



ADAM MICKIEWICZ
UNIVERSITY
POZNAŃ



Treasures of Time

Research of the Faculty of Archaeology
of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań



Location of the main research areas.
Numbering, compare the table of Contents.



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Mirosław, Greater Poland Voivodeship, site 37. Part of the burial equipment.
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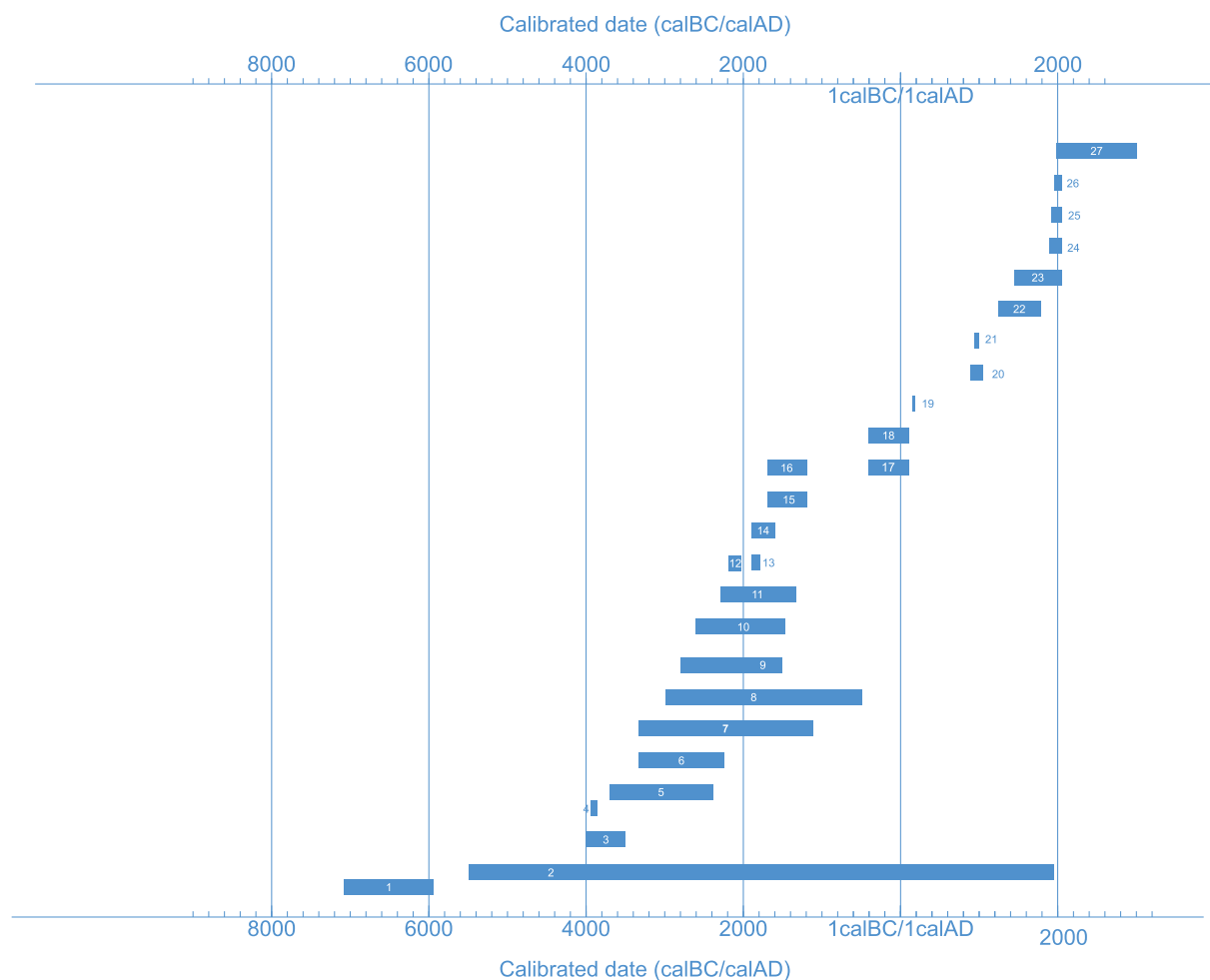
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Treasures of Time: Research of the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Introduction

In 2019, archaeology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań celebrated its honourable 100th anniversary! The establishment of archaeology at this university was associated with the strong influence of the authority of Prof. Józef Kostrzewski and a succession of eminent scholars, many of whom we today call Masters.

