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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANDRZEJ PELISIAK, ZBIGNIEW MAJ

**NEW NEOLITHIC AND EARLY BRONZE AGE
FINDS FROM THE BIESZCZADY MOUNTAINS
(WETLINA RIVER VALLEY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS)**

ABSTRACT

A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj 2013. *New Neolithic and Early Bronze Age finds from the Bieszczady Mountains (Wetlina River Valley and its surroundings)*, AAC 48: 265–272.

The finds of chipped artefacts from Wetlina-Stare Sioło, Orłowicz Pass, Moczarne, and Czerteż Pass are the first archaeological confirmation of human activity in the Bieszczady Mountains in the Late Neolithic. These finds correspond with older anthropological changes of vegetation recorded in pollen diagrams from Smerek and Tarnawa Wyżna which began ca. 2800 BC. They refer to the seasonal animal grazing in the high altitude landscapes. The use of high mountain pastures was connected with salt springs frequent in this area.

Key words: Poland; Carpathians; Late Neolithic; seasonal herding; chipped artefacts; salt

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INTRODUCTION

Extensive palynological investigations have indicated that human interference with once almost fully forested landscape in Bieszczady Mountains become evident from about 2800 BC. These oldest information about human activity in this area come from pollen spectra from Smerek and Tarnawa Wyżna. Anthropomorphic changes of vegetations registered in the III millenium BC in the pollen diagrams resulted from and were connected with animals herding which started probably at the turn of the fourth and third millennium BC (Ralska-Jasiewiczowa 1969; 1980). Unfortunately there were not archaeological confirmations of the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity in this part of the Bieszczady Mts. Single finds of artefacts dated to these period have already been registered in deeper parts of the Carpathians (Lower Beskidy and

