



KRAJOWY OŚRODEK  
BADAŃ I DOKUMENTACJI ZABYTKÓW  
NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD OF POLAND

# Fighting Illegal Archaeology. The Polish Case

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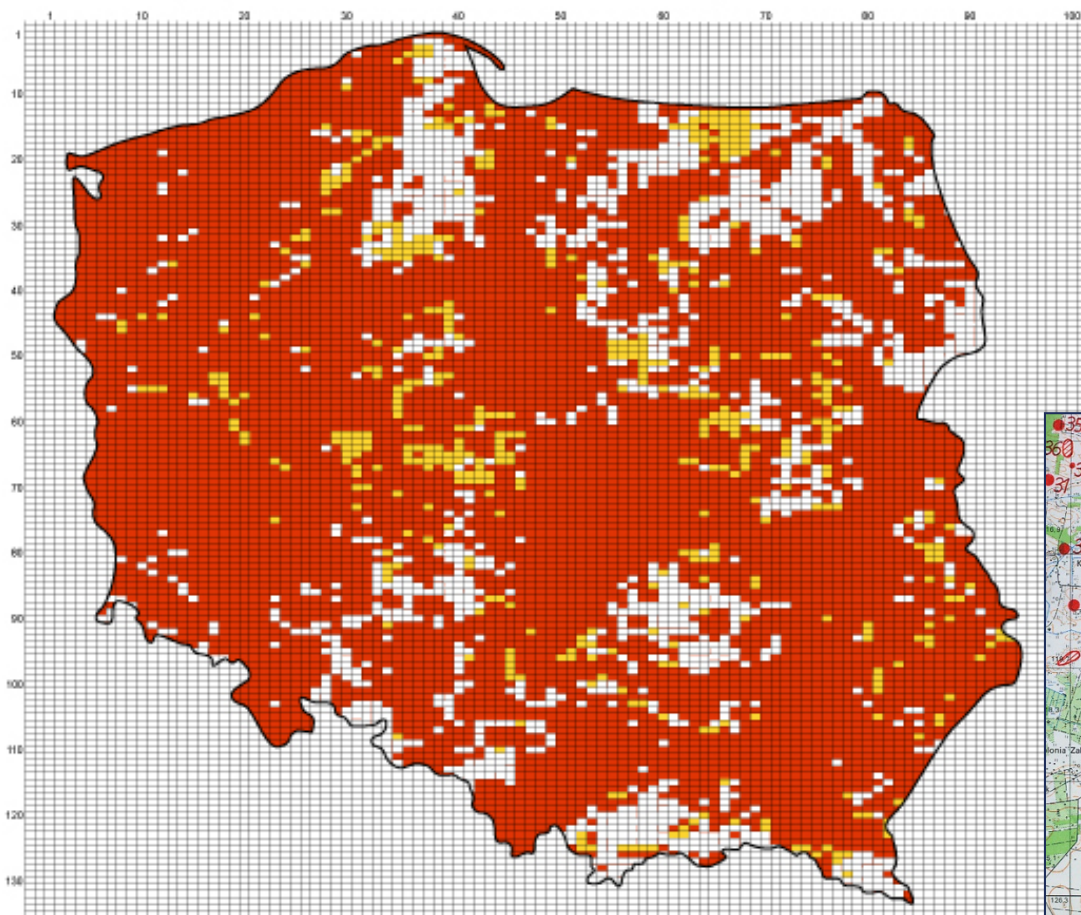






# Archaeological Heritage in Poland

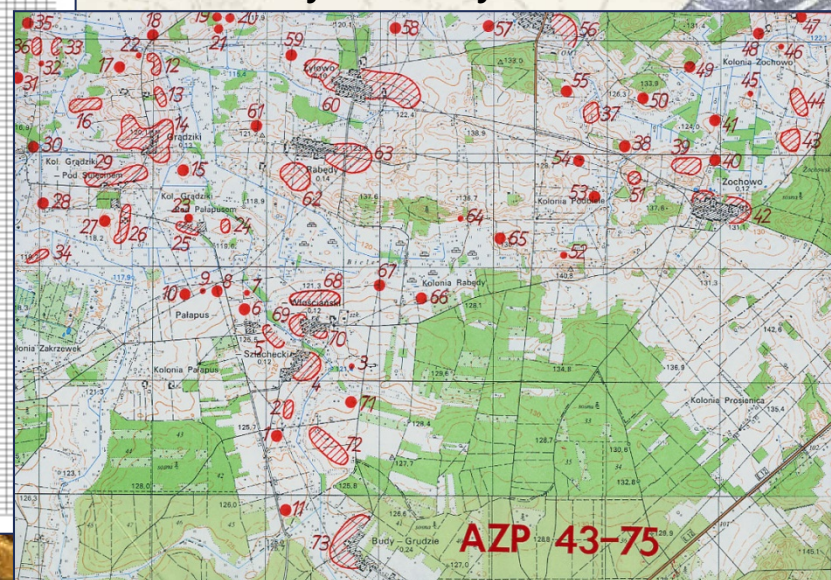
- - fullfield prospection, documentation in AHPC - register
- - fullfield prospection, lack of documentation in AHPC - register



