RESCUE OR SCIENTIFIC EXCAVATION? TWO SHIPS THAT ARE JUST PASSING EACH OTHER

Jan Marik[1]
[1] Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague

The 1990s were not only a crucial new period for archaeology in the Czech Republic. Major legislative changes came surprisingly in the late 1980s as if foreseeing the following developments. The end of the centrally controlled economy also meant the end of many large-scale scientifically oriented researches and a massive increase in development-led excavations. This radical change made it possible to compare the positive and negative aspects of both approaches in a very short period.

The decentralisation of the state system also led to the emergence of a number of regional university departments that had interests and priorities that went in a completely different direction from development-led excavations. The current problem of university education is not the reduction of support for the relatively dense network of university departments (they suffer permanently from a lack of funding), but rather the decline in the number of people interested in studying and a certain degree of fragmentation of the scientific potential of the upcoming generations.

The experience of the last 30 years shows that whether large-scale discoveries or small-scale, targeted research organised in the context of university education is irrelevant for paradigm shifting or at least significantly boost knowledge. There is no supposed antagonism between university departments and rescue archaeology. Rather, they are two disparate worlds that have very little to share in common.

The development of archaeology in the Czech Republic over the last three decades differs significantly from the picture presented by the organisers of the session, and it is therefore entirely appropriate to question the reasons for this and to look for opportunities for beneficial and synergistic cooperation.

Note/comment