

CALL FOR PAPERS

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE 20TH CENTURY
FROM A CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE 2026

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
AND
MODERN ARTEFACTS IN AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Pilsen, 21–22 November 2026



*Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, University of West Bohemia, in cooperation
with the National Heritage Institute and the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy
of Sciences, Prague*

Introducing the conference

Following the final discussion and feedback from the Pilsen Conference on 20th-Century Archaeology held in 2024, we have decided to organize another event focused on the archaeology of the recent past from a Central and Eastern European perspective. This time, the main topic is **INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY**.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many parts of Central and Eastern Europe underwent an intensive process of industrialization. This led to the emergence of industrial agglomerations that became important centres of economic, social, and cultural development. Raw materials and energy resources, together with transport infrastructure, were the basic prerequisites for the rapid development of key industries. As industrial archaeology has evolved, it has demonstrated its potential to trace the early phases of industrial development and their later transformations in this part of Europe. The far-reaching structural changes currently affecting the industry have led to the demise of many long-established manufacturing companies, the transformation of old factories into brownfields, and the demolition of former industrial sites, triggering a number of rescue archaeology projects. Drawing on material evidence and applying an interdisciplinary approach, archaeology has shed new light on the highly complex development of industrial sites in Central and Eastern European cities.

The purpose of this conference is to provide a platform for a comparative view of industrial archaeology from a Central and Eastern European perspective, spanning from the beginning of the industrial period to the 20th century. We also welcome presentations of projects from other parts of Europe that will provide a broader comparative context. In addition to the industrial archaeology of individual industrial sites, we would like to focus on research into industrial landscapes, raw material extraction and processing, transport and settlement infrastructure, and workers' housing, as well as the application of research results in heritage conservation practice. We would also like to open a discussion on specific aspects of field research at industrial sites, which often face challenges, including the size of the territory, the complexity of built environments, and the risks posed by environmental burdens. Interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for industrial archaeology, as it enables us to interpret structures through the lenses of economic and social history, the history of technology, and architectural history.

The second topic of the conference is **MODERN ARTEFACTS IN AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT** – a complex area of study that is acutely relevant for contemporary research and practice. Currently, archaeological field research is revealing large numbers of objects at sites dating to the modern era. Issues that we would like to focus on include:

- record-keeping systems, formalized description methods, and image documentation, including 3D visualizations;
- identification and functional interpretation of modern archaeological artefacts using archival sources, collectors, oral testimonies, and AI;
- case studies focusing on the potential of modern artefacts for the study of the recent past and their relevance to material memory;
- museum practice with regard to assemblages of items from archaeological excavations at modern sites, including conservation methods for different materials.

The conference will take place on 21–22 November 2026 at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen (Sedláčkova 15).

Submissions with the title and abstract of your paper should be sent by 30 September to the following e-mail address: vareka@kar.zcu.cz.

On request, accommodation for conference participants can be booked in the guest rooms of the University of West Bohemia (Bolevecká 91).