

Professor Jacek Lech's Archaeological Interest in Ojców and the Sąspowska Valley

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Abstract: The work presents an examination of the archaeological interest of Professor Jacek Lech in the Valley of Sąspówka; the development and results of his scientific research, particularly in the Neolithic as well as his cooperation with the Ojców National Park in the years 1970–2006. Professor Lech's first stay in Ojców in 1968 was connected with the archaeology students' apprenticeship. The beginnings of his interest in this area coincided with the first Paleolithic symposium in 1970. In the following years the Professor carried out the scientific study of the Neolithic flint mine in Sąspów. Within our cooperation we held science symposia together and edited three books on archaeology related to the Valley of Prądnik. The Professor has always been helpful and willing to advise on the Ojców National Park's publications, not to mention his support for the Park in its educational activity.

Keywords: Valley of Sąspówka, Ojców, Ojców National Park

One of the diverse archaeological interests of Professor Jacek Lech was the Valley of Prądnik (legally protected for 60 years as the Ojców National Park) within the Cracow-Częstochowa Jurassic Upland.

My first encounter with Professor (then Master of Arts [*magister*]) took place in October 1970. Back then both of us nearly at the same time were at the beginning of our careers after graduation. We met – not knowing each other yet – at the 1st Symposium on archaeology concerning stratigraphy and archaeology of early Würm organized on 12–16 October 1970 right in Ojców by *docent* [associate professor] Waldemar Chmielewski (1929–2004), from 1971 professor of Warsaw University. The participants received materials with the summaries of five out of the thirteen lectures then presented (Chmielewski ed. 1970). The materials included a very modest programme of the Symposium. It was very different from the special editions prepared today due to the limited possibilities of printing at that time.

The organizers chose the exhibition room of the Ojców National Park museum in the former 'Hotel Pod Łokietkiem' for the venue. The museum was under construction so the room was completely empty with unattractive panelling on the walls and newly-assembled central heating. Earlier in the years 1950–1955 the room was used as a canteen of the Technical School of Forestry in Ojców, and later up to 1969 it housed a tourist station of the local branch of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society. The station was gradually ending its activity and so leaving the rooms of the 'Hotel Pod Łokietkiem'. During the Symposium some rooms on the first floor were used for accommodation. Half of the building from the side of Prądnik River housed the warehouse of building materials belonging to the Ojców National Park.

For the purpose of the Symposium, tables, chairs and benches had been brought to the large room on the ground floor. A small exhibition of some archaeological materials from Ojców excavations, mainly from Ciemna Cave, Koziarnia Cave, Wylotne Chalet and Nietoperzowa Cave had been prepared. Those sites were the subject of the archaeological research in the 60s of the 20th century carried out by *docent* Waldemar Chmielewski, dr Teresa Madeyska, geologist, future professor in Institute of Geological Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences and MA Stanisław Kowalski, archaeologist from the Archaeological Museum in Cracow.

The conditions of the Symposium in 1970 were poor and primitive – no running water, no toilets, no way to prepare a 'coffee break'; everyone had to use the nearby 'Nad Basenem' Restaurant. The building of the 'Hotel Pod Łokietkiem' built around 1860 by Count Aleksander Przezdziecki (1814–1871), a historian and amateur archaeologist, the former owner of Ojców, looked poor during the conference. It was in decay and basically fit for demolition. The interior was in bad condition, windows and doors were decrepit, plaster was flaking off and the exterior – derelict. Frankly speaking, it looked almost like stables ('I have a feeling that there are cows about to come out' – observed one of the visitors in my first days of work in the Ojców National Park). I had my office in a small room with the view of the miserable condition of the future museum premises. The impression was quite depressing. In such conditions the participants listened to interesting yet very specialist lectures on Quaternary geology and archaeology. One of the participants was MA Jacek Lech. I – an intern in the Ojców National Park – also listened to the lectures and was becoming familiar with the archaeological past of the Valley of Prądnik. Fortunately, beautiful autumn weather with the colourful autumn leaves of beeches, maples,

sycamores and hornbeams created a picturesque scenery for the field sessions. On 13 October 1970 we walked in the Sąspowska Valley to Wylotne Chalet and Koziarnia Cave, and then to Nietoperzowa Cave in Jerzmanowice guided by *docent* Waldemar Chmielewski and dr Teresa Madeyska. The main site visited that day was the Ciemna Cave, whose exploration was finished in 1968 by MA Stanisław Kowalski. Those were my first visits in those archaeological sites.

