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A BRIEF RESPONSE TO S. MILISAUSKAS

ABSTRACT

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There are critical considerations on certain expressions used in the paper by Sarunas Milisauskas, published in the present volume of *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne*. They refer to problems experienced during realization of the Polish-American archaeological research on loess uplands of Lesser Poland in 1960s and 1970s.

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All information authorized by me for publication the “River Interview” has been verified to the highest possible degree by still living participants and eye-witnesses of the described events. I also hoped for response of those with who were not in a close touch with me at the time of my interview, and I have not been disappointed! After publishing my memoirs many of them sent me their remarks, occasionally correcting dates of the described episodes. However, the reaction of Prof. Sarunas Milisauskas, especially his perception of what had occurred 40 years ago during the research of the Polish-American Expedition in Bronocice in southeastern Poland, was to me by all means unexpected.

My remarks about some unpleasant events accompanying the excavations in Bronocice are based on information obtained at that time from participants of that research, named in my memoir. Those still alive can testify the truth.

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From reasons independent from me I cannot now (at least in present volume of *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne*) to open a polemic (to give a comprehensive response) with the version presented by Prof. Milisauskas. Therefore, I will focus only on a few matters:

1. The author misses entirely the truth in saying that I intended to remove Janusz Kruk from leading the Bronocice excavations and that I harassed the Bronocice research team. It is contradicted by professional promotion of my disciple Janusz Kruk, and also by the fact that most of participants of the excavations were recommended by me for employment in the Cracow Branch of the Institute led by me.

2. Untrue is the information that I have discussed with the Director of the Institute the composition of new Bronocice excavation staff that should replace the old one. The truth is that I intended to open excavations on another site of the same culture (as the financial means were sufficient), to be led by Ms. Barbara Burchard.

3. It is not true that I have acted bias employees of the Branch against Prof. Milisauskas. In contrast, the truth is that majority of them negatively responded to the news about my alleged plot against the Director of the Institute. This was a spontaneous response of our professional circle.

4. It is untrue the information that I had ever made difficulties to publish reports on the Bronocice research in the Polish scientific magazines. All living members of the editorial staffs of these magazines would testify for that. It is also contradicted by number of published reports on the site in question.

5. I disagree with the opinion of Prof. Milisauskas that it was only the excavation in Bronocice that after 1970 raised the standard of Polish Neolithic research into European and worldly level. The Polish Neolithic was well known to European Archaeologists already before WWII, due to discoveries in Złota and Samborzec near Sandomierz, in Brześć Kujawski, and on other site, and also due to works of outstanding Polish researchers of that time – W. Antoniewicz, J. Kostrzewski, L. Kozłowski, J. Żurowski, or K. Jażdżewski. It does not contradict (I made it clear in my memoirs) that the Polish-American research (Olszanica, Iwanowice, Niedźwiedź, Bronocice) was a milestone in our knowledge of the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age in Poland, in Europe, and elsewhere.

And the final remark. Reading the paper of Prof. Milisauskas I got the impression that his suspiciousness and perhaps inherited distrust might have combined to his specific perception of events and confusing facts with his beliefs. If not many of the alleged victims of my intrigues were still alive, it should be taken as a matter of minor importance.

To make the matter clear I have decided to include the relevant parts of my memoirs (*Między pokoleniami. Wywiad rzeka z Profesorem Janem Machnikiem rozmawia Marzena Woźny*. Rzeszów 2014).

With passing of time our distrust diminished. The conflict which began when I had showed the Bronocice materials to Ms. Pleslová gradually fade away and we parted in

accord. Nonetheless, our initial mutual confidence never returned. I was feeling that when the excavations in Iwanowice and Olszanica had been completed, Sarunas Milisauskas preferred to continue the Bronocice research only with Janusz Kruk, already without my participation. It first hurt me a little but finally I waved the matter away. Then an incident came that made it worse again. It was a custom that Milisauskas on his arriving in Poland first paid visit to Institute in Warsaw, to see Professor Hensel. After that I used to go to Warsaw to take him to Cracow. Such was a ritual, later continued by Janusz Kruk, although it was not related to the excavations. On one of such occasions, on the way to Cracow we became involved in the conversation on what had happen in the Institute since the previous year. I said that the actual situation in the Institute was very difficult – it was under control by the Highest Inspection Chamber (abbr. NIK; translator's note). It meant that the position of Professor Hensel as a director might have been endangered. In that period controls of NIK most often resulted in removing somebody from his post. Professor Hensel was a good director. Milisauskas, concerned about such a possibility, asked me about the possible Hensel's successor. Being aware of the circulated gossips I inadvertently said that among several candidates the name of Janusz Krzysztof Kozłowski was being mentioned. And what we would have from that? I answered that nothing, perhaps a little more independence in Cracow (pp. 307-308).

The same year, or perhaps on the following year, an archaeological congress was held in Nice. I did not go there because it collided with my other obligations at that time. Among the participants there were many Poles. During a reception, which always took place on congresses, Milisauskas in a very impolite way started to express his opinion about myself. I never attach importance to gossips and although this one was conveyed to me with full details, I let it go out of my mind. Perhaps I was not hurt very much by it. However, about the same time my relations with Professor Hensel suddenly deteriorated. When one day I came to visit him in Warsaw, I was not able to get through with any matter related to the Cracow Branch. All my requests and proposals were being turned down. I had no idea why. After leaving the Director's office I met in corridor my friend Docent Jan Kowalczyk. Under strict secret he confessed to me that Professor Hensel had been informed by Milisauskas by letter that I had been preparing, together with Janusz Krzysztof Kozłowski, a plot to oust him from his position. As a reward I would become an independent leader of the Cracow Branch. Hensel was very embittered – Kowalczyk said. He could not imagine how his disciple could have done a thing so mean, after receiving so much favor from him (pp. 308-309).

I entered to the office and said that all of this was an insinuation based only on a casual tattle. On hearing this Professor Hensel relaxed. I noticed a great relief and joy that the information he had received appeared to be false. But that time I got really very angry. Soon afterwards Milisauskas came to Cracow. He address to me with a smile, as nothing

had happened. In answer I said that he had done an inadmissible thing. He tried to make very light of the matter. He also explained that being anxious that I would attempt to reduce him after that letter to Hensel, he decided to play the "American way". After all, in the United States during electoral campaigns the candidates utilized all arguments to eliminate their opponents. I answered that in Poland such behaviors are usually called "intrigues". From that moment our relations cooled down. It can be even said that they were terminated (p. 309).

Translated by Jerzy Kopacz