The year 2019 was a real breakthrough. We started the second century of existence within the Alma Mater Posnaniensis with a new structural independence and quality that the academic archaeology of Poznań had not yet known for its one hundred years of existence. This change, the formation of the first Polish Faculty of Archaeology, has opened new chances and possibilities of which we are now taking advantage.



Calibrated date
(calBC/calAD)



Prof. Józef Kostrzewski
(1885-1969)

Currently, the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University is formed by a number of teams, each with their own leaders. In the majority of cases, these teams are united by interdisciplinarity, which integrates within selected projects the experience of many so-called 'auxiliary' sciences of archaeology. This trend is paralleled by the development of specialised laboratories armed with the latest equipment in the Faculty of Archaeology.

This publication presents the current scientific interests creatively developed by such teams at the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University. The research of these teams covers vast areas in time and space, summing up at least the last 9,000 years of prehistory. The following articles, arranged in chronological order, allow us to explore the prehistory of various areas.

The adventure begins around 7100 BC, in the Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük located in Turkey. Then, we move on to the loess uplands near Krakow, where the first farmers from the south of Europe had just arrived (5500 BC). A little later (4000-3500 BC), and a little farther north, in the area of Greater Poland, some of the first megalithic constructions in this part of the world were built. Around the same time, about 800 km to the southeast, a settlement

of the Trypillia culture remains in the phase of development (3950 BC). The end of the Stone Age in Poland was described in the history of Late Neolithic communities on a hill in the center of Kujawy region (3700-2400 BC). Farther east, in the forest-steppe area of Ukraine, significant cultural and social changes resulted in the formation of the Yamnaya culture (3350-2250 BC), beginning the Bronze Age.

Intense elements of this era can be traced in the area of southern Europe in the Greek Anthemous Valley (3350-1150 BC), in Attica (3000-500 BC) on the plains of the Hungarian Lowlands (2600-1450 BC) and to the Upper Dniester Valley, where numerous burial mounds were formed (2800-1500 BC). A similar chronological range is presented in the articles devoted to a unique site in Bruszczewo, Greater Poland (2300-1350 BC), which not only accumulates valuable metal artefacts, but is also the subject of interest of an interdisciplinary team focused on reconstructing its environmental context.

The next text take us far to the east, to the area of Iraqi Kurdistan, where we can appreciate the importance of Mesopotamian influences in shaping the picture of the Early Bronze Age (2200-2150 BC).

Subsequent texts describe the discoveries of Poznań scientists in Syria (1906-1787 BC) and in Greater Poland (1900-1600 BC). These two distant points describe various aspects of life in contemporary communities in the Middle and Early Bronze Age.

The characteristic archaeological materials of the later centuries of the Bronze Age (1800-1200 BC) reveal an intensification of military conflicts and migration processes (1700-1200 BC). The turn of the eras is illustrated in this volume by texts on the interpretation of representations on ancient Greek and Roman sculpture (400 BC-100 AD), as well as the cultural situation in the Polish lands (400 BC-100 AD).

We are introduced to the new era by an article on the funerary customs of communities from the Polish lowlands describing discoveries at the site of Mirosław (160-175 AD). Moments of the formation of elements of Polish statehood are referred to in texts describing towns at Grzybowo (919-1050 AD) and Poznań in the early Middle Ages (950-1000 AD).

Later parts of the Middle Ages are described by sacral monuments located also in the area of the contemporary city of Poznań: the Collegiate Church of St Mary Magdalene (1263-1802 AD) and the still extant Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Ostrów Tumski, founded around 1431 AD in the immediate vicinity of the previously described early medieval site of the 'origin' of the city of Poznań.

The final texts of the volume do not refer directly to a particular period of prehistory, but present the history of Polish archaeological research on the Iberian Peninsula, the contemporary perception of prehistoric art by the inhabitants of present-day Canada and Siberia, and the development of methodological thought among Poznań archaeologists.

The volume closes with a text describing one of the many perspectives currently faced by the staff of the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań: the new ArchaeoMicroLab.

We look to the future with great hope that the Staff of the Faculty will provide ideas for many more volumes of Treasures of Time. We trust that this set of articles will present archaeology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in its new structure as a Faculty and show its potential. We would thus like to encourage you to get acquainted with our Poznań perspective on archaeological studies, and to reflect on ways of exploring the past.

