Materiały i Sprawozdania
Rzeszowskiego Ośrodka Archeologicznego
Tom XXXVI, Rzeszów 2015, s. 19–24
DOI: 10.15584/misroa.2015.36.3

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First sites of Corded Ware culture from the high part of the Bieszczady Mountains (south east Poland)

The report discusses the discovery of the Late Neolithic material coming from Bieszczady Mountains. All the sites were found on a relatively small area of Połonina Wetlińska. These finds signalize a range of innovative practices which took place in highest parts of the Bieszczady Mountains. They imply seasonal activity of Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age people in the high zone mountainous landscapes

KEY WORDS: Bieszczady Mountains, Late Neolithic, transhumance, stone artefacts, Corded Ware culture, salt springs

Submission: 27.05.2015; acceptance: 06.11.2015

INTRODUCTION

Palynological works conducted in the late fifties and sixties of the twentieth century in the Bieszczady Mountains (peatbogs near Smerek and Tarnawa Wyżna) have revealed palaeobotanical signs of human activity in this area from ca 3000 BC. The oldest botanical symptoms of the presence of Late Neolithic man in this area have been related to animal herding (M. Ralska-Jasiewiczowa 1969; 1980). Unfortunately, palynological information stood in stark contrast with archaeological data. There were no Neolithic (also Early Bronze Age) sites in this part of Bieszczady Mountains, e.g. near Smerek, Wetlina or Ustrzyki Górne villages. Numerous settlement sites and single finds of the Funnel Beaker culture known from the east Polish Carpathian are located mainly on the Carpathian Foothill, within the Jasło-Sanok Depression (e.g. J. Gancarski, W. Pasterkiewicz, A. Pelisiak 2008), and, to a smaller extent, in the northern part of the Bieszczady Mountains, in distance of several tens of kilometers from Smerek and Wetlina (A. Pelisiak 2005; 2013a; 2013b; M. Parczewski, A. Pelisiak, K. Szczepanek 2012). Numerous Corded Ware culture barrows were discovered on the Carpathian Foothills (e.g. S. Czopek 1997; J. Gancarski, J. A. Machnikowie 1986; 1991; M. Gedl 1997; P. Jarosz 2002; J. Machnik, E. Sosnowska 1996; 1998; 1999) and in the Sanok-Jasło Depression. Also the extraction site of siliceous raw material and the workshops at Cergowa Mount are located near the Dukla Pass (J. Budziszewski, M. Skowronek 2001). It should be noted that important Slovak silica processing sites were discovered and excavated in Lubiša-Merava (P. Valde-Nowak 2001) and Brestov-Dielňa (P. Valde-Nowak, I. Strakošova 2001). The distribution of single finds of small chipped or polished macrolithic stone artefacts of Corded Ware culture is much wider than the barrows. They were noted in the foreground of the Bieszczady Mountains (P. Valde-Nowak 1988, ryc. 6), but also these sites were not registered in the high part of Bieszczady (A. Pelisiak 2005; 2013a; 2013b; M. Parczewski, A. Pelisiak, K. Szczepanek 2012). The dispersion of settlement sites and single finds of Mierzanowice culture is similar to those of Funnel Beaker and Corded Ware cultures. Numerous sites without cultural affiliation, generally dated to the Neolithic or Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, are known also from the "deeper" part of eastern Polish Carpathians, including Bieszczady Mountains. However, also these finds were absent near Smerek and Wetlina (A. Pelisiak 2005; 2013a; 2013b; M. Parczewski, A. Pelisiak, K. Szczepanek 2012).

