

## Chroniques / Kroniek

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*Archaeology of the pre- and protohistoric flint mining: contemporary perspectives.*

Paris, Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie, 3rd-4th September 2007.

**Report from organizing activities and the first conference of the IUPPS-UISPP Commission:  
*Flint Mining in Pre- and Protohistoric Times***

Reported by Anne Hauzeur (Brussels)

### **1. Origin of the Commission and the first activities**

Archaeological research into prehistoric flint mining has a long and rich tradition. It led to the discovery of many magnificent prehistoric monuments starting from spectacular cross-section by Petit-Spiennes plateau in Belgium in 1867, and then flint mines at Cissbury and Grimes Graves in England, Rijckholt – St. Gertruid in the Netherlands, Krzemionki Opatowskie in Poland, Defensola A in Italy and recently Casa Montero in Spain. Excavations of prehistoric flint mines have been frequently reported on and discussed at sessions of the International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology, starting with the one in Brussels in 1872, and then many times at Congresses of the IUPPS. For this reason group of archaeologists from several countries turned to the UISPP authorities to support an initiative in creating the Commission for Flint Mining in Pre- and Protohistoric Times. It happened on the XVth Congress in Lisboa in September 2006.

The first conference of the Commission was held in Paris on September, 3rd-4<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at the Institute of Art and Archaeology, University Paris I Pantheon-Sorbonne. The theme of conference was *Archaeology of the pre- and protohistoric flint mining: contemporary perspectives*.

After a welcome to all the present members made by the organizers Pierre Allard, Françoise Bostyn, and François Giligny in a lecture

room of the Institute, Jacek Lech reported to the present members and invited guests the historical background of the establishment of our Commission, linked with the idea of relaunching the famous “Flint Symposium” from the 20th century.

Historical context of the “Flint symposia” has been remembered at this occasion. A proposal for establishing a Commission on Flint Mining in Pre- and Protohistoric Times in the International Union of Pre- and Protohistoric Sciences / Union internationale des Sciences pré-et protohistoriques (IUPPS-UISPP) referred to the tradition of organizing international symposia on flint, established by the Limburg Branch of the Dutch Geological Society in 1969 at Maastricht. The next meetings were organized in 1975 and 1979 in Maastricht, in 1983 in Brighton, 1987 in Bordeaux, 1991 in Madrid, 1995 in Warsaw and Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. The last symposium took place in Bochum in 1999. Then J. Lech, and some other researchers, were informed by Ing. P.J. (Sejuf) Felder from the Limburg Branch of the Dutch Geological Society that there would be no further symposia, due to the retirement of their organizers. Nevertheless our milieu felt the need for such meetings. Therefore we came to establish this commission.

Jacek Lech repeated in Paris that the intention is to maintain cooperation in the area of archaeological research into siliceous rock mining (flint, chert, hornstone, radiolarite, jasper, obsidian...), presenting and discussing

methods and results. Some of the foremost fields of interest will be research into different stages of the “*chaînes opératoires*” of manufacture, specialisation of labour and circulation of raw materials, as well as the study of sites of flint mines belonging to pre- and protohistoric settlement networks. The commission’s objective will be the promotion of those lines of research into flint mining and its methods which will allow for a better understanding of various phenomena and processes taking place in pre- and protohistorical times.

Then speaker reminded us that - according to our Foundation declaration - the Commission intends to act in accordance with IUPPS principles. We wish to organize international symposia devoted to research on prehistoric flint mining every five years and, in between, to manage workshops devoted to specific areas of research. The later would be accompanied by visits to pre- and protohistoric flint mining sites whenever possible. The results of the Commission activities will be published.

Then Jacek Lech shortly described a history of archaeological research into prehistoric flint mining. This research began exactly 140 years ago. At Spiennes (Belgium) it led to the discovery of such magnificent prehistoric monuments as the mines. In the next years, many others were investigated such as Cissbury and Grimes Graves in England, Rijckholt - St. Geertruid in the Netherlands, Krzemionki Opatowskie in Poland. Excavations of prehistoric flint mines have been frequently reported on and discussed at sessions of the International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology, starting with the one in Brussels in 1872, and then many times at Congresses of the IUPPS. Many distinguished scholars were studied prehistoric flint mining in Europe and other continents.