Andrzej Michałowski

Danuta Żurkiewicz



Location of the main research areas.
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160-175 AD

Treasures of Time:

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**Barrows in the Skirts of the Forest:
Excavation of a Wielbark culture cemetery at Mirosław 37,
Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship**

Andrzej Michałowski

Abstract

Archaeological excavations carried out at site 37 in Mirosław since 2016 have revealed a barrow cemetery of the Wielbark culture. An enormous amount of data hitherto collected has greatly facilitated better understandings of the settlement patterns of the population represented by this cultural group in the northern part of Greater Poland. This information provides a truly compelling and valuable contribution into the study of the burial customs of communities inhabiting northern Greater Poland during the Roman Iron Age period. As a result of this work, two of seven preserved mounds were examined. These contained two female burials: an inhumation burial, dated to phase B2/C1 deposited in Barrow 7 and a cremation burial dated to phase C1a deposited in Barrow 1. Also, other objects were recorded in the area of the mounds, in particular traces that are evidence of metallurgical production. What is more, a fragment of the plane part of the site was identified using non-invasive research methods – magnetometer prospection. A part of this area was examined by means of excavation, which confirmed the occurrence of both burial goods (a burial that was first exhumed in antiquity, was possibly made from another, leveled burial mound) as well as other objects, present in the cemetery and related to the funeral activities. Additionally, the zone between Barrows 6 and 7 yielded the burial of a small child. The excavations have stimulated numerous research questions which have not yet been satisfactorily answered and are vital for describing the structure of the cemetery and providing its full chronology.

Keywords: Wielbark culture, barrows, burial custom, bloomeries, proglacial stream valley of the Noteć River

Many mysteries connected with the history of our lands that await discovery are hidden in the forests. This is because forests can perfectly preserve numerous sites, which creates the chance to make extremely interesting discoveries, whereas under different conditions, the objects could undergo serious degradation or be completely destroyed. The eponymous barrow cemetery of the Wielbark culture located in Mirosław is a good representation of such a site.

This site is located on the southern edge of the Lower Noteć Valley (Figure 1), within the sandy floodplain terrace known as the Walkowice Terrace (Kondracki, 2000, p. 130). In zone AZP 39-25, it is marked with number 104. The site lies on the land belonging to the State Forests, in the forest section 150a of the Sarbia Forest District, Jabłonowo Forestry.

The Mirosław 37 site was identified in January 2015 as a result of reinterpretation of maps made with the use of laser surface scanning technology – LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). Field verifications of the cartographic data were carried out repeatedly: first in 2015

by Dr Jarosław Rola from the Stanisław Staszic Regional Museum in Piła, then in February 2016 by the same researcher and finally on 5 April 2016 by representatives of the Provincial Office for the Protection of Monuments in Poznań, division in Piła and by employees of the Sarbia Forest District. They confirmed the presence of 7 barrow mounds within the site, 6 of which were arranged in linear order along the edge of the proglacial stream valley of the Noteć River, whereas the seventh and smallest mound was located slightly to the south, on the side of the plateau adjacent to the main row of these features. Eventually, it was also the one selected for the initial excavations during the first season.

The first season of excavations was in July 2016 (Michałowski & Teska, 2016; Michałowski, 2017). Prior to commencing the second season of excavations, which took place in July 2017 (Michałowski et al., 2018), a non-invasive geophysical survey with the use of magnetometer was conducted by Dr Jakub Niebieszczanski on April 7, 2017 (Michałowski et al., 2019). The third research season took place between July 1 and August 13, 2020 (Figure 2).

