

## **INTRODUCTION: EMBRACING THE FUTURE WITH OPTIMISM, REMAINING TRUE TO TRADITION**

We are pleased to present the latest volume of *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia* to our readers. This scientific journal has an established position in the Polish and international archaeological communities. Since 1985, the Faculty of Archaeology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań has published *Folia* continuously. This issue marks the journal's 30th anniversary. For years, *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia* has featured articles on archaeology, consistently providing high-quality content while gradually expanding its thematic scope in response to changes in the discipline. This anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on the journal's role in disseminating knowledge about the past as explored by archaeology, as well as on archaeology itself. It also allows us to consider its future development.

Since its inception by Professor Jan Źak, the first Editor-in-Chief, *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia* has played an important role in scientific communication within the archaeological community. The journal provides a space for the exchange of ideas, presentation of research results, and discussion of methods and interpretations. It also shapes scientific and ethical standards in archaeology. From the beginning, the journal's primary objective has been to present research results on the prehistory and early Middle Ages of Central Europe, particularly Polish lands, and to publish works on Mediterranean archaeology. Additionally, the journal has featured articles on theoretical and methodological issues, analytical studies, and syntheses. Recently, the journal's scope has expanded to include interdisciplinary issues and broadly understood archaeological heritage protection and management, as well as contemporary archaeology. This reveals the diverse facets of modern archaeology.

While *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia* has evolved over time, adapting to the changing needs and challenges of archaeology, its basic scientific profile has remained unchanged. Since its inception, the journal has focused on empirical and theoretical research, considering the methodology of prehistory and the history of discipline in Poland and worldwide. *Folia*'s foundations are thematic openness (including promoting interdisciplinarity), methodological reliability, attention to the high substantive quality of published texts, and transparent review procedures. Over the past decades, the journal has developed into a forum for dialogue between academic circles representing various theoretical and methodological orientations. It has become a place to

present pioneering research approaches and a space for constructive debate on the complexity of human history.

The journal's 30th anniversary coincides with changes in the editorial team. As with any scientific journal with a long tradition, it is inevitable that certain changes will take place, both in terms of the topics covered and the editorial staff. This year, Prof. Danuta Minta-Tworzowska's position as Editor-in-Chief has been assumed by AMU Prof. Michał Pawleta. AMU Prof. Iwona Sobkowiak-Tabaka has become the Deputy Editor-in-Chief, and Paulina Suchowska-Ducke, PhD has taken over as Managing Editor. We recognize that this is a significant challenge, requiring consistency in maintaining the journal's high content and editorial standards, as well as openness to new research directions, interdisciplinarity, and the internationalization of discourse.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Prof. Danuta Minta-Tworzowska for her commitment and dedication as Editor-in-Chief of *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia*. Thanks to her work, vision, and consistency, *Folia* has gained a solid position in national and international academic circles. The firm groundwork that Prof. Minta-Tworzowska has laid will enable us to forge new paths in the journal's evolution.

## A NEW BEGINNING WITH RESPECT FOR TRADITION

Although change always carries an element of novelty and uncertainty, it is also a natural stage of development. As Heraclitus of Ephesus said, "The only constant in life is change". However, this does not mean that change negates the past. On the contrary, change allows us to preserve what is most valuable – the core of tradition – in new or changed circumstances. The form, conditions, and methods of action change, but the experience and foundation on which we build the future remain. Thus, change is not the end, but rather a new chapter in an ongoing story.

The tradition we refer to is not a platitude but a broad foundation on which we base and continue our publishing mission. It encompasses not only the legacy of past research, discoveries, and publications but also the ethos of research and editorial work: patient, reliable, and demanding. In the Poznań academic community, these ideas have a special dimension because they are deeply rooted in the history of the Wielkopolska region. They enable the building of lasting values through perseverance, cooperation, and consistent development. For our journal, this means systematically expanding the scope of research, opening up to new perspectives in archaeology, and cooperating across environmental and institutional divisions. Thanks to this, we can confidently speak of continuity while looking to the future with optimism.

Archaeology combines a fascination with the past with the need to ask questions relevant to the present. Today, archaeology is not limited to the study of prehistory or antiquity; it is consistently expanding its territorial and chronological boundaries to include previously marginalized areas. This evolution is reflected in the development of contemporary archaeology, which focuses on recent phenomena and material evi-

dence, reflecting on and often questioning traditional temporal divisions in historical studies.

