

SOURCES, MATERIALS, MISCELLANEA

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MARGARETE BIEBER (1879–1978):  
EMINENT CLASSICAL SCHOLAR FROM WESTERN PRUSSIA

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In the context of questions about the participation of women in making science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the leading position is obviously occupied by Maria Skłodowska-Curie, who was not only the first two-time Nobel Prize winner (in 1903 and 1911), but also the first female professor at Paris-Sorbonne University<sup>1</sup>. However, in-depth studies prove that the famous Polish chemist was not the only scientist in the past century who significantly contributed to science. The scientific background and achievements of Margarete Bieber, a German researcher of Jewish origin (an American citizen from 1940) are also impressive. Born on 31 July 1879 in Schönau (Przechowo, a present-day district of Świecie, Poland)<sup>2</sup> in former West Prussia, she was a world-famous expert in art and archaeology of ancient Greece and Rome, specializing in the history of ancient theatre. The career of this researcher is above all a fascinating story of a daughter of rich Jewish industrialists from Pomerelia, who, in order to devote herself to scholarship, had to struggle for a long time with prejudices concerning not only her gender, but also her ethnicity, which was particularly stigmatized during the Nazi Germany period.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, higher education, let alone being part of academic world, was unattainable for the vast majority of women<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Shari RUDAVSKY, *Marie Curie 1867–1934*, [in:] *Notable Scientists from 1900 to the Present*, vol. 1: A–C, ed. Brigham NARINS, Farmington Hills 2001, pp. 498–499.

<sup>2</sup> Archiwum Państwowe w Bydgoszczy [State Archive in Bydgoszcz], USC w Przechowie, ref. no. 6/1763/0/2.1/32, no. 34 (1879).

<sup>3</sup> Harriet Pass FREIDENREICH, *Female, Jewish, Educated: The Lives of Central European University Women*, Bloomington 2002, pp. 4–10. According to Harriet Pass Freidenreich's calculations, before the time of Nazi Germany only 84 women had an academic career (by obtaining a habilitation) at German and Austrian universities, which did not exceed 1.2% of all the

However, M. Bieber owed her scholarly success not to her social position (although her family was very wealthy and financed her research for quite a long time), but to her extraordinary strength of character, exceptional talent and remarkable diligence, which allowed her and other women of Jewish origin to pursue an academic career in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. The solid early education that the future scholar received in Schönau (Przechowo), Dresden and Berlin was not without significance either<sup>5</sup>. Interestingly, she was the first woman from Western Prussia who, in September 1901, at a gymnasium in Thorn (Toruń), passed her secondary school leaving exam (Abitur), receiving a 'very good' grade in all subjects (except mathematics)<sup>6</sup>. She was the first woman to receive a scholarship for a trip abroad, granted by the German Archaeological Institute (*Kaiserlich-Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* – DAI) (1909/1910), which was an enormous success. She was also the first woman to become a member-correspondent of the DAI<sup>7</sup> in 1913 and finally, just after the end of the First World War in 1919, she was the first woman at the University of Gießen to receive her habilitation<sup>8</sup>. In addition, she was the second woman to take up the position of a lecturer (*Privatdozentin*) at a German university. She became a lecturer of classical archaeology at the University of Gießen<sup>9</sup>. After the Second World War, between 1949 and 1951, she was the first woman (not counting foreign language teachers) to lecture as a visiting professor at Princeton University<sup>10</sup>. The above information convinces us that the scholar herself

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scientists active there. Among these women, 32 were of Jewish origin: 11 in the humanities, 7 in mathematics, 5 in social sciences, and 9 in medicine; *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74–75.

<sup>5</sup> On the unique 'cultural climate' and the reliability of the Prussian school see Tomasz KRZEMIŃSKI, *Małe miasta Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego w dobie przemian cywilizacyjnych XIX wieku. Społeczność lokalna między zacofaniem a modernizacją*, [in:] *Naród bez państwa na drogach do nowoczesności. Książka jubileuszowa w 70. rocznicę urodzin Szczepana Wierchosławskiego*, ed. Magdalena NIEDZIELSKA, Toruń 2017, pp. 116–120.

<sup>6</sup> Hans-Günter BUCHHOLZ, *Margarete Bieber (1879–1978) / Klassische Archäologin*, [in:] *Gießener Gelehrte in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Bd. 1, hrsg. v. Hans Georg GUNDEL, Peter MORAW, Marburg 1982, p. 58; Hans Peter OBERMAYER, *Deutsche Altertumswissenschaftler im amerikanischen Exil. Eine Rekonstruktion*, Berlin–Boston 2014, p. 37. For more information see note 42.

<sup>7</sup> In 1922 Bieber became a member of DAI. See Matthias RECKE, *Bieber, Margarete*, [in:] *Geschichte der Altertumswissenschaften. Biographisches Lexikon*, hrsg. v. Peter KUHLMANN, Helmut SCHNEIDER (Der Neue Pauly. Supplemente, Bd. 6), Stuttgart–Weimar 2012, col. 103.

<sup>8</sup> H. P. OBERMAYER, *op.cit.*, p. 37; M. RECKE, *op.cit.*, col. 104.

<sup>9</sup> H.-G. BUCHHOLZ, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> Larissa BONFANTE, *Margarete Bieber (1879–1978): An Archaeologist in Two Worlds*, [in:] *Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts*, ed. Claire Richter SHERMAN, Adele M. HOLCOMB, Westport 1981, p. 257.

as well as her scholarly achievements, appreciated particularly in German and American scholarship<sup>11</sup>, should also be of interest to Polish researchers<sup>12</sup>.