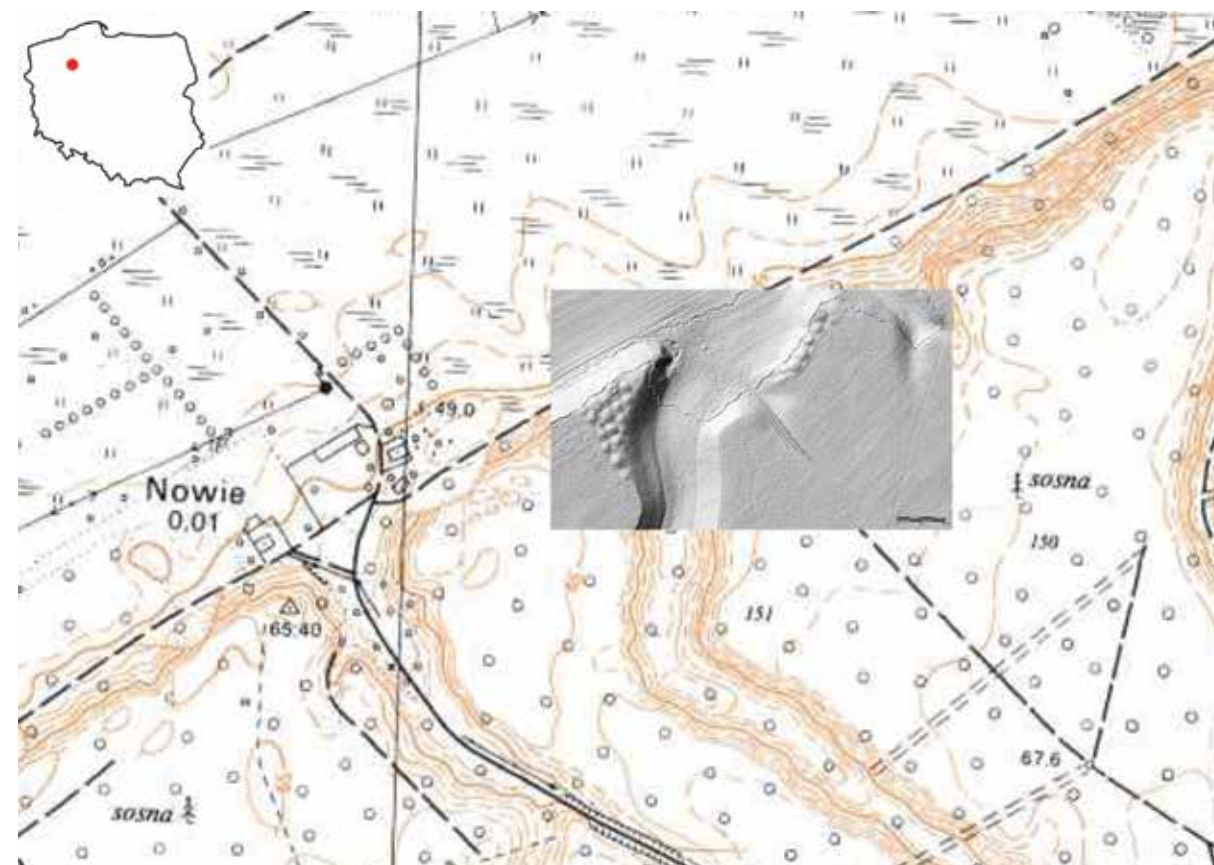


Figure 1. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Location of the study site. Scale 1:10 000 (Created by Andrzej Michałowski).

