

of the area investigated by W. Morawski, to re-examine the cross-section and secure numerous samples for chronometric analysis.

The results of dating of burnt flints from layer 7a with the TL method indicate their period of formation as between 35.6 ± 2.6 and 46.3 ± 3.6 ka, with a weighted mean of 38.5 ± 1.9 ka.²⁴ The data helps to narrow down the dating of the decline of Middle Palaeolithic blade industries in this part of Europe, confirming at the same time the dating of the so-called transition to the Upper Palaeolithic.

Final remarks

The most recent Middle Palaeolithic research in Poland has been helpful in refining some of the data on settlement chronology. The first traces of Middle Palaeolithic industry in Poland recorded at Biśnik Cave (Strzegowa) probably date from the Odranian glaciations (correlated with OIS₈). As such, they predate the oldest finds of Middle Palaeolithic character recorded previously (excepting unstratified artefacts) datable to a slightly later period—OIS_{7 and 6}.²⁵ Similarly, the discussion on the closing stages of the Middle Palaeolithic, in the light of recent research, has taken on a new meaning. Renewed investigation of Piekary IIa (layers 7a, 7b and 7c) helped to establish the age of Middle Palaeolithic industries to ca 38 ka. Studies carried out at Wrocław–Oporów sites A1 and A2 (lower level) confirmed the functioning of industries with Middle Palaeolithic attributes during the interpleniglacial.

Recent research also generated new data, some of it on technology. The better preserved remains from Hallera street, Wrocław, and from ks. Józef street, Krakow (middle level), made possible technological studies on the basis of refitting blocks. Basing on the material recovered in Wrocław it was possible to identify flake production showing non-Levallois features as well as traces of mixed production (reduction + shaping); evidence from Krakow provided a basis for reconstructing blade exploitation of Upper Palaeolithic type in Middle Palaeolithic assemblages.

It is also worth mentioning that new evidence was added to the existing taxonomic model: Acheulean (Owsińskie, Biśnik), Mousterian elements, including Piekary type assemblages (Wrocław, Hallera street, Biśnik), and collections recalling assemblages of the so-called Wylotne and Ciemna type (Biśnik). One of the most discussed issues is the identification of Micoquian elements dated to the penultimate glaciation, both at open air (Dzierżysław 1, Pietraszyn 49), and cave sites (Biśnik).

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²⁴ MERCIER et al. 2003.

²⁵ cf. BURDUKIEWICZ 2003.