This view has been changing since 2013 onwards when the field works concentrating on prehistoric human activity begun in the area of Bieszczady Mountains. All this area is covered by natural vegetation. Moreover, a considerable part of Bieszczady belongs to the Bieszczady National Park. It causes various difficulties in field works, especially of in surface surveys in this area, and requires specific methods of research. Covering by the forest or sub-Alpine vegetation make it impossible to carry out systematic surface surveys in accordance with the methods of Polish Archaeological Record. Registering artefacts on the surface is only possible due to multiple penetrations to recover temporarily "opened" parts of the ground unearthed by the animals, e.g. bears, elks, deer or small rodents as well as penetration of the hollows and animal tracts. The cooperation with local communities and institutions is of great importance in the process of registering archaeological materials on the surface of the ground. These

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** Wetlina 106, 38-608 Wetlina
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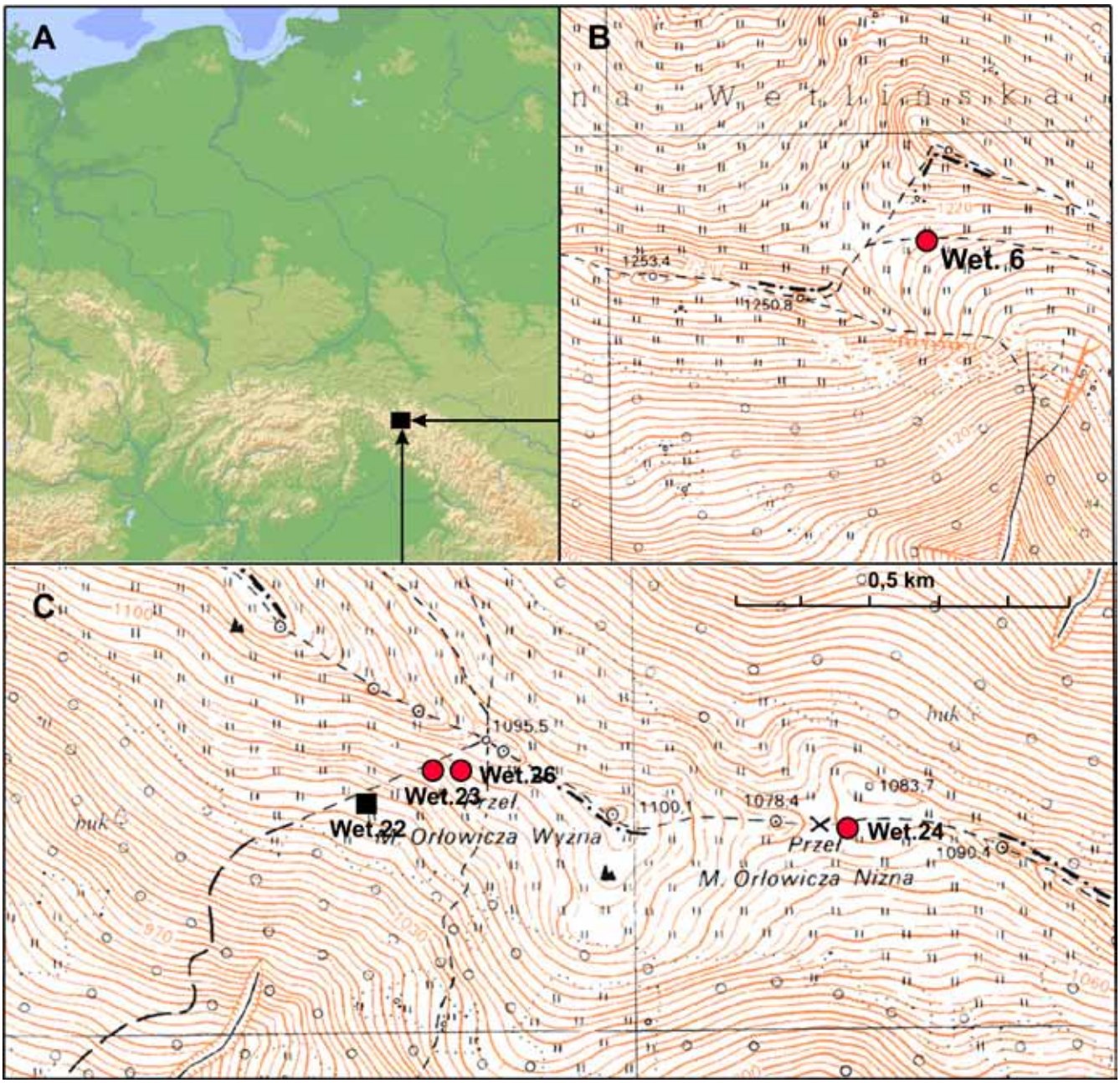