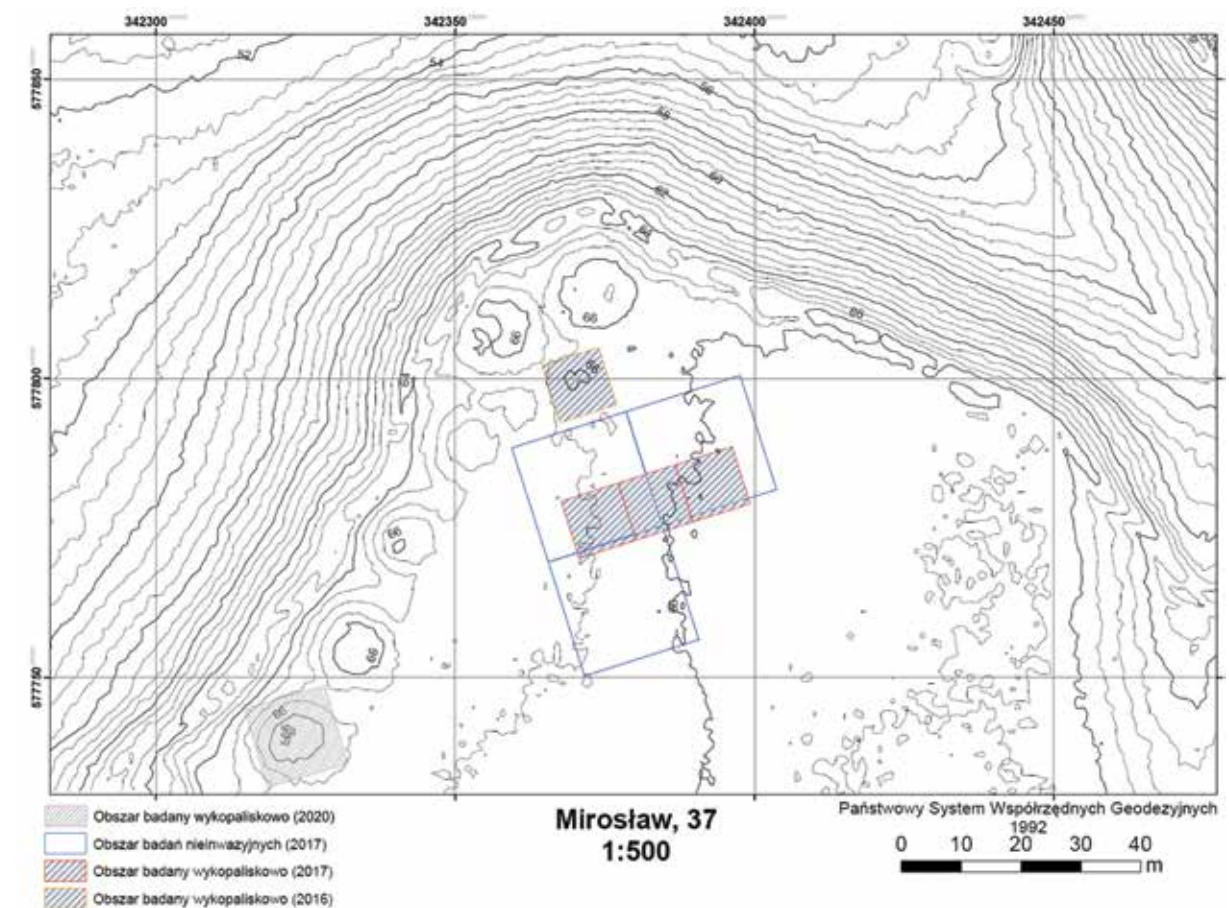


Figure 2. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Contour plan containing a collective summary of excavations from previous research seasons. Scale 1: 500 (Compiled by Jakub Niebieszczanski).



Figure 3. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Drone photo of Barrow 1 with the line of the other mounds visible in the background (Photo: Mateusz Frankiewicz).

As a result of this field work, two barrows, numbers 1 and 7, were investigated, as was a strip of land measuring 300 m² lying parallel to the south of the line where the barrows were recorded (Figure 3). Both barrows examined from the cemetery in Mirosław differed significantly from one another in terms of structure and burial form.

The mound of Barrow 7 was entirely made of earth, with a simple stratigraphy, indicating that it had been built in a single construction event. Within the natural soil horizon in the central part of the mound was a burial pit that barely manifested on the surface. In it, at a depth of 1.5 m from the base of the mound, the inhumation burial of a young woman aged 19 to 21 years was discovered (Wrzesińska, unpublished data). The grave goods that belonged to the deceased were rich, although they did not differ from the standard burial practices of the Wielbark culture (Tempelmann-Maczyńska, 1988, 1989). On the right femur rested a small, bronze fitting for a delicate, thin belt. Above, in the pelvic section, a rectangular belt buckle and three type MLG3 rivets were found (Madyda-Legutko, 1986) together with a single bronze strap-end for a belt. The right arm of the deceased was extended while the left arm was flexed at the elbow and rested on the chest (Figure 4). Two bracelets were placed on the wrists. One was snake-shaped and the other was viper-shaped and of type III variation B after T. Wójcik



Figure 4. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Barrow 7, Feature 8 – inhumation burial of a female (juvenis, aged c. 19-21) with grave goods typical of the Wielbark culture, phase B2/C1 (Photo: Andrzej Michałowski).

(1982). Both bracelets were made of silver (Figure 5). Three bronze fibulae were found on the right side at chest level. Using Oscar Almgren's typology (1897), they should be tentatively classified as series AVII 213, AV 8, and AV 96. Another group of artefacts was located at the level of the clavicle. The finds recorded on that part of the skeleton included: a twin fibula of the AV 96 type and a silver S-shaped buckle. A silver cone-shaped pendant was also discovered among the cranial bones. It is worth mentioning that the excavated soil was sieved, which led to the recovery of small bone beads and belemnites representing the remains of a necklace worn by the woman. The recorded grave goods made it possible to place the chronology of the burial within phase B2/C1 of the Roman Iron Age period.

In contrast, the stratigraphy of the mound of Barrow 1 was far more complex. Based on the recorded cross-sections of its earthen layers, it can be concluded that the construction of the mound was multi-phased. Initially, at least 3 phases of its construction were identified. The first phase concerned its eastern part. It was, most probably, the primary burial mound, with the centre riveted by wooden posts formed in a circle that left traces in the form of post holes (Figure 5). The western part of the mound was most probably destroyed when the burial pit was dug into the natural soil horizon. A stone kerb, which lay over the burial, partially levelled



Figure 5. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Barrow 7, Feature 8 – Part of the burial equipment of a young woman. Silver bracelets snake-shaped and the other – viper-shaped of type III variation B and a silver S-shaped buckle (Photo: K. Zisopulu).





Figure 6. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Barrow 1, Quad B, supporting profile N. Primary burial mound with the inner structure delineated by the outlines of post-holes (Photo: Andrzej Michałowski).

