

OBITUARY



William J. Murnane
1945-2000

I remember Bill, as his friends used to call him, as a man of action, always busy and practically never without a smile on his face. Always ready to share the enormous knowledge he had. He was connected with the University of Chicago from the very beginning. In 1973 he completed his Ph.D. dissertation on Ancient Egyptian coregencies, which was published four years later and which has not lost any of its currency even today. Shortly before that he joined the Oriental Institute Epigraphic Survey as an epigrapher and worked at the Chicago House in Luxor until 1985. He also participated in discussions concerning the temples of Hatshepsut and Tutmosis III at Deir el-Bahari, which the Polish team has been restoring in the past few dozen years. He showed himself then as a great friend of us, Poles.

Bill was a respected scholar. His book "The Road to Kadesh: A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of Sety I at Karnak" (1985) was sold out within a couple of years and a new revised edition was published in 1990. Working at Chicago House, Bill also contributed substantially to the Epigraphic Survey series, including volumes on "The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I at Karnak", and to the "Reliefs and Inscriptions at the Luxor Temple" series. His last work was "Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt."

From 1987 he was Professor of History at the University of Memphis and Associate Professor at the University's Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology. He devoted much of his time to students and to study programs and didactics. I benefited from his comments when preparing the program of studies for the Archaeology of Egypt Department that was created at Warsaw University in the early 1990s.

His lectures were always clear and interesting, always attended by crowds of listeners. (At one of the congresses a speaker addressed his very modest audience in the following words: "...I am grateful to all of you – except for the President of the session and the person in charge of showing the slides – for attending my lecture instead of the one that Bill Murnane is giving next door".) Murnane also wrote "United with Eternity: A Concise Guide to the Monuments of Medinet Habu" (1980) and "The Penguin Guide to Ancient Egypt" (1983), two absolutely scholarly works that are equally interesting to the common man.

In 1990 Murnane formed the Great Hypostyle Hall Project of the University of Memphis.

In the early spring of 2000 we met again in Thebes, in the library of Chicago House in Luxor. (The photo shows him during his last visit to Metropolitan House in Deir el-Bahari on March 17, 2000.) We looked at one another and Bill pronounced: "The mission director never sleeps!" He was like that. Indefatigable, he worked hard and with a hungry passion. The quiet of the library was usually broken with the machine-gun staccato of the keys on his computer laptop.

The news of his sudden death in November 2000 came as a shock. A friend had passed away, an erudite and a scholar, a great fan of Italian and Spanish opera (he grew up in Venezuela, where his parents were stationed). His passing is a much regretted loss for Egyptology.

It is still hard to believe that he is gone – after all, it is he who used to say: "The mission director mission never sleeps!"

Zbigniew E. Szafrński



Barbara Ruszczyc
1928-2001

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

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 Ruszczyc, 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.

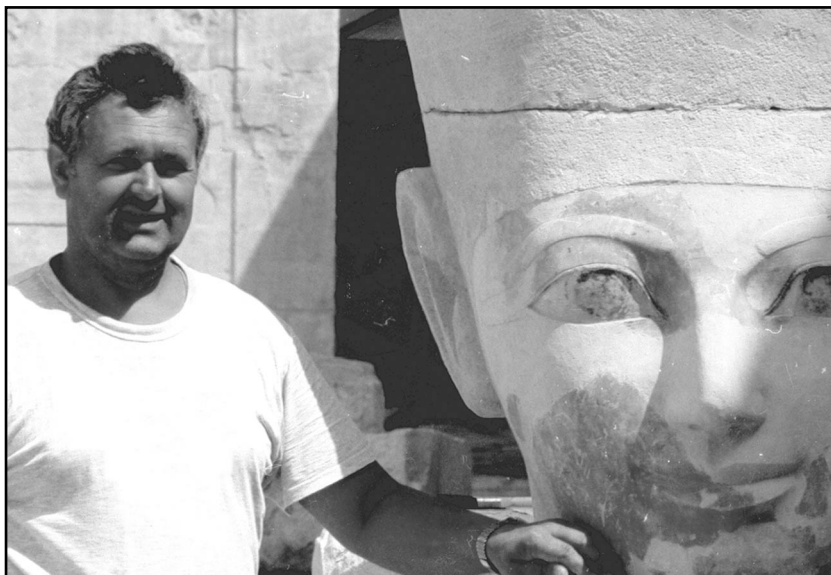
Her enthusiasm, sense of duty and conscientiousness were appreciated by Professor Michałowski, as well as by her colleagues and associates. Even after retirement in 1990, she continued to work in the Museum's stores of ancient art as a volunteer, arranging material that there had never been enough time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



Krzysztof Złotkowski
1948-2001

Krzysztof Złotkowski came to Deir el-Bahari for the first time in 1993. He was supposed to spend just two months there – repairing the electrical equipment, the construction machines and the lighting system in the Temple of Hatshepsut. He ended up returning to the site every season for the next few years until an incurable illness prevented him from participating in the restoration program of the Polish-Egyptian joint expedition.

His unquenchable enthusiasm and a truly creative approach to solving various technical problems turned him into a veritable “man of providence” saving the mission on numerous occasions. Efficient progress of the building and preservation work was largely dependent on him, as was the smooth technical functioning of the Metropolitan House, the mission's headquarters at the site. Whenever – too often – desert conditions turned out to be overtaxing for modern technology, Krzysztof always managed somehow to replace the malfunctioning machinery. His keen eye helped to keep in running condition all the pumps and feeders and crushers that are essential for the production of artificial stone used in restoration. The list would be very long.

