and precision of the solutions applied.

He used to work from morning to night, always ready to help, always kindly disposed to everyone, a man with strong hands and a soft heart.

Wojciech Kołtataj