

NEWS – ZPRÁVY

Obituary of Petr Sommer (30. 11. 1949 – 12. 8. 2023)**Odešel Petr Sommer (30. 11. 1949 – 12. 8. 2023)**

On 12 August 2023, Prof. PhDr. Petr Sommer, DSc., our esteemed colleague and for many also a dear friend, passed away suddenly and surprisingly at the age of 73, leaving behind a great deal of unfinished work.

Petr Sommer was born in Rakovník, and after graduating from the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, he worked briefly at the East Bohemian Museum in Pardubice and at the Museum of the Capital City of Prague. He came to the Institute of Archaeology in Prague in 1976, developed his professional career and also served as the director of the Institute from 1993 to 1999. In line with his main research focus, he conducted extensive field research of medieval monasteries in Prague at Strahov and Beroun and collaborated on excavations of monasteries at Ostrov u Davle and Prague-Břevnov. His lifelong research theme, however, remained research of Sázava Monastery. He was an internationally renowned specialist whose scientific work combined his deep knowledge of archaeology, history, and art history, a combination that resulted in more than a hundred excellent studies and over two dozen monographs focussed mainly on the issues of Christianisation, monasticism, and the reflection of medieval spiritual culture in archaeological sources (e.g. *Sommer 1996; 2001; 2006a; 2006b; Sommer et al. 2009*). In addition to his own scientific work, his educational activities should also be highlighted. He had an amazing gift of words that made him a popular university teacher who placed extraordinary emphasis on the use of critical thinking in the reception of information and presented facts. Petr Sommer's organisational skills were also proverbial and were on full display at the end of the 1990s when he made a major contribution to the establishment of the Centre for Medieval Studies, a joint workplace of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Charles University. He also directed the Centre between 2004 and 2019. Organisational qualities were certainly also an essential trait, which he applied when working to put together the spectacular international exhibitions 'The Centre of Europe Around the Year 1000' (2002) or 'Open the Garden of Eden – Benedictines in the Heart of Europe 800–1300' (2014–2015).

The international reputation of the results of Petr Sommer's work is convincingly demonstrated by his membership on the expert committees, scientific councils, and editorial boards of many foreign scientific institutions and journals in Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Great Britain. At home in the Czech Republic, he was a member of the Learned Society, the Scientific Council for State Heritage Care of the Czech Ministry of Culture and in the past also the Heritage Advisory Board of President Václav Havel. He also sat on more than a dozen editorial boards of professional periodicals. He received a number of important awards for his work, the most prestigious being the National Award of the Government of the Czech Republic – the 2017 Czech Head Award.

However, Petr Sommer was not only an excellent scientist, but also a kind, friendly, gallant, and humanly open person who loved the world around him and knew how to enjoy the everyday pleasures of life. He was a gourmet, a member of the sharpshooters' club in his hometown, and a lover of perfect machines and good anecdotes. Being in his company was always extremely pleasant and refreshing, and it's very difficult to accept the fact that we won't meet again. So, let us at least keep his inspiring legacy in our memory forever.

Luboš Jiráň

Literatura

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