The scientific knowledge generated by archaeology is a complex cultural product whose specificity lies in constant change and reinterpretation. This has been its nature since archaeology emerged as a scientific discipline in the second half of the nineteenth century, a state that continues to this day (Marciniak et al., 2024). Consequently, archaeology and archaeological research cannot be viewed as merely a linear accumulation of knowledge about the past. They never have been, despite what many researchers believe. Rather, archaeology constitutes a space for complex theoretical and methodological discussions that are currently finding expression in the post-paradigmatic stage of the discipline's development. Post-paradigmaticity refers to a situation in which many competing research and interpretive orientations coexist; none achieves the status of a paradigm, as defined by Thomas Kuhn: a dominant, universally accepted scientific model. While post-paradigmaticity can lead to tensions and interpretive discrepancies, it also fosters diversity of perspectives and stimulates the discipline's ongoing evolution. In this context, the pluralism of contemporary archaeology is not a weakness but a source of intellectual dynamism, inspiration, and continuous broadening of research horizons. It opens up new areas of reflection within the discipline and redefines its boundaries.

This raises a question that we have probably all asked ourselves many times: What is archaeology today, and what should it be in the future? This question concerns the definition of the discipline itself, its functions and learning potential, its place in society, and the values and goals guiding researchers studying the past. Today, archaeology is not limited to discovering and describing the material remains of past societies. It is an interdisciplinary discipline combining methods from the humanities and natural sciences, as well as modern technologies that enable a more complete understanding of the past (Kurzawska, Sobkowiak-Tabaka, 2021). Archaeology's recent shift towards the exact sciences is an important phenomenon that testifies to the discipline's development and the expansion of its research tools, which were previously beyond its reach. This is a natural stage in its evolution. However, despite this methodological and technological expansion, archaeology's core remains humanistic (Bugaj, Mamzer, Pawleta, 2024). The etymology of the term "archaeology" reminds us of this: it comes from the Greek words *archaïos* ("ancient") and *lógos* ("word", "story", "science"), meaning a discipline that refers to learning about human history through material traces of human activity. Thus, archaeology's focus remains invariably on humans, as understood through the objects and remains that testify to their existence and ways of life.

Today's archaeology is also about opening up to society, developing public and community archaeology, and promoting knowledge about the past through various activities. Involving local communities in the research process expands information resources and interpretive perspectives while deepening the understanding of the importance of cultural heritage in contemporary life (Smith, 2006). This approach fosters historical awareness and a sense of shared responsibility for protecting tangible

and intangible traces of the past. It strengthens archaeology's role as an active, ethical, and socially engaged practice. Therefore, archaeology is not only a research tool but also an activity with a social and cultural dimension – a bridge between the past and what has survived to this day. Through it, we can not only fill in gaps in source material about the past but also create spaces for dialogue between science and local communities and between collective memory and individual experience. In this sense, archaeology becomes a means of not only studying the past but also actively co-creating its meanings in the present. Its contemporary role is complementary, integrative, and engaging – it combines scientific research with reflection on responsibility for our shared heritage.

It is difficult to answer the question of what archaeology “should” be. Should its role be purely scientific and academic, consisting of systematically expanding the boundaries of knowledge? Or should it be social, providing tools for building historical and cultural awareness? Or should archaeology perhaps combine both dimensions, seeking a balance between scientific rigor and popularizing research results? Attempting to answer these questions fully would require extensive analysis of contemporary trends, social expectations, and directions of scientific development. Therefore, at this point, we will merely signal the problem, leaving it open for further reflection, rather than attempt to provide an exhaustive answer.

To meet these challenges, *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia* aims to consistently broaden its thematic scope. The goal is to create an open forum for exchanging ideas and presenting diverse research and theoretical approaches while inspiring reflection on archaeology's place in contemporary science, including the humanities. Rather than asking what archaeology can draw from the humanities and natural sciences, we want to explore what contribution archaeology can make to their development. This exploration will focus on four key dimensions: time and long-term perspective, materiality, space, and humans as social, cultural, and biological beings.

