ON THE ORIGIN OF STRATA-BOUND Zn-Pb ORES IN THE UPPER SILESIA, POLAND

Maria SASS-GUSTKIEWICZ¹ & Stanisław DŻUŁYŃSKI²

¹ Faculty of Geology, Geophysics and Environment Protection, University of Mining and Metallurgy, al. Mickiewicza 30, 30-059 Kraków, Poland
² Institute of Geological Sciences, Jagiellonian University, ul. Oleandry 2a, 30-063 Kraków, Poland


Abstract: In view of the renewed discussion on the origin of Upper Silesian Zn-Pb ores we give some comments on this subject. In our opinion the recurrently invoked post-Jurassic age of these deposits is at variance with geological facts which point to pre-Jurassic age. The source of metal-bearing solutions could be looked in deeper parts of the Earth’s crust, presumably in Paleozoic rocks, or in older accumulations of ore deposits regenerated during Triassic reorganization of crustal plates.

Key words: MVT deposits, age of mineralization, derivation of ore fluids.

INTRODUCTION

The strata-bound Zn-Pb sulfide ores in the Triassic of Upper Silesia belong to the category of Mississippi Valley-type deposits (abbreviated to MVT deposits). These deposits are once designated as “Upper Silesia – Mississippi Valley type deposits” (Dunham, 1950). Recently, however, they are described as “Silesia–Cracow” ores. As in our earlier publications, in this paper we return to the name “Upper Silesian ores”, unless the designation “Silesia–Cracow” is quoted in excerpts from other publications.

The origin of Upper Silesian deposits is still open to discussion. Time and again contradictory ideas on this subject have been advanced, largely because some investigators ascribe negligible importance to certain geological data that are at variance with their preconceived ideas or because of insufficient understanding of geological setting of these ores. The dispute is centered on the following subjects: 1 – relationship of ores to their karst receptacles; 2 – relationship of ore bodies to tectonic features of the district; 3 – age of ore emplacement; 4 – derivation of ore fluids, their driving mechanism and routes of migration; 5 – source of base metals.

GEOLOGIC SETTING

The Triassic sequence of Upper Silesia is separated from overlying Jurassic and underlying Paleozoic rocks by major unconformities of regional extent. The sequence begins with non-marine sandstones, conglomerates and claystones (Bunter). In the ore district, the thickness of non-marine sediments varies from zero to 20 m, but to the south-east, it may amount up to 1500 m (Moryc, 1971). The non-marine sediments are followed by 300 to 400 m thick sequence of Muschelkalk limestones and early diagenetic dolostones deposited, to a considerable extent, under oxidizing and high energy conditions. These shallow-water carbonates, in turn, are covered, with a slight unconformity, by red non-marine Keuper claystones. The claystones contain, locally, pure lacustrine limestones, the so called “Woźniki limestones” (Roemer, 1870), which are interpreted in terms of hot spring deposits (Bogacz et al., 1970).

In most of Upper Silesia, the Triassic overlies almost flat-lying Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures. However, along the north-eastern margin of the Upper Silesian basin, the Triassic covers with a transgressive overlap the irregular paleorelief (change of elevation up to 300 m) of folded Lower Carboniferous and Devonian carbonates (e.g. Alexandrowicz, 1971; Wyczółkowski, 1971, 1974), whose basement consists of Lower Paleozoic sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks (e.g. Wieser, 1957; Ekiert, 1971;
Fig. 1. Distribution of Upper Silesian Zn-Pb strata-bound ores in relation to major Paleozoic fracture zones and faults presented on a background of schematic geological map without minor tectonic features and Cainozoic strata. Paleozoic tectonics simplified after Herbich (1981) and Moraw ska (1997). 1 - Cretaceous; 2 - Jurassic; 3 - Triassic; 4 - Permian; 5 - Carboniferous; 6 - Devonian; 7 - Carpathians Cretaceous-Tertiary; 8 - Zn-Pb ore deposits; 9 - fracture zones and major faults; 10 - Carpathian nappes. KLFZ - the Kraków-Lubliniec Fracture Zone; TGFZ - the Tarnowskie Góry Fault Zone; USF - the Upper Silesian Fault Zone.

THE HOST ROCK OF TRIASSIC ORES

The host-rock proper of sulide ores in the Triassic is the ore-bearing dolom ite (abbreviated to OBD). This neosome or metasome occurs in the form of laterally extensive, irregular or roughly tabular bodies within unaltered Triassic carbonates (paleosome). These bodies are localized along the southwestern margin of the KL fracture zone and are absent further to the southwest, as well as on the eastern side of this structural elevation.

The cross-cutting metasomatic contacts of the OBD with unaltered Triassic carbonates and the presence of isolated remnants of these carbonates within the OBD, leave no doubts as to its secondary, metasomatic nature (e.g., Bogacz et al., 1972).

The OBD resulted from successive stages, through dolomitization of limestones and recrystallization of early-diagenetic dolostones (Bogacz et al., 1975). There are at least three generations of the OBD: 1 - fine-crystalline, dark dolomite with dispersed iron sulfides, 2 - coarse-crystalline rusty dolomite and, 3 - gangue dolomite in veins.

These generations (see: Krzywicka-Everest, 1990) were the results of the same formative process. They were directly related to the transfer of hot mineralizing solutions and mobilized connate or ground waters through the pore space of Triassic paleoauquifer.

The age of the OBD is pre-Jurassic, because the Callovian marine sediments rest directly upon the eroded surface of this dolomite, the phenomenon already observed by early geologists (e.g. Petrascheck, 1918).

