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Perspectives for Oceania from the Polish academia

The 11th National Conference of the Australia, New Zealand and Oceania Research Association *Problems and perspectives of development of the Oceania states*. Lublin, (December 13, 2019), The Faculty of Earth Sciences and Spatial Management at the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University, and the Australia, New Zealand and Oceania Research Association (ANZORA).

On December 13, 2019, Doctor Joanna Siekiera has organized the annual conference for the Australia, New Zealand, Oceania Research Association (ANZORA) in Lublin. This was the 11th edition of the ANZORA national conference, which gathers Polish scientists and enthusiasts of the Pacific region. It is worth underlining the fact that besides this venue, there are only two cyclic conferences in Europe touching upon Oceania research; the biannual conference of the European Society for Oceanists (the Netherlands) and the New Zealand Studies Association roundtable (Great Britain).

ANZORA (Polish: *Towarzystwo Naukowe Australii, Nowej Zelandii i Oceanii*) operates in Cracow. It promotes knowledge of the Pacific area in Poland and among Polish scientists, travelers and devotees. The annual conference seems to be, therefore, one of the most significant aims of the Association. Each year in December, but at different hosting university, the members of ANZORA and other honorary guests are able to present their scope of research, experience, and very often travels in order to debate among themselves. For the first time in the ANZORA's history, the whole organizing process was made along with the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Spatial Management at the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin.

The 2019 edition's theme was "Problems and perspectives of development of the Oceania states". The ANZORA members, who know each other on academic and personal basis, as well as many new speakers came to Lublin from various disciplines and academic institutions from Poland and abroad. In total, there were 17 presenters. Besides the University of

Bergen in Norway, represented by the main organizer (*nota bene*, the author of this report), foreign speakers represented the Western Sydney University in Australia and Université de Bourgogne in France. Finally, there were representatives of 8 Polish universities: The University of Warsaw, the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Cracow University, the University of Łódź, the University of Bydgoszcz, the University of Economics in Cracow, and the hosting institution being the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. The honorary speaker was Professor Sev Ozdowski, who was the Australian Human Rights Commissioner in 2000–2005. The Embassy of New Zealand, as annually, has taken the honorary patronage over the event. The supporting institutions were also the Massey University in New Zealand and the University of Bergen.

The guests were warmly welcomed by the representative of the hosting university, Prodean Professor Wojciech Zgłobicki from the Department of Geology, Soil Science and Geoinformation. His speech was followed by reading out the welcome letter sent to the organizers by Professor Sev Ozdowski from the Western Sydney University. Both professors underlined deep and urgent necessity of discovering the Pacific studies, as well as the close cooperation between the academia and practitioners here in Poland. Doctor Joanna Siekiera, a long-term member of ANZORA, had the pleasure of opening the conference with the first speech, entitled “Mare Nullius Project – perspectives of the Oceania states development”. It gave the audience insight into the Bergen Pacific Studies research group, the international legal aspects of the grant, as well as the scientific methods of research in Norway.

The gathering was divided into three thematic panels corresponding to the interests, but also the problematic aspects of the speakers’ research. Panel I “Perspectives of Oceania development” was moderated by Doctor Justyna Eska-Mikołajewska from the University of Bydgoszcz. It began with a speech on international legal subjectivity in the context of the effects of climate change in Oceania. This topic as such is so diverse that even lawyers among themselves cannot agree on the common legal solutions regarding the sovereignty of submerged islands, question of the citizenship of such drowning nations, as well delimitation of the new corresponding to the new territorial boundaries Exclusive Economic Zones for the tuna fishery, indeed vital for the Pacific economies. Then, speakers discussed tourism as a possible lost opportunity or a future advantage. The study case was made in Kiribati by the Founder and President of ANZORA, Doctor Dariusz Zdziech from the Jagiellonian University. The last presentation in the first panel was entitled “Indigenous Terra Madre” and was related to transnational perspectives on indigenous food sovereignty.

After the coffee break, Panel II “Historical problems of the Pacific” started. It was moderated by Doctor Zdziech. In this part of the conference first speaker focused on colonial British pioneers’ travel writing from the 19th century. Prehistory along with history of settlement of the Pacific islands were presented using the archaeometry methodology. Next, Rapa Nui rituals held in the past and nowadays in the Chilean Easter Island were presented on the highly detailed examples. Another speech on literature was the last but one in this panel.

It concerned Australian trans-culturalism in both art and writing of William Barak. The methods and ways of prognosing security threats in the regional architecture of the Pacific closed this part of the conference.

The participants of the 11th ANZORA conference reached the midpoint of the gathering during the lunch break, as the last panel was the longest one. The “Threats to the Pacific countries and territories” panel was probably also the most varied. It was moderated by the organizer, Doctor Siekiera. The first speech concerned problems and ways of development of the Australian cities, in particular with regard to transport problems and employment for residents. Next speeches touched upon geopolitical context of the region of Australia and Oceania. Audition was able to learn about international affairs of the microstates in the Pacific facing challenges of the 21st century, diplomatic engagement of China in the region, followed by the Japanese examples of interfering into regional affairs of the Oceania microstates. The concept of “periphery” and center on the world maps, as well as modelling in space-time cartography made by a famous Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand was presented as the last but one speech on the conference. Finally, Doctor Małgorzata Telecka, hosting co-organizer from the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Spatial Management at the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University presented how big, but still not well-know, was the Polish input to Pacific research, led by famous anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski. Doctor Telecka closed up the conference subsequently afterwards.

The next ANZORA conference has already been scheduled, in accordance with the Association’s custom, on December 11, 2020. The host of the 12th conference shall be the University of Łódź with its Faculty of International and Political Studies. Co-organizing units from the University of Łódź will be the Chair of British Studies and the Commonwealth Countries, as well as the “Australian Studies” Scientific Association.

