



INTERDISCIPLINARIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

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A look at the region

The Partnership in Research and Presentation of Archaeological Heritage

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ABSTRACT

This contribution presents a successful research and educational project, which was completed in 2014 at the University of West Bohemia in Plzeň in cooperation with 3 partner institutions. The project aimed at finding innovative ways of collaboration amongst university, museum and culture heritage management sectors through sharing research and educational resources. This goal was achieved by joint research activities, mostly realized as field schools with students' participation, as well as through discussion of interdisciplinary topics conducted at educational and dissemination events, namely study stays, conferences, seminars and workshops.

1. Introduction

The project Partnership in Research and Presentation of Archaeological Heritage was undertaken by a consortium of four institutions: The University of West Bohemia (UWB), Museum of West Bohemia (MWB), Archaeological Centre in Olomouc (ACO) and Palacký University in Olomouc (UPOL). The 3-year project ran from 9th May 2011 to 30th April 2014. The project preparation and implementation was coordinated by Ladislav Šmejda from the Department of Archaeology, University of West Bohemia. The managers from the partner institutions were Milan Metlička (MWB), Jaroslav Peška (ACO), and Pavlína Kalábková (UPOL).

The overarching aim of the project was to create new, and bolster the existing, opportunities for cooperation between partner institutions or their departments involved in archaeological research and its popularization, as well as cultural heritage management and preservation. Two universities and two heritage management institutions joined their resources in this networking project, which allowed for linking the practical needs and considerations within the heritage and museum

sector with university education and training. The selection of partner institutions reflected the aim to include two different regional centres – specifically Plzeň and Olomouc – which have a relatively strong standing within the discipline and a significant professional capacity to complement the strength of traditional research centres positioned in the capitals of Bohemia and Moravia (Prague and Brno respectively), which historically make up the Czech Republic. The project design provided ample scope for developing joint research cooperation and short-term training programmes and meetings aimed at knowledge dissemination. These were organized by the staff of the above-mentioned partner institutions and attended by university students, researchers and other culture heritage professionals from a large number of Czech institutions, as well as by numerous guests from abroad. The implementation of our plan was divided into five key activities, representing the main tools for achieving the project goals.

2. Study visits to partner organisations (key activity #1)

Specialists from all the partner institutions participating in the project took part in study trips and short internships, where they became familiar with the practical aspects of the

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everyday tasks carried out at the visited institutions and their individual departments. They participated in field research and gained insight into the predominant routines of laboratory and documentation procedures. An important part of the visits consisted of extensive use of institutional libraries and field reports for pursuing individual research interests, as well as opportunities to consult particular problems with specialists from the cooperating institutions. These discussions and involvement of visitors in the host's daily agenda led to effective start-ups of new collaborative research plans and the strengthening of personal bonds between the professionals and graduate students of the networked institutions. This type of inter-institutional collaboration and research support has already generated new publications (Křišťuf *et al.* 2012; Moravcová, Vokounová Franzeová 2012; Baierl *et al.* 2013; Gersdorfová *et al.* 2013; Hložek 2013; Hložek, Menšík 2013a, b, c). One of the most remarkable outcomes of this joint research was an archaeological contribution to the large published volume presenting the past of the town of Uničov from the first human settlements up to the present (Burešová ed. 2013). This book received the award of the Olomouc Region for Outstanding Book of the Year. A number of these collaborative ventures provided opportunities for running training field schools and courses for students, which represented another structural component of the project.

3. Field schools for students (key activity #2)

During the period of project implementation (2011–2014), 25 field schools of varied length and thematic content were realised in total for students of archaeology and related disciplines. These were aimed at obtaining practical fieldwork skills and familiarity with surveying, sampling, excavating and recording of various types of archaeological sites (Figure 1). Field reports have been produced for each conducted campaign and on the basis of these a number of the results have already been published. Detailed publications and several larger studies containing extensive amounts of data are forthcoming and their preparation may be supported by additional follow-up projects.

Our team covered a broad spectrum of chronological periods and categories of archaeological sites in order to offer undergraduate and postgraduate students from several universities varied stimuli and exposure to field archaeology. We were focused on and conducted research on the following main categories of archaeological heritage:

- a) Palaeolithic and Mesolithic landscapes and sites, namely the Horní Bříza and Jistebsko regions (Moravcová, Vokounová Franzeová 2012; Moravcová *et al.* 2014).
- b) The Neolithic enclosure in Křimice.
- c) Prehistoric burial mounds, particularly a Late Eneolithic tumulus cemetery near Dřevohostice in East Moravia (Křišťuf *et al.* 2012; Hejman *et al.* 2013), the Middle Bronze Age burial mound Butov near Stříbro in West Bohemia (Metlička 2014) and to a

minor extent various sites in South Bohemia (Menšík 2013).