As is the case with many other MVT deposits, most students regard the OBD as a hydrothermal alteration and there is reliable evidence supporting this conclusion (for references and details, see: Bogacz et al., 1972, 1975). According to some authors, however, the OBD originated independently of ore mineralization (e.g. Śliwiński, 1969).

Recently, Leach et al. (1996a) claim that only a limited part of this dolomite is genetically related to the emplacement of strata-bound sulfide ores. The strata-bound ores are
indeed restricted entirely and exclusively to the OBD (e.g. Michael, 1904; Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1975b, 1985; Sobczyński et al., 1978). Outside the mineralized zone, the Triassic is devoid of the OBD. It should be borne in mind, however, that dolomitizing solutions were forerunning the metal-bearing ones. These latter might have covered only part of the host strata already transformed into the ore-bearing dolomite. Because of their greater specific density such mineralizing solutions emplaced ores chiefly in the lower portions of the OBD.

Admittedly, there are early diagenetic, pre-ore dolostones but they invariably occur as “stratiform” bodies i.e., normal sedimentary beds containing well preserved microfossils and other organic remnants which in the OBD are obliterated or blurred by recrystallization. The OBD is superimposed upon such dolostones and shows cross-cutting metasomatic contacts, similar to those observed with limestones.

The appearance of the OBD heralded the onset of ore mineralization and both phenomena were parts of the same formative processes. The OBD represents the first link in the chain of alterations brought about by the passage of hot ascending and mineralizing solutions (e.g. Bogacz et al., 1970; Przenosło, 1974; Mochnacka & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1981). Therefore, the origin of OBD has been traditionally linked with the genesis of ores.

**TEMPERATURE OF ORE EMPLACEMENT**

The strata-bound ores in the Upper Silesia, like many other MVT deposits, are “shallow” i.e., emplaced close to the contemporary Earth’s surface. Consequently, these deposits are “telethermal” and temperatures of their emplacement range from 80° to 158°C (Kozłowski, 1995) or from 120° to 220°C (Przenosło, 1974). It is realized, however, that at greater depth, where the mineralizing fluids were derived, their temperature must have been higher (Kozłowski, 1995) and presumably inhibitory to precipitation of sulfides.

**ORE-BODIES**

Although the ore-bodies may assume different positions in the OBD, they are thought to occur in three so called “horizons” (e.g., Duzynski, 1928; Sobczyński & Szuwaryński, 1974; Szuwaryński, 1996), the lowest of which is located nearby and along the lowermost metasomatic boundary of the OBD. The ores contained in these “horizons” occur in the form of replacement (metasomatic), cavity-filling and ammoblastic ores (see later).

The problem of replacement ores has been treated in many publications (for references and details see: e.g. Bogacz et al., 1973a; Mochnacka & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1981) and does not cause controversies. Consequently, there is no need to dwell on this subject. Comments, however, are needed on the question of cavity filling ores.

**CAVITY-FILLING ORES**

Mineralized parts of the OBD are riddled with countless dissolution voids, which take the form of sheet-like, low-ceilinged, tabular and spongework cavities. The voids also include openings produced by “karst tectonics” (Bałwierz & Dzułyński, 1976) i.e., the rock disturbances, such as collapse breccias or minor gravity faults, produced by dissolution induced stress redistribution. The above mentioned voids are lined or filled with sulfide ores.


The mineralized cavities in the Upper Silesian district, as well as in other MVT deposits, are best explained in terms of hydrothermal karst phenomena as an ore-forming process (Bogacz et al., 1970; Dzułyński, 1976; Dzułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1980, 1985; Sass-Gustkiewicz et al., 1982; Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1985). This concept is based on three premises: 1. the ores infilling or lining the voids are precipitated from hydrothermal solutions, 2. the voids serving as ore receptacles are of dissolution origin and, 3. the voids and ores resident in them are formed contemporaneously or penecontemporaneously by the same formative process.

The term “hydrothermal karst” is now well established in karst sciences (e.g. Kunsky, 1957; Ozoray, 1961; Maksimovich, 1969, Dzułyński 1976; Jakucs, 1977; Rudnicki, 1979; Dublyanski, 1995). Cavity making by metal-bearing hydrothermal solutions has also been suggested by several ore-geologists, either as an alternative (e.g., Park & Cannon, 1943) or explicit explanation of cavity-filling ores (e.g. Połepny, 1894; McClelland & Whitebread, 1965). To this category of phenomena belong the cavity-filling sulfide ores in the Upper Silesian district (Bogacz et al., 1970; Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1974, 1975b). The interpretation that mineralized cavities were produced by ore bearing solutions finds its strongest support in the solution collapse breccias which are among important ore receptacles. The karstic origin of these breccias is testified by the following features:

1. The lowermost boundaries of breccias are dissolution surfaces covered with mineralized cave sediments made up of grains of disintegrated dolomite and sphalerite, insoluble residuals, clastic fragments of ores and host rock, and idiomorphic sulfide crystals (Bogacz et al., 1973b; Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1975a, 1996).

2. The upper and lateral boundaries of breccias are gradational, whereby the rubble of angular dolomite blocks in the center of breccia bodies passes through crinkle breccias into a network of mineralized fractures. Above the high-domal breccia bodies the mineralized fissures are commonly arranged in pressure arches (Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1974).