Fig. 1. Neolithic sites on the Połonina Wetlińska (Bieszczady Mountains). A – study area; B – location of the Wetlina, site 6; C – location of the sites near Orłowicz Pass on the Połonina Wetlińska: new discovered sites labelled by the dots (Wet. 23, 24, 26 = Wetlina sites 23, 24, 26), earlier discovered site Wetlina 22 labelled by a rectangle

Ryc. 1. Stanowiska neolityczne na Połoninie Wetlińskiej (Bieszczady). A – obszar badań; B – Wetlina, stan. 6; C – położenie stanowisk w okolicy Przełęczy Orłowicza na Połoninie Wetlińskiej: nowe stanowiska oznaczone kropkami (Wet. 23, 24, 26 = Wetlina, stan. 23, 24, 26), wcześniej odkryte stanowisko Wetlina 22 oznaczone trójkątem

institutions include: archaeological Bieszczady National Park, Border Guard, Forest Service, Mountain Guides, and Wetlina Development Association. People employed in these institutions or affiliated with them spend a lot of time in the mountains as a result of their professions or hobbies. Successful cooperation with them already resulted in the discovery of some single stone artefacts within the dense forested or sub-Alpin zones.

The surveys which began in 2013 focused on the mountainous area near Wetlina village, and they resulted in discoveries of four sites represented by single stone artefacts found in Wetlina-Stare Sioło, Orłowicz Pass, Moczarne and Czerteż Pass (A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj 2014). They were the first archaeological traces of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age human activity in the high part of the Bieszczady Mountains[1]. Surveys carried out in 2014 provided stone artefacts from Moczarne near Wetlina village (A. Pe-

[1] It should also be noted the accidental find of menilite chipped artefact on Połonina Caryńska (P. Valde-Nowak 1991, s. 58). This artefact was discovered by Jerzy Libera in June 1976 during the tourist trip. Unfortunately, no information is available about precise location of this artefact. The author is grateful for Jerzy Libera for detailed information about the circumstances of this discovery.

lisiak 2014a). This paper is examines the last discoveries of the Corded Ware culture finds from the Połonina Wetlińska (high part of the Bieszczady Mountains). All of them came from relatively high locations, more than 1000 m. a.s.l. (Fig. 1).

THE MATERIAL

Wetlina, site 6 (ca 1200 m. a.s.l.)

Location: on the south slope close to the main ridge of the Połonina Wetlińska near the top of Osadzki Wierch (1253 m. a.s.l.) and Roh (1255 m.a.s.l.) Mounts (Fig. 2: 1).

Material: Bifacial heart-shaped arrow-head with both dorsal and ventral sides retouched. On the central part of one side there is a vertical micro-ridge formed by the negatives of the micro-flakes detached of the edges of the tool. Asymmetrical in shape with shorter wing rounded and longer one sharpened. One edge slightly convex, second one slightly concave. The crush on the tip formed it to the shape similar to the burin. The base is concave and rounded.

Maximal length - 26 mm; length from the tip to the base – 21 mm; maximal width – 21 mm; thickness – 4 mm.

Raw material: black menilite hornstone.

Discoveries: accidental discovery by Ł. Bajda in 2009.

Wetlina, site 23 (ca 1050 m.a.s.l.)

Location. On the south slope near the mine ridge of the Połonina Wetlińska and Orłowicz Pass (1095 m.a.s.l.) (Fig. 2: 2).