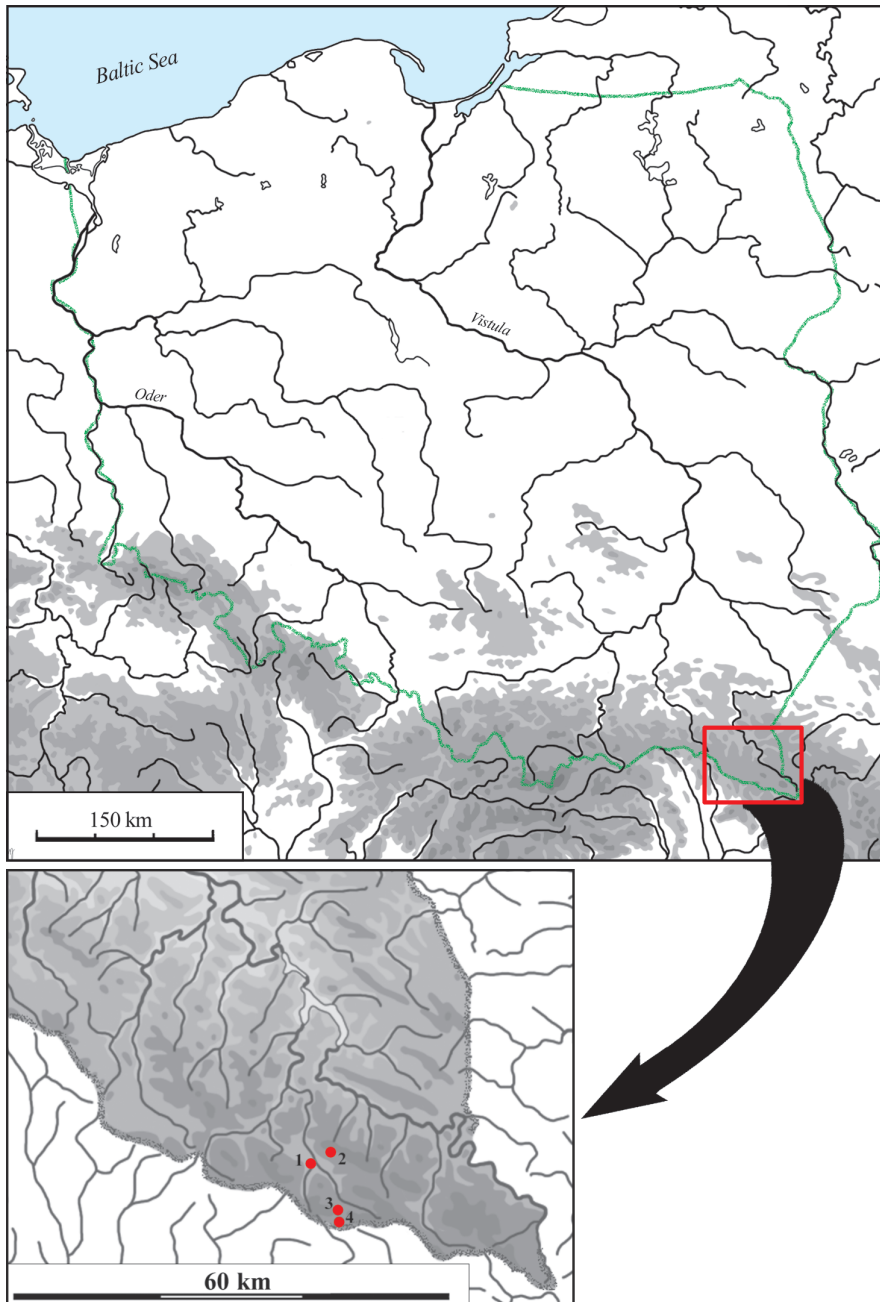


Fig. 1. Location of finds of chipped artefacts from Wetlina Valley and its surroundings (w. — województwo; p. — powiat; g. — gmina); drawn by A. Pelisiak and I. Jordan.

- 1 — Wetlina-Stare Siolo, site No. 1, w. podkarpackie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland; 2 — Orłowicz Pass, site No. 1, w. podkarpackie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland; 3 — Moczarne, site No. 1, w. podkarpackie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland; 4 — Czerteż Pass, site No. 1, w. podkarpackie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland.

northern Bieszczady Mountains) but they were absent on the area in a close vicinity of Smerek and Tarnawa Wyzna (Parczewski, Pelisiak, Szczepanek 2013; Pelisiak 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Valde-Nowak 1988).

This paper presents the recent discoveries of four artefacts made of different raw material found in four locations near Wetlina village. Three of them (from Orłowicz Pass, Moczarne and Czerteż Pass) were discovered by Z. Maj, one (blade from Wetlina) by A. Pelisiak, all in 2013 (Fig. 1).

The discoveries presented below are the first Neolithic and/or Early Bronze Age finds from this area. All the sites are located within a Wetlina Valley and in its close vicinity. Moreover they are located near the Smerek in the distance up to 4,5 km from this palynological site. Because of short distance between location of these finds and the Smerek peatbog, anthropogenic changes of vegetation recorded in Smerek pollen diagram can be tied with human activity evidenced by archaeological material described below. Moreover, all these finds were discovered in the high landscape zones where the altitude exceeds those of other Neolithic finds from the Polish Carpathians. Only one exception is the blade core made of Jurassic flint found on the altitude of about 1350 m a.s.l. in Kondratowa Valley in Tatra Mountains (Tunia 1977). And finally, in three cases the artefacts were made of non local raw material. The nearest natural sources of menilite hornstones are located in distance of several kilometers, and the sources of Bircza flint are several tens of kilometers (Łaptaś et al. 2002).

FINDS

1. Wetlina-Stare Siolo, site 1, województwo podkarpackie, powiat Lesko, gmina Cisna.

Location: within a Wetlina Valley, on a small plateau about 3 m above the present bed of Wetlina River, at the west end of Wetlina village, near the old ford in Stare Siolo (about 600 m a.s.l.).

Material: 1 mid part of blade made of quartzite, one edge worked-out with irregular “use” retouch, length 31 mm, width 32 mm, thickness 4 mm (Fig. 2:1).

2. Orłowicz Pass, site 1, województwo podkarpackie, powiat Lesko, gmina Cisna.

Location: on the Orłowicz Pass about 1080 m a.s.l.

Material: 1 fragment of irregular flake made of menilite hornstone in a shape similar to knife-like tool with natural back, unretouched, working edge with irregular “use” retouch on the opposite side to the back, length 34 mm, width 22 mm, thickness 5 mm (Fig. 2:2).

3. Moczarne, site 1, województwo podkarpackie, powiat Lesko, gmina Cisna.

Location: near the stream called Beskidnik, inside a small pass between the Szypowaty Mountain and another local elevation on the altitude of about 770 m.a.s.l.