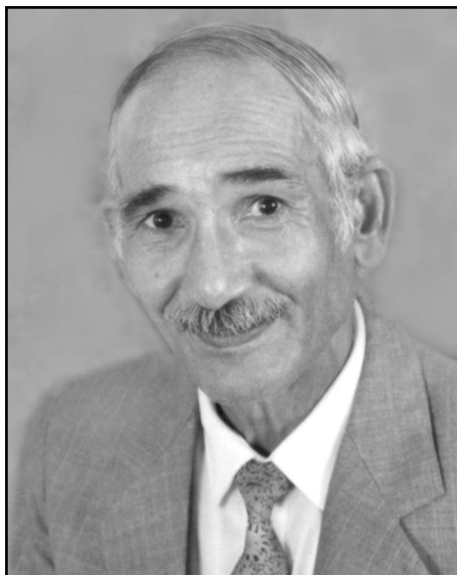
It is no exaggeration to say that the restoration of the Upper Courtyard and the reconstruction of the monumental Osiriach statues of Queen Hatshepsut are largely thanks to his contribution.

Passing through Cairo on his way to Luxor, he always managed to find the time to help out with the equipment at the seat of the Polish Center of Archaeology. The air conditioners, thermal water heaters and electrical installation are all his work, done voluntarily, in his free time, of which he never had too much, always called back urgently to his duties as Chief Electrical Officer at Warsaw University.

Perhaps the most important thing, however, was Krzysztof's honesty, friendliness and constant readiness to be of help to whomever needed it, whether friend, colleague, acquaintance or total stranger.

Language and cultural barriers were never a problem in the face of this simple, commonplace human cordiality. That is why wherever Krzysztof went, he engendered the sympathy and friendship of colleagues at work, local workers, inspectors and guards from the Antiquities Department. Last but not least, of the inhabitants of Gurna village in Luxor, who waited impatiently for his every arrival. Looking at the crowds paying their last respects to Krzysztof in Warsaw, I feel certain that those who would have come to say their last farewell in far-off Gurna would have been just as numerous.

Franciszek Pawlicki



Abou Al-Youn Barakat
1939-2002

Our dearest Friend, a Man of the greatest qualities of the heart, true science and kindness pure, Abu Al-Youn Barakat, Ph.D. in Egyptology and archaeology, dean of Sadat City University, professor of Egyptology at numerous universities in Egypt (Sohag, Tanta, Cairo, Alexandria) and visiting professor of archaeology at the universities in Yemen (Sana'a) and Saudi Arabia (1980-1990), passed away on September 28, 2002.

Dr. Abu Al-Youn Barakat started out as inspector of the then Egyptian Antiquities Organization in West Thebes (al Qurna) in the mid 1960s. It was there that he first met Polish specialists working at Deir el-Bahari. Having won a Ph.D. degree from Warsaw University in 1975, he resumed his duties at Thebes, rising quickly through the ranks to become the Director General of the entire West Bank and member of the Permanent Council of the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt. In 2000, he was awarded the Order of Merit, the highest Polish distinction for foreigners, in recognition of his dedicated – even in the face of various not always favorable political developments – assistance to Polish specialists working in the field of restoration and archaeology on numerous sites in Egypt.

With the death of Dr. Abu Al-Youn Barakat Science has suffered an irremediable loss. It is a pity that he wrote little, for he had that unique gift, of which only the best of scholars are truly possessed, to bring to life a real world out of any material, however poor it may be. His acquaintance with and deep understanding of historic Egyptian monuments and his broad practical field knowledge caused every word that he did write to be highly appreciated by the most eminent scholars. But it was in teaching that Dr. Abu Al-Youn Barakat found his true vocation. Like the Piper of Hamelyn, he guided boards of enchanted students through the important archaeological sites of Egypt, teaching them history and archaeology directly from the monuments, a hands-on approach far distant from the stuffy lecture hall. In this respect, he truly possessed “baraka” – He was inspiring, permeating young people with an understanding of the Pharaonic past. To see and hear Him was to witness the fervor of His brilliant eyes, sensitive hands and the deep wisdom of his straightforward lecturing style – the true quintessence of five millennia of the glorious culture of His ancestors, otherwise much better attested on the monuments of Ancient Egypt than in present-day achievements.

Dr. Abu Al-Youn Barakat had one other characteristic that is seldom seen nowadays. He was ready to witness the truth – Ma’at in the best sense of the term – even at his own expense. Firm in his opinions and always one to defend them with true passion, He nonetheless remained open to the arguments of the other side, quick to recognize their superiority, if he thought it right. This rare quality gave him unlimited authority among the Qurnawy people from the beginning of his work in the Thebes district. He had come there as a young man and, as one born in Middle Egypt, a complete “stranger” to this closed and set world, yet within a short time the word of “doktoor Abu” (as he was called there) acquired a magical power and was sufficient to put an end to all animosities, some lasting for decades, among even the most prominent and impetuous members of the local community.

Dr. Abu Al-Youn Barakat did not attain any top posts in the officially recognized administrative hierarchy, yet that was never an objective with him. But in the hearts of those who were fortunate to know him – to meet him at the very least – He will occupy a forever hallowed place. Without Him not just Egypt, but the world, will not be what it was. Let us be consoled, however poor the consolation may be, that in the “Otherworld” He is surely following this “direct path” that he had already taken during his lifetime, “the path of those whom the God hast blessed, not those against whom He art wrathful nor of those who are astray” (Qur. I, 6-7).

Maciej Witkowski