

CHRONICLE

BARBARA BURCHARD

(28 November 1930 – 9 June 2016)

On June 14, 2016, the family and friends gathered at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw paid their last tribute to Barbara Burchard MA, a retired researcher from the Kraków Centre of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology at the Polish Academy of Sciences, an eminent archaeologist, expert in the Central-European Neolithic Age and, to many of us, a dear friend and valuable partner in research projects, discussions, long conversations and shared moments.

In 1954, soon after her graduation, Barbara Burchard was employed at the then forming Department of Polish Archaeology in the Institute of the History of Material Culture at the Polish Academy of Sciences, headed by Prof. Stefan Nosek. She remained professionally and emotionally linked with the Institute throughout her career. Apart from her research, she was involved in various formal or informal capacities important to everyday functioning of the Kraków Centre. For a long time, she was also a member of the editorial team of the *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne*, for which she prepared the regular sections.

Barbara Burchard ranked undoubtedly among the researchers who in the 1960s and 1970s made a significant contribution to the taxonomic and chronological studies of the New Stone Age in present-day Poland, and whose findings, elaborated on afterwards, have provided the basis for contemporary interpretations of prehistory. Barbara Burchard's achievements consisted both in her synthetic publications and in the results of excavations carried out at crucial archaeological sites. She was primarily interested in the Funnel Beaker culture, mainly its taxonomy, chronology and funeral rites. The material she discussed, recovered e.g. from Książnice Wielkie in the Koszyce commune, and then her own excavations induced her to choose a more specialised field, such as the relationship of the Funnel Beaker communities with the Danube drainage area, the origin of the Baden culture in Małopolska, or the monumental wood-earth graves described recently as "Niedźwiedz type tombs" by Seweryn Rzepecki.

Barbara Burchard's excavations, a significant and possibly favoured part of her research, were of high standard, and their results have made it possible to analyse the material further in more detail. Her exploration also stood out because of the unique nature of



Fig. 1. The excavators of the site in Samborzec (from the left):
Jadwiga Kamińska, Barbara Burchard and Anna Kulczycka-Leciejewiczowa, in the 1960s.
A photo from the archive of the Centre of Archaeology of Mountains and Uplands,
the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, the Polish Academy of Sciences

the finds, which led to the description of archaeological facts that had previously been poorly documented or entirely unrecorded.

In 1961–1966, Barbara Burchard carried out the excavation of a multi-occupation site in Samborzec, the Sandomierz district, with Jadwiga Kamińska and Anna Kulczycka-Leciejewiczowa. The excavators divided the area of research among themselves, and Barbara Burchard worked on materials from final Neolithic cemeteries identified there, which resulted in her published analyses of collective burials of the *Złota* culture community, particularly of their metallurgical production.

In 1965, Barbara Burchard started excavating a site in Niedźwiedź, the Słomniki commune. The excavation, financed within a large Polish-American project in 1968–1971, uncovered relics of a Funnel Beaker settlement with material showing traits related to the “southern” areas, termed “Niedźwiedź type assemblages” by the excavator. The site included a wood-earth megalithic tomb, the first one recorded in Małopolska, interpreted wrongly at first as a trapezium dwelling structure from the Neolithic Age.

In 1991, Barbara Burchard began her last excavation, at the *Mogila* site in Zagaje Stradowskie. In 1994–1996, the excavation was financed by the State Committee for Scientific

Research as one of the first projects by the Institute of the Archaeology and Ethnology to receive the grant. The aim was to verify the results achieved by Jan Gromnicki in 1959 and to obtain new data on megalithic structures built by the Funnel Beaker culture. Burchard corresponded with Magdalena Midgley on that issue, which helped her reinterpret the “trapezium dwelling structure” in Niedźwiedź and identify it as a megalithic tomb. The excavation in Zagaje Stradowskie confirmed that new interpretation.

The excavation in Zagaje Stradowskie was carried out inventively with interdisciplinary methods, some of which, e.g. analysis of phytoliths, were used there for the first time in prehistoric archaeology in Poland. The most important achievement was the discovery of a very complex multi-stage cemetery in the Małopolska Upland. The presentation of the results was financed as another project approved by the State Committee for Scientific Research.

The results of the field work in Samborzec, Bronocice, Niedźwiedź and Zagaje Stradowskie became to Barbara Burchard the main source of inspiration in her prehistoric research. They also brought interesting questions which have remained unanswered to this day. The excavator often posed them to herself and other researchers long after the excavations were completed. Now those questions are part of her achievement bequeathed to us.

Barbara Burchard is remembered also as a brave woman who truly cherished freedom. At the time when many Poles were only able to dream secretly of independence, she became deeply involved in the democratic opposition and socio-political life. After the Gdańsk Agreement in August 1980, she was active in the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarity” at the Kraków Branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The introduction of martial law in 1981 did not stop her activity, only changed its form. In the clandestine period of the union, in 1981–1989, Barbara Burchard distributed and delivered samizdat literature or press, including the periodicals: *Głos*, *Dzień*, *Hutnik* and *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, and she was a member of the editorial team of the *Nowy Głos PAN*, issued by Solidarity at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków from November 1984 to September 1987. In 1988, she took part in the



Fig. 2. Barbara Burchard at the site in Małyce, the Czarnocin commune, on September 14, 2004. A photo by E. Włodarczak

re-establishment of the Commission of Solidarity at the Kraków Branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She was engaged in the organisation of the parliamentary election on June 4, 1989. When Poland regained freedom, Barbara Burchard was active in the Democratic Union, in the Freedom Union, which evolved from it, and – since 2005 – in its successor, the Democratic Party.

Even the shortest recollection of Barbara Burchard must include a mention of her as a colleague and a friend. She is remembered by us all as a warm, open and kind person with a special sense of humour, who was able to bridge the generation gap with great ease. Barbara Burchard mastered the difficult art of listening, though in her modesty she seldom talked about herself. She always had time to meet her friends and discuss their professional or personal problems, and she was sincerely glad about her colleagues' achievements and promotions.

Barbara Burchard was a unique person in our circle, and we were saddened to receive the news of her progressing illness and then of her decease. It is very difficult to talk about her in the past tense and to acknowledge the final parting, which always comes at the wrong time.

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