

Evaluation of the Research and Professional Activity of the Institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) for the period 2010–2014

Final Report on the Evaluation of the Institute

Name of the Institute: Institute of Archaeology of the CAS, Brno, v. v. i.

Fields, in which the Institute registered its teams:

History and archaeology

Observer representing the Academy Council of the CAS: Pavel Baran

Observer representing the Institute: Ondřej Šedo, substitute observer Olga Lečbychová

Commission No. 11: History and archaeology

Chair: Prof. Dr. Marie-Elizabeth Ducreux

Date(s) of the visit of the Institute: October 19 - October 23, 2015

Programme of the visit of the Institute: see attached Minutes from the visit

Evaluated research teams:

No. 1 - Research Centre for the Palaeolithic and Palaeoethnology; No. 2 - Research Centre for the Roman Period and the Migration Period; No. 3 - Research Centre for Slavic and Mediaeval Archaeology; No. 4 - Department for Moravia-Silesia Prehistory

A. Evaluation of the Institute as a whole

1. Introduction

The Institute of Archaeology, Brno whose history dates back to 1942, has undergone an extensive transformation in the early 1990s and structural and conceptual changes continued also during the last two decades. The Institute has always had a unique and irreplaceable role in the field of archaeology in Moravia and Czech Silesia, but also in the Czechoslovak/Czech and broader European context. Currently it represents a progressive research centre with an excellent scientific position at both national and international level, focusing on clearly defined areas of research activities associated with archaeological topics of World importance: research on the earliest anatomically modern human population, processes in Central Europe during the Roman period and successive Migration period and the earliest states' establishment in the Eastern part of Central Europe in the 8th – 10th century (esp. Great Moravia).

The task of the Institute also lies in fulfilling a central role within Moravian and Czech Silesian archaeology which includes, besides scientific activities, also the role of guarantor of the archaeological field research activities and coordinator of the archaeological heritage care (due to the National Heritage Act). It manages a central repository of field documentation and central registration database of field activities, maintains an extensive specialised library and provides services in the conservation of movable artefacts and in a highly specialised non-destructive methods. It has established three archaeological open air museums famous to the general public in the Czech Republic and abroad (Pavlov Archaeology Park, Mikulčice national monument and Chotěbuz – Podbora hillfort) where results of the basic research are excellently presented.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

Central position in the Moravian and Czech Silesian archaeology reflected in long-term continuity of basic archaeological research and formulation of key research topics in the currently studied areas.

- Excellent position and visibility in the international context.
- An appropriate strategy regarding clearly defined research areas including chronological specialisation (Palaeolithic and palaeoethnology, Roman and Migration period, Early Middle Ages); well defined spheres of scientific interests concerning the partner Institute of Archaeology in Prague.
- Personal qualification (concentration of leading experts for studied fields).
- Interdisciplinarity in research activities.
- Excellent international collaboration and effective international scientific network establishment (Europe, America and Africa).
- A large number of successful grants, ability to implement scientific projects of national importance.
- A large number of excellent outputs, including papers in impacted journals.
- Involvement in applied research.
- Publishing activities (1 peer-reviewed journal of central importance and series of monographs).
- Top technical, instrumental equipment and software.

- Management of central information sources and archive for Moravia and Czech Silesia, management of the large library specialised on archaeology.
- Fruitful collaboration with universities, intensive involvement in educational activities in the field of archaeology.
- Well-qualified Direction team and effective executive management.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

Insufficient institutional funding.

- Uncertainty in employment sustainability.
- Lack of own internal doctoral students (due to current legislation), though a significant number of researchers are involved as tutors in university teaching.
- Lack of young research assistants and researchers.
- Heritage management is not adequately funded.
- Insufficient results of the Department of Moravian-Silesian Prehistory

4. Recommendations

- To continue in current strategy of clearly defined research areas reflected in objectives of individual departments.
- Problems associated with the heritage management may be soon solved by a new Heritage Act which is currently being discussed.
- To keep on the cooperation with key foreign partners to establish strong international research teams capable to obtain European grants (Horizon 2020, ERC, HERA etc.) or other international research funds. It is also recommended to increase joint publications using existing international scientific network.
- Necessity to keep on with the cross-disciplinary character of projects.
- To think about possibilities in attracting foreign researchers in order to internationalise the staff and recruit young researchers from abroad (recruit foreign Post-Doc/s using European Programmes); think about ERC, COST or Marie Curie Fellowship applications.
- Gradually scale down and close the Department of Moravian-Silesian Prehistory.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