3. In plan view, the breccias are highly irregular (Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1975b).

4. The rock fragments making up the breccia bodies are devoid of slickensided surfaces or tectoglyphs.
The mineralized breccias were formed synchronously and/or penecontemporaneously with the emplacement of ores from an alternating succession of brecciation and mineralization episodes in which the successively younger ore minerals enveloped the clastic products of earlier brecciation and mineralization episodes (Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1975b). As seen in plan view, the breccia bodies reveal concentric and zonal arrangement, with successively younger stages of mineralization covering progressively more extended areas. Such a relationship implies that both the karst receptacles and the ores resident in them are products of the same formative processes and that their coexistence in space is not due to an accidental superposition of unrelated events. This conclusion can be extended to cover the uncollapsed mineralized karst cavities. The banded ore crustifications pass from interfрагmental voids of the breccias into such cavities without interruption.

Significantly, the mineralized karst cavities seldom, if ever, occur in limestones. This behaviour may be explained by the increased permeability of coarse-crystalline OBD and by the fact that at temperatures above 40 °C, the dolomite is more soluble than limestone (Mandy, 1945, fide Jakucs, 1977).

The dissolution motivated origin of mineralized breccias in the Triassic strata-bound deposits is ignored, minimized or rejected by authors who insist on their true tectonic derivation (e.g., Kibitlewski, 1993; Szwarzyński, 1983, 1993). The previously indicated characteristic features of the breccias in question, however, are incompatible with their alleged true tectonic origin.

Our interpretation is also partly questioned by American investigators. The moot point in the dispute is the presence or the alleged presence of “pre-ore” breccias in the OBD, produced by dissolution motivated collapse, independently of the transfer of mineralizing solutions. Leach et al. (1996a) use the term “pre-ore breccia” to describe “dissolution collapse breccias which lack diagnostic evidence of involvement of either meteoric or hydrothermal fluids and whose formation predate the emplacement of ore minerals” (I.e. p. 45). The above mentioned authors conclude that “many ore-bearing breccias in the Silesian–Cracow region are REPLACEMENT BRECCIAS (capital letters by the present authors) that are the result of superposition of ore stage dissolution and hydrothermal brecciation on a pre-ore breccia and the selective replacement of pre-ore karst breccias by sulfides” (I.e. p. 46). In matrix-supported breccias, the matrix is preferentially subjected to dissolution and replacement, but from this it does not follow that the metasomatic process is superimposed upon the pre-ore breccia unrelated to the transfer of mineralizing solutions (see below).

Leach et al. (1996a) suggest three possibilities for the development of mineralized breccias in the OBD: 1 – meteoric karst system developed prior to the introduction of ore-forming fluids which altered and enlarged the original, meteoric collapse breccias, 2 – the pre-ore breccias developed before an earlier hydrothermal event, which was unrelated to ore emplacement and, 3 – hydrothermal karst might have formed during the initial introduction of ore-forming fluids but prior to the deposition of sulfides (I.e. p.46). The possibilities suggested have already been discussed, in a somewhat similar way, by Dżulynski & Sass-Gustkiewicz (1985, p.400).

The above listed possibilities require the following comments:

ad 1. Indeed both, the unaltered Triassic host strata and the OBD reveal meteoric karst features belonging to the three periods of meteoric karstification: pre-Jurassic, Lower Tertiary, and Pleistocene–Recent. These meteoric karst features developed under oxidizing conditions. On the other hand, the mineralized karst features in the OBD do not show any evidence of having been developed under oxidizing conditions and no coeval karst breccias of this type have ever been observed in the host strata outside the OBD. The sheet cavities which are characteristic of hydrothermal karst ores (ribbon ores) are also absent in non-mineralized carbonates. The ribbon ores, interpreted as proto-karst features, are representatives of the first stage in development of hydrothermal karst phenomena (Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1993; Dżulynski & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1993). The mineralized collapse breccias represent the mature stage of such development. Summing up, the mineralized breccias resulted penecontemporaneously or synchronously with deposition of ores and have never been pre-ore meteoric karst features.

In the OBD, there are Lower Tertiary sinkholes containing clastic fragments of ores derived from earlier mineralizations. Such sinkholes were produced during subaerial erosion following the retreat of the Cretaceous sea. Some of them became inundated by the Miocene transgression and partly filled with marine sediments (Panek & Szwarzyński, 1975). If this is the case, the sinkholes may contain remobilized galena crystals in shells of Miocene molluscs attached to the walls of sinkholes (Bogacz et al., 1973b).

ad 2. There is no evidence that mineralized karst cavities in the OBD developed from an earlier hydrothermal fluid event, unrelated to the ores in them.

ad 3. The third possibility is not at variance with the concept of hydrothermal ore-forming karst processes. The formation of voids preceded shortly the emplacement of ores, but both processes were penecontemporaneous and parts of the same formative event.

Brief comments are needed on breccias which appear to be only partly mineralized. Such breccias may give the impression that mineralizing solutions invaded the pre-ore meteoric karst structures. Mineralizing solutions, however, may deposit sulfides in more permeable parts of breccias, leaving other parts of the breccias apparently barren of ore minerals. Nevertheless, such seemingly barren portions invariably contain small amounts of dispersed sulfides.

Large collapse breccia bodies in the Upper Silesian region are preferentially located along the lowermost metasomatic boundary of the OBD. This boundary approximates the top limit of the Gogolin beds which consist of fine-crystalline, thin- to medium-bedded limestones intercalated with marls. The Gogolin beds provided an impermeable floor for horizontally spreading dolomitizing solutions. The following, heavy and aggressive mineralizing solutions also moved along such an interface, taking advantage of an increased porosity of the coarse-crystalline OBD.

Converging in more passable conduits, these solutions could dissolve sizable caverns which were subject to roof
failures in bedded and cracked dolomites. Inasmuch as the roof failures propagated upwards, involving successively the overlying dolomitic beds, the rock fragments making up the breccia body consist exclusively of the OBD.