Margarete Bieber was born in Schönau (Przechowo)<sup>13</sup> into an assimilated German family of Jewish origin as the second of four children of Jacob Bie-

<sup>11</sup> The international literature has already devoted several biographical notes and detailed studies to M. Bieber. However, a separate biography has not been written yet. See e.g. Larissa BONFANTE, *Margarete Bieber (1879–1978)*, *Gnomon*, vol. 51: 1979, pp. 621–624; idem, *Margarete Bieber (1879–1978): An Archeologist in Two Worlds*, pp. 239–274 (the most complete analysis of her biography and achievements based on the unpublished autobiography of the scientist titled “Memoirs of a female Scholar” from 1959); H.-G. BUCHHOLZ, op.cit., pp. 58–73; Hugo RASMUS, *Lebensbilder Westpreussischer Frauen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Münster/Westf. 1984, p. 27; Walter TETZLAFF, *Bieber, Margarete*, [in:] *Altpreussische Biographie*, Bd. 4/2, hrsg. v. Ernst BAHR, Gerd BRAUSCH, Marburg/Lahn 1989, p. 1181; Hugo RASMUS, *Schwetz (Świecie n. W.) an der Weichsel. Stadt und Kreis. Natur – Geschichte – Wirtschaft – Kultur*, Münster/Westf. 2001, pp. 246–247; Ann Thomas WILKINS, *Bieber, Margarete*, [in:] *Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary Completing the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan WARE, Stacy BRAUKMAN, Harvard 2004, pp. 56–57; Matthias RECKE, „...besonders schauerlich war die Anwesenheit von Frä. Bieber“. *Die Archäologin Margarete Bieber (1879–1978) – Etablierung einer Frau als Wissenschaftlerin*, [in:] *Science oder Fiction? Geschlechterrollen in archäologischen Lebensbildern*, hrsg. v. Jana Esther FRIES, Ulrike RAMBUSCHECK, Gisela SCHULTE-DORNBURG, Münster 2007, pp. 209–231; idem, *Margarete Bieber (1879–1978) – Vom Kaiserreich bis in die Neue Welt. Ein Jahrhundert gelebte Archäologie gegen alle Widerstände*, [in:] *Ausgräberinnen, Forscherinnen, Pionierinnen. Ausgewählte Porträts früher Archäologinnen in Kontext ihrer Zeit*, hrsg. v. Jana Esther FRIES, Doris GUTSMIEDL-SCHÜMMANN, Münster 2013, pp. 141–149; idem, *Bieber, Margarete*, col. 103–105. For the compilation of the works of M. Bieber see Larissa BONFANTE, Rolf WINKES, *Bibliography of the Works of M. Bieber for her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, New York 1969; *Lexikon deutsch-jüdischer Autoren*, Bd. 2, hrsg. v. Renate HEUER, München–New Providence–London–Paris 1993, pp. 419–423.

<sup>12</sup> In Polish historiography, there are two rather brief references to M. Bieber, which focus mainly on the ‘extraordinary’ fact that she was the first woman from West Prussia to pass the secondary school leaving exam (*Abitur*). See Magdalena NIEDZIŁSKA, *Życie polityczne i kulturalne Torunia (1815–1914)*, [in:] *Historia Torunia*, vol. 3, part 1: *W czasach zaboru pruskiego (1793–1920)*, ed. Marian BISKUP, Toruń 2003, p. 318; Krystyna PODLASZEWSKA, *Gimnazjum Toruńskie w latach 1817–1920*, Toruń 2007, p. 180, note 55. The only biographical note of M. Bieber prepared in Polish is an occasional biographical sketch by Lidia Smentek, prepared to popularise science. See Lidia SMENTEK, *Nawojka gimnazjum Toruńskiego: Margarete Bieber*, *Zeszyty Literackie i Naukowe I LO im. Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu*, no. 4: 2018, pp. 21–58. Unfortunately, although the text contains illustrations and interesting information regarding the scientist from Przechowo, it was not supplemented with scientific substance. See also Piotr SKUCZYŃSKI, *Przechowo. Album z zarysem dziejów*, Świecie 2014, p. 84 (a short note on M. Bieber prepared on the basis of a website).

<sup>13</sup> In the second half of the 1860s the village of Schönau (Przechowo) was one of the largest in the district of Schwetz (Świecie) (829 inhabitants: 411 Catholics, 396 Lutherans, 22 Jews). See Emil JACOBSON, *Topographisch-statistisches Handbuch für die Regierungsbezirk Marienwerder*, Danzig 1868, pp. 166–167. This situation did not change in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the census conducted in the district of Marienwerder (Kwidzyn) on 1 December 1910, there were 1430 people living in Przechowo, of which 750 declared that their mother tongue was

ber<sup>14</sup> and Valla Bukofzer<sup>15</sup>. Margarete's father, a 'millionaire Jew'<sup>16</sup>, who may have taken an interest in ancient art himself<sup>17</sup>, was an influential and wealthy entrepreneur with the *Kommerzienrat* title<sup>18</sup>. In the 1901 *Adress-Buch der Stadt Graudenz und Feste Courbiere* he was mentioned as a manufacturer from Schönau (Przechowo), a member of the Chamber of Commerce in Graudenz (Grudziądz)<sup>19</sup>. In the 1912 *Güter-Adreßbuch für die Provinz Westpreussen*,

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German (596 Lutherans, 99 Catholics, 39 members of other Churches and 16 Jews), 658 – Polish (all of them Catholic), 1 – another foreign language, and 22 – German and another foreign language. See *Gemeindelexikon für die Regierungsbezirke Allenstein, Danzig, Marienwerder, Posen, Bromberg und Oppeln. Auf Grund der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 1. Dezember 1910 und anderer amtlicher Quellen*, H. 3: *Regierungsbezirk Marienwerder*, Berlin 1912, pp. 62–63.

