Editorial IANSA 2/2019

Crossing the Threshold of a First Decade

Ondřej Mlejnek

Next year it will be exactly ten years since a group of central European archaeologists and natural scientists decided to establish a new purely-scientific, English-written journal, which was called Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica – Natural Sciences in Archaeology. On 12th September 2019, members of the IANSA Editorial and Advisory Board met at a joint meeting in Šádek in Moravia, where they discussed a future of this journal (Figure 1).

The first topic discussed was how to commemorate the journal’s anniversary next year. It was an universal decision: it is worth preparing a special anniversary issue, where all the members of the Advisory and Editorial Boards could present results of their own team’s work in a scientific paper. Another decision was to rebuild the editorial board to make it more international and gender equal. This should be done by the end of the next year. We hope that this could help to maintain the broad scope of our journal and, possibly, could also attract even more high-quality submissions.

The current issue, a non-special, general one, appears to be extremely diverse from a thematic, as well as chronological, point of view. Therefore, we hope that it will attract a high number of readers with different interests. Following this editorial, it continues with an article written by Danielle J. Riebe, analysing the sources of obsidian used as lithic tools in Late Neolithic sites on the Great Hungarian Plain. Based on the results of this preliminary study, the variation in geological source exploitation may be linked to socio-cultural practices that differentiated the Tisza and Herpály units – archaeological cultures present during the Late Neolithic in this region.

Another paper, written by Dariusz Król and Jakub Niebieszczański, deals with the spatial arrangement of the Eneolithic settlement features dated back to the Funnel Beaker Culture excavated at Skołoszów site in south-eastern Poland. The geophysical survey conducted at this site has enabled a space delimitation of the entire settlement, including the non-excavated part, which should constitute an area of at least 65×40 metres.

The next article, written by Freek Braadbaart et al., deals with charred organic material, heated by anthropogenic fires and by hot tephra from the Minoan eruption (ca 1613 BC), excavated at the Bronze Age site of Akrotiri on the Cycladic island of Thera in Greece. The reflectance measured on the organic charred remains and their elemental analysis, and opal phytoliths from the ash, have provided interesting information about the temperatures at which the organic remains were heated as well as about the functions of their fires and the fuel resources used by the Akrotiri inhabitants. Since the first author passed away during the editorial process, it is very much appreciated that the second author, Anaya Sarpaki, together with the other co-authors, managed to answer the remarks of the peer-reviewers and to prepare the final revision of this paper, the publication of which can also be seen as a memorial to Freek Braadbaart and his work in archaeological science.

The last paper in the Articles section, written by Jana Nováčková et al., presents the results of the genetic analysis of human remains from a defunct graveyard in the former village of Obora in Prague. This graveyard was in use between circa 1730 and 1770 AD and the main aim of this study was to determine genetic kinship and genetic sex of individuals buried either in the same grave, multi-level grave, or neighbourhood graves. The genetic analyses of 23 individuals buried in four groups of graves proved that there were no blood relatives among the analysed individuals. Studies of historical written sources provided information that the parish affiliation at the time of death had a crucial role in choosing the place for burial and that in a social group of burghers it was even more important than family kinship. Furthermore, it was also possible to determine the genetic sex of children, an evaluation that could not be made by morphological methods.

The thematic review section is represented by a paper written by Martin Gojda, presenting the current development in archaeological remote-sensing seen from a central European perspective.

A look-into-the-region section presents the Department for Bioarchaeology at the Austrian Archaeological Institute of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. Andreas G. Heiss – and a team of scientists working at this institute –
refer to their recent projects and the results of their work. A list of recently-published scientific papers published at this department is, as usual, part of this presentation.

Finally, we have a sad piece of news concerning our colleague Slavomil Vencl, who passed away on 23rd June 2019 at the age of 82. His colleague from the Archaeological Institute in Prague, Katarina Kapustka, has prepared an obituary with an overview of his life and career. A list of his selected publications is enclosed as well.

We hope that each reader will be able to find in this issue something interesting from his or her field of research and we wish the journal every success as it enters into a new decade.