

Chocolate flint on the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland. Mining, use and distribution.

The region of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland is characteristic due to its exceptionally favourable palaeoenvironmental conditions in relation to prehistoric settlement. During the glaciations and at the beginning of the Holocene, a variety of life-sustaining resources were available to man in this region: animals wandering through valleys provided food, watercourses and karst springs supplied water, caves and rockshelters offered protection, whereas outcrops of Jurassic limestone provided good quality flint needed for the manufacture of hunting tools and weapons. Against this background, two excellent quality raw materials stand out, namely chocolate flint and striped flint, whose outcrops until recently were identified only with the region of the Holy Cross Mountains, and in recent years were discovered in the central part of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland.

Learning the character and conditions of settlement of prehistoric communities constitutes one of key studies of the Stone Age researcher. The basic method is a detailed analysis of archaeological sites, however, it is also extremely important to perform a close examination of the space around them, as the background for social and cultural development. It is the issue concerning the first of the mentioned raw materials, i.e. chocolate flint that the main assumptions and objectives of the project are focused around.

The main objective of the presented project is a detailed examination of the distribution of chocolate flint deposits throughout the entire Kraków-Częstochowa Upland, in the context of its exploitation sites and the role that this raw material played in particular periods of prehistory.

The answer to the question about the route travelled by a particular flint product (i.e. where the raw material was excavated and what happened to it) is crucial for the understanding the mechanisms of human activity in the past. Scheduled research tasks, such as geological mapping of deposits, excavation at the chocolate flint exploitation site (mine) in the Udorka Valley and a thorough archival analysis of inventories based on this raw material, are particularly important for studies on the use of local resources and determining the share of so-called imports in the inventories of prehistorical sites located in the area of the Polish Jura.

The project manager, Dr. Magdalena Sudoł-Procyk, is an archaeologist by profession, specialising in research on the Paleolithic and Mesolithic settlements of the Częstochowa Upland, in the context of palaeoenvironmental conditions. Important part of her studies are silica raw materials in the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland, which refer to the subject matter of this project. Dr. Magdalena Sudoł-Procyk has been employed at the Institute of Archeology of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń since 2004 and since then has been involved in archaeological research at cave sites in the central part of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland.