

EDITORIAL

On February 1st, it will be three years since I stepped into the role of editor-in-chief of *Archeologické Rozhledy*. Since then, managing peer reviews, reviewers' critiques sent to authors, and authors' responses sent back, has become my everyday routine, my editorial bread and butter. Amid the constant hum of tasks and notification emails, it is easy to lose sight of the broader picture. A three-year anniversary feels like a reasonable moment to pause and look up.

Over this period, I have come to acknowledge how well-established, deeply entrenched, and institutionalised academia's mechanisms to channel critique are. The peer-review system (along with its variants, such as community review) stands as one of the most prominent products of this framework. Of course, reviews can be glowing. Yet the moment one begins writing a review, there is an almost automatic inclination to hunt for weaknesses, oversights, or outright errors the author has made. That instinct is not wrong; research should withstand this kind of scrutiny if it is to earn its place in print. Honestly, if I received a review stating 'it is an excellent paper, no problems, publish it as it is', I would feel very uneasy, perhaps even suspicious. Surely there must be something worth improving, some minor bolt that could be tightened?

It is not my intention to argue here that the peer review system is flawed. It likely is, but for other reasons; for now, it remains the least imperfect option available, and its role is irreplaceable. My reflection points to a more personal level. Because our review culture is built around identifying problems, the feedback we issue and receive on a nearly daily basis is never entirely free of criticism, never without at least a few stains on otherwise good research, proposal or paper. The message such a system broadcasts is 'you are good enough to pass, but there is always something wrong'.

It is worth asking whether such an atmosphere might subtly suppress the emergence of bold, risky, or unconventional ideas. Should we not institutionalise at least one mechanism to respond to this perpetual culture of criticism? Someone, whom I unfortunately cannot recall, once shared with me an intriguing and simple idea. Instead of adding yet another report, self-assessment or any other piece of paper to the growing administrative landfill, every scholar should pick one paper or book they genuinely enjoyed reading recently. Then write to the author. Nothing elaborate, no deep review, no list of comments. Just a brief but sincere message: 'Hey, I have read your paper and it was good. Keep going!'

I still think this 'naïve' idea is quietly brilliant. In fact, I suspect it would have a greater impact on the vitality of our discipline than many formal procedures designed to measure it. Instead of draining the energy through the system of administrative chores, it would steadily pour encouragement back into the scholarly community, nudging authors to continue, to explore, to take the next intellectual risk. If this resonates with you, you might even consider writing such a note to the author of one of the papers in the current issue.

It opens with a paper by Marek Florek and Agata Hałaszkó, who present their research on two Late Eneolithic graves from the site of Złota 6 in Southern Poland. Their detailed analyses of the archaeological context and skeletal remains provide a robust foundation for interpreting these burials against the backdrop of major sociocultural transformations unfolding in Central Europe at the start of the 3rd millennium BC. Given the prominence

of burial contexts and evolving deathscapes as key archaeological sources for this period, the study also addresses the position of the Złota culture in relation to neighbouring entities, particularly the Globular Amphora and Corded Ware.

Funerary archaeology remains in the spotlight in the following article. Agnieszka Půlpánová-Reszczyńska and colleagues present their findings on an Early Roman Period female burial from Nezabylice in Northwest Bohemia. Among other insights, their study refines our understanding of interments associated with imported Östland-type buckets. By comparing analogous finds from Bohemia, the authors demonstrate that such burial contexts were not gender-exclusive and highlight shifts in elite self-presentation in the Central European Barbaricum during the 2nd century AD.

The paper by Michael Kamarád shifts the attention from burial contexts to artefacts. His work advances current knowledge of the function of Late Bronze Age stone grooved hammers. Drawing on a multi-method examination of two specimens from the Šumperk region in Moravia, and situating them within a wider dataset of similar finds from across the Czech Republic, Kamarád concludes that despite their formal homogeneity, these tools were employed in varied and fundamentally utilitarian ways.

The paper by Zbigniew Robak transports the reader into the Early Middle Ages. Few objects are more emblematic of medieval noblemen than the sword, yet Robak's case study of a Carolingian-style sword from Varín in Slovakia demonstrates that this association is far from straightforward. Less affluent, second-order warriors could possess or aspired to possess such weapons, even though these were just low-quality blades refurbished with lavish parts. Robak interprets this as an attempt to appropriate elite symbolism and thus to elevate one's social standing.

Finally, following my appeal for positive feedback, I encourage readers to consider writing a book review if they recently encountered an interesting publication. In this issue, you will find assessments by Jan Turek, who reviewed the book *Hinterland*, and by Tomáš Kroupa reviewing the new guidelines for the use of LiDAR in archaeology.

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