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The frontier and development and operations of the scientific community of Zielona Góra

In 1945, the Higher Engineering School was established as the first higher education institution in Zielona Góra and thus the first stage of development of the Zielona Góra scientific community, based primarily on social activity, concluded. Twenty years earlier, when the first settlers began to arrive in the area, Zielona Góra was a small town where 25 thousand residents lived before the war. In 1946 the city became a seat of the district authorities in the Poznańskie voivodeship and since 1950 it became the capital of the newly established Zielonogórskie voivodeship. Elevating Zielona Góra to the rank of a voivodeship city resulted in new needs emerging apart from the typical post-war issues related to restoration and, in the case of the Reclaimed Territories, to integration with the rest of the country: developing own administrative staff, establishing the education system meeting the demands of the region and aspirations of the city, creating a network of culture institutions. The new voivodeship lacked the personnel possessing higher education numerous enough to fill even the basic administrative positions, not to mention positions in higher education system or culture. Industry and agriculture were also experiencing shortages of staff.

In the beginning of the Fifties there were no scientific institutions or organisations in Zielona Góra. To tell the truth, the first scientific expeditions carried out by the Institute of the West in Poznań began to arrive in the area in 1946 and 1947; the employees of the Institute delivered lectures for school inspectors and culture activists on the subjects of history, geography and economy of the Western Lands (Ratuś, 1971, p. 31) but these actions were unable to meet the regional demands, needs and ambitions. The former Heimatmuseum, made available to the public in 1946, nationalised in 1950 and qualified as the Regional Museum subordinate to the National Museum in Poznań, did not play the role of a cultural centre. The Museum employed only a single person, operated with interruptions and did not possess the staff properly qualified for developing the exhibitions meeting the needs of the new statehood; furthermore, the exhibitions which were made available to viewers differed little from those from the German period of museum's operations (Ciosk, 2002, pp. 55–66; 2003, pp. 14–15; 2005, pp. 6–8). The second institution which could serve as the root and seed of scientific research was the Voivodeship National Archive of Zielona Góra established in

September 1953 which at that time was located in Sulechów (Szyłko, 2005, pp. 67–73; Borkowska, 2009, pp. 84–88).

These institutions launched the first initiatives aimed at stimulating development of scientific movement. Upon the initiative of Krystyna Kłęsk, the head of the National Museum, a division of the Polish Pre-History Association was established in Zielona Góra in 1950. However, due to the lack of professional archeologists the operations of the division were primarily promotional in character and consisted of organising lectures, establishing Archaeology Associations in schools and organising small exhibitions. The Association operated until 1957 (Malinowski, 1998, pp. 179–181) and its brief activity, despite not producing any direct results in terms of developing the local scientific community, resulted in a certain intellectual stir which was not without significance for similar later initiatives. Four years after the establishment of the Polish Pre-History Association a new initiative was launched by the National Archive; this initiative, however, was sparked externally. In 1954 the then Secretary General of the Polish History Association, prof. Stanisław Herbst, sent a letter regarding establishing a division of the Association to the director of the archive in Zielona Góra, dr Tadeusz Mencel. The very same year a division of the Polish History Association was established in Zielona Góra and T. Mencel became its first president. At the time of establishment the Division counted 28 members including a single person holding a degree of PhD, 5 archivists, 10 teachers and 8 employees of cultural institutions holding MA degrees as well as 4 persons with secondary education (Iwan, 1980, p. 157). Władysław Korcz, who later became an academic teacher, was among the founding members of the Association and served as its Vice-President.

In the case of both these initiatives the context related to the location of Zielona Góra and the surrounding frontier region, specifically the issue of the changes in Polish borders, was not without significance. It was the time of the Polish society undergoing the process of redefining historical traditions. This process was particularly important in the Reclaimed Territories where the search for historical roots of the Poland formed after t1945 was particularly explicitly visible. After the conclusion of the Second World War, the population of the so called Reclaimed Territories changed almost completely. The former residents were displaced and replaced by the settlers from the eastern areas of the Republic of Poland. The majority of the newcomers experienced difficulties with adapting to the new conditions and with getting accustomed to living in a foreign cultural landscape. One of the prerequisites for “feeling at home” was facing the cultural heritage of these lands understood as the material achievements and the legacy left by the former residents displayed in, for instance, the manner in which the towns and villages of the region were mapped out, the type of the residential and monumental architecture present in the area as well as the landscape, which were all influenced by both nature and people, but also the heritage understood as the spiritual traditions and the recorded history. In this context the greatest difficulty was

combining the issue of history with the context of the Polish-German conflict and the need for historical legitimisation of the new borders running along the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers (Mazur, 2001).