## Archaeological Sites Inventory (AZP)

(nationwide land survey project since 1978)

- ✓ c. 500 000 sites identified (paleolithic through mediaeval)
- ✓ More than 90% country's territory already checked







# Archaeological Heritage in Poland

## Types of Sites





# Archaeological Heritage in Poland

## Other types of "sites" and "relics"







# Archaeological Heritage in Poland

## Legal Issues

- ✓ **Archaeological monument** –  
an immovable monument constituting  
on-ground, underground, or underwater remains of  
the existence and activity of human being consisting  
of cultural strata, and products, or their traces  
contained in them, or the movable monument being  
such product;

/Art. 3, item 4 of Act of 23 July, 2003  
on the Protection of Monuments and the Guardianship of Monuments/







# Archaeological Heritage in Poland

## Legal Issues

- Archaeological Heritage:
  - ✓ All protected by State
  - ✓ All belongs to State
  - ✓ All excavations require permits
  - ✓ All amateur searches (incl. metal detectors) require permits
  - ✓ All sites, if not threatened by destruction, protected IN SITU
  - ✓ Protection of heritage in a sustainable way and equal access to it for all citizens guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997)







# Archaeological Heritage in Poland

## Main Threats



Some **200 000 sites** are constantly threatened by destruction due to natural or human factors such as deep ploughing, construction works and metal detectorists.







# Illegal Archaeology in Poland Aware and Unaware Destruction

- ✓ **Unaware** (farmers, small investors, accidental finders, divers, souvenir lovers)
- ✓ **Aware** (looters, collectors, metal detectorists, militarists)







# Public image of black archaeology in Poland

- ✓ **Breaking the rules is socially approvable** in relation to crimes against goods, especially if it is State's property – sad relic of the past political system
- ✓ Misunderstanding **civil responsibility for heritage** (it is not about making new discoveries but protecting sites *in situ*)
- ✓ The main issue is considered to be the ownership of finds, the question of destroyed sites is commonly ignored by media etc.
- ✓ The only recognised value of the finds is financial (important for prosecutors and courts: low value = low social harm. **Problem solved by calculating the value of damage by means of costs of professional excavations.**
- ✓ Archaeologists and heritage protection services are commonly considered to be the same, although their priorities differ significantly.







# Metal Detectorists & Their Myths

- ✓ "We save Heritage"
- ✓ "We don't enter archaeological sites"
- ✓ "Archaeologists are not interested in modern times relics"
- ✓ "Archaeologists envy us and want to keep all finds to themselves"
- ✓ "Law too strict – a past time relic, it's much more liberal in the 'civilized' world"
- ✓ "Using metal detectors and owning private collections is illegal since ALL in ground belongs to State"
- ✓ "Police should better fight 'real' crime"

**ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE FALSE!!!**







# Fighting Illegal Archaeology Programme (since 2006)

## Prevention activities:

- ✓ Educating about the value of archaeological heritage and ways to protect it
- ✓ Monitoring risks to archaeological heritage
- ✓ Atlas of the most endangered archaeological sites for the Police
- ✓ Training programmes for the Police, Border Guards and Customs

## Intervention activities:

- ✓ "Black market" surveillance and reporting to Police (mainly Internet)
- ✓ Providing expert opinions on archaeological objects and sites secured during crime investigation
- ✓ Cooperation with "treasure hunters"???







# Preventive activities: education

- ✓ Informing the so called "treasure hunters" about law in force;
- ✓ Encouraging landowners to forbid trespassing
- ✓ Keeping in touch with the media in regard to black archaeology issues
- ✓ Much more to come...