- d) Intensive survey, an excavated section through the fortification and interdisciplinary research into the modifications of the environment by human settlement at a multi-period stronghold in Plzeň-Hradiště (for an introduction to the site see Chytráček, Metlička 2004, 224–229). The results of this extremely data-rich field project are the subject of detailed forthcoming publications.
- e) Mediaeval castles, keeps and their hinterlands, *e.g.* Liškův Hrad near Mítov, Loket, Tichá, Litice, Skála, Stod.
- f) Human burials from 19th and 20th centuries in Stříbro.

4. Thematic conferences (key activity #3)

The project planned and organised six conferences with the aim of strengthening communication among researchers and aiding the dissemination of their ideas and findings. The conference themes covered broad interdisciplinary research directions as well as narrower, more specialized topics. The list of events includes:

1. **The Neolithic and Eneolithic in Central Europe**, 19th – 22th September 2011, Mikulov (Peška, Trampota 2012).
2. **Burial Archaeology: Burials under Barrows**, 15th – 17th February 2012 Plzeň (published in the journal *Archeologie západních Čech* 5, 2013).
3. **Computer Applications in Archaeology**, 23rd – 25th May 2012, Loket.
4. **Conference of Environmental Archaeology**, 28th – 30th January 2013, České Budějovice.
5. **Conference of Environmental Archaeology**, 27th – 28th January 2014, Olomouc.
6. **The Archaeology of Fortifications**, 13th February 2014, Plzeň.

5. Seminars and workshops (key activity #4)

The planned number of twelve seminars and workshops was successfully undertaken with an additional seminar which summarised the results of the project and presented plans for the future cooperation of the involved institutions. These meetings were usually smaller in scope than the conferences described in the previous section, more practically oriented with numerous hands-on activities, and with plenty of space for interaction among the participants (Figure 2). Their thematic range centred on modern approaches in archaeological practice and spanned from methods of archaeological prospection such as aerial reconnaissance or metal detector surveying, through techniques of archaeological recording (drawing, photography, 3D scanning), laboratory conservation protocols and analytical methods suitable for studying archaeological and anthropological materials, to

Figure 1. Archaeological field schools for university students: A – reconstruction of an excavated burial mound in Butov near Stříbro, B – flotation of soil samples at Dřevohostice tumulus cemetery, C – excavation of a rampart section at Plzeň-Hradiště fortified site.



overviews of museum practice and regional archaeology. The project seminars and workshops were:

1. **Aerial Archaeology** workshop, 20th – 24th June 2011, Sazená.
2. Meeting of the **Archaeological Working Group of East Bavaria/West Bohemia and South Bohemia/Upper Austria**, 22nd – 25th June 2011, Stříbro.
3. Seminar entitled **Preventive Archaeology – Metal Detecting – New Findings**, 8th – 9th December 2011, Olomouc) + exhibition of finds.
4. Workshop on **Methods of Drawing and Photographic Documentation of Portable Archaeological Finds**, 23rd – 24th February 2012, Olomouc.
5. Workshop on **Field Photo-Documentation in Archaeology and Related Disciplines**, 12th September 2012, Olomouc.
6. Workshop on **Methods of Drawing Documentation of Portable Archaeological Finds II – Lithics**, 13th – 14th March 2013, Olomouc.
7. Seminar on **Methods of Biological Anthropology: Field Methodology – Laboratory Analysis – Biological Characteristics – Identification of Individuals**, 25th – 26th April 2013, Olomouc.
8. Workshop on **Traditional Artistic and Artisan Metal-Working**, 10th – 12th June 2013, Turnov.
9. Workshop on **Methods of Conservation of Portable Archaeological Finds Made of Metal and Organic**