MA Jacek Lech used to visit the place during his apprenticeship in the Sąspowska Valley in 1968 (Lech 2006: 729). There was a narrow windy path leading to the Ciemna Cave. It was closed to the public, information we found out during the Symposium from the late Ojców tour guide Kazimierz Zawisz (1915–2009). We stopped at the Cracow Gate to see the location of the Ciemna Cave in the massif of Mount Koronna behind the group of rocks called Rękawica [the Glove] perfectly visible from the Valley of Prądnik at that time. It was then when the tour guide loudly informed us that the cave had been closed due to the ‘archaeological research conducted by professor Kowalski’. MA Stanisław Kowalski, one of the participants of the tour, who brought us to the Ciemna Cave could not help overhearing those words, too. He was presenting the results of his research carried out in the years 1963–1968. The cave was then closed with a special key kept by the director of the Ojców National Park Marcelin Mełges (1917–1999), Master of Engineering.¹

The Ciemna Cave truly impressed me during this first visit, especially the arrangement and scenery of the rocks hiding inside a huge cave visited with the candles (it is still visited this way as it is probably the only cave in Poland without electricity). The archaeological profiles had been carefully secured with a special wall made from limestone fragments which has not survived till today. Since 1992 the cave has been made available for visitors. One can walk from the cave to the viewing points on Mount Koronna, Wapiennik (Barania) Rock and Mount Okopy. It is probably the most beautiful part of the Ojców National Park.

Before the Symposium I had had no orientation in the archaeology of Ojców. Short notes about the prehistory of this territory could be read from the enamelled boards situated on the slope of Mount Zamkowa in Ojców. They informed about the studies of *docent* Waldemar Chmielewski in the Nietoperzowa and Koziarnia Caves and Wylotne Chalet. Those boards were located near the above archaeological sites but later moved to Ojców which resulted in some kind of confusion among the visitors who were searching for those caves at the remains of the castle in Ojców, obviously without success. I myself have witnessed



Fig. 1. Sąspów, Cracow dist. Jacek Lech, Dagmara Mańka and Jan Lech in place of flint mines. 2005. Photo: J. Partyka.

such ‘searches’. This ‘unintentional, funny effect’ was mentioned by Professor Jacek Lech in one of his publications about his memories of the first encounters with Ojców (Lech 2006: 728).

After the Symposium in Ojców, MA Jacek Lech came back to his work begun just two weeks earlier in the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) Institute of the History of Material Culture in Warsaw (now: the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of PAN). I continued my work in the Ojców National Park which I started in the middle of September 1970. For the first two years I was meeting Jacek Lech in Ojców occasionally during his studies in Sąspów, former Olkusz district. Back then in the years 1967–1977 his Institute had a field station in the Villa ‘Warzechówka’ in the Sąspowska Valley. I remember my longer visit in this station at the beginning of October 1973 and the talks about the archaeological research with MA Jacek Lech and a few other persons including MA Hanna Młynarczyk, who later married Jacek.

Since 1969 Jacek Lech had been interested in the materials recovered by dr Anna Dzieduszycka-Machnikowa from the Neolithic mine in Sąspów (former Olkusz district) which was studied during the construction of the local road from Wola Kalinowska to Jerzmanowice through Sąspów (Fig. 1). The site was discovered by Waldemar Chmielewski in May 1960 (Lech 2006b: 742). These materials were made available to him by *docent* Jan Machnik (Lech 2006b: 729 and 739). He also took part in the rescue archaeological research of this site in the spring of 1970 together with dr Anna Dzieduszycka-Machnikowa and again with a group of auxiliary staff in 1994 and 1996 in relation to the installation of gas in Sąspów village (Lech 2011: 118). The flint mine in Sąspów and the Neolithic flint workshop determined

¹ Director of the Ojców National Park in the years 1965–1981.



Fig. 2. Sąsław, Cracow dist. Participants of the Symposium 'Profesor Stefan Krukowski (1890–1982) – archaeological activity and its significance for Polish science'. In the middle Waldemar Chmielewski (1929–2004), first to the right Jacek Lech. Photo: J. Partyka.

the scientific interests of Professor Jacek Lech and – as he himself writes – for many years they determined his further research (Lech 2006: 743).

On the behalf of the management of the Ojców National Park in the 70s of the 20th century we were inviting Jacek to give lectures to our employees and the tour guides showing visitors around the Valley of Prądnik. That is how our cooperation, which later turned into friendship, started. Ojców located in the Valley of Prądnik happened to be the background. As a result of this cooperation we organized a few symposia and wrote a few publications together. Jacek Lech was particularly careful about the editorial form of the lectures and monographs prepared for printing after the symposia. He prepared the programme of each academic meeting with great care and attention. Preparation of a few archaeological volumes together was some kind of ordeal. We had to do everything on our own, yet with possibilities of printing by far better than in 1970. The problem was the authors who did not always keep the deadlines, and the consequent discussions with them, correspondence and phone calls we had to exchange. All these contributed to the delays in publication of materials.

