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Editorial IANSA 1/2024

IANSA on the Web of Science

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Last year, 2023, was one rich in events connected with the IANSA journal. In February, we participated in the organisation of the Conference of Environmental Archaeology in Brno, which was focused on rescue archaeology and, in particular, on the methodological environmental approaches in rescue archaeology (Figures 1 and 2). The web site of this annual conference has been transferred to the IANSA journal web pages and now it can be found on: www.iansa.eu/cea. This year the conference of environmental archaeology will take place in Hradec Králové from the 7th to 9th February 2024 and will be focused on the environment and culture. We hope that some of the papers presented at this conference will be later published in our journal.

One particularly pleasing piece of news is that IANSA was finally inscribed in the list of emerging journals on the Web of Science, which can be considered as an important moment in the journal's development. We hope that it will

bring about a broadening of the contributors and papers submitted to the journal.

Our organisation of two IANSA Editorial Meetings per year has become a tradition. On the 21st April 2023, our first meeting was held online with the participation of ten editors, and on the 12th October 2023, eleven editors met in person in Prague to discuss the preparation of the next issues and also, importantly, the journal's general strategy for the next several years (Figure 3). After the official part of the meeting, which lasted more than six hours, the participants moved to the suitably nearby Únětice Brewery for a dinner – followed by further discussion (Figure 4). This was quite symbolic, as the brewery is located just a few hundred metres from the type site of the Early Bronze Age Únětice archaeological culture. How appropriate!

Just two months later, we were all shocked by the gunman attack in the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in

Figure 1. The auditorium during the Conference of Environmental Archaeology in Brno. Photo by O. Mlejnek.





Figure 2. A contribution about parasitological analyses of archaeological samples presented by Kristýna Kuklová at the Conference of Environmental Archaeology in Brno. Photo by O. Mlejnek

Prague, which cost the lives of fourteen of our colleagues and students. We sent our condolences to their families and we wish them courage and peace during this tough time of grieving.

The content of this general issue is again quite varied concerning its presented issues, scientific disciplines, as well as in its geographical scope. The authors of the first article by Georgina Ibarra-Arzave *et al.* have tried to identify the anthropic processes from three buried soils dated to the Early Agriculture Period (4500 years BP) in the arid Northwest Mexico using physical, micromorphological and biogeochemical characteristics. In addition, the physical

and biogeochemical variables were analysed by redundancy analysis. These analyses proved to be an accurate indicator of agriculture and additionally, it was proved that the soil organic phosphorus fraction can be also a good indicator of soil changes induced by human fire management. The integrated analysis of these geoarchaeological methods has, according to the authors, a high potential for determining the human activities effect on soils from the Late Holocene.

The second paper is related mainly to the application of geophysical methods and the authors Roman Křivánek and Ivan Čižmář present the results of a geophysical survey performed with the use of a magnetometer on the grounds



Figure 3. IANSa Editorial Board Meeting at the Institute of Geology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. Photo by O. Mlejnek

of the Middle La Tène site of Nĕmčice in central Moravia (Czech Republic). Recent archaeological excavation was then focused on selected areas and situations identified during magnetometer prospection. The results of the excavation confirmed settlement, glass-making, and ritual activities under the magnetic anomalies they had detected. This new possibility of comparing uncovered sunken features and the distributions of magnetic anomalies has provided new feedback for a more precise interpretation of similar anomalies from magnetograms. An additional detailed apparent magnetic susceptibility measurement showed another possibility for the application of this geophysical method during archaeological excavations. With the use of this method the authors were able to obtain additional information about the infills of sunken features and possible post-depositional processes.

The authors of another article, Jiri Sneberger, Michal Tejček and Veronika Lungová, presented the use of

archaeological, anthropological and historical methods to identify some skeletal remains found in the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Přeštice in west Bohemia (Czech Republic) with a particular person mentioned in written sources. Based on anthropological analysis, these remains were interpreted as probably a female of over fifty years of age. By combining archaeological context, anthropological analysis and historical sources, the skeleton was interpreted as the remains of Marie Anna Lindauer, the mother of Josef Ondřej Lindauer, the dean in Přeštice and later the bishop in Budweis.