Thus it is not surprising that the first initially amateurish but over time increasingly professional scientific initiatives concerned researching the past and that the goal of these initiatives was searching for the historical roots of the Poland formed after 1945. Such roots were sought for in the monarchy of Piasts. The geopolitical character of these studies was a strong argument in favour of alluding to these traditions; the geopolitical character of the research was based on the desire to legitimise the current shape of the state borders which overlapped with the former homeland of Piasts from where Piasts were displaced by the German expansionism. Thus in the first decades after the war historians occupied with the issues of the Western Territories were focusing their attention on the oldest history and pointed towards the affiliation of this area with the country of the first Piasts and emphasised the relationship of this area with the Polish nation developing over the subsequent centuries. The historians of Zielona Góra were pushed to take such actions not only by the scientific policy of the authorities but also – as it would seem – by the equally important natural willingness to learn about the history of this land and by the desire to shed some light on the issues of or related to Poland which were frequently glossed over by the old German historiography (Dolański, Osękowski, 2005).

In this area even stones were supposed to speak in Polish and the right of Poland to these lands was proclaimed and emphasised in the “We were, we are, we will be” slogan inscribed on the monuments. However, it must be also explicitly stated that despite the motivation behind these studies being at times characterized by politics and propaganda these actions resulted in major discoveries and the political climate was in large part excellently utilised to expand the knowledge regarding the history of the region.

Thus the first years of the development of the scientific community in Zielona Góra were dominated by the regional issues. In the initial period numerous pieces popularising these topics were written by Władysław Korcz and, later, by Hieronim Szczegóła and published on the pages of *Gazeta Zielonogórska* and *Nadodrże* magazines. The lectures aimed at popularising these issues organised by the division of the Polish History Association in Zielona Góra and by the Universal Knowledge Association enjoyed significant popularity.

Upon the decision of the Ministry of Culture and Art made in 1957 the rank of the Museum in Zielona Góra was elevated to the rank of the Regional Museum, a body superior in regards to other museum institutions of the Zielonogórskie voivodeship (Dzieżyc, 2008, p. 100). Expansion of Museum's tasks was also entailed the obligation of conducting scientific studies which in the Zielona Góra institution were dominated by the archeology studies. The development of archeological studies, similarly to

the development of historical studies, was facilitated by the political circumstances: the preparations to commemorating the thousandth anniversary of the Polish nation, the contemporary disputes between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the discussion between the Polish scholars led by Józef Kostrzewski and the German supporters of Gustaf Kossina regarding the ethnic aspect of the prehistory of Pomerania, Silesia and the Greater Poland reignited after 1945. At that time the Museum already employed Edward Dąbrowski (Malinowski, 1998, pp. 167–170; 2005, pp. 271–275; Łaszkiewicz, 2007, pp. 7–13; Kurnatowska, 2008, pp. 273–274) and Adam Kołodziejski (Malinowski, 1998, pp. 171–173; Marcinkian, 2002, pp. 257–260; Garbacz, 2002, pp. 260–265), both of whom were students of J. Kostrzewski. In the Museum in Zielona Góra they were both occupied with organising the Archaeology Section. The Archeology Section was the first scientific unit in Zielona Góra which, in essence, continued the studies until then carried out in the area of the Zielonogórskie voivodeship by the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences. This unit primarily focused on the issues related to the beginnings of the Polish statehood. The studies and research progressed in two directions. Within the framework of the first direction E. Dąbrowski was leading the studies regarding progress of the settlement processes preceding the formation of the state of Piasts. Within the framework of the second direction of research A. Kołodziejski and Bogdan Kres were attempting to recreate the transformation of the functions of the defence systems of the old tribal structures in relation to the westward expansion of the nation of Poles and attempted to recreate the changes in the western border occurring against this historical background.

