

Editorial

This issue of *Archeologické rozhledy* is devoted to the study of early ironworking and brings you some of many papers presented at the highly successful international conference *Iron in Archaeology: Bloomery Smelters and Blacksmiths in Europe and Beyond* which was held in Prague in 2017 and was organized in honour of Professor Radomír Pleiner.

The date of the conference was not chosen at random, but because 2017 was the 50th anniversary year of the *Comité Pour la Sidérurgie Ancienne* (CPSA). Founded by Radomír Pleiner in 1966 and active since 1967, the CPSA represents the oldest and one of the most important platforms for bringing together specialists in research on early ironworking. The greatest credit for this goes to Pleiner who was the secretary of the CPSA for nearly 40 years. During this time he was also the editor of the CPSA Communications, published twice yearly in *Archeologické rozhledy* until 2002. The Communications, totalling 67 issues, contain reports on conferences, excavations, scientific work and other research, and, above all, abstracts of publications. Thus, in the pre-internet era, the Communications were a crucial source of information in the field of the archaeometallurgy of iron. The CPSA was also involved in twenty-one conferences which were organised under its auspices. The first such conference was held at Schaffhausen in 1970 and the last one at Uppsala in 2001. In 2002, a flood badly affected the Institute of Archaeology in Prague and completely destroyed the CPSA archive kept in Pleiner's basement office. This resulted in the activity of the CPSA being interrupted for some time. Pleiner continued to hold the post of secretary until 2004, when Janet Lang became the new secretary. Despite her enormous effort the CPSA activity declined, mainly because of the changes in the method of retrieving information due to the development of the internet. In 2015, the CPSA was revived in a new format through the pages of Academia.edu (<https://independent.academia.edu/CPSA>) which serve both as an archive of CPSA activity and publications and as a single location where scholars of early ironworking and their papers can be found. The CPSA also aims to revive the tradition of scientific conferences focussed on the issue of early ironworking, starting with the 2017 Prague conference, which was held 30 years after Pleiner himself organized the CPSA conference at Liblice near Prague. The next conference will be in Fribourg in 2021, organised by Vincent Serneels, who is now the President of the CPSA.

Although the papers published in this issue represent only a small sample of the contributions to the Prague conference, they provide new information for improving our knowledge both of the history of early ironworking and of the developments in its study and they bring a new impetus for further scientific discussion. We sincerely hope that you will find these articles interesting and useful, and we should like to thank all the authors who prepared their papers for this issue, as well as all the anonymous peer-reviewers whose work contributed to its realisation.

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