The Professor was appointed a member of the Editorial Board of our journal *Prądnik*. I remember a discussion in 1989 on the clarification of the title, particularly on its English version which had even been discussed with one of the English archaeologists visiting Ojców at that

time. The Professor's advice from his rich experience was very relevant and reinforced our opinion about the need to set up a special periodical – scientific journal to publish papers connected with the Ojców National Park and the Cracow–Częstochowa Upland *vel* Polish Jura.

Our academic cooperation began with the preparations for the symposium organized to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of professor Stefan Krukowski (1890–1982), researcher of Paleolithic. The first talks were held in the spring 1989 with the then director of the Ojców National Park, Henryk Jędrusik, Master of Engineering.² A few months later there was a change of the position of the Park's director. Rudolf Suchanek, Master of Engineering was appointed the new director of the Park. Our plans connected with that very important academic meeting were accepted and fully approved. The symposium on 'Professor Stefan Krukowski (1890–1982) – archaeological activity and its meaning for Polish science' was held on 2–4 May 1990 in Ojców. There were about 30 participants mainly archaeologists from Cracow and Warsaw and about 20 lectures presented.

An integral part of the symposium was the field session in the Sąsławska Valley (Fig. 2) preceded by the visit to the Ciemna Cave and the naming of 'Krukowski's Rock' – one of the rocks at the path leading to the Cave. The celebration was attended by the participants of

² Director of the Ojców National Park in the years 1985–1989.

the symposium and the widow of professor Stefan Krukowski, Janina Uracz-Krukowska. The final accent of this event was the meeting in the house of Uracz family in Ojców – villa ‘Janina’ nearby the Cracow Gate.

After the symposium Jacek and I began to complete the texts of lectures presented during the sessions. The materials came in irregularly, the correspondence with the authors continued, proofreading was in progress, and we tried to find funds for printing the materials. I remember one of the two-day editorial meetings at the beginning of 1992 which took place in the palace in Igołomia, Cracow district (the seat of the Branch of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of PAN). We spent a long time on editorial processing with Danuta Piotrowska from the National Museum of Archaeology in Warsaw, who participated in the processing of these materials. Eventually, we managed to finish up and send everything to the printing house in Cracow. The materials were published in two versions – as the sixth issue of the scientific journal of the Ojców National Park *Prądnik. The Works and Materials of the Professor Władysław Szafer Museum* (Lech and Partyka eds 1992a) and as a book with the index of names and geographical names (Lech and Partyka eds 1992b). This technique was recommended by one of the sponsors who could not support printing of the journal but only the monographs.

The subsequent symposium – on the 125th anniversary of archaeological research in Ojców Jura and on the 40th anniversary of the Ojców National Park was held on 8–10 May 1996. It was organized by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of PAN and the Professor Władysław Szafer Museum of the Ojców National Park. 71 participants from different archaeological institutions in Poland and foreign guests joined the symposium which was preceded by a few meetings with Jacek Lech, a consultant on the topics, the list of guests and lectures. And again the substantive help of Jacek in the preparations to the symposium – the program, in the field sessions and even printing the invitations – was invaluable. One of the members of the organizational team was Danuta Piotrowska, the author of a vast report from this meeting (Piotrowska 2006). It was probably our largest joint organizational venture under the auspices of Zofia Kuratowska (1932–2013), professor of archaeology, then deputy marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland. One of the participants of the symposium was professor Stefan Kozłowski (1928–2007), geologist, the former Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection in the Polish government of Jan Olszewski. After the chamber session held in the same building, ‘Pod Łokietkiem’ as the first symposium in 1970 but in renovated interior, a field session took place. We also went on a trip to the Mamutowa Cave in Wierzchowie, Cracow district,

where Count Jan Zawisza (1822–1887) the then owner of Ojców had started archaeological research 125 years before.

Again the time of collecting the texts for the archaeological monograph of Ojców Jura came. Difficult works had continued for a longer while and when almost all material had been collected, professor Waldemar Chmielewski, an outstanding researcher of Paleolithic connected with the Ojców National Park for a number of years, died. For this reason we dedicated the issue to him and we expanded it by the memoirs of his students and friends (Lech and Partyka eds 2006). The issue was published in print in October 2006 shortly before the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Ojców National Park (Lech 2006a).