<sup>14</sup> In January 1901, a man by the name of Bieber, probably Margarete's father, described by the *Thorner Presse* as "Guts- und Mühlenbesitzer zu Schönau, Kreis Schwetz", was awarded the Royal Order of the Crown of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class. See *Thorner Presse*, 1901, no. 18, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> The Jewish family of Bukofzer from Schönau (Przechowo) was certainly wealthy. However, unlike J. Bieber and his wife, who opted for Germany in 1921 and left for Berlin, the Bukofzers remained in Polish Przechowo. Artur Bukofzer, a merchant dealing in grain who around the year 1926 lived in Świecie at Klasztorna Street 1 (see *Księga adresowa przemysłu, handlu i rzemiosła Zachodniej Polski (Wielkopolski, Pomorza, Śląska i w. m. Gdańska)*, Poznań 1926, P 100) was a secretary of the Jewish Religious Community of Świecie–Nowe–Gniew in 1933 and was "the owner of five buildings worth 70 thousand zlotys, 3 hectares of land and a crop and colonial goods depot"; see Mirosław GOLON, *Gmina Wyznaniowa Żydowska w Świeciu nad Wisłą w latach 1920–1939*, [in:] *Stosunki narodowościowe i wyznaniowe na pomorzu w XIX i XX w.*, vol. 4: *Gminy Wyznaniowe Żydowskie w województwie pomorskim w okresie międzywojennym (1920–1939)*, ed. Jan SZILING, Toruń 1995, p. 186. The five buildings mentioned above included the tenements and the granary; see Zbigniew KARPUS, *Żydzi w Świeciu i powiecie w okresie międzywojennym*, [in:] *Emancypacja – asymilacja – antysemityzm. Żydzi na Pomorzu w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. Zenon Hubert NOWAK, Toruń 1992, p. 113.

<sup>16</sup> *Gazeta Toruńska*, 1913, no. 217, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> It is possible that Margarete's father possessed (perhaps collected?) antiquities. See *Chronik der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin für das Rechnungsjahr 1914*, Jg. 28, Halle 1915, p. 85: "An erster Stelle haben wir Herrn Kommerzienrat Bieber in Schönau für eine römische Bronzestatue, Apollo im Typus der berühmten Kasseler Statue, zu danken".

<sup>18</sup> In 1910 the *Kommerzienrat* Jacob Bieber from Schönau (Przechowo) was listed as a supporting member, and between 1911 and 1914, as a donor to the Berlin Institute for Jewish Studies (*Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*). See *Achtundzwanzigster Bericht der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin*, Berlin 1910, p. 30; *Neunundzwanzigster Bericht der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin*, Berlin 1911, p. 39; *Dreissigster Bericht der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin*, Berlin 1912, p. 40; *Einunddreissigster Bericht der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin*, Berlin 1913, p. 35; *Zweiunddreissigster Bericht der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin*, Berlin 1914, p. 40. More on the activity of the Berlin Institute for Jewish Studies see Rafał ŻEBROWSKI, *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, [in:] *Polski Słownik Judaistyczny. Dzieje, kultura, religia, ludzie*, vol. 1, ed. Zofia BORZYMIŃSKA, Rafał ŻEBROWSKI, Warszawa 2003, p. 605.

<sup>19</sup> *Adress-Buch der Stadt Graudenz und Feste Courbiere*, Graudenz 1902, p. XV.



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A.

Nr. 34

Thönan am 5<sup>ten</sup> August 1879

Vor dem unterzeichneten Standesbeamten erschien heute, der

Persönlichkeit nach \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ be kannt,

von Berufswort Jacob Bieber

\_\_\_\_\_

wohnhaft zu Thönan \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Religion, und zeigte an, daß von der

Vollw. Bieber, gewesener Buchhalter,

seiner Ehefrau \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Religion,

wohnhaft bei ihm \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

zu Thönan in seiner Wohnung

am \_\_\_\_\_ ten Juli des Jahres

tausend acht hundert sieben zig und neun Hauptwille &

um \_\_\_\_\_ Uhr ein Kind weiblichen

Geschlechts geboren worden sei, welches von \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

erhalten habe, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und unterschrieben

Jacob Bieber

\_\_\_\_\_

Der Standesbeamte.

\_\_\_\_\_

Margarete Bieber's birth certificate  
 (Archiwum Państwowe w Bydgoszczy [State Archive in Bydgoszcz],  
 USC w Przechowie, ref. no. 6/1763/0/2.1/32, no. 34 [1879])

he was registered as a Lutheran, one of two (next to Friedrich Kuchenbecker) landowners (82 hectares) in Schönau (Przechowo)<sup>20</sup>. As early as in 1894 Bieber had two grain mills (including a steam mill) and a sawmill<sup>21</sup>. In 1900, the sawmill of H. Bieber company, which employed 40 workers, the second largest in the Schwetz (Świecie) district, sawed 11,500 linear metres of wood<sup>22</sup>. How considerable the assets and financial possibilities of the mill owners were can be illustrated by the organisation of a festival in September 1897 to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bieber company. During this celebration, the officials and employees were paid the sum of 10,000 marks<sup>23</sup>. At that time, according to *Thorner Presse*: “Die Firma steht mit dem Auslande in Geschäftsverbindung und ist in weiten Kreisen bekannt. [...] erfreut sich bei den Gemeindegemeinschaften grosser Achtung und Verehrung”<sup>24</sup>. In 1914, there were 105 workers, both Polish and German, working for H. Bieber in Schönau (Przechowo)<sup>25</sup>. However, relations between the workers and the owner were not always going well. In September 1913, a group of 65 workers working in the mill announced a strike, demanding an improvement in working conditions and an increase in wages<sup>26</sup>. After the First World War, the value of Bieber’s property was still enormous, which was manifested in 1919 on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, when *Kommerzienrat* Bieber himself supported the newly established district

<sup>20</sup> ERNST SEYFERT, *Güter-Adreßbuch für die Provinz Westpreussen*, Leipzig 1912, pp. 182–183. See also *Handbuch des Grundbesitzes im Deutschen Reiche. Provinz Westpreussen. Im Auftrag der Landwirtschaftskammer unter Mitwirkung der Königlichen Behörden der Provinz*, Berlin 1909, pp. 276–277.