The proposal for the creation of a Commission devoted to “Flint mining in Pre- and Protohistoric Times” in the frame of the

International Union of Pre- and Protohistoric Sciences came from discussions among a group of scholars interested in the topic, former participants of “Flint Symposia” as Françoise Bostyn, Marjorie de Grooth, Jacek Lech, Alan Saville, Andreas Zimmermann and others. The final initiative was undertaken by Jacek Lech and Anne Hauzeur. The address to the IUPPS Congress was supported between end of June, and beginning of August 2006 by ca. 40 scholars from seven countries. The Commission got the official agreement during the meeting of the Permanent Committee in Lisboa in September 2006, where organisers were represented by Anne Hauzeur.

The first informal meeting of members of the IUPPS Flint Mining Commission was held September 21st, 2006, in the Archaeological Museum in Cracow, during the 12th annual meeting of the EAA (19th - 23rd of September). Results of the Cracow meeting were presented to participants of the Paris conference. In the Cracow meeting participated: Jerzy T. Bąbel (PL), Françoise Bostyn (FR), Marta Capote and Cristina Criado (SP), François Giligny (FR), Anne Hauzeur (BE), Jacek Lech (PL), Alan Saville (GB), and in the first part Dr. Jacek Rydzewski, Director of the Museum, who will come guest of our Commission from abroad and Poland. The Cracow Museum excavated some prehistoric mining and workshops sites in Little Poland with the first excavations of the Flint mines at Krzemionki Opatowskie in the twenties of the last century. In the second part, participants of the Cracow meeting discussed the following points:

1. Idea of the Commission
2. Membership
3. Report from the Lisbon Congress
4. Proposals for programme.

It was decided to organise the first official meeting of the Commission in Paris in the beginning of September 2007 (3 days). François Giligny was so kind to accept to organise the meeting, with the help of the other French members of the Commission:

Françoise Bostyn, and Pierre Allard. It was told that the meeting in Paris would be a session only for members of the Commission with basic purposes to organise our work and future activities as well as to discuss a state of research of Pre- and Protohistoric flint mining in our countries, and current problems of studies in this field.

In Cracow was decided that the election of a Presidium of the Commission will be held in Paris. Because was expected that the Commission will have approximately 50 members, the participants of the Cracow meeting proposed that the presidium should have a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and two other members. The proposal was accepted by members of the Commission during the Paris meeting. The Cracow meeting decided that the election will be only amongst and by the members who will be present in Paris.

In closing remarks the speaker remembered the IUPPS regulations for the Commission. The most important point is to be active not only during the IUPPS congresses every five years, but also between these main sessions. We are open also for organising links and crosses with the other Commissions of the IUPPS. During the gap will be organised "Flint mining symposia" referring to a specific topic interesting for organisers and the Commission.

At the occasion of the Paris meeting we proceeded to the election of the Presidium.

At the majority of the present members were chosen:

President: Françoise Bostyn (FR)

Vice-President: Jacek Lech (PL)

Secretary: Anne Hauzeur (BE)

Added members: Alan Saville (UK), Pierre Allard (FR)

They have been elected for 5 years.