**BRECCIAS NOT RELATED TO ROOF FAILURES OF CAVERNS**

Not all of mineralized breccias in the OBD may be attributed to roof failures of cavens. With hydrothermal karst phenomena, new brecciating factors come into action such as “hydraulic fracturing” and “hydraulic explosions” (Muffler et al., 1971; Phillips, 1972). The hydrothermal explosions result from rapid transformation of water into steam and may disrupt the confining rock. Also a sudden drop in pressure may burst it apart with the onset of dilatancy (e.g. Bridgeman, 1952; Kents, 1964). The above mentioned processes have played a dominant role in the formation of brecciated, vertical ore veins which served as channelways for ascending ore fluids (Dżułyński, 1976; Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz 1978; 1985). They also might have operated as contributory agent in brecciation of the host dolomite. The present writers, however, do not consider the hydrotectonics as the key factor in the formation of large breccia bodies in the OBD, as suggested by Jaroszewski (1993).

Brecciation is also promoted by the disrupting action of minerals crystallizing in fractures (e.g. “breche d’éclatement” – Gignoux & Avnimelech, 1937 or “chemical brecciation” – Sawkins, 1969). This process is particularly common in the OBD which is partly affected by solutional disaggregation. The solutional disaggregation may be part of hydrothermal karst phenomena. It is effected by dissolution of crystal edges, whereby the solid rock is delithified and transformed into a soft, structureless mass of incoherent or semi-coherent grains in which all traces of primary structures are obliterated.

The disaggregated grains and clayey residuals which tend to accumulate at the bottom of cavens may be redeposited by the flow of mineralizing solutions (Bogacz et al., 1973b). Massive or piecemeal roof failures also stir the unconsolidated bottom materials giving rise to clouds of suspensions which may spread laterally in the form of subterranean turbidity currents (Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1980).

Disaggregated dolomites, referred to as “sanded” (Lowering et al., 1949) or “pulverulent” (Jakucs, 1977) provide favorable conditions for an unhindered growth of sulfide minerals. Such minerals tend to line the boundaries of disaggregated carbonates in the form of drusy incrustations projecting with their free crystal faces into the disaggregated mass of grains. This type of ore mineralization, first described from the Upper Silesian ores (Bogacz et al., 1973b), has been indicated as “ammoblastesis” (Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1985).

Solutinal disaggregation may proceed concurrently with the ammoblastesis and may continue after the emplacement of ore minerals. In such situations, the sulfide incrustations become suspended in a mass of incoherent grains and, devoid of solid support may break into smaller fragments. Also the preexisting bedding-controlled ore veins are affected by such brecciation. With progressing disaggregation they become fragmented and displaced, though some of them are still aligned in strings, marking the original positions of veins (Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1978 – Fig. 2, 1985 – Fig. 26).

Fractures of dolomite detached from side-walls of collapse breccias or cavities, which are entirely enclosed in soft matrix of incoherent grains, are subject to specific type of “self-brecciation”. Such fragments, weakened by incipient disaggregation, yield to weak strains and break into smaller pieces along the pre-existing cracks. These discontinuities are widened by injected disaggregated grains and disrupting growth of autigenic sulfide crystals and form a kind of “micro-crackle breccias (Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1985; Sass-Gustkiewicz et al., 1982 – Fig. 23).

**RELATIONSHIP OF ORE BODIES IN TRIASSIC CARBONATES TO TECTONIC FAULTS**

A key tenet of many interpretations of strata-bound ores in the Triassic of Upper Silesia is that the tectonic faults which affect the host strata have played an important role in the formation and distribution of ore bodies (e.g. Galkiewicz, 1983; Szuwarzyński, 1993; Kibitlewski & Görecka, 1988; Kibitlewski, 1993). The possibility that some of these faults have been associated with early Cimmerian movements has also been invoked (e.g. Pickarski, 1965; Szuwarzynski, 1983). The direct relationship of the strata-bound ore to pre- or syn-ore tectonics is not clearly recorded in mine workings but appears from statistical analyses of distributions of the ore bodies (Blajda, 1993; Sass-Gustkiewicz et al., 1997).

The Upper Silesian region was affected by early Cimmerian movements which appear to be recorded by some sedimentary structures (Szulc, 1993). The early Cimmerian faults might have and presumably did follow the pattern of earlier tectonic fractures although their amplitude was much smaller than that of the Variscan faults (Herbic, 1981; Görecka, 1993). However, the majority of faults which transsect and displace the strata-bound ore bodies in the Triassic are post-ore phenomena related to Early Tertiary and Neogene tectonics. As noted, the early Tertiary faults were associated with local regeneration and remobilization of preexisting sulfide ores and were responsible for insignificant fault-hosted mineralization of Jurassic limestones.

**AGE OF STRATA-BOUND MINERALIZATION IN TRIASSIC CARBONATES**

Age of the sulfide mineralization in Triassic carbonates has long been a bone of contention between proponents of “syngenetic” and “epigenetic” interpretations. In spite of prolonged discussions no consensus of opinion has been reached on this subject.