<sup>21</sup> KAZIMIERZ WAJDA, *Świecie i powiat świecki w czasach zaboru pruskiego*, [in:] *Dzieje Świecia i jego regionu*, vol. 1, ed. KAZIMIERZ JASIŃSKI, Warszawa–Poznań–Toruń 1979, p. 312. The mills in Schönau (Przechowo) played an important economic function not only on the local market (district of Schwetz), as evidenced by trade relations with Berlin in the 1870s. See GUSTAV GERLICH, *Statistische Beschreibung des Schwetzer Kreises*, Schwetz 1878, p. 58; HUGO RASMUS, op.cit., p. 12. J. Bieber’s estate was not limited to Schönau (Przechowo). In 1904 *Gazeta Toruńska* wrote: “The mill and the estate in Kozłowo near Terespol were purchased from Mr. Raczyński of Charlottenburg by Mr. Bieber from Przechowo for 88,800 marks”; *Gazeta Toruńska*, 1904, no. 231, p. 2. Interestingly, the property that Bieber bought in Kozłowo (Kozłowo) (including 325 hectares of arable land and gardens, and 21 hectares of meadows) significantly exceeded his property in Przechowo (82 hectares). See *Handbuch des Grundbesitzes im Deutschen Reiche. Provinz Westpreussen*, pp. 272–273, 276–277.

<sup>22</sup> K. WAJDA, op.cit., p. 312.

<sup>23</sup> *Gazeta Toruńska*, 1897, no. 218, pp. 2–3; *Thorner Presse*, 1897, no. 220, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Thorner Presse*, 1897, no. 220, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> K. WAJDA, op.cit., p. 312.

<sup>26</sup> According to *Gazeta Toruńska*, the demands of Polish and German employees of the Bieber company included an increase in their daily salary by 30 pfennigs. Due to the intensification of the conflict, the owner announced that collective redundancies will ensue and that “workers will be brought from Hamburg”. See *Gazeta Toruńska*, 1913, no. 217, p. 1; *Gazeta Toruńska*, 1913, no. 221, p. 1.

nursery in Schwetz (Świecie) with the amount of 100,000 marks<sup>27</sup>. In September 1921, after the borders had changed and the Świecie district had been incorporated into Poland, J. Bieber decided to sell – according to *Słowo Pomorskie* – “the largest mill in Pomerelia – ‘Przechowo’” – for the dazzling amount of 85,000,000 Polish marks<sup>28</sup>. Undoubtedly, it was a high amount (after conversion into American dollars), which allowed J. Bieber and his wife to live a prosperous life in Berlin<sup>29</sup>, where they in fact went<sup>30</sup>.

*Słowo Pomorskie* reported that the company (general partnership) of Heinrich Bieber ceased to exist on 23 September 1921, and the purchasers were Polish nationals, residents of Wętfie – Kazimierz Jakubowski and Leon Piotrowski<sup>31</sup>. It is worth noting, however, that Bieber's estate was bought out by the “Przechowo Młyny i Tartaki” Joint-Stock Company<sup>32</sup>, which was financially

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<sup>27</sup> *Jahresberichte der preussischen Regierungs- und Gewerbe- und Bergbehörden, 1914–1918*, Berlin 1919, p. 64; *Księga pamiątkowa dziesięciolecia Pomorza 1920–1930*, ed. Kazimierz ESDEN-TEMPSKI, Marian SYDOW, Toruń 1930, p. 416.

<sup>28</sup> *Słowo Pomorskie*, 1921, no. 224, p. 4. The amount of 85 million Polish marks is also confirmed by the political report of the Agency of the Information Branch of the General District of Pomerelia in Chojnice dated 1 October 1921, which mentions the purchase of “the most important mills in Pomerelia – Przechowo”; Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe Warszawa–Rembertów [Central Military Archive Warsaw–Rembertów], Dowództwo Okręgu Korpusu No. VIII, ref. no. I. 371.8/A 74.

<sup>29</sup> Lidia Smentek reports that the sale of the estate proved highly unprofitable for J. Bieber, and that he “could buy a pair of shoes for all the money on the following day”; L. SMENTEK, op.cit., p. 32. This opinion seems to be mistaken, as inflation had already been going on since the end of 1918, and inflation processes accelerated only in the years 1922–1923. See Zbigniew LANDAU, Jerzy TOMASZEWSKI, *Gospodarka Polski międzywojennej 1918–1939*, vol. 1: *W dobie inflacji 1918–1923*, Warszawa 1967, pp. 280–281; Aleksandra FARON, *Przebieg inflacji markowej w II Rzeczypospolitej*, *Studia Ekonomiczne*, vol. 26: 2003, p. 42. Jacob Bieber, an experienced businessman familiar with financial matters, having plans to go to Berlin, certainly decided to quickly convert the amount from the transaction from Polish marks into dollars or German marks. As early as in 1922, i.e. after the sale of mills, he was confirmed as a member of the Supervisory Board of the “Przechowo Młyny i Tartaki” Joint-Stock Company. See *Spółki Akcyjne w Polsce*, vol. 2, ed. Roman URBAN, Bronisław WIETRZYKOWSKI, Poznań 1922–1923, p. 103.

<sup>30</sup> On the legal situation of German optants and the migration of German people from Pomerania to the Reich in 1921 see Marek STAŻEWSKI, *Exodus. Migracja ludności niemieckiej z Pomorza do Rzeszy po I wojnie światowej*, Gdańsk 1998, pp. 170–195.

<sup>31</sup> *Słowo Pomorskie*, 1921, no. 224, pp. 4, 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Spółki akcyjne w Polsce*, vol. 1, ed. Roman URBAN, Bronisław WIETRZYKOWSKI, Poznań 1921–1922, p. 100; *Dziennik Bydgoski*, 1921, no. 226, p. 4. In the 1920s, the Joint-Stock Company managed an estate of 70 hectares, including water mills and sawmills. The second estate of similar size in Przechowo was owned by Hugo Kuchenbecker. See *Książka adresowa gospodarstw rolnych ponad 50 hektarów wojew. pomorskiego*, ed. Stanisław MANTHEY, Toruń 1923, pp. 356–357; *Księga adresowa gospodarstw rolnych ponad 50 hektarów województwa pomorskiego*, ed. Stanisław MANTHEY, Toruń 1929, pp. 540–541; *Księga adresowa Polski (wraz z w. m. Gdańskiem) dla handlu, przemysłu, rzemiosł i rolnictwa*, Bydgoszcz 1927–1930, pp. 1189, 1204–1205. In the



supported by M. Stadthagen Bank from Bydgoszcz<sup>33</sup>. The very transaction of changing the owner of the mills in Schönau (Przechowo) was probably prepared much earlier, because the said Joint-Stock Company was already established in 1920, and J. Bieber himself was a member of its Supervisory Board in 1922<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, it can be concluded that the former owner of the mills as a member of the Supervisory Board, and thus a shareholder of the Joint-Stock Company, secured his income also after the ownership change and liquidation of the general partnership of H. Bieber<sup>35</sup>.