Shortly after the jubilee of the 125th anniversary of the archaeological research on the territory of the Ojców Jura we started to organize the next symposium on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the discovery of the Światowid [Zbruch Idol] in the basin of the Zbruch River in present-day Ukraine. The first part of the Symposium took place in 1998 in the seat of Zapowiednik ‘Miodobory’ in Hrymailiv (Grzymałów) in Ukraine, cooperating with the Ojców National Park since 1994. The second part was planned for the end of April 1999 in Ojców and Cracow in Poland. Jacek and I had a vivid discussion on the programme of the meetings. It was necessary to develop the theme of the meeting in such way that it combined archaeology of both territories simultaneously emphasizing their natural analogies. An important reference was also the discovery of the Zbruch Idol.

This time we managed to collect the texts of the lectures earlier and a mere two years later we published a special issue *Z archeologii Ukrainy i Jury Ojcowskiej* [From the Archaeology of Ukraine and the Ojcow Jura] (Lech and Partyka eds 2001a), including executive summaries in English and Ukrainian. The issue was dedicated to the two late archaeologists meritorious for archaeology of Ukraine and Poland, dr Iryna Rusanowa (1929–1998) and dr Ewa Rook (1930–1999). The issue included materials regarding the nature of both protected areas (the Ojców National Park and Zapowiednik ‘Miodobory’) and the most recent archaeological research in the region of Ojców. It also included descriptions of Polish – Ukrainian cooperation in the field of archaeology and the hitherto contacts of the Ojców National Park with the Ukrainian Zapowiednik ‘Miodobory’.

In the years 1998 and 2000 Professor Jacek Lech conducted archaeological surveys on the Ciemna Cave on the margin of the Ojców National Park, which I was invited to join. I got the opportunity to take a closer look at the on-site work of the archaeologists who

reconstruct the conditions of living of the humans in past epochs on the basis of single discoveries. The result of this research are our two publications (Lech and Partyka 2001b, 2001c).

In May 2001 was organized the celebration of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the Ojców National Park and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Jurassic Landscape Parks Complex were organized. We prepared a joint scientific session where Professor Jacek Lech presented the poster about the prehistory of Sąspów (Lech 2001).

In 2006 the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Ojców National Park was celebrated. Professor Jacek Lech attended the ceremonial sessions on 10 and 11 October 2006. He gave a very interesting and important lecture on the impact of human pressure on the archaeological sites in the Ojców National Park and its buffer zone. On this occasion a book entitled *Jura Ojcowska w pradziejach i początkach państwa polskiego* [The Ojców Jura in prehistoric times and the beginnings of the Polish nation] was published (Lech and Partyka eds 2006). It was our largest joint edition and at the same time the last accord of editorial cooperation. Unfortunately, due to the lack of approval from the director of the Ojców National Park, the promotion of the book in Ojców with a short walk to Oborzysko near the Ciemna Cave and to Sąspowska Valley often visited by professor Waldemar Chmielewski (planned for November 2006) did not take place. Instead, on 1 December 2006 in the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of PAN in Warsaw a ceremonial session referring to the most recent archaeological research in the region of Ojców was held. It was combined with the promotion of the aforementioned publication mostly in tribute of professor Waldemar Chmielewski (Lech and Partyka eds 2006). Amongst a few lectures there was also mine entitled 'Ojców and the Ojców Jura in the history of archaeology', which considered the significance of this part of Poland for archaeology and highlighted the activity of the researchers of our prehistory, including Professor Jacek Lech. On that day I was awarded a medal and a diploma of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of PAN as a reliable friend of the Institute.

The end of 2006 actually closed the formal cooperation of Professor Jacek Lech with the Ojców National Park, yet, not completely. We are still in good rapport (Fig. 3), still in touch by mail, phone and e-mails. However we now lack the substantive context, which used to be the Ojców National Park with its numerous archaeological issues. A recent example of this cooperation was my participation in the conference in the archaeological reserve Krzemionki in April 2014 where I was invited by Professor Jacek Lech. I was introducing the participants



Fig. 3. Sąspów, Cracow dist. Jacek Lech in front of Howe Chalet. 2005. Photo: J. Partyka.

to the organization and protection of nature in the Ojców National Park. The lecture prepared with dr Anna Sołtys-Lelek (Ojców National Park) was submitted for printing (Partyka and Sołtys-Lelek, in progress).

I keep the memory of each pleasant and exceptional aspect of this cooperation, especially the substantive value, the expertise of Professor Jacek Lech in editorial works, his great knowledge about archaeology and more – in the field of culture, which he shared with everyone who met him. He would always give unconditional advice and help. His reviews of articles have always been reliable. I myself frequently used his expert help in preparing various papers for printing. In his reviews one could feel the selflessness and great kindness, yet without leniency towards authors – no such thing was included and this was the true value of his help. I hope that Professor Jacek Lech will still work in archaeology and share his knowledge and expertise not only with his students but also with friends. I hope that he will continue to visit Ojców – this tiny archaeological site in the cultural space of the great world, where he will always be a welcome and valued Guest.

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