



2023 Master internship at University of Gdańsk



TITLE: Scales of prehistoric amber exploitation at the southern Baltic

LAB & PEOPLE

- Name of the hosting lab: Institute of Archaeology
- General activities of the lab: prehistoric and historic archaeology
- Website: <https://en.historia.ug.edu.pl/>
- Number of staff / PhD: 14 lecturers and researchers / 4 PhD students
- Supervisor name and contact: Dr Łukasz Pospieszny (lukasz.pospieszny@ug.edu.pl), Dr Mateusz Cwaliński (mateusz.cwalinski@ug.edu.pl), Prof. Waldemar Ossowski (waldemar.ossowski@ug.edu.pl), Prof. Marcin Wąs (marcin.was@ug.edu.pl)

TOPIC OF THE INTERNSHIP

- Scientific context of the internship (max 20 lines)

The Gulf of Gdańsk holds some of the richest deposits of the Baltic amber, exploited by humans since the Mesolithic. Local production and far-reaching exchange of various prestige objects made of amber peaked in the Younger Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age. At the time amber began to be exported in considerable numbers from Northern to Southern Europe, where it is found in variety of processed forms (mainly as jewellery). However, in Europe also other types of fossil resins were used at these periods. Hence, the presence of Baltic amber in archaeological context needs to be confirmed with the help of chemical methods, primarily spectroscopic analyses. The third scientific revolution in archaeology both allows and demands fast and open access to data, and an online database of amber finds is currently being developed at the University of Gdańsk. This requires creating standards of data collection and storage, cross-border and cross-discipline collaboration of researchers, and effective transfer of skills and knowledge. A fast urban development in coastal areas causes a threat to both known and yet uncharted archaeological sites, especially remains of amber collection camps and production workshops. There is an urgent need for mapping such sites and conducting non-destructive research of the most endangered and/or valuable ones.

Keywords: Neolithic, Baltic Sea, amber, archaeological heritage

Bibliography:

Beck, C. W. 1986. Spectroscopic Investigations of Amber. *Applied Spectroscopy Reviews* 22, 57–110; Kosmowska-Ceranowicz, B. 2017. Amber in Poland and in the World (2nd

edition). Warszawa; Cwaliński, M. 2023. Amber in the circum-Adriatic Bronze Age: acquisition, circulation and adaptation. Peter Lang Publishing Group.

Tasks and duties entrusted to the student:

The first part of this internship will be to conduct fieldwalk surveys along the coast of the Gulf of Gdańsk and in the Vistula river delta (Żuławy region). This will allow to evaluate the state of preservation of known Neolithic settlements with traces of amber processing, and to search for new such sites. The second part will be to conduct a series of analyses of amber artefacts found during the surveys and those from university and museum collections at Gdańsk: a) spectroscopic analysis aimed at determining class and specie of fossil resin; b) typological classification aimed at determining chronology and cultural affiliation of an artefact; c) technological examination aimed at determining the level and tradition of craftsmanship, including methods and tools of amber processing. Collected data will be prepared to be published in our on-line database. Depending on the progress and the interests, we will then consider extending these analyses to finds coming from other regions and time periods.

Skills to be acquired or developed:

Surveying; using mobile GIS; spectroscopic analyses; database designing and maintenance; amber mineralogical, typological and technological classification.

PROFILE OF THE DESIRED STUDENT

- Minimum level of study required: Master
- Field(s) of study: Archaeology, Earth Sciences
- Scientific skills: recognising and handling archaeological finds, basics in GIS
- Language skills required: spoken and written English

THE INTERNSHIP ASSIGNMENT:

Desired duration of the internship (in months): 5 months

Desired Starting date of the mission: Feb-March

Indicative weekly schedule: 35h / week

Remuneration: n/a

A SEA-EU Erasmus grant could be asked to your own university.

Internship agreement: an internship agreement will be signed.

To SEA-EU students:

If you're interested please send your CV and letter of motivation to the scientist in charge, lukasz.pospieszny@ug.edu.pl before the date 29/09/2023.