The family's assets and the Bieber company's income enabled financial support for Margarete's education for quite a long time. From the very beginning her parents were able to provide her with a solid education in the Protestant spirit. In her youth she studied at home and she was taught by a governess<sup>36</sup>. She then attended the local girls' school (*Töchterchule*) in Schönau (Przechowo). Between 1893 and 1895, at the boarding school for girls in Dresden, the future scholar learnt not only French, English, geography or history of art and literature, but also painting, dancing and playing the piano<sup>37</sup>. In 1899 in Berlin, twenty-year-old Margarete took a year-long course to prepare for the school leaving exam (Abitur), where she studied under the direction of Helena Lange (1848–1930), a famous German teacher and activist fighting for women's rights<sup>38</sup>. During this period, Bieber's teacher of philosophy and German language was another suffragette, Hildegard Wegscheider (1871–1953), who was one of the first women in history to obtain a doctorate in humanities in 1898 (*Doctor of Philosophy*) at Halle University in 1898<sup>39</sup>. Undoubtedly these two

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second half of 1929, the mills in Przechowo "had a huge milling capacity" and were the third largest flour producer in Pomerelia, employing 60 people. See Zbigniew KURAS, *Przemysł na Pomorzu Gdańskim w latach 1920–1939*, Bydgoszcz 1984, pp. 21–22.

<sup>33</sup> See *Monograficzny almanach polskiego handlu i przemysłu*, Bydgoszcz 1923, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> *Spółki Akcyjne w Polsce*, vol. 1, p. 100; *Spółki Akcyjne w Polsce*, vol. 2, p. 103. One of the members of the Management Board was E. Bieber, probably the son of the mills' owners.

<sup>35</sup> In 1927, members of the Bieber family were no longer members of the Supervisory Board and the Management Board of the Joint-Stock Company. At that time, the function of the president was held by K. Różycki. See *Spółki Akcyjne w Polsce*, vol. 3, ed. Roman URBAN, Poznań–Warszawa 1928, pp. 113–114.

<sup>36</sup> Matthias Recke emphasised that Margarete received "christliche-säkulare Erziehung"; M. RECKE, *Bieber, Margarete*, col. 103. See also H. P. OBERMAYER, op.cit., p. 40.

<sup>37</sup> H.-G. BUCHHOLZ, op.cit., p. 58.

<sup>38</sup> M. RECKE, *Bieber, Margarete*, col. 103. On Lange's activity and her engagement in the works over the reform of women's secondary education in Germany see Aneta NIEWĘGŁOWSKA, *Średnie szkolnictwo żeńskie w Prusach Zachodnich w latach 1815–1914*, Toruń 2014, p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> Hildegard WEGSCHEIDER-ZIEGLERS, *Chronicon Carionis. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichtsschreibung des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Halle 1898. The first German woman to receive a doctor's degree in medicine in 1754 was Dorothea Erxleben. Maria von Linden was the second – she defended her doctorate in Tübingen in 1895. See Patricia M. MAZÓN, *Gender and the Modern*



politically engaged women had a strong influence on the life and educational attitude of young Margarete<sup>40</sup>. The family urged her daughter to pursue her educational and, consequently, professional career in medicine<sup>41</sup>, but she wanted to become a teacher. This is because she was most interested in humanities, especially in ancient culture.

After passing her school leaving exam (*Abitur*) in Thorn (Toruń) in 1901<sup>42</sup>, Bieber decided to start further education in the field of classical studies (*Alttertumswissenschaft*) at the University of Berlin<sup>43</sup>. There, between 1901 and 1904, the future scholar scientist from Schönau (Przechowo) studied classical history, philosophy and philology. Among her teachers were two outstanding classical philologists: Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931), who came from Markowitz (Markowice, Strzelno commune, Poland)<sup>44</sup> and Hermann Alexander Diels (1848–1922), but also Eduard Meyer (1855–1930), an

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*Research University: The Admission of Women to German Higher Education, 1865–1914*, Stanford 2003, p. 180.

<sup>40</sup> M. RECKE, „...besonders schauerlich war die Anwesenheit von Fr. Bieber“, p. 212.

<sup>41</sup> H.-G. BUCHHOLZ, op.cit., p. 58. It is not without significance that the Jewish graduates of the gymnasium in Toruń most often decided to study medicine and law. See Krystyna KĘPCZYŃSKA, *Absolwenci Gimnazjum Toruńskiego w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku*, *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Historia*, vol. 11 (74): 1977, p. 126. See also Lucjan BRONIEWICZ, *Tworzenie się inteligencji żydowskiej w Prusach Zachodnich. Żydowskie absolwenci gimnazjów przed 1914 rokiem*, [in:] *Emancypacja – asymilacja – antysemityzm. Żydzi na Pomorzu w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. Zenon Hubert NOWAK, Toruń 1992, pp. 35–37.

<sup>42</sup> This information can be read in the researcher's *Lebenslauf*, attached at the end of her doctoral dissertation. See Margarete BIBER, *Das Dresdener Schauspielerrelief. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des tragischen Costüms und der Griechischen Kunst* (doctoral dissertation, Universität Bonn), Bonn 1907, p. 92. Bieber was not included in the lists of graduate students of the Thorn (Toruń) gymnasium, published in annual reports. See *Königliches Gymnasium mit Realgymnasium zu Thorn. Bericht über das Schuljahr 1900/1901*, Thorn 1901, p. 28; *Königliches Gymnasium mit Realgymnasium zu Thorn. Bericht über das Schuljahr 1901/1902*, Thorn 1902, p. 28. This can be explained by the fact that she passed her school leaving exams (*Abitur*) extramurally, preparing for it in Berlin from 1899. Therefore, she cannot be described as a graduate of the gymnasium in Toruń in a strict sense. At that time she could not attend a men's school. It was not until the 1908 reform of women's education in Prussia that ten-grade schools for women were established, and women were given the right to pass their *Abitur* and to begin university studies. See Aneta NIEWĘGŁOWSKA, *Średnie szkolnictwo żeńskie w Toruniu w latach 1820–1920*, *Rocznik Toruński*, vol. 31: 2004, pp. 119–121. Although Krystyna Podlaszewska does mention that M. Bieber graduated in 1901, she does not provide the source of this information; K. PODLASZEWSKA, op.cit., p. 180, note 55; cf. L. SMENTEK, op.cit., pp. 39–45.