Material: End-scraper made of regular, small blade from single platform blade core. The front formed with semi-steep retouch is partly crushed. One edge of the blade is irregularly retouched on ventral face. Length – 33 mm, maximal width – 10 mm, thickness in bulb portion – 4 mm, in mid part – 5 mm, in front portion – 8 mm.

Raw material: black menilite hornstone.

Discoveries: surface surveys by A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj, T. Maj, and M. Pelisiak in April 2014.

Wetlina, site 24 (ca 1040 m.a.s.l.)

Location: On the south slope near the main ridge of Połonina Wetlińska (Fig. 2: 3).

Material: Two small, fragile, undecorated pottery fragments of Corded Ware culture with damaged walls. Dimensions: respectively 15 and 13 mm in diameter, and 4 mm thick. Both outer and inner walls are light-brown. The paste contains small pieces of chamotte, very small amount of mineral pieces, and possible charcoal.

Discoveries: surface surveys by A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj, T. Maj, and M. Pelisiak in April 2014.

Wetlina site 26 (ca 1040 m.a.s.l.)

Location: On the south slope near the main ridge of Połonina Wetlińska and Orłowicz Pass, about 50 m from the location of the menilite blade end-scraper (Wetlina, site 23)(Fig. 2: 4).

Material: Irregular semi-bipolar piece of menilite hornstone with obliterated and unclear negatives of flakes detached from one edge. Length – 35 mm, width – 16 mm, maximum thickness – 12 mm. Raw material: black menilite hornstone.

Discoveries: surface surveys by A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj, T. Maj, and M. Pelisiak in April 2014.

DISCUSSION

Single finds usually do not offer a satisfactory possibility for estimating their chronology and cultural affiliation. However, the finds from Połonina Wetlińska have diagnostic techno-typological features enabling their dating.

The arrow-head found on Połonina Wetlińska (Wetlina, site 6) bears typical traits of the arrow-heads of the Corded Ware culture. Such items are frequent in the grave inventories of this culture in south and south-eastern Poland (W. Borkowski 1987; J. Budziszewski, K. Tunia 2000; J. Machnik, A. Pilch 1997; J. Machnik, J. Bagińska, W. Koman 2009; P. Włodarczak 2006). This artefact, as well as the blade end-scraper is made of regional, but not local raw material. The nearest outcrops of menilite hornstones are located several kilometers from Połonina Wetlińska.

The pottery fragments found in Wetlina, site 24 are small and undecorated. The paste contains chamotte particles of small size, small mineral pieces and a black substance, probably charcoal. The wall thickness is about 4 mm. The outer walls are red-brick-yellow, and inner walls are of the same color. Technological characteristics of these potsherds refer to the typical features of pottery of the Corded Ware culture (J. Gancarski, J. Machnik, I. Strakošová, K. Tunia 2001; J. Machnik, H. Mačalová, P. Jarosz, P. Włodarczak 2008; J. Machnik , H. Mačalová, K. Tunia, P. Jarosz 2008; J. Machnik, E. Sosnowska 1998; 1999). Based on the above evidence it is assumed that the material from Wetlina, site 24 as well as the arrow-head from Wetlina site 6 should be connected with the activity of Corded Ware culture people in the high zone of the Bieszczady Mountains (Połonina Wetlińska).

Single blade end-scraper from the Orłowicz Pass (Wetlina, site 23) should be dated to the Neolithic, but it cultural affiliation is not clear. In respect of single artefact detailed typological analysis itself does not resulted in satisfying cultural precise definition. Based on palynological data from the pollen diagrams from Tarnawa Wyżna and Smerek and the first palynological evidence of human activity in this part of Bieszczady Mountains the most probable chronology of this tool should also be placed within the Late Neolithic, i.e. from ca 3200 BC onwards (M. Ralska-Jasiewiczowa 1980). This indirect information clarifying its chronology shows that the end-scraper can be connected with Corded Ware culture people, but its connection with Funnel Beaker culture is also possible.

