

# PRO MEMORIA

Acta Poloniae Historica  
124, 2021  
PL ISSN 0001-6829

## MARIA BOGUCKA (1 JUNE 1929 – 27 OCTOBER 2020)

27 October 2020 was marked by the death of Professor Maria Bogucka. This one of the most outstanding scholars, whose main fields of research was late mediaeval and early modern Polish society, passed in her Warsaw apartment, aged ninety-one. Born in Warsaw on 1 June 1929, Maria was the daughter of a Polish Army officer Jan Bogucki and his second wife, Helena née Kasprowicz; her parents descended from Podolian landed gentry, residing in Kamieniec Podolski area.

Maria spent her childhood years, the time she later described in her autobiography *Ludzie z Kresów* (Warszawa, 2009), in Warsaw and Grodno, where the Boguckis owned a wooden villa. And it was in Grodno that the war fell upon the girl and her mother. After the Soviets requisitioned their entire property and the family faced a real threat of getting deported to Siberia, Helena Bogucka took her children and fled through the ‘green border’ to the Generalgouvernement, finally returning to Warsaw. The family settled in the right-bank area of Warsaw, i.e. the Praga district, where Maria completed her education at the Rzeszotarska Grammar School and came across the resistance movement. During the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, she joined the troops fighting against the Germans in that district as a medical orderly.

After the war, in 1948, Maria took her school-leaving exams and commenced her studies at the University of Warsaw’s Institute of History. As she never joined the ruling communist party [PZPR] or its wing organisation, the Union of Polish Youth [ZMP], she became subject to vast criticism and chicaneries. In 1949–51, she worked at an archive in Gdańsk. In 1951 she successfully submitted her master thesis, prepared at the master seminar run by Professor Marian Małowist, analysing the active capital in Polish fourteenth- to sixteenth-century mining industry. Despite high appraisal of her dissertation, she was not employed at the Faculty of History; instead, she became

a research assistant with the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences [IH PAN], from 1 November 1953, and worked there for the following several decades (until 2004). It was with the Institute that she proceeded with her career as a research scholar. She was granted a doctoral degree in 1956, based on a monograph *Gdańskie rzemiosło tekstylne od połowy XVI do połowy XVII wieku* [Gdańsk Textile Craftsmanship between the Middle of the Sixteenth Century and the Middle of the Seventeenth Century]. The postdoctoral dissertation entitled *Gdańsk jako ośrodek produkcyjny od XIV do połowy XVII wieku* [Gdańsk as a Manufacture Centre between the Fourteenth and the Middle of the Seventeenth Century] contributed to her habilitation, received in 1961. Ten years later, she obtained the position of professor at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences (based on her study on Gdańsk's foreign trade in the former half of the twelfth century). In 1981, she became a full professor in the humanities.

Since 1976, for nearly thirty years, Professor Maria Bogucka managed the IH PAN's Research Group for Old Polish and Enlightenment Culture (later known as the Department of Modern History).

Maria Bogucka has over 1,300 dissertations, scholarly articles and reviews to her credit, including several dozen books, many of which were published in English, French, or German. The span of her research interests is so extensive that it is not easy to describe her extremely rich scientific output concisely. At the start of her career, she researched into economic history, focusing on production, trade, and monetary and bill-of-exchange transactions in modern Gdańsk, and on the position of Gdańsk in the Baltic trade. This led her to focus on the history of trade and commercial exchange in European history and to co-author the first Polish-language history of Holland.<sup>1</sup>

Another field of her interest became the transitions of social structures, particularly the bourgeoisie, in the early modern era and the role of Polish cities in Europe at that time. This led to the studies proposing definitions of 'capital city' and 'metropolis', showing the position of the bourgeois in Old Polish society, and to original propositions of typology of cities and towns. Bogucka considered these phenomena in a general European context and sought their origins in the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Balicki and Maria Bogucka, *Historia Holandii* (Wrocław 1976<sup>1</sup>), 465.

<sup>2</sup> See, i.a., Maria Bogucka, 'Kultura mieszczaństwa warszawskiego w okresie renesansu i baroku', in Józef Kazimierski *et al.* (eds), *Kultura Warszawy* (Warszawa,

In cultural studies, Maria Bogucka proposed in the 1970s a new research current by formulating, among other aspects, the issue of gesture as a token of affiliation with a defined social group. She disseminated in Poland the problems of 'everyday life', analysed the social mentalities and the relationships between men and women in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Her detailed studies were crowned by a historiographic work on Polish culture 'since the beginning of time' until the year 1989 (*Kultura-Naród-Trwanie. Dzieje kultury polskiej od zarania po 1989 r.*), published in 2008. Her theoretical considerations were summarised in *Kategorie i funkcje społeczne kultury w perspektywie historycznej*, a study on the categories and social functions of culture in a historical perspective (2013).<sup>3</sup>