<sup>43</sup> The graduates of the Thorn (Toruń) gymnasium most often chose to study at universities in Berlin, Breslau (Wrocław), Leipzig and Königsberg. See K. KĘPCZYŃSKA, op.cit., p. 123; K. PODLASZEWSKA, op.cit., p. 170.

<sup>44</sup> For more information on this outstanding classical philologist from Markowice in Kuyavia see *Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff i jego mała ojczyzna. W osiemdziesiątą rocznicę śmierci wielkiego Kujawianina*, ed. Włodzimierz APPEL, Strzelno 2013.

outstanding historian of antiquity. In 1904 M. Bieber moved to Bonn, where she studied ancient art under the direction of other esteemed researchers, including the archaeologist Georg Loeschcke (1852–1915) and art historian Paul Clemen (1866–1947). Georg Loeschcke<sup>45</sup> had a particular influence on M. Bieber's research methods. It was under his direction that, at the age of 28, she defended her doctoral dissertation on the history of dramatic costumes in Greek art, in 1907 at the University of Bonn<sup>46</sup>.

However, she did not immediately commit herself to the academy. Thanks to the financial support of her family, she travelled a lot, visiting Italy, Greece, Turkey, and other countries. Initially, she developed her research interests by pursuing scholarships and working in various scholarly institutions. Her professional activity included work as an archaeological assistant at the German Archaeological Institute in Athens, and as an assistant at the Kassel Museum, where she developed a catalogue of ancient sculptures stored in the museum<sup>47</sup>. After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Margarete returned to her hometown, where she and her sister Anna provided assistance under the auspices of the Red Cross<sup>48</sup>. In 1915 she went to Berlin, where she worked at the DAI until 1916. Until 1918, she also ran classes with students as Professor Loeschcke's assistant. One of them was Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968), the creator of the iconological method.

In 1919, she began her professional academic career, which was made possible by the liberalisation of the Weimar Republic's approach to female employment at universities<sup>49</sup>. As a scholar dedicated to ancient art and theatre, which was the focus of her dissertation titled *Die Denkmäler zum Theaterwesen im Altertum* published in 1919, she became an 'unpaid lecturer' (*Privatdozentin ohne Gehalt*) at the University of Gießen<sup>50</sup>. At that time she was the only female lecturer in the archaeological department. She did not receive any salary, therefore, her family had to support her financially<sup>51</sup>. In 1923, at the age of 44, M. Bieber was promoted to the position of Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Archaeology. In 1932 she expected to receive

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<sup>45</sup> M. RECKE, „...besonders schauerlich war die Anwesenheit von Fr. Bieber“, p. 213.

<sup>46</sup> See note 42.

<sup>47</sup> MARGARETE BIEBER, *Die antiken Sculpturen und Bronzen des königlichen Museums Fridericianum in Cassel*, Marburg 1915.

<sup>48</sup> In April 1915 *Thorner Presse* reported on the financial support that the Bieber family from Schönau provided for German prisoners of war. See *Thorner Presse*, 1915, no. 99, p. 5: “Die Familie des Kommerzienrats Bieber in Schönau spendete für kriegsgefangene Deutsche in Feindesland 600 Mark”.

<sup>49</sup> L. BONFANTE, *Margarete Bieber (1879–1978): An Archaeologist in Two Worlds*, p. 249.

<sup>50</sup> Bieber gave a habilitation lecture on ancient Greece; H.-G. BUCHHOLZ, op.cit., p. 62.

<sup>51</sup> H. P. FREIDENREICH, op.cit., p. 74.

a full professorship, but her scholarly career was put on hold by the changing political situation in Germany. From January to April 1933, as a result of National Socialist policy, people of Jewish origin were forced to leave academic positions<sup>52</sup>. Despite M. Bieber's adoption of the Old Catholic faith in 1920 (her closest family professed Protestantism<sup>53</sup>), she also had to leave the university<sup>54</sup>. For a long time, the eminent scholar demonstrated the attitude that was typical of Jews from the German eastern borderlands, who were particularly eager to adopt German cultural patterns<sup>55</sup>. Later, however, due to the anti-Semitic ideology of Nazi Germany and emigration to the United States, she changed this attitude. Years later, being in exile, she wrote: "I am not a Jew and do not consider myself as a Jew. Until now I have considered myself German. I believe, however, that in the sense of the citizenship law, I am a Jew. I will in any case soon no longer be a German, but after 1940 a proud citizen of the free land of America"<sup>56</sup>.

In 1933, the outstanding art historian, together with her adopted daughter Ingeborg (M. Bieber never married) and housemaid (nurse) Katharina Freytag emigrated to England<sup>57</sup>. In Oxford she became an honorary member of Somerville College. Then, at the invitation of Barnard College, she left for the United States and in 1936 became a visiting professor at Columbia University<sup>58</sup>. A year later she was appointed professor of fine arts and archaeology. The recommendation of an outstanding researcher of economic history of antiquity – Michael Rostovtzeff (1870–1952) from Yale University was of great importance for the scholar's efforts to stay abroad and work at the American university<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>53</sup> H. P. OBERMAYER, op.cit., p. 40, note 22.