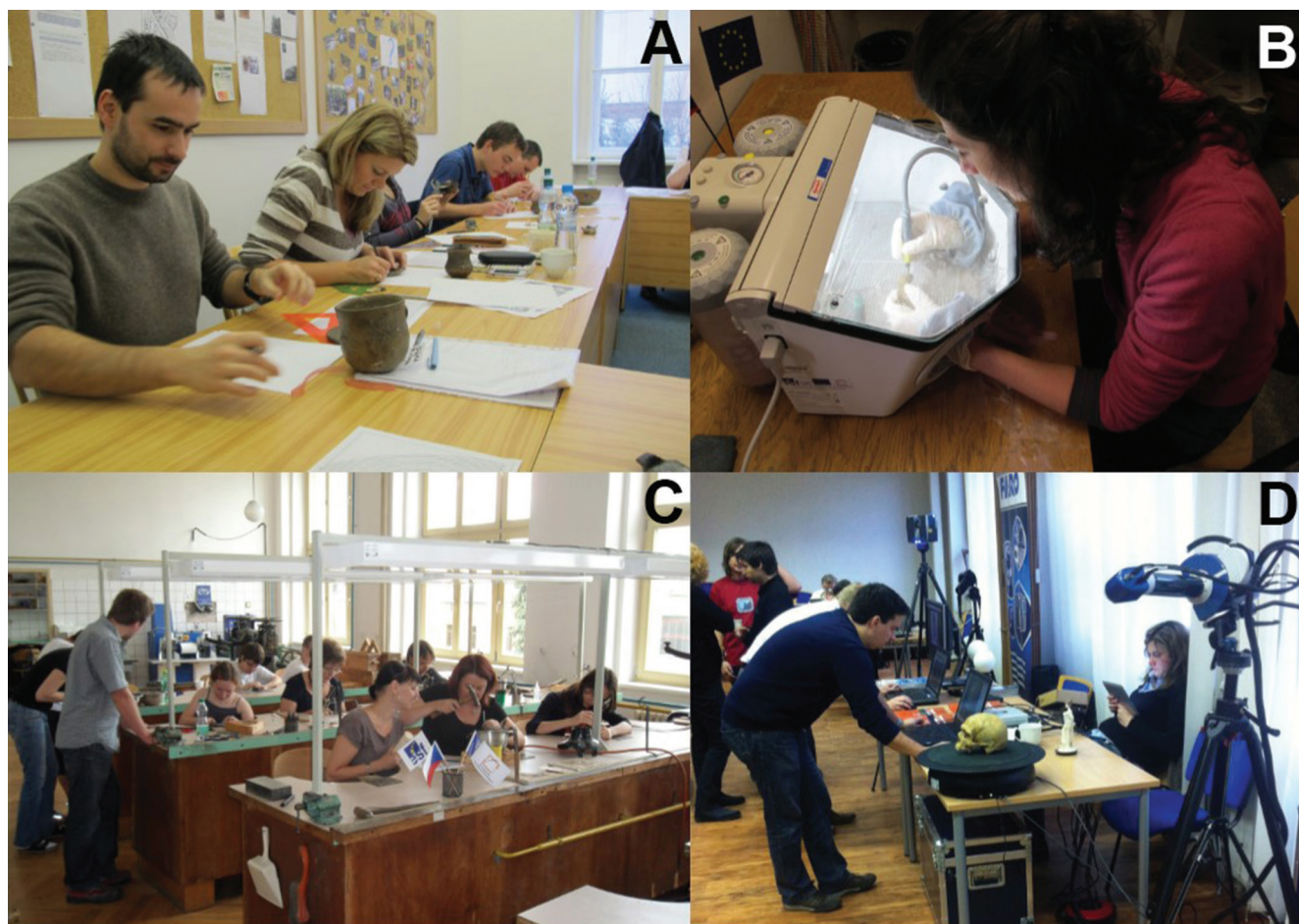


Figure 2. Project workshops: A – drawing of archaeological finds, B – laboratory processing of archaeological finds, C – traditional metalworking techniques, D – 3D documentation in archaeology.

Materials, 7th – 8th November 2013, Olomouc.

10. Workshop on **3D Documentation in Archaeology and Heritage Management**, 11th – 12th December 2013, Plzeň.
11. Workshop on **Conservation of Problematic Materials in Archaeology**, 20th – 21st February 2014, Olomouc.
12. **Final Seminar of the Partnership for Archaeology Project**, 20th – 21st March 2014, Plzeň.
13. Seminar on **Museum Work and Analysis of Archaeological Material**, 17th – 18th April 2014, Plzeň.

