

EDITORIAL

Whether on your screen or printed on paper, you are reading the last issue of the 2023 volume, thus creating a good opportunity to review the past year. You might object that, due to the delay in *Archeologické rozhledy* releases, this issue was published later in 2024 and my review is thus a little bit stale. However, as historians and archaeologists should know best, one needs some distance to fully contemplate past events – what was really important and what was just mundane triviality.

Looking back, the year 2023 for me was marked by conferences and workshops, since I took part in six such events throughout the year. Among them, the EAA Annual Meeting traditionally holds the most prominent position. In my opinion, this conference is unparalleled in the number of attendees, the spectrum of topics, and its impact on the archaeological community across Europe. Judging by the number of conferences, the year 2023 thus showed to me that archaeology has fully recovered from the COVID break and that personal contact is still irreplaceable in academia. The return of on-site conferences brings a grain of positivity to pessimistic visions of a future in which people communicate only online or just through VR goggles, as the hype after this latest gadget hit the market might suggest.

On the other hand, it is not possible, considering the number of events and one's busy schedule, to attend all of the interesting conferences, and scholars are often faced with hard choices. Therefore, I am happy that reports from conferences are submitted to the News section of our journal. Specifically in this issue, you can read a report by Luboš Chroustovský with a summary of the conference on the archaeology of music held in Würzburg on September 2023. I believe that such reports are useful for those who could not attend while also providing important feedback to conference organisers. In this respect, I would like to encourage authors to submit their reports in English to address the international audience.

Besides the conference report, I am sure that the research articles published in this issue will also interest the readers. Natalie Venclová and her colleagues provided a complex assessment of an old excavation in Nižbor (CZ), where a sunken hut with deposited human remains was revealed. The erudite pottery chronology assessment was compared to radiocarbon dating, which is still rather uncommon in La Tène archaeology. Further, spatial relations between the Nižbor site and the nearby oppidum of Stradonice led the authors to a GIS-based analysis that explores the potential river ford near the site.

The paper by Kateřina Pořádková and Lenka Kovačiková falls into the category of methodological studies and strives to refine a determination of the age of hunted mammals based on the acellular cement growths in their teeth. The authors present not only an analysis of recent reference samples but also a case study on archaeozoological finds from the early medieval hillfort in Netolice (CZ) to demonstrate the practical use of the method. I believe that the paper will speak to archaeozoologists as well as non-specialists searching for new insights into animal bone assemblages from their excavations.

An important new find – a hammering form for the production of early medieval *kap-torga* pendants – is presented in the paper by Naďa Profantová and colleagues. The find comes from the hinterland of the Kouřim – U Sv. Jiří hillfort (CZ) and represents just the

second object of this kind known thus far. The paper, however, is not just a mere publication of a new find. The hammering form from Kouřim produced *kaptorgas* with the motif of a gryphon, so the paper thoroughly discusses how this Byzantine motif found its way into the heart of early medieval Central Europe.

Respecting the chronological order, the issue concludes with the paper by Karel Slavíček and colleagues on the 13th-century pottery kiln from Žďár nad Sázavou–Staré Město (CZ). The authors examine several questions concerning the formation of the excavated context and the pottery production at the site. To obtain answers, they use a wide spectrum of analytical methods including petrography, XRF analysis and 3D scanning, which makes the paper crucial in the context of medieval pottery studies in Central Europe.

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