- Overview of project activities: A total of 18 grant projects obtained in the 5 years is a remarkable success considering the size of the Institute having 18 researchers. The Institute has a proven ability for developing and implementing several leading grants running parallel.
- Publication results: 228 publications (including outputs with international impact) proves high efficiency of the staff; 23 articles in journals with impact factor, 128 articles in other journals, 23 books and 114 other publication outputs.
- Place of the Research centre for Palaeolithic and Palaeoethnology (Team I) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 7 (out of 119), 2 publications ranked into "world leading quality" (quality group outputs 1) and 3 into the "internationally excellent"

- category (group 2), 2 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in group 4 and 5.
- Place of the Research Centre for the Roman Period and the Migration Period (Team II) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 7 (out of 41), 2 publications ranked into “world leading quality” (quality group outputs 1), 4 into the “internationally excellent” category (group 2), 1 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in groups 4 and 5.
 - Place of the Research Centre for Slavic and Mediaeval Archaeology (Team III) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 13 (out of 107), 1 publications ranked into “world leading quality” (quality group outputs 1), 5 into the “internationally excellent” category (group 2), 7 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in group 4 and 5.
 - Place of the Department for Moravia-Silesia Prehistory (Team IV) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 3 (out of 21), no publication ranked into “world leading quality” (quality group outputs 1), 2 into the “internationally excellent” category (group 2), 1 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in group 4 and 5.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

- The majority of the scientists is involved in university teaching including tutoring of doctoral students (Masaryk University, Charles University, Silesian University, University of West Bohemia, Palacký University, University of Hradec Králové, Trnava University, Nitra University and Comenius University).
- Students are involved in field research projects.

Declaration on societal relevance

- Services for research.
The Institute of Archaeology provides valuable service in the field of archaeology:
Central repository of field documentation and central registration database of field activities for Moravia and Czech Silesia.
Library specialised on archaeology.
None-destructive methods
Conservation and reconstruction of movable artefacts laboratory
- Due to the Heritage Act, the Institute of Archaeology is the main guarantor of professional standards in the field of archaeological research. It is also the coordinator of the archaeological heritage protection (Moravia and Czech Silesia).
- Teaching:
2 researchers work also as cooperating associate professor and full professor at Universities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
Supervision of students: 24 Bachelors, 12 Masters and 16 Doctoral. Numerous consultants and co-supervisors.
- Activities in popularisation:
A large number of popularisation activities like interviews in newspapers and magazines, appearances in radio and television broadcasting, lectures for learned societies and general public, exhibitions etc.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

- Partnerships with numerous European but also American and African institutions.
- Participation in international inquiries.

- Number of publications in journals with international impact.
- Leading position on the national level and an excellent position on the international level in selected areas.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

- The budget is complemented from grants and applied research.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

- The Institute of Archaeology has a well thought out strategy for the period 2015-2019. The Institute will concentrate on increasing the interdisciplinarity and internationalisation of basic research. Fundamental research will continue in focusing on three main areas related to individual Research centres objectives: 1) Research on the earliest anatomically modern human population and its adaptation in the Danube region (together with other related topics), 2) Germanic society in Moravia in the Roman period, Roman military intervention towards the area North of Middle Danube and Lombard migration to Moravia (later phase of the Migration period), 3) Early Slavic period and Great Moravia (esp. Mikulčice), peripheral areas as well as topics connected with later development (the period of the 10th-11th and high medaieval towns related to the mining of precious metals).

B. Evaluation of the individual teams

Evaluation of the Team No. 1: Research Centre for the Palaeolithic and Palaeoethnology

1. Introduction

The Research Centre for the Palaeolithic and Palaeoethnology has been for a long time focusing on the oldest anatomically modern human population (*Homo sapiens*), with a particular interest in the formation of cultural, economic and structures interaction with the natural environment. It primarily concentrates its work on unique Southern Moravian sites (Dolní Věstonice – Pavlov) but it deals also with other areas of the Czech Republic and areas outside Europe (Ethiopia, Siberia). Great attention is paid to other important research areas including palaeoanthropology, origins of art, Gravettian period, Mesolithic in North Bohemia, reconstruction of the glacial landscape and palaeoethnology.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

- Long tradition of fundamental research in the field of Palaeolithic archaeology.
- Personal qualification.
- Ability to develop new insights in Palaeolithic archaeology.
- A large number of successful grants.
- A large number of excellent publication outputs, including papers in journals with impact factor and shared papers with international partners.
- Excellent international collaboration with leading European and American institutions.
- Implementation of new methods for documentation.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

- Insufficient institutional funding.
- The small number of researchers may represent a threat for the future.