# Preventive activities: monitoring

- ✓ Monitoring the Internet forums of "treasure hunters" in order to identify their methods, motivation and planned activities;
- ✓ Ongoing analysis of archaeological heritage risk factors (natural forces, deep ploughing, investments, looting)
- ✓ Building strategy for joint fight against this type of crime (successful cooperation with the Police).







# Preventive activities: atlas

## Atlas of most valuable sites threatened by looting

- ✓ GIS based information on the most endangered sites for the Police
- ✓ Direct contact to the right archaeology inspectors included
- ✓ Police will be patrolling the sites on regular basis







# Preventive activities: training

- ✓ Training the public security services, mainly the Police (nearly 200 policemen trained nationwide in 2007-2008, tbc)







# Interventive activities: surveillance

## Selling archaeological objects of unknown origin = fencing

### Statistics since 2007:

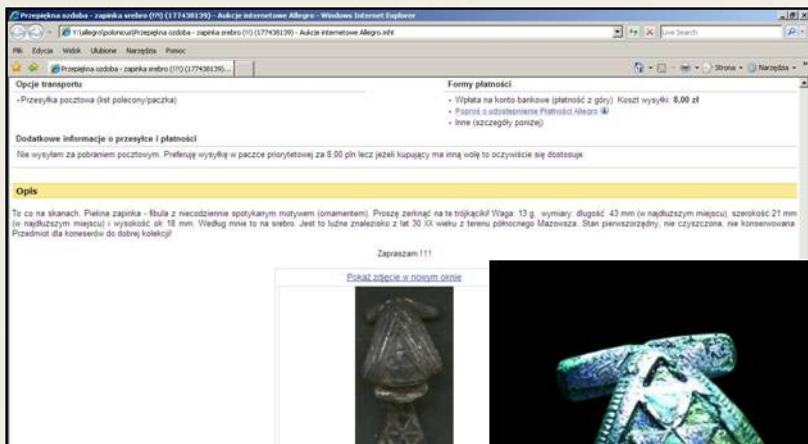
- ✓ Over 1300 suspicious auctions recorded
- ✓ 184 recorded sellers and wholesalers
- ✓ 13 sellers withdrew after our notice on law in force
- ✓ 64 auctions reported to Police, resulted in intervention
- ✓ 11 cases so far ended in persecution







# Interventive activities: surveillance





# Interventive activities: surveillance

Fibule rzymskie - lot10 (1) (210716812) - Aukcje internetowe Allegro - Windows Internet Explorer


Y:\allegro\marek\_1958\Fibule rzymskie - lot10 (1) (210716812) - Aukcje internetowe Allegro.mht

Live Search

Plik Edycja Widok Ulubione Narzędzia Pomoc

Fibule rzymskie - lot10 (1) (210716812) - Aukcje inter...

10 bardzo ładnie zachowanych, nie czyszczonych, rzymskich fibuli z brązu. Polecam. Artefakty nie pochodzą z wykopalisk, nie zostały przypadkowo wykopane lub znalezione w ziemi na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Sprzedaż i kupno w/w przedmiotów, nie narusza ustawy o ochronie zabytków i dóbr kultury R.P. !!!



Wyświetleń: 196

O nas Prasa Reklama Oferty pracy Program Partnerski Usługi i narzędzia Bezpieczeństwo

Korzystanie z serwisu oznacza akceptację regulaminu

Internet 100%

Start Skrzynka odbiorcza... Moje dokumenty Microsoft PowerPoi... marek\_1958 Strona startowa pr... Fibule rzymskie -... 11:05







# Interventive activities: expertise





# Interventive activities: cooperation?

- ✓ Joint actions with "treasure hunters"  
(2006-2007) – from conferences to fieldwork



**Long-term benefits for heritage protection???**



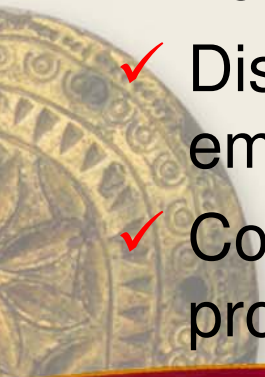




# Fighting Illegal Archaeology Challenges

## # 1 is EDUCATION!!!

- ✓ Raising social awareness of the problem
- ✓ Making decision-makers realise the risks
- ✓ Educating amateurs on the true ways of protecting heritage and the current law
- ✓ Discouraging archaeologists (researchers and museums employees) to "co-operate" with outlaws
- ✓ Constantly trained public security bodies (i.e. Police, prosecutors)







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**Thank you for your attention!**

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