## THE CONTENTS OF THE VOLUME

This volume contains eleven articles written by experienced researchers and the younger generation of archaeologists. The articles cover a variety of subjects, including research on Neolithic settlements and the Przeworsk culture, interdisciplinary analyses at the intersection of neuroesthetics and the natural sciences, and reflections on contemporary cultural heritage. The diversity of approaches allows us to see the continuity of the research tradition, as well as the new methodological directions and fresh perspectives of the younger authors. The articles span a broad geographical range, from Anatolia to Poland and Central Europe, as well as a wide chronological scope, from prehistory to 21st-century issues of heritage preservation and interpretation.

The volume opens with an article by Patrycja Filipowicz, Jędrzej Hordecki, and Arkadiusz Marciniak summarizing twenty-five years of research by the Polish archaeological mission at the Çatalhöyük site in Turkish Anatolia, particularly emphasizing

ing the years 2014–2025. The authors present key discoveries regarding stratigraphy, architecture, and funerary practices, providing a more comprehensive understanding of settlement processes in the Neolithic era and later periods. Next, Małgorzata Markiewicz analyzes the potential of neuroaesthetics in the study of prehistoric art, emphasizing the need to combine cultural and biological perspectives on perception and creation. Mateusz Napierała, in turn, addresses the topic of Tutankhamun's iron dagger, contrasting reliable scientific research results with the often sensationalist media narratives that perpetuate false information about its origin.

Wojciech Rutkowski and Radosław Janiak address the subject of Przeworsk culture in an article describing the discovery of a stone structure in Buszków Dolny. An A158 type fibula was found under the structure, a discovery consistent with the depositional practices of this community. Tomasz Gralak discusses economic and social changes in Barbaricum during the late period of Roman influence. He points out the complex relationships between climate crises, constraints in agricultural production, and the centralization of power and capital. Maciej Gembicki, Marcin Krzeptowski, Marek Polcyn, and Paige Lynch present the results of their research on the cemetery of the now-defunct village of Gać. Thanks to radiocarbon dating, they revised earlier findings and demonstrated that a necropolis functioned there in the 17th–18th centuries, probably in connection with the region's Protestant communities.

Jacek Konik discusses the recent archaeological discovery of a Jewish study hall (*bet ha-midrash*) in Warsaw's Muranów district and artifacts related to the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. These finds provide knowledge about the fate of the Jewish community and prompt reflection on memory and the preservation of heritage in urban spaces. Włodzimierz Lajsner discusses the depiction of ancient coins on contemporary currency issuances in Central and Eastern European countries in an article on the reception of antiquity. These depictions serve to build national identity and pursue historical policy. On the other hand, Aleksandra Chabiera points out the insufficient consideration of archaeological heritage in municipal monument preservation programs, indicating the need for more comprehensive and participatory actions.

Rafał Zapłata addresses the definition and social issues surrounding “old things” and the material traces of the recent past. He analyzes these topics in the context of the ambiguous concept of a monument and proposes new research approaches that cover the material culture of the 20th and 21st centuries. The volume concludes with Mateusz Drewicz's critical review of *Leksykon terminów archeologicznych* (*Dictionary of Archeological Terms*) (2024). Drewicz emphasizes the publication's value in systematizing basic archeological concepts and as a starting point for further discussions and debates.

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As *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia* enters its next phase, it remains faithful to the principles on which it was founded, principles that have been carefully cultivated over the years. At the same time, it remains open to new directions and research perspectives in contemporary archaeology, thus responding to the needs of a dynamically

changing reality. We will make every effort to ensure that the journal continues to be a space where different research trends and traditions meet, and where scientific ideas are exchanged. This space is intended for both recognized specialists and young scholars beginning their academic careers. *Folia* fosters creative dialogue, inspiration, and cooperation. The journal has always served as an open forum, bearing witness to the continuity of archaeological research while acting as a living medium that responds to the discipline's new challenges. The common denominator is the passion for discovering, researching, and interpreting the past in material and intellectual terms.

We invite contributions to *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia* and are confident that these articles will help further strengthen the position of archaeology as an interdisciplinary, dynamic science open to the modern world, while making a significant contribution to the development of knowledge about the past as studied by archaeology.

Staying true to the tradition we grew up with while looking optimistically to the future, we present this volume to our readers.

Editors of *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia*

*Translated by Tomasz Skirecki*