In some contrast to the Neolithic material examined above, the chronology of the irregular semi-bipolar (Wetlina, site 26) and the tool which was earlier discovered at Połonina Wetlińska (A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj 2013, Fig. 2: 2) appears unclear. These

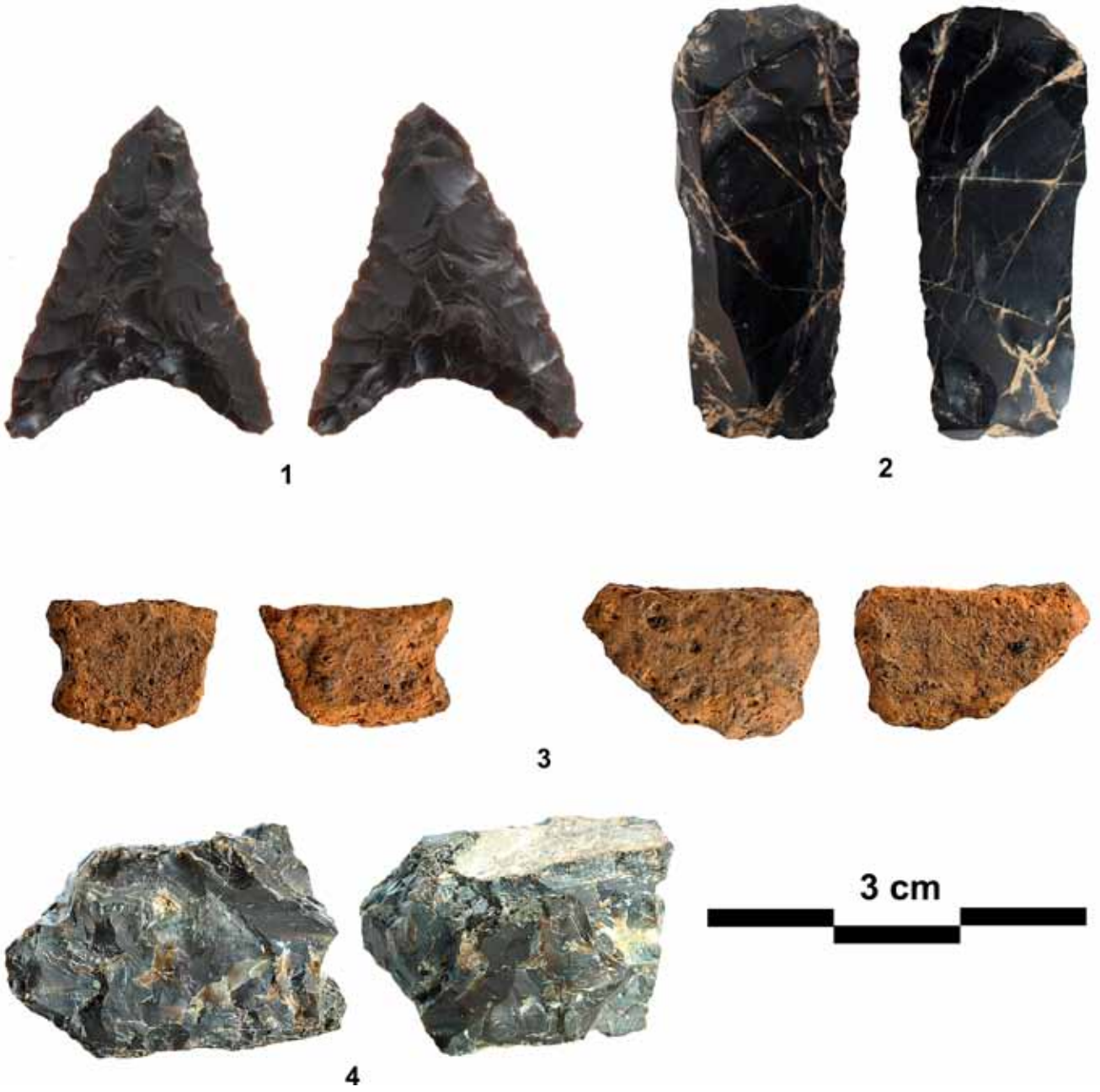

Fig. 2. New finds from Połonina Wetlińska: 1 – Wetlina, site 6; 2 – Wetlina, site 23; 3 – Wetlina, site 24; 4 – Wetlina, site 26
Ryc. 2. Nowe znaleziska z Połoniny Wetlińskiej: 1 – Wetlina, stan. 6; 2 – Wetlina, stan. 23; 3 – Wetlina, stan. 24; 4 – Wetlina, stan. 26

artefacts relate to the so-called Orava Type, and they can be dated to the Late Neolithic as well as to the Early Bronze Age.

The above-mentioned sites are located in some distance one from another. In this respect the only exception are the sites from Orłowicz Pass: Wetlina sites 23 and 26, and the earlier discovered Wetlina site 22 (A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj 2013).They were found on a relatively small area but these sites are also separated by a distance at least 50 m from each other. It can be suggested that all the finds from Połonina Wetlińska, including those from the sites labelled as Wetlina 22,23 and 26, are the traces of multiple activity of Late Neolithic, or Early Bronze Age people on the "open" zones of the landscape located above the tree limit.

It has to be taken into account that the blade end-scraper from Wetlina, site 23, the arrow-head from Wetlina, site 6, the semi-bipolar from Wetlina, site 26 as well as the already published tool from Orłowicz Pass are made of regional but not local raw material: menilite hornstone. In the area of the Carpathians varied types of menilite hornstones formed one of the most frequent groups of siliceous raw material (see B. Olszewska 1985; P. Valde-Nowak 1991; 2013), but the nearest outcrops of menilite hornstones are located over a dozen kilometers from Połonina Wetlińska. Consequently, all these artefacts come from outside and were brought here from some distance of the Połonina Wetlińska.