Figure 8. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Barrow 1, Feature 12 – an piece of burial furniture accompanying an adult female (adultus, aged 22:30-35), a single bronze goad (Photo: Andrzej Michałowski).



Figure 7. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Barrow 1, Feature 12 – stone kerb of the burial chamber (Photo: Andrzej Michałowski).

the primary mound (Figure 6). The entirety of the structure was then covered with a new earthen layer. The stratigraphic structure of the western part of the barrow, which lacked the primary, older mound, was uniform. The stone structure present above the burial pit was built of large cut boulders using the dry stone method. It was rectangular in outline – such a structure indicates that it was a kerb to an inhumation burial. The grave was empty, though (Figure 7). An oval pit with a diameter of 1 m was found at its eastern edge. It was filled with some burnt material and the cremated remains of an adult female aged 22 to 30-35 years (Kozak, unpublished data). The cremation pit grave yielded fragments of bronze artefacts – 2 spurs, of which two goads were preserved (Figure 8), as well as 3 fragments of two heel bands. A preliminary visual inspection indicated that they were group VII d spurs in the Wielbark culture typology developed by E. Smółka (2014), and thereby they were the only sensitive timestamps, indicating the possibility of referring the burial to phase C1a of the Roman Iron Age.

The remnants recorded during the second research season most probably belonged to a levelled burial mound. Unfortunately, the barrow did not manifest itself in an exposed form on the surface of the site. Worse still, no trace of a mound was detected with the use of LIDAR data. The only clue to the possible existence of such a form at that location was an anomaly

that was caught in the image obtained from the geomagnetic research (Michałowski et al., 2019, p. 161). During excavation, the burial pit manifested itself immediately in the undisturbed soil horizons. Within the grave fill, a trench disturbing the primary structure of the grave was discovered. In the top part of the trench, a sandstone spindle whorl was deposited. The trench was filled with a large amount of burnt material and clearly identifiable fragments of charred logs. Wielbark culture pottery was recorded throughout the feature. The primary burial pit was recorded at the base of the levelled mound. In the transition zone between the trench and the burial pit lay a single, large sherd from a Wielbark culture vessel, decorated with a roughened triangular ornament. It can be assumed that leaving it in that place was intentional. The form and size of the burial pit indicate that originally it belonged to a cremated burial. Also, some traces of burnt material were recovered, probably originating from a pyre. The described situation indicates that the primary filling of the feature and the skeleton were intentionally exhumed in antiquity. A single fragment of a vessel was placed at the bottom of the feature. Next, the pit was set alight, which was followed by a single episode of backfilling the burial pit and 'sealing' the top part with a stone spindle whorl (Figure 9). It seems possible that the whole process had a symbolic character. Thus, the totality may be interpreted as traces of ritual practices performed at the site. Radiocarbon dating conducted at the Absolute Dating Laboratory in Cracow (Kraków) by Prof Dr Hab Inż Marek Krąpiec revealed that the burnt material obtained from the primary pit could be dated to 230 ± 50 AD whereas the burial pit provided two dates of 375 ± 70 and 415 ± 50 AD (Figure 10). This shows the timing of the primary burial of the deceased and the date of the potential exhumation during the Migration Period (ca. AD375-500).

Another discovered burial feature was the cremation grave of a small child located between the mounds of Barrows 6 and 7 and enclosed by a kerb made of three large boulders. Apart from some burnt bones, that burial site yielded no other artefacts.



Figure 9. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Feature 15, Season 2017 – stone spindle whorl and a vessel fragment decorated with a roughened triangular ornament recorded in the top and base parts of the exhumation trench in the burial pit, respectively.