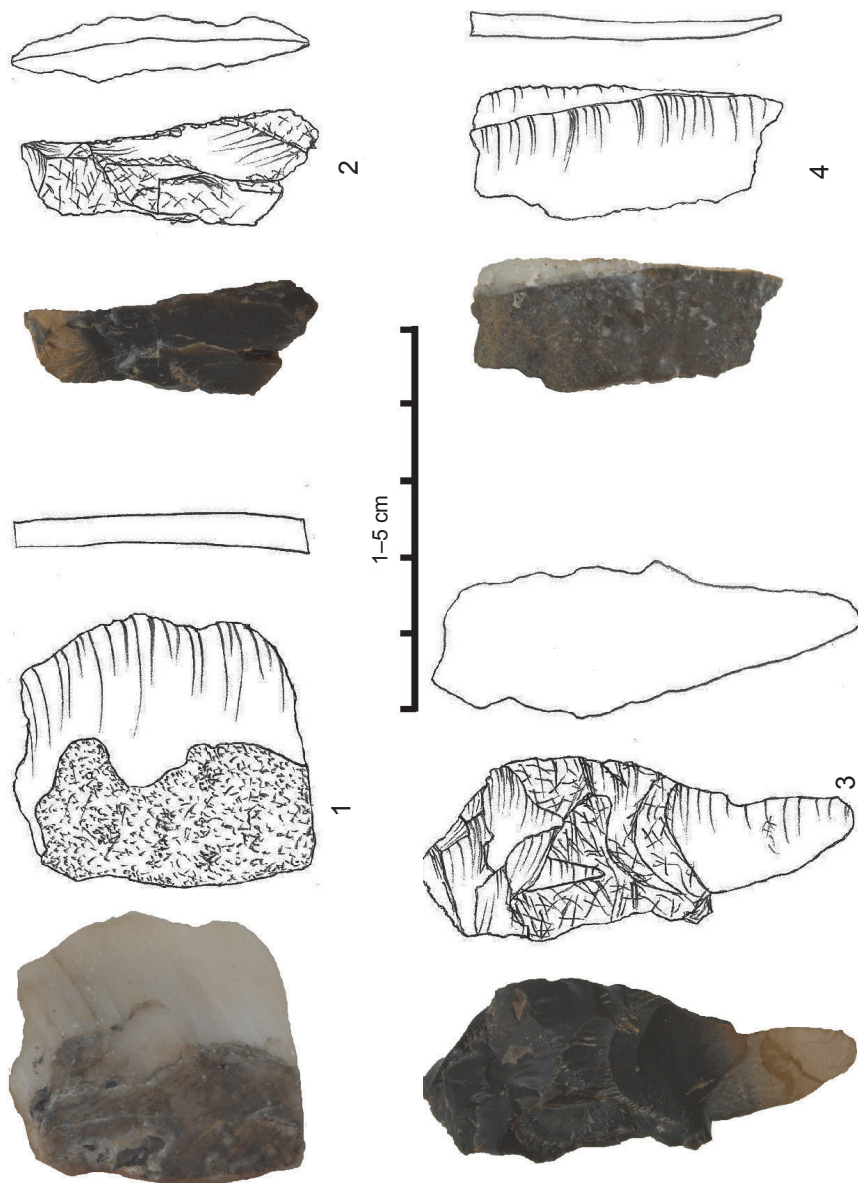


Fig. 2. Finds of chipped artefacts from Wetlina Valley and its surroundings; Photo by Z. Maj, drawn by A. Pelisiak.
 1 — Wetlina-Stare Sioblo, site No. 1, w. podkarpacie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland. Mid part of blade made of quartzite; 2 — Orłowicz Pass, site No. 1, w. podkarpacie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland. Fragment of irregular flake made of menilite hornstone in a shape similar to knife-like tool; 3 — Moczarnie, site No. 1, w. podkarpacie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland. Irregular bipolar made of menilite hornstone; 4 — Czerteż Pass, site No. 1, w. podkarpacie, p. Lesko, g. Cisna, Poland. Mid part of irregular blade made of raw material similar to so called Breza flint.

Material: 1 irregular bipolar made of menilite hornstone with one front sharp, and second front blunt, length 55 mm, width 23 mm, thickness 23 mm (Fig. 2:3).

