

CHRONICA

RÓZSA KALICZ-SCHREIBER (1929–2001)

Dr. Rózsa Kalicz-Schreiber was born in Budapest on 12. March, 1929. She finished her university studies as archaeologist and museologist in the Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences in 1955. She started as assistant in the Budapest History Museum between 1954 and 1955, then worked as referent of museum affairs in the Department of Public Education of the Municipal Council of Budapest between 1955 and 1957. From 1957 until retirement in 1988 she worked in the Budapest History Museum first as archaeologist and museologist, then as senior researcher studying the Prehistory of Budapest and its environs.

She conducted numerous rescue and plan excavations in the capital. In the 60's and 70's she was nearly the only archaeologist who conducted prehistoric excavations on behalf of the Budapest History Museum. During her investigations between 1954 and 1960 (Budapest XVII, Rákoshegy, XV, Rákospalota, XIII, Tüzér street, XI Fehérvári road), she enriched the archaeological collection with various remains from the Prehistory and also with finds from the Migration Period. Her research activity, however, was largely determined by the find material of the early Bronze Age settlement at Budafok unearthed during her first rescue excavation (1954), from which time the study of the Bronze Age marked the main stages of her career. She conducted rescue and plan excavation in the northern and southern districts of Budapest, and also significant excavations outside the capital, in the course of which she uncovered, among others, the first settlement of the oldest phase of the Transdanubian Linear Pottery Culture in Budapest, numerous settlements and burials of the early Bronze Age Makó culture and Bell Beaker–Csepel group, and the cemetery of the Urnfield culture counting the largest number of burials. The finds collected from the numerous settlements and cemeteries compose, even to date, the core of the prehistoric collection of the Budapest History Museum. Outside the administrative borders of Budapest, she conducted excavations at Szigetszentmiklós-Felsőtag in 1962–63, then at Diósd-Mészköbánya in 1968, which yielded the fragment of an early and middle Bronze Age cemetery and traces of an early Bronze Age settlement. Her main research field encompassed the problems of the Early Bronze Age in the capital. She thoroughly studied the typological and chronological problems of the Hungarian, eastern group of the Bell Beaker culture and the early Bronze Age development in the territory of Budapest. The name of the group, which was introduced in the archaeological literature as Bell Beaker–Csepel group was her invention (1973). He laid stress on the study of the effects and mediating role of the local base (Makó and Somogyvár-Vinkovci cultures) of this group distributed in the area of Budapest, and of the reflections of the Northern Balkan cultural contacts. On the occasion of the analysis of the grave finds, she demonstrated typological features which helped the differentiation of the older and the younger phases of the culture, which has since then been corroborated by the results of recent settlement excavations.

Rózsa Schreiber conducted numerous other rescue excavations as well that resulted important pieces of information concerning various stages of the Bronze Age and in led to Budapest and its environs becoming one of the leading centres of Bronze Age studies in Hungary.

Religion historical problems of the Early Bronze Age were also included in her scientific scope. During the analysis of the inhumation grave unearthed in the Csepel Island she dealt with the double feature detectable in the burial rite of the Nagyrév culture, discussed the depiction of a mythical scene on a late Nagyrév vessel from the Pannonhalmi road interpreted as the creation of the world and, in relevance to the latter, several symbolic depictions and their interpretations. On the occasion of the strange finds unearthed at the Soroksár-Botanical Garden site she published papers analysing analogues of sacrificial pits.

She unearthed and published the settlement and grave finds of the Tumulus culture from Óbuda-Tsz and Rákoskeresztúr and rescued a grave find from the late Bronze Age Koszider horizon in the Jászberényi road in the 1970's. The zenith of her career was the excavation of the 478 graves of the early and late Bronze Age cemetery at Békásmegyér. The 150 graves of the Bell Beaker–Csepel group unearthed in this site is the largest number among the burial sites of the same age in Budapest and even in Central Europe. The same site yielded 324 cremation burials of the late Bronze Age Urnfield culture (Váli group), which contained finds unparalleled in Central Europe. The eminent finds of the late Bronze Age cemetery were described in a detailed preliminary summary, where she emphasised their remarkable religion historical significance (1991, 1996 and 1997).

She thoroughly studied the settlement and burial features of the Bronze Age and the economic and social historical aspects of the period especially in her papers published in foreign languages. Her greatest scientific merit was that in result of the excavations of early Bronze Age settlements and cemeteries in the Csepel Island and in Békásmegyér, the cultural and ethnic role South-Eastern and Central Europe played in the Bronze Age development of the territory of Budapest could be determined. She intended to publish the results of decades of analytical work in monographs titled “The early Bronze Age of Budapest” and the “Late Bronze Age cemetery at Békásmegyér”, yet her death in 2001 hampered the completion of the nearly finished manuscript.

She reported about her results at numerous conferences in Hungary and abroad. She made the early Bronze Age, finds es-

pecially those associated with the Bell Beaker–Csepel group and the ones from the late Bronze Age cemetery of Békásmegyér, well known all over Europe.

She first attended an international conference with oral contribution at Szeged in 1966, then the International Congress of Prehistory in Belgrade, which was followed by 25 more conferences. The most important ones were: Kraków: Early Bronze Age Conference (1973), Freiburg-Oberried: Symposium on the Bell Beaker culture, Novi Sad: Early Bronze Age Conference (1974), Budapest-Velem: International Early Bronze Age Conference, where she was among the organisers (1977), Verona–Lazise (Italy): (1972, 1980, 1992) and Novi Sad–Vrdnik: (1982) Conferences on the Copper Age and Bronze Age – her papers were published. Furthermore: Poysdorf (Austria) she gave a communication on the Aszód settlement in 1983, then on the neolithic settlement in Aranyhegyi road in 1995 in conferences on the Neolithic. The last time it was only her paper that took part in the international Bronze Age conference in Herzogenburg (Austria, 1996), her illness already hindered her in travelling to meetings organised abroad.

She gave lectures on the Bronze Age sites of Budapest, the Békásmegyér cemetery and the chronological problems of the Early Bronze Age in the universities and archaeological institutes of Halle, Erlangen (1974), Amsterdam (1977) and West Berlin (1987).

She took part in the organisation of several exhibitions in the Budapest History Museum, from which the first was the exhibition “Prehistory of Budapest” opened in 1959. She organised a study excursion in the Archeological Department of the museum on the occasion of the international conference held in Budapest–Velem (1977). She took part in the organisation of the permanent exhibition of the museum in 1968 and finally in 1997.

She laid special emphasis on that the people living near her excavations and archaeological investigation could learn about the prehistory of their district. In this spirit she gave popular scientific lectures linked with exhibition in the Town-hall of Csepel (1961), in the Pesterzsébet Museum (1962) and the Local History Museum of Szigetszentmiklós (1968). She directed the Knowledge of the Homeland Circle in the Workers’ Home in Csepel between 1961 and 1963.

Her activities were recognised by being granted the Minister’s diploma of merit, then the award for Socialist Culture in 1987.

Rózsa Schreiber, beside her activity as a museologist, did not tire to take part in the practical and scientific training of the young generation of archaeologists, and help their scientific development with passing them her experiences. The archaeological excavation she conducted often within very difficult conditions were unforgettable because of her colourful personality, humour and cheerfulness. During the more than three decades of her work in the Budapest History Museum, she took great care to organise, catalogue and preserve the archaeological find materials, which could arrive to their deserved place in the Aquincum Museum only after her death.

Her death is a great loss to Hungarian and European archaeology.

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A. Endrődi