At the same time an idea was maturing in the community of Zielona Góra regarding establishing an organisation acting for the benefit of developing and spreading culture; the scientific research also fell under this category. In 1957 the Lubusk Cultural Association was founded which was led by historians Wiesław Sauter and W. Korcz as well as E. Dąbrowski, an archeologist. The Scientific Station of the Polish History Association was established in Zielona Góra owing to various efforts, including the actions taken by the Lubusk Cultural Association in Zielona Góra. Tasks of the Station included initiating and carrying out the scientific and research work regarding the regional history and related disciplines, organising and popularising historical knowledge with particular attention drawn to the regional issues, publishing results of work, cooperation with regional authorities and associations, maintaining contacts with domestic scientific institutions, gathering historical resources and publications. Establishing the Station was a milestone on the path towards increasing professionalism of the scientific studies. During the 1958–1975 period of Station's operations three of its employees successfully defended habilitation dissertations and three employees defended doctoral theses.

At that time a group of active researchers originating from among the employees of the Museum, the employees of the Station of the Polish History Association and teachers' community already operated under the Lubusk Cultural Association. From among the teachers' community the future professors and academic teachers displayed particular activeness and involvement: Hieronim Szczegółła from Szprotawa, Marian Eckert from Rzepina and Wojciech Pasterniak from Sulechowa. They were involved in the ongoing debate recorded on the pages of *Nadodrze* magazine regarding establishing "the Lubusk Science Institute" which would engage in studies in the field of various disciplines of knowledge and which would coordinate the scientific activity in the voivodeship. In 1962 the Science and Research Centre was established under the Lubusk Cultural Association. Foundation of this unit was significant owing to the prevalence of the historical sciences which were developing as a result of presence of the Scientific Station of the Polish History Association. The Centre established under the Lubusk Cultural Association provided other disciplines of science with a similar opportunity of development. Simultaneously a significant number of the Lubusk Cultural Association members declared that the operations of the Association were dominated by the efforts aimed at developing the scientific movement whereas popularising culture, the primary goal of the Lubusk Cultural Association, was neglected. As a result in 1964 the Lubusk Scientific Association separated itself from the Lubusk Cultural Association (Dolański, 2012, p. 24).

The frontier context and the attempts at establishing relations with similar organisations in the German Democratic Republic could not be observed across the entirety of this institutional development of the Zielona Góra's intellectual life. The geographical location influenced only the studies conducted in the fields of archaeology and history and, furthermore, influenced said fields of study in the context described herein-above. These studies, despite being entangled in the political and ideological context, resulted in major and significant scientific discoveries. Discussing this issue we cannot omit the significant studies conducted by Tadeusz Kozaczewski in cooperation with Edward Dąbrowski, Stanisław Kowalski and Jan Muszyński in Głogów and Krosno Odrzańskie (Lubiskie Towarzystwo Naukowe 1970). Furthermore, owing to the studies conducted by said scholars dating anew the group of more than 40 churches located in the current-day Nowosolski, Żagański and Żarski districts, until then dated by the German historiography to the turning point between the XV and the XVI century, to the period of the rule of Henryk Brodaty was made possible (Kowalski, 1999; 1987). We should undeniably indicate two volumes of *Studia na początkami i rozplanowaniem miast nad środkową Odrą i Dolną Wartą* [The studies on the beginnings and mapping out of the cities and centres situated by the rivers of Middle Odra and Lower Warta] edited by Zdzisław Kaczmarczyk and Andrzej Wędzki (Kaczmarczyk, Wędzki, 1967; 1970) as well as the study by Hieronim Szczegółła devoted to the twilight of the rule of Piasts over the middle Odra and the biography of John of Głogów (Szczegółła, 1967; 1968;

1970) among the most important monographs created within the scientific community of Zielona Góra in cooperation with the Poznań Centre.

Establishing higher education institutions created opportunities of developing relations with foreign higher schools. In the case of Zielona Góra the natural direction for developing said relations was the German Democratic Republic. In the case of the HES the first foreign relations were established with the Technical University in Karl-Marx-Stadt (currently Chemnitz) but these relations had little influence on the development of scientific research or the process of education because they resulted in annual holiday exchanges and sporadic, infrequent science-related contacts. After several years this cooperation ceased (Samujłło, Politowicz, 1990, p. 23). Years 1973–1980 were the period of active relations between the HES and foreign institutions. At that time several agreements were concluded regarding cooperation, including the cooperation with the universities of the German Democratic Republic which were the most numerous partners of the HES: the Technical University in Illmenau, the Higher Construction and Architecture School in Weimar and the Higher School of Technology in Cottbus. The cooperation with the Illmenau institution had the greatest influence on the development of the scientific community in Zielona Góra. By 1990, approximately 20 persons stayed in Ilmenau and participated in doctoral and habilitation internships, dozen or so individuals received academic degrees of PhD or habilitated doctor. The student internship exchange without involvement of foreign currency took place towards the end of the Nineties of the XX century and several students concluded their education and received diploma at the partner university within the framework of the so called alternating studies. The institutions were developing programmes of joint studies and scientific conferences were being organised (Samujłło, Politowicz, pp. 24–25). The cooperation with the remaining institutions of higher education was limited to organising internships for students and infrequent scientific exchange.

