



Sociedad Geográfica de Lima

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MONUMENT AT THE SOURCE OF AMAZON RIVER

Discovery made by Jacek Palkiewicz commemorated on the Quehuisha Mount in Peruvian Andes. The birthplace of the largest river of the world recognized as a global natural heritage

On 11 September 2011 in the Department of Caylloma (Region of Arequipa, Peru) the monument at the source of the Amazon River was unveiled. „Preserved in its original condition, the birthplace of the main hydrological system of the world creates an ecosystem that is important for the human being, playing a vital role in maintaining the environmental balance of the whole planet – says Dr. Nicole Bernex Weiss from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú - It is a monument of nature, a key element of a global natural heritage. Given its universal value for geographical science, it is essential to show him due care”.

The place of origin of the main hydrological system of the world preserved in its primeval form represents a monument of nature, the key element of the Peruvian nature heritage. Due to its universal value for the scientific discipline of geography, the international community shall exhibit care of that environment and shall preserve it for future generations.

The largest river in the world has its origins from the combination of the rivers, Marañón and Ucayali, flowing from the Peruvian Andes Mountains. The latter is universally considered to be the main arm of the river, originating from Rio Urabamba as well as from even further to the south, the Apurimac river and Lloqueta. That was the source of the latter which had never been definitely determined.

That fact drew the attention of the Polish explorer, Jacek Palkiewicz, a member of the Royal Geographical Society of London, who decided to solve the mystery which was as the River Nile used to, the object of endless controversies. He hired specialists for that project, among whom, Admiral Guillermo Faura Gaig, was the main pillar of the expedition. The Department of Hydrography of the Peruvian Navy, Russian Academy of Sciences, Catholic University of Lima and Peruvian and Russian Geographic Society also gave their support.

In the summer of 1996 the expedition *Amazon Source 96* started its explorations in Andes Cordillera. Thanks to comprehensive hydrological and geomorphologic research, it was possible to determine that Apacheta is the main tributary of

Lloqueta, being the initial section of Amazon river. Its source is on Quehuisha Mount (15°31'15", south latitude and 71°45'42" west longitude, 5150 meters high above the sea level on the border of continental water division Pacific-Atlantic). The stream along which the path runs used to be a transport route as early as in the Inca civilisation. It is the longest of the claimants as it has the largest tidal flow, the biggest hydrological activity and it has a distinct longitudinal profile.

In this way the hypothesis of *National Geographic* has been refuted, which at some point in time, limited itself to narrowed longitude criterion which did not correspond with the basic hydrological requirements, indicated by the source in McIntyre pool on Mismi Mount. More evidence defending Palkiewicz' thesis came from the cosmos in 2010. The image of 1 meter resolution obtained from the Korean satellite KOMPSAT-2 showed that the pool does not have any tributary. Hence, it can not be treated as a source.

The need for verification and substantiating the thesis led to the formal approval of Jacek Palkiewicz exploration results by the Geographic Society of Lima given only in 2008, The president of that Society, Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo declared then: "We have inexhaustible evidence material to defend the thesis which solved the intriguing issue. It is the high time the geographical publications were updated. We will raise the awareness of this fact, which is so meaningful to the Amazon River".

Discussions have always been aroused by the length of the Amazon River, which, flowing in the alluvial valley, often changes the channel and where the current constantly creates new meanders. Many years of average measurements from satellite images allow now to determine that the length of the Amazon is about 7.040 km, which is 200 km more than the Nile.

The Minister of Culture and National Heritage Bogdan Zdrojewski, extending from the Polish side the honorary patronage of the ceremonies marking the discovery, said: „The world owes a lot to Polish researchers, scientists and travelers, who have contributed to the flourishing of world science over the centuries. We can be proud of their achievements. Ernest Malinowski, Edward Jan Habich and Wincenty Szyszlo are among those who have contributed to the development of the Peruvian civilization. I am extremely pleased that a few years ago this group was joined by a Polish explorer, Jacek Palkiewicz, who, guiding the international scientific expedition - *Amazon Source 96* - with the participation of, among others, specialists from the Sociedad Geográfica de Lima, has determined the source of the Amazon River. I am convinced that this beautiful event, recorded in the history of the world, will in the future give testimony to the close relations that unite Poland and Peru".

The geographical discovery can not be officially registered because there is not such an institution as a patent office. Science may remain hermetic to discoveries. Every new scientific truth brings confusion to the orderly world of science usually attached to orthodox views. It is like a transatlantic liner and to change its direction needs a lot of time. It will become deeply rooted in the common awareness and only then may it may become a recognised canon.



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