<sup>54</sup> In her birth certificate M. Bieber was assigned to the Jewish faith (*mosaischer religion*); Archiwum Państwowe w Bydgoszczy [State Archive in Bydgoszcz], USC w Przechowie, ref. no. 6/1763/0/2.1/32, no. 34. As early as in 1907 M. Bieber wrote: "Ich bin israelitischer Religion". See M. BIEBER, *Das Dresdener Schauspielerrelief*, p. 92. It is possible that in her case the conversion was motivated by the desire to avoid discrimination against women of Jewish origin at universities, as Jewish origin hindered academic careers. M. Bieber entered the Old Catholic Church in 1920, which coincided with the official permission of the Weimar Republic for women to take up an academic professorship. See H. P. FREIDENREICH, op.cit., p. 73: "The majority of the women who gained *Habilitation* status can be classified as 'Former Jews', however, since they had either been baptised as children or had subsequently left the Jewish community".

<sup>55</sup> More information: Max ASCHKEWITZ, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Westpreussen*, Marburg/Lahn 1967; L. BRONIEWICZ, op.cit., pp. 28–30; Z. KARPUS, op.cit., p. 109.

<sup>56</sup> As cited in: H. P. FREIDENREICH, op.cit., p. 167.

<sup>57</sup> For more information see *ibid.*, pp. 131, 137.

<sup>58</sup> For more information on the scholar's period of emigration see H. P. OBERMAYER, op.cit., pp. 35–107.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 46–47.

Although Bieber retired in 1946 at the age of 67<sup>60</sup>, she remained scholarly active. She lectured at Princeton University, where other German immigrants were also active: an art historian Erwin Panofsky and a byzantineologist Kurt Weitzmann<sup>61</sup>. The scholar educated her worthy successor, renowned historians of ancient art: Evelyn Byrd Harrison and Larissa Bonfante, who devoted numerous studies to her teacher<sup>62</sup>. Although anti-Semitism was forbidden in the United States, the attitude to American scholars of Jewish descent in universities was ambivalent, quite like to female-scholars. William M. Calder III used the Bieber example to illustrate the limitations faced by these scholars: "Margarete Bieber remained an associate professor until the end of her career, and when she retired [...] she did not receive the title of *professor emeritus*"<sup>63</sup>.

Margarete Bieber received numerous scholarly awards and distinctions. In Bonn in 1957, at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the defence of her doctoral dissertation, a solemn renewal of her doctorate took place, and in 1954, Columbia University awarded her the title of *Doctor of Literature (honoris causa)*, and a year later her old but still valid work, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, was reissued in the prestigious series of *Columbia Bicentennial Editions and Studies*<sup>64</sup>. In 1974, the American Archaeological Institute awarded her a gold medal for outstanding scholarly achievements.

Margarete Bieber was a recognized researcher, often quoted around the world<sup>65</sup>. Contemporary art historians emphasize her ability to combine the German, 19<sup>th</sup> century, strict scholarly and thus somewhat hermetic approach to ancient art with American scholarly pragmatism, allowing her to reach a wider audience<sup>66</sup>. Her interdisciplinary research was not limited to narrowly defined issues, or just one period in ancient history (e.g. the Hellenistic era). Having a versatile set of scholarly skills and the research experience of an art historian and archaeologist at her disposal, Bieber was able to analyse and describe not only the art of Archaic Greece but also of the Imperial Rome. According to Clifford Asby's historiographic analysis, her study of the history of

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<sup>60</sup> H.-G. BUCHHOLZ, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>62</sup> See note 11.

<sup>63</sup> William M. CALDER III, *Filologia klasyczna w Ameryce*, Meander. Miesięcznik Poświęcony Kulturze Świata Starożytnego, vol. 49: 1994, no. 7–8, p. 393.

<sup>64</sup> H. P. OBERMAYER, op.cit., p. 107.

<sup>65</sup> Her works, especially the monograph devoted to Greek and Roman theatre, as well as her entries in the *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* devoted to the issues of the theatre, were also cited by Polish scholars. See e.g. Stefan SREBRNY, *Teatr grecki i polski*, Warszawa 1984, p. 760; Mirosław KOCUR, *Teatr antycznej Grecji*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 188, 249; Agnieszka KOTLIŃSKA-TOMA, *Tragedia hellenistyczna*, Wrocław 2006, p. 221.

<sup>66</sup> Larissa BONFANTE, *Bieber, Margarete (1879–1978)*, [in:] *Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology*, ed. Nancy THOMSON DE GRUMMOND, New York 1996, pp. 159–160.



Greek classical theatre was particularly important for the scholarly discourse<sup>67</sup>. In 1939, M. Bieber published a synthesis of the history of the Greek theatre of the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods, as well as of the Roman theatre of the Republic and Empire, titled *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater* (second edition in 1961), compiled from archaeological, iconographic and narrative sources. In this work she not only put forward an important hypothesis about a kind of continuity of two types of theatrical performances (comedy and drama) until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.<sup>68</sup>, but also, by comparing, for example, satire drama with games or rather rituals of the inhabitants of the island of Bali during religious festivals, she exceeded the framework of the traditional research into Greek-Roman art, developed since the times of Johann J. Winckelmann (1717–1768)<sup>69</sup>. In 1928, the eminent scholar published a work titled *Griechische Kleidung*, in which she analysed Greek attire, especially the *peplos* worn by women, and the *chiton*, which was the most characteristic costume worn by men and women, on the basis of rich iconographic material (mainly Greek vases and terracotta). Later, her scope of interests extended to the Roman costume, which she analysed by way of comparative studies<sup>70</sup>. Bieber also wrote important works on Greek Hellenic art, including a monograph on one of the most famous sculptures, the so-called Laocoön Group and its influence on art<sup>71</sup>. Last but not least, she wrote a study on the history of Greek sculpture in this period (*The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, Columbia 1955). One of her most important works was the study titled *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Art* (Chicago 1964). Bieber also planned to publish a monograph on portraits minted on antique coins. She published the partial results of her research in this regard with reference to the Roman Republic era in the prestigious series *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*<sup>72</sup>. She was also going to write a synthesis on the subject of the antique costume, but she did not finish this work. The scholar was also interested in issues of Roman archi-

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<sup>67</sup> Clifford ASHBY, *Classical Greek Theatre: New Views of an Old Subject*, Iowa 1999, pp. 139–146 (chapter titled *Validation by Authority: Margarete Bieber's Comparisons of Hellenistic and Roman Theatres*).