For the Higher Teachers' School established in 1971, transformed into the Higher School of Pedagogy in 1972, the development of international relations also began with reaching out to the German Democratic Republic. The first agreement on scientific cooperation was signed in 1974 with the Higher School of Pedagogy in Potsdam; almost simultaneously an agreement was entered into with the Faculty of Polytechnical Education of the University of Halle and slightly later this cooperation was expanded through entering into cooperation agreements with the Higher School of Pedagogy in Dresden and the Institute for Education of Serbian Teachers in Budziszyn. Relations were also established with the higher education institutions of Czechoslovakia, the USSR and Hungary but the German higher education institutions constituted the largest group of partners of the HSP and cooperation with these institutions was the most profound. This cooperation developed on the basis of the scientific and teaching staff exchange and the exchange of students, exchanging scientific publications and organising joint scientific conferences (Wąsicki, 1983, p. 31). Almost every edition of the

“Higher School of Pedagogy Guide Book” published in years 1975–1990 contained the information regarding projects or ventures organised jointly with the German higher education institutions, the most frequently with the Potsdam school, or the arrivals and departures of academic teachers and students within the framework of the partnership agreements. Rectors of the HSP and German universities hosted each other during academic celebrations (Informator, 1975–1990).

These institutional relations were interrupted during the period of political transformation of Poland, primarily due to the unification of Germany and essentially a complete replacement of the academic staff of the post-GDR universities. In essence, after 1990 the relations had to be established anew and were to an increasingly lesser degree based on the bilateral agreements and the currency-free exchange programmes and were instead increasingly frequently based on procuring the financing for implementation of the specific projects within the framework of the European Union funds. In this context the relations with the Brandenburg Technical University in Cottbus, the institution with which the regular cooperation based on the EU funds was and is still maintained, took on a new dimension just as the cooperation with the University of Potsdam with which several projects were implemented jointly. Since 1990 new opportunities emerged for establishing relations with the Universities of the western Germany. In this field particularly active forms of cooperation have been maintained by the HSP with the University of Vechta and by the Technical University of Zielona Góra with the Higher Vocational School in Giessen-Friedeberg; this cooperation is still maintained and continued by the University of Zielona Góra and primarily covers the integrated Polish-German studies which provide the opportunity of obtaining a dual diploma to graduates of both institutions (Pieczyński, 2007; Dolański, 2012, p. 195).

During the discourse concerning the future of the academic community of Zielona Góra the consequences of political and social transformations on both sides of the border also began to emerge. Certain concerns were raised by the transformation of the schools in Dresden, Cottbus and Potsdam into specialist or classical universities and by the establishment of the University Viadrina in Frankfurt. In this context the asymmetry of the official names in conjunction with the fact of holding equal rights regarding providing education and conferring academic degrees (in the Nineties of the XX century both Schools in Zielona Góra quickly obtained the required rights in this field) were perceived with certain apprehension. These apprehensions were demonstrated by using the German or English names of the Zielona Góra institutions containing the word “university” in international correspondence. However, it must be admitted that for both Schools this issue was not a decisive factor in regards to making the decision concerning merging and forming the University of Zielona Góra.

The political transformations related to the Polish aspirations regarding joining the European Union and the unification of Germany imparted a completely new

perspective upon the scientific research, particularly in the fields of history and sociology, whereas the border running along the Odra and Nysa rivers acquired a new meaning. The past and the contemporaneity of the region began to be perceived in the context of the frontier and the cross-border activity.

Since 1996 the “Transgraniczność w perspektywie socjologicznej [The Cross-borderism in the Sociological Perspective]” series of conferences have been organised by the Institute of Sociology under the auspices of the Lubusk Scientific Association and the Polish Sociological Association. The conferences gave birth to the series of publications on such issues as the social and cultural background, the institutional and organisational aspect of the phenomenon of cross-borderism, the education processes, the issues of organisation and disorganisation of social life, the different cognitive perspectives in the frontier and, ultimately, the theoretical and methodological issues (Dolański, 2012, p. 246). The issue of cross-borderism also emerges within the studies conducted by pedagogists. It concerns such problems as the preventive measures, diagnosing and treatment of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases in the frontier regions, the social and educational innovations, the issue of supporting parenthood and fighting against the social exclusion or the issue of education in the context of the Polish-German neighbourhood (Dolański, 2016, p. 214).