The finds from Połonina Wetlińska signalize a range of innovative practices which took place in highest parts of the Bieszczady Mountains. They imply seasonal activity of Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age people in the high zone

mountainous landscapes (see T. Kienlin, P. Valde-Nowak 2002/2004). Such activity, probably connected with summer herding of animals within the transhumance system of animal grazing, was already suggested also for high parts of eastern Polish Carpathians (A. Pelisiak 2013a; 2013b; 2014b). The latest discoveries near Wetlina (A. Pelisiak 2014a; A. Pelisiak, Z. Maj 2013), including those described above, confirm this supposition. It should be also highlighted that all finds from Połonina Wetlińska are located in the close spatial context of salt water springs. Salt was one of the most important minerals for herded animals (see A. Pelisiak 2007; 2008). Salt water springs as well as salt-loving plants covering their surrounding and very rich summer vegetation on the Połonina Wetlińska were important "magnets" for Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age herders who made active use of these landscapes.

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Pierwsze stanowiska kultury ceramiki sznurowej z wysokiej części Bieszczad (Polska południowo-wschodnia)

Streszczenie

Niniejsze opracowanie dotyczy późno neolitycznych materiałów odkrytych w Bieszczadach Wysokich. Wszystkie stanowiska zarejestrowano na stosunkowo niewielkim obszarze Połoniny Wetlińskiej. Są to pojedyncze przedmioty wykonane technikami krzemieniarskimi oraz fragmenty ceramiki. Grocik z rogowca menilitowego jest typowy dla kultury ceramiki sznurowej. Cechy technologiczne ceramiki sugerują również związek z tą kulturą. Drapacz ma cechy neolityczne i również, z pewnymi zastrzeżeniami, można go łączyć z ta jednostką kulturową. Materiały z Połoniny Wetlińskiej dobrze korespondują ze śladami aktywności człowieka z bieszczadzkich diagramów pyłkowych. Są najprawdopodobniej pozostałością sezonowych wypasów zwierząt na tych terenach.