<sup>68</sup> Margarete BIEBER, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater*, Princeton 1961, pp. 227–253.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 17. See C. ASHBY, op.cit., p. 139.

<sup>70</sup> Margarete BIEBER, *Charakter und Unterscheide der griechischen und römischen Kleidung*, Archäologischer Anzeiger, 1973, pp. 425–447.

<sup>71</sup> Eadem, *Laocoon: The influence of the Group since its Rediscovery*, Columbia 1942.

<sup>72</sup> Eadem, *The Development of Portraiture on Roman Republican Coins*, [in:] *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Rise and Decline of the Roman World*, vol. 4/1, ed. Hildegard TEMPORINI, Wolfgang HAASE, Berlin–New York 1973, pp. 871–898.

ture of the early Empire. Among other publications, she wrote an in-depth review of a monograph devoted to the Column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome<sup>73</sup>.

The outstanding art historian and archaeologist was not only an active scholar, distinguished for her contribution to German and American scholarship, but also a committed educator. For English-speaking students of German philology and art history interested in German research on ancient art, Bieber prepared a study titled *German Readings in the History and Theory of Fine Arts*, vol. I: *Greek and Roman Art* (New York 1946). The works she wrote, as she herself emphasized, were to be accessible not only to specialists, researchers of ancient art, but also to students and readers more widely interested in ancient culture<sup>74</sup>.

In 1977, the scholar from Western Prussia published her last book, *Ancient Copies: Contributions to the History of Greek and Roman Art*, which was – as Holly Lee Schanz stressed in her review – the realization of the scholar's earlier plans<sup>75</sup>. In this valuable study, Bieber explored how Roman artists made copies of Greek sculptures, by focusing mainly on the analysis of Greek attire. Over the period of 70 years, from 1907, the year of the publication of her doctoral dissertation, until 1977, the time of her last monograph, M. Bieber published 350 works on the history of ancient theatre and Greek costume<sup>76</sup>. Margarete Bieber died in 1978 in New Canaan (Connecticut), at the age of 99<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> Eadem, review of Giovanni BECATTI, *Colonna di Marco Aurelio*, Milan 1957, *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 63: 1959, no. 1, pp. 107–108.

<sup>74</sup> M. BIEBER, *Laocoon*, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Holly Lee SCHANZ, review of M. BIEBER, *Ancient Copies: Contributions to the History of Greek and Roman Art*, New York 1977, *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 62: 1980, no. 2, pp. 307–309.

<sup>76</sup> H.-G. BUCHHOLZ op.cit., p. 71.

<sup>77</sup> When asked for her recipe for longevity, M. Bieber responded: "Richtige Ernährung und Veranlagung, mein Urgrossvater wurde 102, mein Vater 93 Jahre alt". As cited in: *ibid.*, p. 70.

MARGARETE BIEBER (1879–1978):  
EMINENT CLASSICAL SCHOLAR FROM WESTERN PRUSSIA

Abstract

**Key words:** Przechowo, women's emancipation, ancient culture, classical archaeology, women of science

The article presents the biography and scientific achievements of the outstanding researcher of ancient culture, Margarete Bieber (1879–1978). At the same time, it is an example of women's emancipatory aspirations in this region at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The article describes the less-known Pomeranian roots of Margarete Bieber. She came from Przechowo (Schönau, Świecie district) in former Western Prussia. Bieber was the first woman from Western Prussia to pass high school final examinations in Toruń in 1901. Then, despite all kinds of difficulties arising from her gender and ethnicity, she made an excellent academic career in Germany and the United States.

The article also describes in detail the Pomeranian Bieber family living in Przechowo and their property status (until the sale of the mills in 1921). Jacob Bieber, Margarete's father, the owner of "the most important mills in Pomerania – Przechowo", who perhaps was interested in ancient art himself, supported the scholar's research for a long time. The high financial and social status of the family was important for her educational opportunities, but it was not recognized in the article as the most important reason for her success. First of all, her personality features, talent and great diligence were emphasized.

MARGARETE BIEBER (1879–1978),  
EINE BEDEUTENDE ANTIKENFORSCHERIN AUS WESTPREUSSEN

Abstract

**Schlüsselwörter:** Schönau in Westpreußen, Frauenemanzipation, antike Kultur, klassische Archäologie, Frauen der Wissenschaft

In dem Artikel geht es um die Biografie und die wissenschaftlichen Leistungen der bedeutenden Antikenforscherin Margarete Bieber (1879–1978). Zugleich handelt es sich dabei um ein Beispiel für die emanzipatorischen Bestrebungen von Frauen in dieser Region an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert. Der Artikel beschreibt die bisher wenig bekannten Wurzeln von Margarete Bieber in Pommern. Sie stammte aus Schönau (Przechowo, einem Stadtteil von Schwetz) auf dem Gebiet des früheren Westpreußens. Als erste Frau aus Westpreußen legte sie 1901 in Thorn das Abitur ab. Danach machte sie eine großartige akademische Karriere in Deutschland und den USA, trotz Schwierigkeiten verschiedener Art, die aus ihrem Geschlecht und ihrer ethnischen Zugehörigkeit herrührten.

Der Artikel beschreibt auch ausführlich die pommersche Familie Bieber, die in Schönau wohnte, und ihren Vermögensstatus (bis zum Verkauf der Mühlen 1921). Jacob Bieber, der Vater von Margarete und Eigentümer der „wichtigsten Mühlen in Pommern, in Schönau“, der sich möglicherweise selbst für antike Kunt interessierte, unterstützte lange Zeit die Forschungen der Gelehrten. Die hohe finanzielle und gesellschaftliche Position der Familie war von Bedeutung für ihre Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten, wird aber in dem Artikel nicht als die Hauptursache ihrer Erfolge angesehen. Hervorgehoben werden vor allem die Bedeutung ihrer charakterlichen Eigenschaften, ihr Talent und ihr Fleiß.

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