

Seems to be in Greek context. NHT 5/22/71

# At 91, a Historian Relates the Story Of Her Own Life

By RITA REIF

In the cool dark of a recent morning, Margarete Bieber, age 91, rose a half hour earlier than usual. It was 6:30 and there were preparations to complete before her assistants would come to work at 10 and her visitors would arrive later in the day.

She took her cane, rejecting the walker that the doctor had prescribed because he thought it would be safer than the cane and she carefully assembled her clothing so that she could dress sitting down. She moved slowly and there was pain. But once she had put on the black crepe dress, trimmed with lace jabot and cuffs, slipping it on over her head, grateful that there were no fastenings to fuss with, she was ready to face the day.

When this archeologist, art historian, educator and author was younger, she dealt with larger obstacles than the doorsills and the long narrow hallway she now negotiates with difficulty within the boundaries of her five-room apartment. (She is nearly crippled with arthritis in both legs and is further impeded by cataracts on both eyes and a loss of hearing.)

### Following Diggings

As a young woman, she followed archeological routes through Italy, Greece and Turkey and, later, she fled Germany, her homeland, when Hitler came to power.

And Dr. Bieber, who will be 92 on July 31st, still works hard and laughs a lot. But now the world, and the honors it has to offer, comes to her, to the book-lined, modestly furnished rooms of her home on the upper West Side.

minced meat and vegetable patties that Dr. Bieber eats for her main meal at midday.

There is also Helen Wang, a Chinese girl from Taiwan (the fourth she has had) who sleeps in the apartment and is present for emergencies as well as to do the dishes. Dr. Bieber tries to be as independent as possible.

"When there is a pain, if it gets better in three days, I don't call the doctor," she said, an impish look brightening her face. When her ailments threaten to get the best of her, Dr. Bieber said, "I talk to my body."

### Making the Horses Go

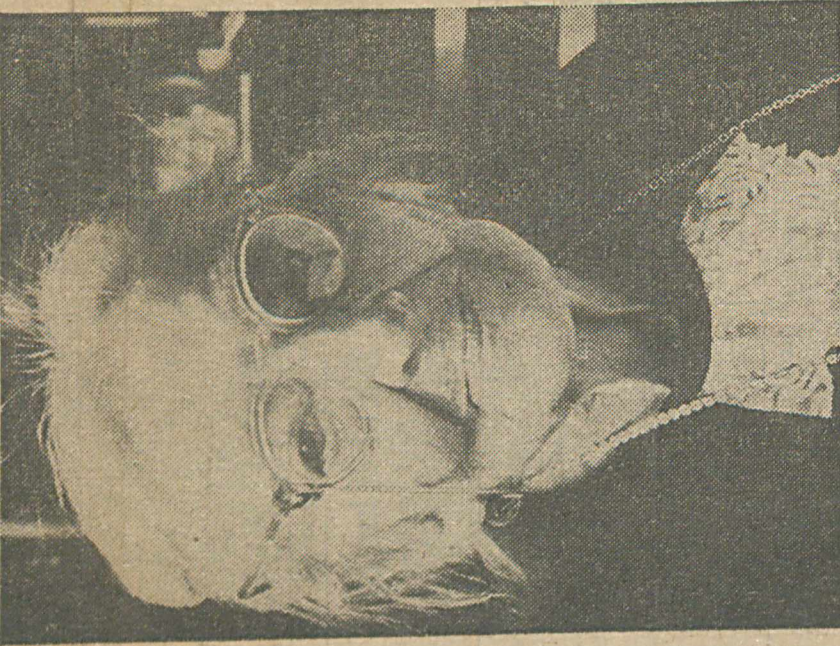
The words she uses on such occasions are the stern words she used as a child in Schönaue, Germany (now Swierzawa, Poland), words that made her father's carriage horses gallop.

"I say: 'Hop, hop, hop—now you must get it right,'" she said.

Margarete Bieber remembers her childhood in that West Prussian town where she was the second of four children. Her father was an industrialist who had flour mills.

But it was Dr. Bieber's mother who championed the girl's desire—as outlandish as it seemed then—for a higher education. After some years at a girl's finishing school, Margarete Bieber became the first girl to attend the Helene Lange gymnasium (high school) in Berlin. Later she was one of a very few women studying at the University of Berlin and the University of Bonn where she won her Ph.D. magna cum laude, in 1907.

Then came seven years of travel and archeological



Manny Warman

### Dr. Margarete Bieber

been elected as a fellow to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, becoming one of the oldest persons in the academy's 190-year history to be so honored.

But on most days it is not honors but people who give her joy. Former students and colleagues, fellow archeologists and authors appear almost daily to sit and talk with this small, frail woman who sits in her large, padded green chair in front of which is a lightweight table that functions as her desk. Her face is framed now in a halo of soft white hair pulled back with gray combs. It is a face honed to essentials.

"I am to archeologists what the Statue of Liberty is to tourists," said the retired associate professor of Columbia University last week. "They keep coming to see if the old lady is still around. And working."

She is—intensively—on her 11th book. It is a massive scholarly study on the Roman sculptural style, a volume that New York University Press hopes to publish next year. Tentatively titled, "Copies—A Contribution to the History of Graeco-Roman Sculpture," the work represents the culmination of decades of research, several years of writing and the current editing and rewriting.

#### Aids for Reading

"As long as I can read at all, I am all right," said Dr. Bieber emphatically. She uses both reading and distance eyeglasses and keeps a strong magnifying glass tucked in between the arm and seat pillow of her chair for use in deciphering fine print.

"I am lucky because I can correct my weaknesses," she said jovially.

Coping for her, she said, begins with her will to keep on working "no matter what happens." She does have the assistance of a cleaning woman who comes for a few hours a week and also shops for food and prepares in advance portions of soup and

faculty of the Justus-Liebig University at Giessen, where she became the director of the archeology department.

In 1933, the educator, who is part Jewish but was reared as a Protestant, was forced to resign by the Nazis.

One year earlier, at the age of 53, Dr. Bieber, who never married, anticipated one of the many causes supported by today's women's activists. She adopted a daughter, an action permitted then to responsible, single women over the age of 50.

#### Three Grandchildren

Ingebord Bieber, then 5½, is now Mrs. William S. Sachs, an accomplished librarian, a wife and the mother of three children, all of whom Dr. Bieber dotes on, she says.

But in 1933 in Hitler's Germany, Dr. Bieber says she feared that her daughter would be indoctrinated with Nazi philosophy. She took Ingebord and fled to England where the archeologist taught for a year at Somerville College, Oxford, before coming here to Barnard College in 1934. A year later she joined the faculty at Columbia and remained through 1948.

"Then I had to begin my career a third time," she said. Her "retirement" began auspiciously when Dr. Bieber joined the all-male faculty at Princeton University (to the best of anyone's knowledge she was the first to do so.) She lectured there for two years and also lectured from 1948 through 1956 at Columbia's School of General Studies.

The last decade has been quieter, but not without memorable moments. Earlier this spring, Dr. Bieber was awarded a fellowship by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It has enabled her to step up her pace on the book. And work will continue on schedule, she says fervently, in spite of such interruptions as the painters who were coming the next day to freshen the faded green walls and repair the flaking ceilings.

**Boğaziçi Üniversitesi**

**Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi**

**Jale İnan Arşivi**



JALARC0700210