4. Recommendations

- To keep on with efforts in international scientific networking and cooperation aiming at European research programmes (Horizon 2020, ERC, HERA etc.).
- To reinforce the team (e. g. recruit foreign Post-Doc/s using European Programmes).

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

- Place of the Research centre for Palaeolithic and Palaeoethnology (Team I) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 7 (out of 119), 2 publications ranked into “world leading quality” (quality group outputs 1) and 3 into the “internationally excellent” category (group 2), 2 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in group 4 and 5. This outstanding ranking is supported by high citation level.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

- Students are regularly involved in field research activities.

Declaration on societal relevance

- The team members are very intensively engaged in teaching activities at many Czech universities (Charles University, Masaryk University, University of West Bohemia, University of Hradec Králové, Palacký University and Silesian University), including supervision of both theses and dissertations. The team members are active in popularisation.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

- Excellent publications as well as high international impact of scientific outputs rank the Research Centre among leading research teams in Palaeolithic archaeology at the international level.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

- Organisation and management procedures are adequate. Involvement of students in research may guarantee future development. The Centre has proven considerable success in grant applications.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

- The Department will continue in the successful research area divided into several topics associated with activities in the Czech Republic, which will be, however, linked to global themes (expeditions in North-Eastern Africa and Siberia).

Evaluation of the Team No. 2: Research Centre for the Roman Period and the Migration Period

1. Introduction

The Research Centre for the Roman Period and the Migration Period underwent an uneasy process of restructuring which resulted in conceptual changes successfully implemented by the new head of the Centre. Under the new leadership the Centre has notably shifted towards a progressive and innovative research unit. The good ranking of its members' publications during Phase 1 of the Evaluation gives evidence of this positive turn. Research capacities were divided in two groups, the first of which is focused on the Roman period and the second one on the Migration period. Main research topics are represented by Romano-Germanic military confrontations, the development of Germanic populations and the Migration period with a united cross-disciplinary approach.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

- Reflexivity, comparison, inventiveness and interdisciplinarity are distinctive marks of the implemented projects.
- Ability to develop new insights in the archaeology of the Roman and Migration periods, which is often burdened with traditional approaches.
- Personal qualification.

- Excellent international cooperation with leading European institutions.
- A large number of successful grants.
- A large number of publication outputs, including papers published abroad.
- A balanced age structure of the team.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

- Insufficient institutional funding.
- The small number of researchers may represent a threat for the future.

4. Recommendations

- Keep on with efforts in international scientific networking and cooperation aiming at European research programmes (Horizon 2020, ERC, HERA etc.).
- Keep on with the interdisciplinary character of the research.
- Reinforce the team (recruit foreign Post-Doc/s using European Programmes (Marie Curie Programme etc.).

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

- Place of the Research Centre for the Roman Period and the Migration Period (Team II) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 7 (out of 41), 2 publications ranked into “world leading quality” (quality group outputs 1), 4 into the “internationally excellent” category (group 2), 1 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in groups 4 and 5.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

- Students are involved esp. in field research activities.

Declaration on societal relevance

- The team members are very intensively engaged in teaching activities at many Czech universities (Masaryk University, University of Hradec Králové and Silesian University), including the supervision of both theses and dissertations. Involvement in rescue excavations proves the ability of the team in the area of applied research. The team members are also very active in popularisation.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

- The team has an excellent position in both national and international context..

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

- Organisation and management procedures are adequate. The team has a balanced age structure and its members have demonstrated successful career growth. Involvement of students in research projects may guarantee a future perspective for the department. The Centre has proven successes in grant applications.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

- The team has developed satisfying and well thought out projects and strategy for the future. The Department will continue in the two fundamental research areas: the Roman Period (Germanic society of the Roman Period in Moravia and archaeology of the Roman military intervention to the north of the Middle Danube region) and the Migration period (Lombard migration in Moravia) with an emphasis on interdisciplinary approach and international impact.