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1979), 27–54; also, *ead.* and Henryk Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej* (Wrocław, 1986), 321–588; as well as, *ead.* and Maria J. Kwiatkowska, Marek Kwiatkowski, Władysław Tomkiewicz, and Andrzej Zahorski, 'Warszawa w latach 1526–1795', in Stefan Kieniewicz (ed.), *Dzieje Warszawy*, ii (Warszawa, 1984), 9–133, 177–180, 241–4; also, *ead. et al.*, *Historia Gdańska*, ii, ed. by Edmund Cieślak (Gdańsk, 1982), 176–259, 445–585, 658–85, 773–7; *ead.*, 'Między stolicą, miastem rezydencjonalnym i metropolią. Rozwój Warszawy w XVI–XVIII w.', *Rocznik Warszawski*, xxii (1992), 119–29; *ead.*, 'Model kariery mieszczańskiej w Gdańsku w drugiej poł. XV w. Rudolf Feldstete jako fundator potęgi rodziny', in Roman Czaja and Janusz Tandecki (eds), *Studia nad dziejami miast i mieszczaństwa w średniowieczu* (Toruń, 1996), 257–66; *ead.*, 'Miasta a władza centralna w Polsce i w Europie wczesnonowożytnej (XVI–XVIII w.)' (Warszawa, 2001; Series: Wydział I Nauk Społecznych PAN, *Rozprawy. Historia*, 4, 47); also, *ead.*, 'Miejsce mieszczaństwa w społeczeństwie szlacheckim. Atrakcyjność wzorców życia szlacheckiego w Polsce XVII wieku', in Andrzej Wyczański (ed.), *Społeczeństwo staropolskie. Studia i szkice*, i (Warszawa, 1976), 185–230; *ead.*, 'Miasta Europy Środkowej w XVI–XVII w. Problemy rozwoju', *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, xlii (1981), 5–24.

<sup>3</sup> As far as gesture is concerned, see Maria Bogucka, 'Gest w kulturze staropolskiej', *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, xxvi (1981), 5–18; *ead.*, 'Le geste dans la vie religieuse, familiale, sociale, publique et politique de la noblesse polonaise aux XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, xxx, 1 (1983), 3–15; *ead.*, 'Le geste dans la vie des nobles polonais aux temps modernes. Tradition médiévale ou ritualisation de la structure sociale?', in Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa (ed.), *Bretagne-Pologne. La tradition médiévale aux temps modernes* (Poznań, 1996), 71–8. For everyday life realities, see Maria Bogucka, *Życie codzienne w Gdańsku. Wiek XVI–XVII* (Warszawa, 1967); *ead.*, *Życie w dawnym Gdańsku* (Warszawa, 1997); *ead.*, 'Controversies about Everyday Life. Profile of Research and Definition', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 85 (2002), 5–16; *ead.*, 'Everyday Life: Discussions and the Definition', *Vana Tallin*, xiii, 17 (2002), 63–74. The position of women in society: Maria Bogucka, 'Rodzina w polskim mieście XVI–XVII wieku: wprowadzenie w problematykę',

Important in Professor Bogucka's scholarly output is also a series of interesting popular-science biographies of outstanding rulers (of both sexes): Bona Sforza d'Aragona, Anna Jagiellon, Casimir IV Jagiellon, and Maria Stuart.<sup>4</sup> She also published her original poetry (two volumes of 'selected poems', 2016 and 2018). Her last scholarly dissertation, entitled *Mizoginia* [Misogyny], was issued in 2018.

Regardless of her out-of-the-ordinary academic achievement, let us add that Professor Bogucka was among the most involved and proactive contributors to scientific life at home and abroad. As the organiser of three consecutive International Baltic Conference editions (Warsaw, 1971; Szczecin, 1974; Elbląg, 1975), she contributed to the setting up of the International Association for the History of European Northern Seas. When serving as Secretary to its Organisational Committee, in 1971–4, she made the Association enable cooperation between historians from East and West Germany, and numerous international contacts were established. In 1974–94 Bogucka was a member of the Association's Scientific Bureau; in 1972–81, she presided the Commission for European Northern Seas at the Historical Sciences Committee. In 1988, she became a member of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences in Wassenaar (NIAS).