The values governing the studies of historians were thoroughly reshuffled. The relics of the material culture ceased being the evidence of these lands belonging to Piasts and instead provided proof of their multicultural character. The German past of these lands began to be displayed more prominently just like the processes of intertwining of cultures and the processes of economical and political influence in the region which from the historical point of view was a place where various borders intertwined: political, language, religious and artistic. This perception of the past became a major factor in transforming the regional awareness in the Reclaimed Territories and constituted a significant voice in the discussion concerning the difficult and unilaterally glossed over aspects of the common German and Polish past historians are involved in. In this context a new light was shed on the issues of the first years of the processes of the Polish resettlement of the Western Lands and establishing a new Polish administration. Papers emerged which not only depicted the German past but the authors of which focused on the search for the examples of cohabitation of Poles and Germans in the past. One of the first results of the new approach to researching the past history of the area of the Middle Nadodrze consisted of the selection of regional history entries edited by Kazimierz Bartkiewicz (1996), the selection of the regional history excerpts as well as in two biographical dictionaries compiled under leadership of K. Bartkiewicz (1998) and Hieronim Szczegółła (1996, 1999); these dictionaries took into account to a broad extent the names of the distinguished personas from the circle of the German culture. In the introduction to one of these works K. Bartkiewicz wrote:

Those who selected and compiled the sources presented herein do not focus on any particular historical ideas, convictions and actions and do not consider them in any particular context. It is not easy when – as is the case of the area of Nadodrze – the subject of our attention consists of the areas entangled in the history and mutual relations of two neighbouring nations – Poland and Germany. However, contemporarily (after 1989) an explicit need and – as it would seem – a real chance emerged at both parties casting out the national-prestigious approach to the perception of the past accompanied by the need for perceiving and understanding this mutual past under a single unified scientific approach (Bartkiewicz, 1996, pp. 4–5).

The frontier location of Zielona Góra significantly contributed to its development and influenced the directions of the undertaken actions. These actions were initially primarily taken in the fields of history and archaeology but not in the context of the region being a neighbour of the German Democratic Republic; instead these actions were taken in relation to the need for legitimising the shape of Polish country after 1945 which overlapped with the former homeland of Piasts and the territories from which Piasts were expelled by the German expansionism. This new perception became particularly visible in the studies conducted by historians and sociologists but also by representatives of other scientific disciplines in relation to such problems as the preventive measures, diagnosing and treating HIV/AIDS as well as sexually transmitted diseases in the frontier regions, the sociological and educational innovations, supporting parenthood and fighting against the social exclusion or the issue of education in the context of the Polish-German neighbourhood.

The frontier location of Zielona Góra was also a significant influence behind the higher education institutions operating in the city establishing the institutional scientific cooperation with other institutions ; for the institutions of Zielona Góra the closest and natural partners in the period of the PPR were the German Democratic Republic universities, particularly the universities located in the borderland such as the universities in Dresden, Cottbus and Potsdam, but also the universities located in the interior of the Eastern Germany. This cooperation was interrupted primarily due to the almost complete replacement of the university academic staff in the unified Germany and had to be re-established through regional cooperation related to and based on utilising the European Union Access Funds within the framework of the cross-border cooperation programmes.

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Abstract

The studies and the conducted research cover the period between 1945 and the beginning of the XXI century which encompasses the social beginnings and the period of development of the scientific community of Zielona Góra related to the social activity of the scientific movement which resulted in establishing two higher education institutions, the technical institution and the institution focused in humanities, which merged in 2001 to form the University of Zielona Góra. The studies were primarily occupied with searching for an answer to the following question: did the frontier location of the region and Zielona Góra influence the development of the academic and scientific community of Zielona Góra? The frontier geographical location of Zielona Góra exerted major influence on the development and the directions for the actions initially undertaken in the fields of archaeology and history and later, after 1989, in the field of social sciences – pedagogy and sociology in particular. The frontier location was also decisive for the fact that the first relations, which grew in strength and complexity along with the development of the academic community, were being developed with the universities of the German Democratic Republic and after the unification of Germany with the students from the entire Germany.

Keywords: Zielona Góra, scientific research, higher education institutions, international cooperation