Evaluation of the Team No. 3: Research Centre for Slavic and Mediaeval Archaeology

1. Introduction

The Research Centre for Slavic and Mediaeval Archaeology continues in long tradition of the Mediaeval, esp. Early Mediaeval archaeology of the Institute. The largest Centre, it deals with the whole Mediaeval period with special emphasis on selected research areas. The Early Mediaeval studies comprise the Earliest Slavic settlement in Moravia, Great Moravia and Mikulčice hillfort with several sub-topics (sacral buildings, cemeteries and anthropology of buried communities, fortification system, river branches' system, settlement structure of the narrow hinterland and pottery research), marginal regions' studies (esp. upper Odra region), decline of the Great Moravia and further development in the 10th-12th century. An important part of the research orientation of the Centre is also concentrated on the High Mediaeval urban archaeology. All above mentioned research activities were in the period of 2010-2014 completed with essential publications extending significantly the knowledge of Mediaeval Moravia and Silesia within wider Central European context.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

- Long tradition of fundamental research in Mediaeval archaeology.
- Ability to develop new insights and key topics of Mediaeval archaeology and to implement innovative approaches.
- Interdisciplinarity.
- Personal qualification and capacity.
- A large number of successful grants.
- A large number of publication outputs, including papers published abroad.
- Excellent international cooperation (partnerships with leading European institutions).
- Involvement in societal attractive topics of Moravian Mediaeval history.
- Involvement of students (annual field work practice on excavations, workshops and seminars).

3. Weaknesses and Threats

- Insufficient institutional funding.
- Lack of young research assistants and researchers.

4. Recommendations

- Keep on with efforts in international scientific networking and cooperation aiming at European research programmes (Horizon 2020, ERC, HERA etc.).
- Keep on with interdisciplinary approach.
- Reinforce the team, recruit Post-Doc/s.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

- Place of the Research Centre for Slavic and Mediaeval Archaeology (Team III) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 13 (out of 107), 1 publication ranked into “world leading quality” (quality group outputs 1), 5 into the “internationally excellent” category (group 2), 7 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in group 4 and 5.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

- Students are regularly involved in research activities.

Declaration on societal relevance

- The team members are intensively engaged in teaching activities at several universities (Charles University, Masaryk University, University of West Bohemia, Silesian University and Comenius University), including supervision of both theses and dissertations. Extensive involvement in rescue excavations shows the ability of the team in the area of applied research. The team members are very active in popularisation; exhibitions realised by the Centre had a great response among general public (esp. Great Moravia and the beginnings of Christianity).

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

- The team has an excellent position on both national and international level. Research results have a great international impact.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

- Organisation and management procedures are adequate. Involvement of students in research activities may guarantee the future perspective of the Mediaeval archaeology in the Institute. The centre has proven considerable success in grant applications.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

- The strategy is ambitious but realistic. Great emphasis will be placed on innovative approaches, progressive field and analytical methods, development of interdisciplinary methods and international impact of the research results. The Department will continue in successful areas of the previous research comprising the Early Slavic period, Great Moravia and Mikulčice centre and High Mediaeval urban archaeology extending to social and economic history topics.

Evaluation of the Team No. 4: Department for Moravia-Silesia Prehistory

1. Introduction

The Department of Moravian-Silesian Prehistory was founded in 1993. It focuses on the Young and Late Eneolithic period and more precisely on the changes undergone in the Late Stone Age and the Bronze Age. Its main topics are the role played by these two regions in the development of the lithic industry. Methodologically, it addresses the transfers of cultural contacts and innovations, including long-distance contacts of Eneolithic populations on the basis a comparative analysis of finds, for reconstructing the provenance of raw materials as well as of chipped stone artefacts, and for a better understanding of the social structure, the cultural interaction between the South and the North, the study of burial rites and material culture, and the stone industry of the Bell Beaker culture in Central-Europe. It cooperates with two specialists of the Institute of Geology of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Brno, as well as with a team of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow, at aiming to carry out a comprehensive study of the chipped stone industry of the Late Stone Age in Central-Europe.

The team has only 2 researchers, 1 in the 60-65 group age, the other in the 35-40 group age.

The team seems not very productive in terms of publications.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

- Recognised expertise in the field of Eneolithic Stone Industry.
- Thorough knowledge of the Moravian-Silesian terrain of the lithic industry of the Bell Beaker culture.
- Interconnection with a small group of Czech-Polish specialists

3. Weaknesses and Threats

- The tiny dimension of the Department.
- Limited attractiveness.
- No involvement of Ph.D. students or post-doctoral researchers.
- A classical but perhaps a bit restricted methodological approach.