## 2. Programme summary of the Conference

In the frame of the recent researches in the Paris basin, lectures related to this topic were presented on Monday: "Flint mines and axe workshops in the Seine Valley" by François Giligny, Françoise Bostyn, "La minière de Ri, Orne, France" by Cyril Marcigny, Jean Desloges, Emmanuel Ghesquière, Sébastien Giazzon et Laurent Juhel, and a film projection about "Flint mine digging experimentations". Next Tuesday was devoted to other countries with: "A survey of Palaeolithic and Neolithic flint mines in Israel" by Avi Gopher and Ran Barkai, "The Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and research on flint mining of Danubian communities in the Vistula basin" by Jacek Lech, "Grimes Graves: recent work and future possibilities" by Gillian Varndell and David Field, "The exploitation of secondary flint resources" by Alan Saville, and "The Flint Source reference collection" by Rengert Elburg. In the afternoon we go on with the overview: "The Krzemionki Opatowskie flint mine site: state of affairs" by Jerzy T. Bąbel, "Methodological approaches to the excavation, survey and study of the flint mine of Casa Montero (Madrid)" by Xavier Terradas, Pedro Díaz-del-Río, Susana Consuegra, Marta Capote, Cristina Criado, Juan M. Vicent and Teresa Orozco, "Flint mining of Mauer-Antonshöhe in Vienna" by Gerhard Trnka, "Distribution and functions of tools made of mined flint in the Neolithic cultures in the Polish Lowland" by Jolanta Małecka-Kukawka, and finally "Study of the lithic waste left during the mining activities in the mining feature itself: the case study of the shaft 20 in Petit-Spiennes" by Hélène Collet and Michel Woodbury.

## 3. Participants

Here follows the list by alphabetical order of the participants at the Paris meeting:

Pierre Allard (CNRS), Jerzy Tomasz Bąbel

(Krzemionki Opatowskie Museum, Poland), Françoise Bostyn (Inrap<sup>1</sup>, France), Marta Capote (University of Madrid), François Charraud, Hélène Collet (Spiennes Museum, Belgium), Véronique Darras (University of Paris X), Jean Desloges (DRAC-SRA Basse-Normandie), Rengert Elburg (Flintsources.net), David Field (British Cultural Heritage), Emmanuel Ghesquière (Inrap, France), Sébastien Giazzon, François Giligny (University Paris I Pantheon-Sorbonne), Avi Gopher (University of Tell Aviv), Anne Hauzeur (University of Liège, Belgium), Laurent Juhel, Jacek Lech (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw), Marion Lemée, Jolanta Małacka-Kukawka (N. Copernic University of Toruń), Cyril Marcigny (Inrap, France), Alan Saville (National Museums of Scotland), Xavier Tarradas (University of Barcelona), Gerhard Trnka (University of Vienna), Gillian Varndell (British Museum).

### 3. Members and membership

Colleagues, which supported the address to the IUPPS Congress between end of June, and beginning of August 2006 are automatically the first group of members of the Commission for the next five years. The second group are the active researchers who were present during the Paris conference, and which declared access to the Commission. The next members will be welcome by participation in the next meetings of the Commission in Madrid – 2009, in Vienne 2010 and in Brasil in 2011.

### 4. Programme to 2012

After discussions proposals for our next activities have been made: The members of the Commission decided to organise a meeting (conference, symposium, workshop, colloquium) every two years after 2012.

2009 – Madrid (Spain) and the new discoveries of a mining field at Casa Montero

The main topic will be “Flint mining techniques in Prehistoric Europe”

Organisators: Susana Consuegra (CSIC-IH, Madrid), Pedro Díaz-del-Río (CSIC-IH, Madrid), and Xavier Terradas (CSIC-IMF, Barcelona).<sup>2</sup>

2010 – Vienna (Austria)

The topic will be “Mines structures”, and the preparation of the Brasil session  
Organisator: Gerhard Trnka

2011 – Brasil: the next IUPPS Congress

The topic of symposium organized by the Commission will be “The Flint Mines studies in light of Ethnoarchaeology and experiments”

One contact will be Véronique Darras who belongs to the UMR 8096 “Archéologie des Amériques” at the *Maison de l’Archéologie et de l’Ethnographie* in Paris-Nanterre, France

2012 – Paris

In the first part the next official meeting of the Commission with discuss of organisation and programme of the body for the next five years with new election (for members only), and in the second part the open archaeological conference with papers like in 2007.

The Commission invite all colleagues who are interested in siliceous rock mining and allied activities in pre- and protohistoric times to participate in our meetings and to membership in the Commission.

Contact:

Anne Hauzeur  
ahauzeur@yahoo.fr

<sup>1</sup> Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives / National Institute for Research in Preventive Archaeology

<sup>2</sup> The 2nd International Conference of the Commission: “Flint Mining and Quarrying Techniques in Pre- and Proto-historic Times” was held in Madrid, October 14-16, 2009.