The synsedimentary non-hydrothermal interpretation, once popular (e.g., Guerich, 1903; Stappenbeck, 1928; Keil,
1956; Gruszczyk, 1967; Smolarska, 1968) is now generally abandoned. Some proponents of epigenetic interpretations suggest post-Upper Jurassic and/or Tertiary age of the strata-bound sulfide ores in Triassic carbonates, relating this mineralization to the "Alpine tectonics" in the Carpathians (e.g. Aithans, 1891; Sachs, 1930; Harančzyk, 1979; Kozłowski, 1995; Górecka et al., 1996;). As an argument in favor of such interpretation, they point to the mineralization in Upper Jurassic limestones located along the early Tertiary faults. This concept has been recently accepted by American investigators (Leach & Viets, 1993; Leach et al., 1996a, 1996b; Church et al., 1996) on the basis of paleomagnetic investigations of ore samples. It should be born in mind, however, that Lower Tertiary fault-hosted ores may be superimposed upon the strata-bound deposits, where these deposits are cut by Lower Tertiary faults. Such situation requires precise localization of samples and their presentation against the background of ore structures in the sampling site. The samples investigated, however, do not satisfy this requirement. Moreover, any genetic hypothesis explaining the origin of MVT-deposits must be in accord with all aspects of geologic setting that existed at the time the deposit were formed (Ohle, 1980). The Tertiary interpretation of the strata-bound ores discussed is difficult to reconcile with field evidence.

As noted, the strata-bound sulfide ores are pre-Jurassic because Callovian sediments rest with transgressive overlap upon the eroded surface of the OBD which was formed penecontemporaneously with the emplacement of sulfide ores. The lowermost non-marine Jurassic sediments have been reported to rest upon a karstified surface of the OBD, whereby the ores themselves have already been subjected to weathering and oxidation (e.g. Petrascheck, 1918; Piekarowski, 1965).

The presence of sulfides in Jurassic limestones gave rise to the concept of multi-stage mineralization extended over a long time interval from Upper Triassic to Lower Tertiary (e.g., Różkowski et al., 1979; Szuwaryński, 1983). The early Tertiary mineralization, however, as compared with the Triassic mineralization, took place under entirely different tectonic, structural and environmental settings. This mineralization is fault-hosted impoverished (Szuwaryński, 1983) and does not occur in the form of strata-bound bodies. The emplacement of strata-bound ores was an earlier and separate event and not a step in a long-lasting mineralization process, embracing Jurassic and Cretaceous carbonates (see later).

The concept that the strata-bound sulfide ores were emplaced in post-Upper Jurassic or post Cretaceous time raises a number of questions which, under such assumption, remain unanswerable:

1. Why ascending hydrothermal solutions did not spread laterally through permeable, sandy Bathonian—Callovian sediments?

2. Why did they deposit the bulk of their base metals in the Muschelkalk and not in bedded Upper Jurassic or Cretaceous carbonates?

3. Why, in Jurassic or Cretaceous carbonates is there nothing comparable to the OBD?

On the other hand, the pre-Jurassic age of strata-bound deposits explains the bedding-parallel deposition of ore-bodies. The dolomitizing solutions forrunning the emplacement of sulfides, could spread laterally, taking advantage of high primary porosity, without being inhibited or deviated by faults. The following mineralizing and aggressive solutions utilized the secondary porosity of coarse crystalline texture of the dolomitic neosome. Finally, the pre-Jurassic age of mineralization is consistent with what is known of many other MVT deposits, namely the proximity of such deposits to a regional unconformity above the host strata. The MVT deposits or, at least most of them, were emplaced close to the contemporary Earth surface.

We do not know exactly when mineralizing solutions started to invade the Triassic paleoaquifer and how long the inflow of such solutions lasted. The time interval in which the passage of mineralizing solutions persisted, estimated by Repetski & Narkiewicz (1996) as of the order 1,000 to 5,000 years, is presumably too short. Estimations by Lewchuk & Symons (1996) for the MVT from 1 to 8 My appear to be more realistic.

The beginning of inflow of mineralizing solutions began after much, if not all, of the Muschelkalk succession had been deposited. It is possible that a certain amount of metal-bearing solutions might have leaked into the sea water. Perhaps, the small quantities of dispersed sulfides reported from the uppermost lagunal Triassic sediments bear evidence to this event ("diplogenetic ores"—Lowering, 1963). Indeed, submarine exhalations of ore fluids have been suggested (Ekiert, 1957; Przeniosło, 1974; Harančzyk, 1993). However, the oxidizing and high energy sedimentary environment of the Muschelkalk was not conducive to any significant accumulation of sulfide deposits on the sea floor (Siedlecki, 1955; Krajewski, 1957). Consequently, the strata-bound deposits in the Triassic are epigenetic with respect to the host strata, not because the ore fluids could not reach the bottom surface, but because most of the metals had precipitated before reaching the bottom and because of the lack of suitable receptacles on the sea floor (Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1980).

The above interpretation does not debar the possibility that the inflow of ascending hydrothermal solutions continued after the retreat of the Triassic sea. The previously mentioned lacustrine Woźniki limestones (Keuper) represent hot spring deposits, as final products of hydrothermal activity that earlier resulted in dissolution of karst cavities and emplacement of ores (Bogacz et al., 1970). The hot waters, which precipitated calcium carbonate, however, were depleted of base metals. Small amounts of dispersed sulfides have also been reported from both the Keuper and Raetian sediments (Assman, 1948; Ekiert, 1957, 1971; Bednarek et al., 1983; Szuwaryński, 1996). The Keuper clays, however, did not act as a diversionary barrier for mineralizing solutions because there is no concentration of ores beneath these clays.

From the foregoing considerations, it appears that the age of the strata-bound sulfide ores is late Triassic (comp. also Ekiert, 1957; Przeniosło, 1974). Such ores are "epigenetic" with respect to the enclosing Muschelkalk carbonates but are "syngenetic" on the scale of Triassic sequence as a whole. There is yet another line of support in this respect.
According to recent preliminary investigation by Banaś et al. (1996) on illitization of smectite, there was a distinct thermal event by the end of Triassic time which resulted in significant rise of temperature of the Triassic strata overlying the Upper Carboniferous (see later). In this connection it is to be recalled that early isotopic age determinations of ores from Upper Silesia by Borucki (1978) have led him to conclude that the range of “analytical errors”, 40 and 220 My “impairs the reliability” of these determinations. However, the first age (40 My) corresponds to Paleogene and the second (220 My) to the late Triassic. This is in agreement with the two separate epochs of ore mineralization postulated by the present authors.