The authors of a methodological study, Nikola Sál, Anna Pankowská and Ladislav Šmejda, attempted to use X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF) to differentiate particular species and individuals in commingled bone assemblages. A total of 119 human bones and 17 animal bones from archaeological sites in Central Moravia and Silesia (Czech Republic) were examined. When the authors tried to

Figure 4. A dinner in the Únětice Brewery after the IANSa Editorial Board Meeting.



differentiate the unburnt and burnt bones at the species level, the overall accuracy of classification was 84.6% and 93.9%, respectively. When differentiating unburnt human bones at the individual level, the correct classification ranged from 88.1% to 72.7%. The differentiation of the burnt bones of humans at the individual level achieved an average success rate of more than 60%. The results confirmed that portable XRF can be used for species and individual differentiation of unburnt bones – and it is almost equally applicable to burnt bones.

Another paper by Alise Gunnarssone, Ester Oras and Alexandre Lucquin deals with the dietary practices of the Guja Livs in the 11th and 12th century AD. To answer the research questions, pottery fragments from the Turaida hillfort and Pūteļi cemetery (Latvia) were studied using Lipid Residue Analysis. Samples included both pottery clay matrix and burnt foodcrusts. The lipid residue results revealed that the main food groups consumed by the community were terrestrial animal and aquatic products, but also provided insights into a potential mixing of different foodstuffs. Some of the expected foodstuffs were not found in or on the analysed pottery, leaving the possibility for a hypothetical use of cooking practices that might have excluded ceramic vessels. The results of the research also provided preliminary indications of gender-based dietary patterns if assessed in context with the studies from other Baltic sites dated to this period.

The main research focus of the petroarchaeological paper by Kristýna Trnová *et al.* is the provenance of the Želešice metabasite. This raw material was used for the production of polished stone tools in the Central European Neolithic. This study is based on petrographical and mineralogical comparison of the artefacts made from Želešice metabasite collected in the Neolithic settlement (and workshop) at Brno-Holásky/Tuřany with the various rock types occurring around the Želešice metabasite body (southern Moravia, Czech Republic). The most probable locations of Neolithic exploitation within the Želešice metabasite body were described and furthermore three main rock varieties of the artefacts from Želešice metabasite were defined. They match well in their petrography and mineralogy with the rock types determined in the source region. The artefacts with pebble surfaces were most likely collected in the nearby Bobrava riverbed.

After a short break, there again appears the thematic reviews section in this issue. Patricia Ayipey, Dela Kuma and Jaromír Beneš describe the current state of archaeobotanical research in Ghana. Specifically, they discuss the changes in food consumption patterns over time in West Africa, emphasising the significant role played by archaeobotanical studies. Furthermore, the authors focus on the economic factors of plant domestication, which leads to a better understanding of the connection between food and society. Additionally, they dispel some misapprehensions currently held about West African cuisine and highlight the impact of the Atlantic trade on foodways. Archaeobotanical research has recently shed light on the dynamic nature of African foodways, including the integration of American crops into local food traditions. However, knowledge of the extent of adoption and use of these crops during the precolonial era still remains rather limited. More research is required, according to the authors of the review, to comprehend this adoption of American crops and the resilience of the African food system.

Last, but not least, the Backstory paper, this time written by Lenka Lisá *et al.*, presents the Czech-Kyrgyz geo-environmental project titled “In the Footsteps of the Silk Road”. The project brings together scientists from different institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Charles University in Prague, Masaryk University in Brno, and the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. In the framework of this project, the work of the Czech environmental team (covering geology, geomorphology, pedology, paleoecology, archaeobotany, malacology, osteology and many other disciplines) followed up on previous surveys and excavations performed in this area. Since 2021, their expeditions in the Osh Region (south-eastern Kyrgyzstan) have been aimed at the structure and development of the settlement pattern in this region, which is located along the ancient Silk Road. One of the major challenges of the ongoing geoarchaeological and palaeoecological project, based mainly on the cooperation between the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen and Osh State University, is to link climate changes and the changes instigated by humans with the transformation of the patterns of settlement and the landscape.

We hope that you will find some interesting information in this issue, which can be useful in your research, and finally, we would like to wish you a pleasant scientific experience with the IANSa journal.