4. Czerteż Pass, site 1, województwo podkarpackie, powiat Lesko, gmina Cisna.

Location: local plateau near the state border on the altitude of about 900 m a.s.l.

Material: 1 mid part of irregular blade made of raw material similar to so called Bircza flint, one edge unretouched, used-up, opposite edge is wide and makes natural and unretouched back, length 43 mm, width 18 mm, thickness 8 mm (Fig. 2:4).

DISCUSSION

The artefacts are differentiated in terms of technology and typology: two of them are made of menilite hornstone, one of quartzite and one of Bircza flint. Fragments of blades from Wetlina and Czerteż Pass are typical for Neolithic. Important for estimation of more precise chronology of these artefacts are the oldest manifestations of human activity recorded in pollen diagram in Smerek. This suggests that both blades can be dated to the Late Neolithic. Bipolar from Moczarne and the flake tool from Orłowicz Pass are the examples of artefacts frequent in the Neolithic as well as in the Early Bronze Age. It should be emphasized that the bipolar and the flake knife-like tool made of menilite hornstone found also their numerous counterparts in the material dated to the Early Bronze Age including specific items from the mountains, i.e. inventories of so called Orava Type (Kopacz, Valde-Nowak 1987a; 1987b; Valde-Nowak 1986a; 1986b). Therefore it is prudent to propose for them broad chronology within a period from the turn of IV and III millennia to ca. 1600/1500 BC, but the younger metrics including the later parts of the Bronze Age can not be ruled out too.

The chipped artefacts from the Wetlina Valley and its vicinity are an archaeological reflection of the early exploitation of this part of the Bieszczady Mountains started from the Late Neolithic. This problematic, in slightly wider geographical range but relating also to this part of Carpathians, has recently been the subject of detailed study (Parczewski, Pelisiak, Szczepanek 2013; Pelisiak 2005; 2010; 2013a; 2013b; 2014). The one aim of above publications was an attempt to identify and define on the base of distribution of single chipped artefacts and palynological information the zones of human activity in the deeper parts of the Carpathians including the Bieszczady Mountains located outside the zones permanently inhabited by communities of the Funnel Beaker, Corded Ware and Mierzanowice cultures. There was suggested that in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age the deeper parts

of Eastern Polish Carpathians could be used as a zone of seasonal animals herding. The finds from Wetlina, Orłowicz Pass, Moczarne and Czerteż Pass confirm this hypothesis.

Important question is, what motivated the Late Neolithic men to enter into the Bieszczady Mountains? It seems to be that numerous salt springs were important component of natural environment here. Significance of salt and salt springs in a pastoral economy is unquestionable and has been frequently discussed (e.g. Chapman, Gaydarska 2003; Danu, Gauthier, Weller 2010; Nikolov, Krum 2012; Pelisiak 2007; 2008/2009; Saile 2008; Weller, Brigand, Nuninger 2008; Weller, Dumitroaia 2005). Salt springs, numerous water springs, small streams, and high level of ground water built a favorable conditions for the development of vegetations, even in dry seasons. These circumstances were probably properly recognized by Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age herders, and led these groups to use these suitable, mountainous pastures located several or several tens kilometers away of their villages.

Another questions refer to the preparation of convenient pastures in the landscapes previously unchanged by human activity connected with cultivation of plants. The initial step of adaptation of these areas for animals herding must have been related to entering the first herders into virgin forests, and subsequently to conform these landscapes for their own needs by preparation of some clearings which were suitable for grass and shrubs vegetation — rich animal feed.

The important economic and social changes took place during the Late Neolithic over the large territory of Europe (Milisauskas, Kruk 2001a; 2011b; Kruk, Milisauskas 1999). An important part of these transformations was a significant growth of animals in human life. Seasonal grazing of animals in the high altitude landscapes are suggested for various part of Europe (e.g. Gerling et al. 2012; Greenfield 1999; Kienlin, Valde-Nowak 2002/2004). Separated Baden Culture graves from the Western Carpathians located tens of kilometers from the area settled by these communities can also be interpreted as an archaeological reflection of seasonal use of the mountains in Late Neolithic (Valde-Nowak 2008; 2010).

Above described finds from the Bieszczady Mountains refer to these processes too. Moreover, they are the first archaeological confirmation of earliest, Late Neolithic use of high altitude landscapes in this part of the Carpathians.

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