6. Publication of academic journals (key activity #5)

The project supported the publication of several volumes of archaeological journals “*Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica*” (the project directly financed the printing of volumes II/1,2, III/1,2, IV/1,2) and “*Archeologie západních Čech*” (The Archaeology of Western Bohemia – volumes 2–7) and one Supplement volume of the latter journal (Dobeš, Metlička 2014). Thanks to this support the new journals became well-

established periodicals and acquired a solid reputation in professional and academic circles (Figures 3–4). Both new journals were accepted by the State Cabinet Committee for Research and Innovation on the official list of the Czech scientific peer-reviewed journals. Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica has been included in Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory and recently started to be indexed in Scopus.

7. Project impact and outlook

The general aim of the project was to establish and broaden cooperation between universities and institutions involved in culture heritage management, presentation and popularization in archaeology. More specifically, we aimed to link up the demands of everyday archaeological practice in non-academic institutions with the possibilities of universities in terms of the more effective use of the human resources and technical equipment of all of the involved partners. This specifically involved collaborative work on joint research and dissemination of sub-projects where participants from various backgrounds could meet, exchange ideas and contribute with their own expertise. The

Figure 3. Front covers of the six volumes of Archaeology of West Bohemia Journal, published with the financial support of the project.



implementation and budgeting of the individual tasks were guided by the structuring of the entire project into the five key-activities described above.

Participation in the project, the study visits and cooperation throughout the implementation of the activities had significant positive effects on the dissemination of knowledge in the professional community as well as among students of archaeology and related disciplines. The project

team was recruited from four institutions of a different specialization and infrastructural background. The team size fluctuated at around 25 people, all with part-time contracted involvement in the project. Those members of the project team who were in the early stage of their career particularly benefited from the opportunities offered: funding of study stays, participation in fieldwork, availability of a high-end 3D laser scanner, purchase of expensive equipment for

Figure 4. Front covers of a monograph synthesizing the current knowledge on the early Eneolithic period in South-West Bohemia (left) and the first issue out of six of the Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica – Natural Sciences in Archaeology Journal (right) which were printed with a subsidy from the project Partnership for Archaeology.



geodetic measurements, photographic documentation and laboratory treatment of archaeological finds, covering the costs of specialized analyses and measurements, networking with their peers at workshops and domestic as well as international conferences, etc. The numbers of participants at the events organised by the project always exceeded our expectations. We take this as a sign that the themes and activities included in the 3-year programme designed for the project were timely and attractive for students and interested professionals from various institutions. The journals which were supported by the project for nearly three years have definitely become popular and widely regarded as ranking among the standard professional periodicals in the Czech Republic and beyond.

Because of the nature of this project, due attention was paid to public outreach and popularization of its key activities. Basic information and programmes of the individual events were advertised online (<http://www.kar.zcu.cz/partnerstvi.php>), printed invitations were posted to relevant institutions and displayed throughout all the partner institutions. The web page has been providing new information about the project and its activities, as well as about the educational seminars, workshops and conferences organised through and by the project. The website will remain accessible to the public and continue to provide general information about the completed project. It forms part of the project beneficiary web pages of the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of West Bohemia in Plzeň. The archaeological sites which were studied in detail by survey and excavation (Plzeň-Hradiště, Dřevohostice and Butov near Stříbro) now feature educational signposts with information about the research undertaken there and their cultural significance.

The strategies set out for the project have a clear relevance for future archaeology in the Czech Republic as well as internationally. We hope that with the Partnership for Archaeology project we have embarked, in various ways, on a new, more effective and more inclusive, path of responsible high-quality archaeological research and cultural heritage management, which will be built upon and developed further.

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About the Project Manager

Ladislav Šmejda is Assistant Professor at the Department of Archaeology, University of West Bohemia in Plzeň since 2008 and recently has become a member of a research team studying human adaptability and environmental archaeology at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. He received his Ph.D. in 2008 from the University of West Bohemia in Plzeň. He is Chair of the Czech and Slovak Chapter of the international organisation Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology.



Ladislav Šmejda, project manager.

His main specializations include mortuary, landscape and spatial archaeology, with a focus on prehistoric archaeology and the Bronze Age. He is currently studying Early Bronze Age mortuary practices in Central Europe and leading interdisciplinary research which follows up on and processes the data collected at a prehistoric and early historic fort of Plzeň-Hradiště in the Czech Republic. With an interest in human adaptability, social change and past communication, he has focused on exploring these problems in the context of past settlement patterns and the archaeology of death and burial. He promotes exploring the potential of interdisciplinary research for the understanding and explanation of social development and cultural change.

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