DERIVATION AND TRANSFER OF MINERALIZING SOLUTIONS

The origin of ore fluids which emplaced the sulfide ores in Triassic carbonates is a matter of conjecture. Hypotheses concerning their derivation are based on preconceptions rather than on direct observations, because such observations are lacking.

The mineralization “per descendum” from overlying rocks (e.g. Althans, 1891; Sachs, 1930; Assmann, 1948) is now abandoned, because these rocks are either barren or contain too little base metals to account for large strata-bound deposits. For similar reasons, it is unlikely that the metals have been derived from compaction brines resident in Triassic host strata or from reconcentration of dispersed sedimentary ore minerals by circulating ground waters (e.g. Stappenbeck, 1928). The Triassic host strata do not show any evidences of such circulation.

On one point agreement has been reached, namely, that the ores were emplaced by ascending hydrothermal solutions. This is also indicated by ore-fluid inclusions which reveal the presence of vertical thermal fluid gradient pointing to the cooling of these fluids towards the Earth’s surface (Kozłowski, 1995). Presently, the discussion is centered on migration routes of ore fluids, their driving force and the source of base metals.

The mineralizing solutions have gained access to the Muschelkalk through folded and fractured Lower Paleozoic rocks of the previously mentioned Kraków–Lubliniec Fracture Zone. Evidence for this is seen in vertical or subvertical ore veins located in faults and fractures that transect these rocks. In places of intersection of such tectonic discontinuities, the ore bodies may assume chimney-, or pipe-like shapes (Kwaśniewicz, 1932). It should be noted that large accumulations of Zn-Pb ores in Triassic carbonates occur preferentially where the underlying Paleozoic rocks are strongly tectonized (Michael, 1904).

The faults and fractures mentioned are manifestations of late Variscan orogeny associated with an elevated heat flow (Belka & Siewniak-Madej, 1996). As noted, in various stages of this orogeny, the movement along these discontinuities might have continued, during the onset of Triassic cycle of sedimentation (Herbich, 1981), as is the case with recent post-Alpine neotectonics. Some of the faults might have been reactivated during Early Cimmerian orogeny (Szuwarzyński, 1983).

Mineralogical composition of these fault-hosted ore veins in Paleozoic rocks may be similar to that of the strata-bound deposits (Gorcecka, 1973). The ore veins reveal also similar brecciation which is explained in terms of hydraulic fracturing (Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz 1985). Such brecciation might have been associated with “seismic pumping” (Sibson et al., 1975; Sibson, 1987), as is the case with recent, earthquake generated violent expulsions of hot mineralizing solutions (Lebedev, 1974).

The ore veins are particularly well developed in folded Lower Carboniferous and Devonian carbonates. These carbonate rocks stood high in pre-Triassic topography in the form of “knobs” which are considered characteristic of the MVT deposits (“ore-knob relationship” – Ohle, 1996). From such knobs, the ascending solutions could easily cross the Paleozoic/Triassic unconformity and enter directly into horizontally disposed Muschelkalk carbonates (Alexandro-wicz, 1971).

The formation of extensive strata-bound deposits requires a vigorous flow of large volumes of metal-bearing solutions. To satisfy this requirement such solutions must have already been made available and it is reasonable to accept the idea of deep-seated “fossil reservoirs” as possible sources (Fyfe et al., 1978). The draining of such reservoirs must have been very rapid and with the appearance of the previously mentioned active tectonic fractures the ore fluids were abruptly released (Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1985).

Derivation of ore-fluids, driving forces, the routes of their migration and the ultimate source of base metals are open to discussion. Since the strata-bound ores are pre-Jurassic (see above), both the uplift and thrust of the Carpathian nappes could not have been the driving mechanism for ore fluids, as envisioned by some investigators (e.g. Symons et al., 1995; Leach et al., 1996b – Fig. 37). The Carpathians as an orogenic belt did not exist in Triassic time. The development of the Carpathian geosyncline had only just begun and the accumulation of thick (7–8 km) flysch sequence started by the end of the Jurassic (Tithonian) and has continued till the Middle Miocene. At that time, the sedimentary flysch basins were situated far away to the south. Therefore the formation model depicted in Fig. 37 in the publication by Leach et al., (1996b), is misleading. Admittedly, to the south of the present occurrences of Central European Muschelkalk, there existed a land area which might have given rise to topography driven flow of ore fluids (comp. Pelissonier, 1965, Różkowski et al., 1979; Church & Vaughn, 1993), but evidence in this respect is inconclusive.

An alternative to the long-distance lateral flow of hydrothermal fluids, is the short-distance flow from sources located nearby beneath the present occurrences of strata-bound deposits. Wodzički (1987) suggested a reasonable hypothesis that the ores under consideration resulted from episodic expulsion of ore fluids from Carboniferous strata during Early Cimmerian orogeny. The Coal Measures are occasionally cut by ore veins, but these veins may also be interpreted as channelways of ore fluids derived from pre-Carboniferous rocks (e.g. Kosmann, 1883; Krusch, 1929).