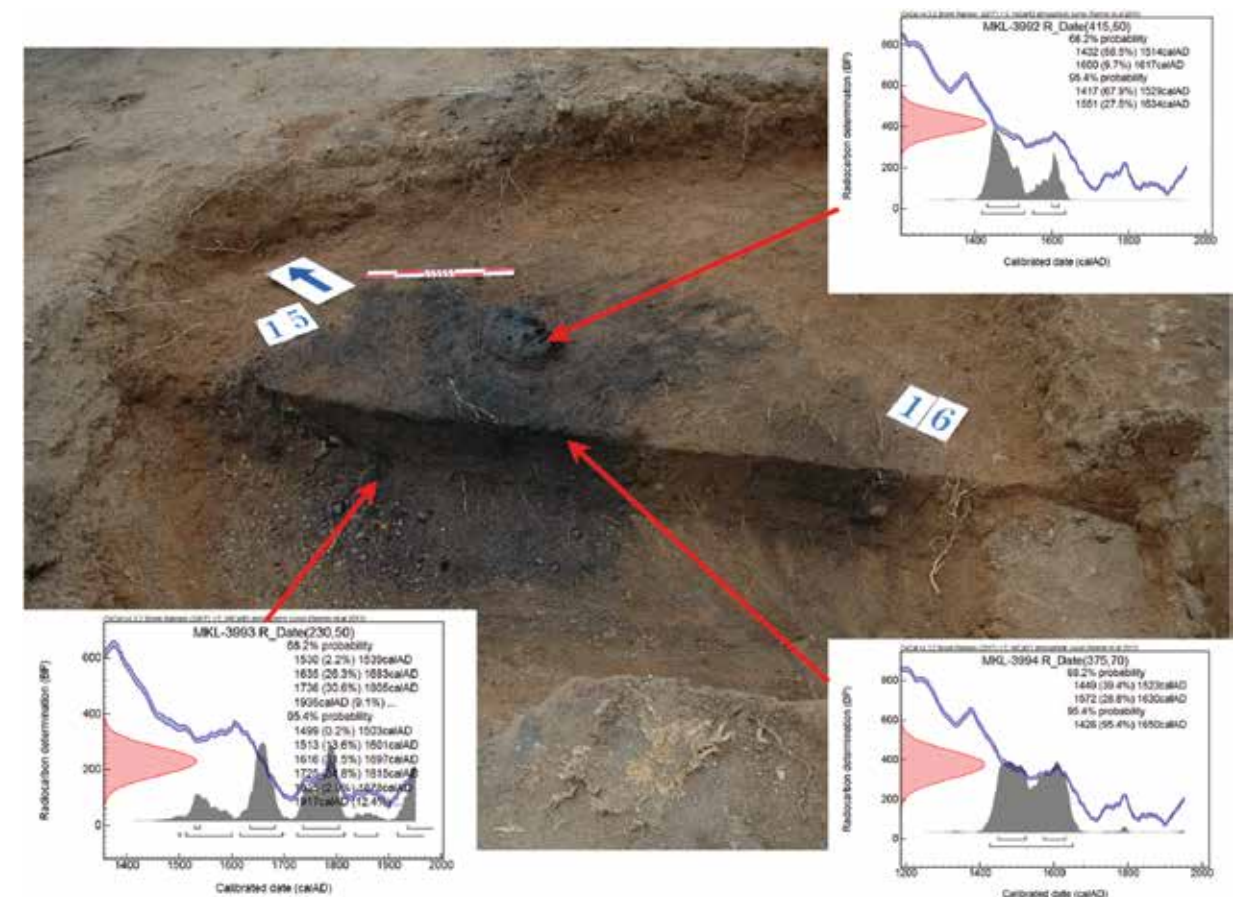


Figure 10. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). Feature 15, Season 2017 – a burial pit with an exhumation trench and radiocarbon dating conducted by Professor Dr Habil. Eng. Marek Krąpiec (Photo and compilation by Andrzej Michałowski).

Moreover, some non-funerary objects were recorded in the course of excavation works at the cemetery in Mirosław, although it cannot be ruled out that they were related to the activities undertaken within the cemetery for ceremonial purposes. Right at the border of the contemporary range of Barrow 7, a large, deliberately cut stone (boulder type) was recorded in the undisturbed subsoil. It was identified as a fragment of a stone from a tomb and was probably a coping stone for the analysed mound. Near it, a pit was discovered containing a single Wielbark culture pottery fragment in addition to stone flakes detached during the process of shaping the extension of the stele (Chachlikowski & Michałowski, 2021). Traces of stone working were also noticeable on the stones that marked the place of the child's grave and the boulders that formed the burial pit found in Barrow 1. What is more, it seems possible that the stonemasons who worked for the Mirosław necropolis built the two structures identified in the flat part of the site. They were classified as large hearths filled with overheated stones. This is the procedure used while preparing stone material for further mechanical treatment.

A slag block in a small smelting furnace (bloomery) pit was recorded under Barrow 7 and other traces of the presence of such features were found within the area covered by Barrows 7 and 1. While discussing these finds in Podlasie, Szymon Orzechowski brought awareness

to the co-occurrence of bloomeries and traces of black metallurgy with funeral objects within Wielbark culture cemeteries during the Cecele Phase (ca AD 10-200 (Orzechowski, 2012). The finds from the cemetery in Mirosław foster the first confirmed observations of this type of cemetery in the Lubowidz phase (ca AD 200-375) and in the western zone of the Wielbark culture area (Figure 11).