Since 1976, Professor Bogucka was a member of the International Committee for the History of Towns, including as its Deputy Chair in 1986–94. Between 1976 and 2012, she was a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Committee for Historical Research. In 1994, she was elected as a member of the PAN's Historical Sciences Committee (for the 1984–6 term), and in 2006 joined the Ethics Committee at the Academy's Presidium. She moreover chaired the Popularisation Committee at the Central Board of the Polish Historical Society in 1967–73 and ran the Board's Maritime Committee. Her other memberships

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*Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxiv, 3 (1983), 495–507; *ead.*, *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce. Kobieta w społeczeństwie polskim XVI–XVIII w. na tle porównawczym* (Warszawa, 1998); *ead.*, 'Women and Culture in Poland in Early Modern Times', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 80 (1999), 61–97; *ead.*, 'Marriage in Early Modern Poland', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 81 (2000), 51–78; *ead.*, *Women in Early Modern Society Against the European Background* (Aldershoot, 2003); *ead.*, *Gorsza pleć. Kobieta w dziejach Europy od antyku po wiek XXI* (Warszawa, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Warszawa, 1964<sup>1</sup>, 1994<sup>2</sup>); *ead.*, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk* (Warszawa, 1970); *ead.*, *Bona Sforza* (Warszawa, 1989); *ead.*, *Maria Stuart* (Warszawa, 1990).

included the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences [PAU], the Warsaw Scientific Society [TNW], and the Polish Writers' Association [SPP]; the Scientific Council at the IH PAN (Vice-Chair in 1978–80) and a peer body with the PAN's Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology.

From 1970 onwards, Maria Bogucka regularly participated in conferences of European economic and cultural scholars held in Prato, Italy. She delivered papers at the International Congresses of Historical Sciences (Bucharest, 1980; Stuttgart, 1985; Madrid, 1990; Montreal, 1995), International Congresses of Economic History (Leningrad, 1970; Copenhagen, 1974; Edinburgh, 1978; Budapest, 1982; Bern, 1986; Leuven, 1990; Milan, 1994), Hanseatic Conventions (Leipzig, 1964; Magdeburg, 1965; Schwerin, 1970; Frankfurt, 1972; Erfurt, 1974; Schwerin, 1976; Sellin, 1978; Stade, 1979; Stralsund, 1994), conventions organised by the Österreichische Kommission für Städtegeschichte (Wien, 1974; Salzburg, 1978), by the Polish-Hungarian Commission (Budapest, 1974 and 1976) and Polish-French Commission (Auxerre, 1978), and at a number of other scientific conferences. Altogether, Professor Bogucka presented over a hundred papers at international congresses and conferences.

Maria Bogucka obtained her first foreign scholarship for a research trip to Holland in late 1958/early 1959; she repeatedly travelled to France, enjoying the scholarships from the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and La Maison des sciences de l'homme. She moreover delivered many lectures at European universities – in East and West Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, and Switzerland. Between 1994 and 2010, she was active as a professor at the Faculty of Philology, Aleksander Gieysztor Academy of Humanities in Pułtusk. She tutored four doctoral students and many bachelors and masters.

For more than thirty years (1978 to 2008), Maria Bogucka served as editor-in-chief of the renowned academic magazine *Acta Poloniae Historica*. In 1957, she created the popular-science historical monthly *Mówią Wieki*, which she edited until 1976. In 1978–81, she edited the series 'Studia Maritima'. In 1995, she was appointed member of the Editorial Committee of *Vana Tallin*, an Estonian scholarly periodical. Let us add at this point that since 1978, Prof. Bogucka was part of the Editorial Committee of the *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* [Quarterly of the History of Material Culture].

Maria Bogucka's extraordinary scientific and organisational activity earned her many prizes, awards and mentions, including the Golden

Cross of Merit (1974), the Knight's Cross and the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (1986 and 1992, resp.), the Alfred Jurzykowski Prize, awarded by the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation in NYC (1996), and the honorary doctorate with the University of Gdańsk (2007).

All this is convincing evidence that Professor Maria Bogucka devoted her life entirely to science – at the expense of her family life, which she was never to experience. She was a strong and uncompromised person, which did not make her many friends and caused her long-lasting conflict with a part of the Warsaw historical milieu, particularly with Professor Marian Małowist and some of his students. In 1998, Professor Bogucka retired; it was then that a rash of ailments she had been suffering since earlier in the nineties intensified.

The last few years of Maria's life turned into sheer anguish. Her chronic pathologies, including a spine injury, made her completely bedridden. She was a lonely person, entirely dependent on her caregivers, brought one after the other from Ukraine. The circle of those who stayed in touch with her was shrinking. She was gnawed by loneliness and the sense of time passing; she expressed these feelings in the poems she wrote at that time.

All in all, she never broke down and, until mid-2020, tried to continually pursue her scholarly work and publish her studies, especially reviews. She also planned to publish an extensive study on the medieval and early modern Polish salt mining industry; regrettably, she did not complete this final project. She was interred on 6 November 2020 at Warsaw's Northern Cemetery in a very modest (due to the pandemic restrictions) funeral ceremony.

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