As is the case with many other MVT deposits, the
strata-bound ores under consideration do not reveal any direct relationship to igneous rocks. Many authors, however, suggest a magmatic origin of these ores (e.g. Krusch, 1929; Harančzyk, 1963, 1984; Palys, 1967; Galkiewicz, 1971; Kucharski, 1996). There is, indeed, a striking spatial coexistence between the localization of strata-bound ores in Triassic carbonates and the appearance of igneous rocks in the underlying Paleozoic strata (Belka & Siewniak-Madej, 1996). It should also be born in mind that the KL lineament (KL fracture zone) was associated with igneous intrusions which materialized in the formation of a large batholith (Rulski, 1973, Kucharski, 1996). We do not know how long it takes for a large, deep-seated batholith to lose its last manifestations of the thermal activity. Perhaps, the time interval between the last manifestations of igneous activity in the Paleozoic and the emplacement of Zn-Pb ores in the Triassic (c.a. 40 My) was not long enough to preclude a genetic relationship between these two events.

Przeniosło (1974) is ready to accept such a possibility. He suggests that the Variscan magmatism and the emplacement of strata-bound ores in the Triassic have a common source. As an argument in favor of this conclusion he calls attention to the opinion of French authors (Sarcia et al., 1958) that in the Central Massif, the ore-forming hydrothermal activity related to late Paleozoic intrusions of granitic magma may be traced in Triassic and Lower Jurassic strata. As known, the hydrothermal ore forming solutions may remain for a long time in the so called "fossil water reservoirs".

As a colorary of magmatic origin of ore fluids or as an alternative explanation is the generation of heat and the subsequent regeneration of Late Paleozoic ores as a consequence of geologic evolution of the Earth's crust. The MVT deposits tend to occur at specific stages of such evolution. These stages correspond to the global break-up of plates and the beginning of new geosynclines in the Earth's history. Such turning points in the evolution of the Earth's crust are invariably associated with significant heat flow. The emplacement of the Upper Silesian strata-bound sulfide ores occurred in the Triassic which reflects the Pangean break-up following the Early Permian assembly of Pangea (e.g. Trumpy, 1982; Veevers, 1989). It is thus tempting to interpret the origin of the Upper Silesian strata-bound sulfide ores in terms of global plate reorganization (Przeniosło, 1974; Palys, 1967; Dżułyński & Sass-Gustkiewicz, 1985).

Summing up, with the present state of knowledge it is difficult to provide reliable evidence concerning the source of base metals. The possibility of a long distance fluid flow from unknown or hypothetical source beds cannot be discarded. However, the source of metal-bearing fluids may well be searched in deeper parts of the crust, below the present Triassic deposits. In a speculative reconstruction of the processes which resulted in the emplacement of strata-bound sulfide ores we arrive at the following tentative formation model. The primary metal-bearing fluids were originally related to the Late Paleozoic igneous activity which gave rise to the polymetallic ores. These ore fluids or ores became remobilized by heat flow during the late Triassic plate-tectonic reorganization and redeposited as strata-bound deposits in the Muschelkalk host strata. During the Lower Tertiary, the flow of hydrothermal solutions was re-activated and resulted in deposition of economically unimportant, fault-hosted sulphide ore veins. This time, indeed, the faulting was related to final thrusting of the Carpathian nappe. The heat generated by friction of rock masses along the fault surfaces raised the temperature of ground waters and enabled the remobilization of earlier sulfide deposits.

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**Streszczenie**

**KOMENTARZ DO GENEZY GÓRNOŚLĄSKICH ZŁÓŻ RUD Zn-Pb W UTWORACH TRIASOWYCH**

*Maria Sass-Gustkiewicz & Stanisław Džubýnski*

W związku z ukazaniem się ostatnio szeregu artykułów dotyczących genezy złóż rud cynku i ołowiu w Górnym Śląsku, w których przypisuje się istotne znaczenie danym pozostającym w sprzeczności z faktami geologicznymi, zabieramy raz jeszcze głos w sprawie genezy. Chociaż po kilkudziesięcioleciu dyskusji już nikt nie kwestionuje poglądu o epigenetycznym i hydrotermalnym pochodzeniu złóż, nadal jeszcze pozostały zagadnienia, co do których poglądy są podzielone. W każdym z nich następujące kwestie: - pochodzenie roztworów hydrotermalnych - drogi migracji metalonosnych roztworów oraz mechanizmy ich przezemieszczania się i depozycji; - pochodzenie roztworów hydrotermalnych i źródło zawartych w nich metali. Pomimo, że przytoczona dyskusja koncentruje się na poziomo rozprzestrzenionych (strata-bound) złóżach rud występujących w utworach triasowych, wypływające z niej wnioski dotyczą również złóż rud cynku i ołowiu w utworach paleozoicznych, które są z nimi związane geneetycznie.

Zminimalizowana część weglanowych skał otaczających złóż zawiera niezliczone pustki o zróżnicowanej wielkości wskazujące na istnienie pióropłótnych, które wraz z wypływającymi z nich roztworami oraz mechanizmy ich przemieszczania się i depozycji, pochodzenie roztworów hydrotermalnych i źródła zawartych w nich metali. Pomimo, że przytoczona dyskusja koncentruje się na poziomo rozprzestrzenionych (strata-bound) złóżach rud występujących w utworach triasowych, wypływające z niej wnioski dotyczą również złóż rud cynku i ołowiu w utworach paleozoicznych, które są z nimi związane geneetycznie.


**Notes**


nych brekcji". To z pozoru logiczne rozumowanie nie znajduje poparcia w znanych faktach geologicznych dotyczących rozwoju zjawisk krasowych w tym obszarze.