All seasons of excavations conducted at site 37 in Mirosław brought a staggering pool of data pertaining to the process of settling the northern part of Greater Poland by the population of the Wielbark culture. They also provided truly thought-provoking and valuable information to be used for the study of the burial customs of the local communities. However, as a result of the work conducted, numerous new research questions have arose that are still awaiting adequate answers. All of this calls for further research to be conducted in the Mirosław necropolis. An important factor in determining the full chronology of the site would be the excavation of at least one more barrow. To understand the structure of the cemetery, it is also advisable to excavate the zone between the barrows and the excavation unit established in 2017. This would allow a possible second row of barrows that were supposedly levelled as a result of the agricultural use of this area and the anticipated occurrence of flat graves in this portion of the site to be identified or ruled out. Another important research aspect is the recognition of the site's environmental base and finding the remains of the related settlement.

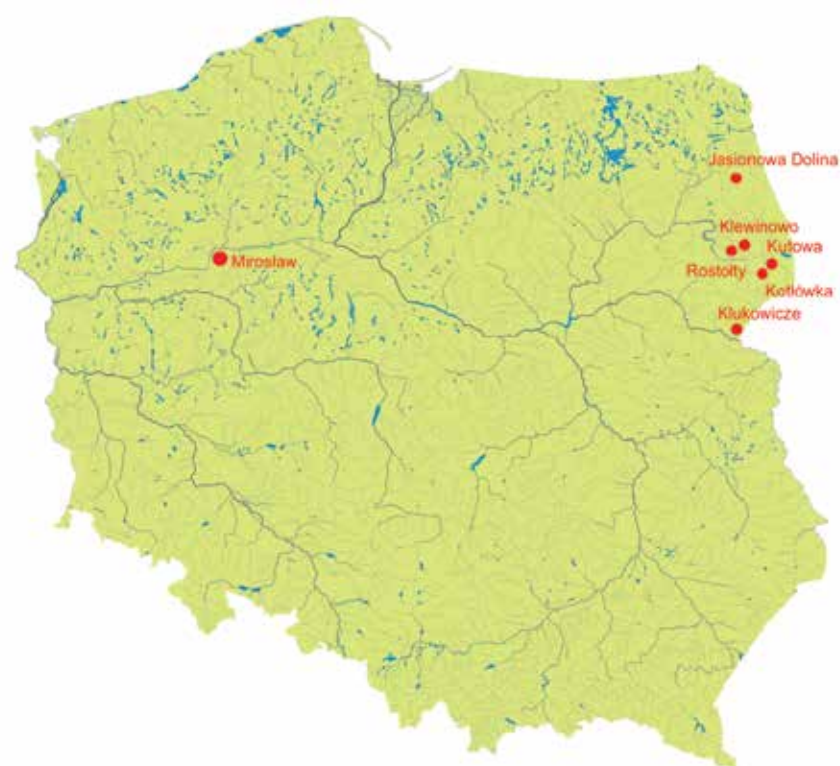


Figure 11. A barrow cemetery in Mirosław against the background of discoveries of traces of ferrous metallurgy identified in the context of the necropolis of the Wielbark culture (Based on Orzechowski 2012, compiled by Andrzej Michałowski).



Figure 12. Mirosław, Ujście commune, Piła district, Greater Poland Voivodeship site 37 (AZP 39-25/104). An indispensable member of the excavation team – Mr Arkadiusz Graś Msc Eng., forester of the Jabłonowo Forest District, the land manager, a great friend of the expedition – the best archaeologist among foresters and the best forester among archaeologists (Photo: Andrzej Michałowski).

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The excavations, which were supervised by the author of this report, were possible thanks to the courtesy of the Regional State Forests Directorate in Piła and financial support from the Forest Districts of Lipka, Kaczory, Krucz, Trzcianka, Wronki, Zdrojowa Góra, and especially the Forest District of Sarbia, which took the expedition under its wings. In particular, I would like to mention Mr Arkadiusz Graś Msc Eng., forester of the Jabłonowo Forest District, who was the good spirit of the research works (Figure 12).

Further, I extend my thanks to the company Viabud Sp. z o.o. from Walkowice and in particular to its owner, Mr Jacek Gruszkiewicz, for his expert assistance with the reconstruction of the burrow mounds.

Last but not least, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to the many people involved in this project for their great physical effort as well as mental contribution, without which the research work would not have been possible, including all members of the Expedition – the employees, PhD students and the students of the Faculty of Archaeology of Adam Mickiewicz University, for their enormous help, involvement and great effort in uncovering the mysteries of the barrows from the backwoods.

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