

PRIORITIES, RESEARCH AGENDAS AND PLANNING-LED INVESTIGATIONS IN CZECH ARCHAEOLOGY

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The Czech system of archaeological heritage management is mostly based on outdated legislation from 1980s. The authors of the law could not predict the major political and economic transformations that occurred in the Czech Republic after 1989. Thus, paradoxically, a law created in the conditions of a totalitarian state suppressing all private civil and business activities is still in force, after almost thirty years of democratic government and market economy.

We can say that there is no effective system of setting priorities in development-led archaeology in the Czech Republic.

The decision what and how to excavate lies in hands of archaeological companies (state or private) and archaeologists responsible for conducting of particular fieldwork. To conduct a particular development-led excavation, the archaeological companies have to make a bilateral agreement. How the agreement is fulfilled as well as methods used in the course of the fieldwork are fully in the hands of the archaeologist and developer while the state authorities have only minimum possibilities to intervene in the on-going project. The absence of enforceable rules and effective supervision in the course of archaeological fieldwork represent a considerable problem not only to the archaeological heritage, but it also undermines the reputation of archaeology in public.

Under the current conditions, the quality of the fieldwork can only be evaluated from excavation reports, which are usually written up to three years after the completion of fieldwork.

The current legally frozen state of archaeological heritage care system produced some unique not-official solutions and structures. Among the most important ones belong the centralised system of evidence of archaeological fieldwork and their results – the Archaeological map of the Czech Republic or regional archaeological commissions. Generally speaking, the current state of archaeological heritage care system can be defined as extremely fragile and unsustainable from a long-term perspective.

Keywords

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