Powszechnie akceptowany pogląd, że obserwowana w skałach otaczających złoża tektonika odgrywała ważną rolę w tworzeniu się i rozmieszczeniu górnośląskich złóż rud, rozumiany jest: często w diametralnie różny sposób. Zdaniem autorów fakty geologiczne dowodzą, że tylko wczesnokimeryjskie uskoki, pokrywające się z uskokami waryscyjskimi mogą być przed- lub syn-depozycyjne z rudami. Większość uskoków obserwowanych w złóżach, będących rezultatem wczesnotrzeciorzędowej lub neo­
geńskiej tektoniki, jest jednoznacznie pozłożowa, ponieważ przecina i przemieszcza ciała złóżowe. Tektonika ta natomiast spowodowała lokalną regenerację i remobilizację wcześniej zdeponowanych siarczków, które w znakomych ilościach obserwowane są w szczelinach jurajskich wapieni.

Opinie o wieku złóż górnośląskich podzielone są pomiędzy dwie hipotezy: o mineralizacji przedgómojurajskiej bądź trzeciorzędowej związanej z tektoniką alpejską. Ta ostatnia hipoteza zna­lała rzekome poparcie w badaniach paleomagnetycznych, które wartość może być jednakże kwestionowana ze względu na brak realistycznej lokalizacji badanych prób oraz sformułowane poniżej zastrzeżenia natury geologicznej. I tak nie daje ona odpowiedzi na następujące pytania: 1 - Jak wyjaśnić transgresywne ułożenie morskich osadów gó­mojurajskich na zerodowanej i szczelinowej powierzchni dolomitów kruszonośnych zawierających w znacznym stopniu utlenione rudy? 2 - Dlaczego ascenzyjne roztwory mineralizujące nie pozostawili żadnych śladów mineralizacji w przepuszczalnych utworach batonu i keloweju? 3 - Dlaczego kruszce wytrącały się tylko w wapieniu muszlowym a nie w dobrze uławiconych węglanowych osadach jurajskich lub kredowych? 4 - Dlaczego w wapieniach jurajskich czy kredowych nie ma dolomitów kruszonośnych? Przedjurajski wiek okruszcowania wyjaśnia równoległe do uławiczenia rozmieszczenie ciał rudnych. Roztwory dolomityzujące poprzedzające de­pozycję siarczkowych złoża, wykorzystując zachowaną wciąż pierwotną porowatość osadów, mogły z łatwością przemieszczać się równolegle do uwarstwienia, zwłaszcza, że w tym czasie osady triasowe nie były jeszcze zaburzone dolnotrzeciorzędowymi i neo­
geniskimi uskokami.

Rozmieszczenie złóż w utworach triasowych na tle późno­
warwyckiej tektoniki wyraźnie sugeruje, że ascenzyjne roztwory hydrotermalne deponujące złóż siarczków cynku i ołowiu, przemieszczały się przez zaburzone tektonicznie dolnokarbońskie i dewońskie skały węglanowe, najprawdopodobniej w obrębie strefy szybki Kraków–Lubliniec (KLFZ) oraz stref uskokowych Tarnowskich Gór (TGFFZ) i uskoku Górnośląskiego (USF) przed­
stawionych na Fig. 1. Wskazują na to zarówno obecność żyłowych skupień rud o takiej samej mineralogii w utworach paleozoicznych jak i fakt występowania największych nagromadzeń rud w utworach triasowych głównie w miejscach gdzie skały podścielające były silnie spekane. Zerodowane paleozoiczne skały tworzyły w przed triasowej topografii, charakterystyczne dla złóż MVT pasmo wysokich wzgór. Podkreślone w górnym triasie wzgórza były szczególnie dogodnym miejscem, w którym ascenzyjne roztworzy mogły przekraczać niezgodny kontakt skał i rozprzestrzeniać się poziomo w uławiczych utworach triasowych.

Pochodzenie roztworów mineralizujących jest przedmiotem domysłów. Ponieważ powstanie tak rozległych złóż wymaga intensywnego i ogromnego objętościowego przepływu roztworów mineralizujących słuszne jest rozważenie idei o głębokich "po­
grzebanych rezervoarach", których gwałtowny drenaż następuje w warunkach uaktywniania się søka tektynicznych. Wobec przestrzennego związku między skałami magnowymi w paleozoicznym podłożu a okruszcowaniem skał triasowych, istniejącego, na wschodnim obrzeżu obszaru występowania złóż rud Zn-Pb można przypuszczać również, że okruszcowanie tych utworów jest przejawem schyłkowej aktywności stygnejcej i zapewne w znacznej mierze zastygłej już waryscyjskiej masy magmowej.

Jako mechanizm przemieszczania roztworów mineralizu­
ujących zwelonicy trzeciorzędowego wieku złóż proponują nasuwanie się karpackich płaszczowni - "long-distance lateral fluid flow". Z przedjurajskim wiekiem złóż rud natomiast spójne po­
zostają trzy mechanizmy przepływu: "topography driven fluid flow" z lądu położonego na południe; - "short distance flow" z zalegają­
ych w pobliżu oraz podścielających złóż triasowych utworów kar­
bońskich; - przepływ pionowy z hipotetycznego źródła magmo­
wskich.

Należy również pamiętać, że złóża MVT powstawały w okre­
słonym globalnym stadium rozwoju skorupy ziemskiej. Powsta­
nie górnośląskich złóż, zdaniem autorów, przypadło na okres roz­
padu Pangei, ogólnej tensji i tworzenia się głębokich rozłamów. Z takimi zjawiskami wiąże się wzmocniony dopływ ciepła, uaktyw­
nienie przepływu roztworów hydrotermalnych jak również możliwa jest remobilizacja wcześniejszych generacji mineralów kruszcowych.