4. Recommendations

- To try to enlarge the scope of the research.
- To increase the number of publications and to published in journals with impact factor.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

- In the 1990s, the Department succeeded in underpinning its position as an important place in research on Eneolithic stone industries and artefacts in Moravia and Czech Silesia, implementing appropriate methods and thus valorising this part of the prehistoric heritage of the two regions. Prof. Šebela, as the present head of the team,

is a recognised expert in analysing Late-Stone Age and Early Bronze Age stone. He has conducted explorations of many sites in Moravia and Silesia, and even in Bohemia. In the evaluated four-year period, himself and the second, younger researcher of the team have re-evaluated two newly uncovered Eneolithic necropolises in Czech Silesia on the basis of the study of the chipped stone industry and other inventories and has continued to produce inventories of the finds, in connection with dr. J. Kopacz and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy Sciences in Krakow. Amongst other results, a control probe undertaken in 2014 at Stranská skála near Brno has confirmed the first evidence of the existence of a chipped industry workshop in the Bell Beaker culture in the eastern part of Central Europe. The second key topic was the study of the settlement of Czech Silesia during the Late Bronze Age to the start of the Iron Age, which relies both on older find collections as well as on finds from more recent excavations. The team has also started to inventory the finds from one Lusatian culture burial site in Samborowice in Upper Silesia and has studied settlements from the period of the Urnfied culture. The outputs of its researches were mostly monographs and articles.

- Despite respectable results, the team should now redefine and enlarge its perspectives and its themes of research and improve its outputs.
- Place of the Department of Moravia-Silesia Prehistory (Team IV) in phase I. of the evaluation: evaluated outputs 3 (out of 21), no publication ranked into “world leading quality” (quality group outputs 1), 2 into the “internationally excellent” category (group 2), 1 into the “recognised internationally” category (group 3) and none in group 4 and 5. Outputs for bibliometry: 0.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

- The team has not involved PH.D. students in its research activities.
- No supervision of doctoral dissertations.

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Declaration on societal relevance

- Pedagogical activities:
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 - Students from Institute of Archaeology as well as from the Institute of Historical Sciences at the Faculty of Arts and Natural Sciences of the University of Opava, where the second team member teaching at Bachelor and Master levels, were involved in rescue excavations within the current professional and legal framework.
 - The 2 team members gave lectures at the universities of Opava, Hradec Králové, Brno, Prague Charles University, and at the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra.
 - Number of supervised BA theses 8, number of defended BA theses in 2020-2014: 6. 2 MA theses supervised, none has been defended.
 - Participation in summer camps for children between 6 and 14 years old.
 - Involvement in the organisation of Secondary School Professional Activities.
- Popularising activities:
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 - Presentation of the team workplace during popularising open days, for instance at Brno Science Festival, Science and Technology Week etc.
 - Promotion of the team results in media (Czech radio).
 - Involvement in one exhibition in Opava, creation of displays as part of another exhibition.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

- The Department is involved in a long-term Czech-Polish project on Chipped Stone industries of the young Eneolithic of Moravia and Silesia.
- At national level, it deals with a relatively rare and sensitive topic.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

- The team is too small. In spite of the presence of 1 younger researcher, and though its results have great educational potential, it doesn't seem to be very attractive neither for Ph.D. students, nor for young researchers.
- Financial resources: running grant funded projects don't appear in the team report and was not made apparent during the on-site visit.
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- Research for practice and the transfer of technologies (from non- public sources):
- 1 contractual research on the basis of Act of National Heritage was conducted from 2010 until 2014 (revenues: 499 000 euros). No collaborative research. The team has not been involved in transfer of technologies.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

- For one part, the team will continue to focus on the formation of the Bronze Age in Moravia and Czech Silesia as well as the emergence of the Lusatian culture society between the Danube region and the Silesian-Polish Lowlands, concentrating itself on the issue of chipped stone industry. Catalogues will be prepared. For other part, it will carry on a project on the burial rites of the Lusatian Urnfield culture in Moravia and Silesia including Polish Silesia. It will be involved in rescue excavations in Northern Moravia and Czech Silesia.
- As underlined during the on-site visit, the Institute will not reinforce the team but appreciates its members' expertise and abilities.

Date: December 31, 2015

Commission Chair: Prof. Dr. Marie-Elizabeth Ducreux