The exploatation and processing of raw materials in the Stone Age was one of the most important factor of the human settlement around raw material deposits and also an attribute determining the nature of the occupations that focused on a specified function. The system of exploitation and processing of flint, which is the basic and one of the most important archaeological artefacts present at the Stone Age sites, is a problem that requires a particular, extensive and comprehensive multidisciplinary research. Studies on these issues in Poland have a long tradition, and dateback to the early twentieth century. In Poland there are a number of exellent quality deposits of siliceous raw materials, which were used during the prehistory. One of the most important raw material used during the Stone Age, was the so called "chocolate flint" (the name after brown colour of flint). His deposits are located in the Northern margin of the Holy Cross Mountains, up to the borderlands with Mazowieckie Lowland (Radom Plain) in świętokrzyskie and mazovian voyvodeship. Chocolate flint deposits cover about 90 km (north-east: south-west).
Archeological research in this area in terms of prehistoric flint mining and processing were carrying out in 20-ties and 30-ties by the prominent polish archeologist prof. Stefan Krukowski, as well as later by other distinguished scholars. Their research led to the discovery of exploitation points (mines) and processing workshops, camps, used by the Stone Age communities.
This project focuses on the most north-western part of these deposits (in the Orońsko region and its vicinity). In this area there are numerous evidence of Stone Age (especially the oldest part of it) mining activities also with the advanced, underground mining constructions (shafts). However, archaeological excavations that revealed the presence of one of the oldest in Poland mine shafts were conducted only in one site (on small scale) of at least several other mining sites well known from the surface survey in the region. The site (Orońśko II) is entered in the international catalog of prehistoric mining (PL 1) alongside other well-known flint mines (such as Krzemionki in Poland or Grimes Graves in the UK).
Comprehensive field works with the use of a variety of geophysical and environmental methods shall allow for obtaining the new data and shall let for reconstruction of the settlement in north-western part of the chocolate flint deposits.
Around flint outcrops the Stone Age settlement was concentrated. The vicinity of flint outcrops was also the factor determining the nature of this settlement, concentrated on a specific function.
The aim of research is, therefore, a detailed characeristic of Paleolithic and Mesolithic settlement concentrated on the exploitation and processing of flint on this limited by natural boundaries part of chocolate flint outcrops, as well as an attempt to reconstruct the diversity of systems of prehistoric mining and processing of flint in each period and within particular taxonomic units.
The base of the research will be the results of the field, non-invasive surveys (surface prospection and geophysical survey) and small-scale excavations (test-trenches), to verify the already known settlement points, as well as locating new, previously not excavated site.
The study shall allow for the recognition of particular settlement points and its corelation in prehistory as a points of extractions (mining) and processing (workshop) chocolate flint, one of the most widely used raw material in the Stone Age on Polish territory.
It shall be possible to reconstruct the settlement concentrated on the exploitation of flint and refer this model to other areas related to the system of prehistoric flint mining.
It shall be possible also to evaluate the relationship between the distance from the outcrops and the nature of the settlement and the impact of deposits on the intensity of the settlement in the particular periods of the Stone Age, as well as the role of mining systems in everyday living of the Paleolithic and Mesolithic societies.s of the Stone Age.