

Archaeology of Conflicts

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Conclusions

In the foregoing chapters we could find out how broadly the study of past conflicts can be viewed from the perspective of archaeology and other disciplines. The chronologically ordered chapters are dealing with wars from the 2nd century AD until the so far largest conflict in the history, which affected Europe in 1939–1945. Individual chapters cover with their topics mainly the territory of Central and East Europe.

After an introduction, the second chapter addresses a conflict between Germanic tribes and the Roman Empire at the time of the Marcomannic Wars. Presented is the current state of knowledge of this period from the perspective of archaeological sources. The text is dealing with a wider territory of South Moravia and adjacent regions, the Slovak Morava valley and Lower Austria. The end of the chapter is dedicated to the most recent finds from the region of Malá Haná on the Bohemian-Moravian border.

The following four chapters are chronologically focused on the medieval period. The third chapter addresses the problem of long linear features as we know them from the territory of present-day Poland. These terrain features are hundreds to thousands of metres long. On the basis of present knowledge, these ramparts can be dated to a wide chronological interval of the 10th–14th centuries. The fourth chapter is dealing with imports of luxury arms and equipment in elite graves in the Pontic-Caspian steppes, whose origin can be sought in the Russian and Bulgarian territories. The fifth chapter gives an overview of archaeological sites and artefacts, which can be associated with Mongol invasions of the Polish territory in 1241, 1259/60 and 1287. Emphasis is put on militaria (arrowheads) or jewellery (arm rings). The sixth chapter documents the evidence of the 14th–15th century ranged weapons and firearms from four Polish fortified sites, which enable a more accurate dating based on reports on their besieging.

The following six chapters are dedicated to modern conflicts from the 'Thirty Years' War until the 19th century. The seventh chapter deals with the problem of the 16th and 17th century military manuals, particularly the build-up of field fortifications – redoubts, their dimensions and sequence of construction works. The eighth chapter is dedicated to the defence of the Silesian-Hungarian border and its development in the early modern period. An important role was played by the Jablunkov fortifications (Jablunkovské šance), which were several times rebuilt during their existence. The ninth chapter pays attention to the appearance of the 18th century Austrian military camps. The problem is mainly addressed on the basis of historical military manuals and it might be an inspiration for further development of this topic which is so far omitted by historians. The tenth chapter describes the present state of archaeological research into the Austro-Prussian Wars in the territory of East Bohemia, which is a region distinctly affected by the rivalry between the Habsburg Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia.

Archaeological excavation of one part of field camps of the Austrian army associated with the Battle of Wagram is presented in the eleventh chapter. The twelfth chapter, dedicated to the period of the Napoleonic Wars, maps out the components of a 1813 defence line in the Lower Ohře Valley. This long-term research project is mainly focused on the possibilities of non-destructive archaeology.

The remaining three chapters are dealing with the problems and possibilities of archaeological research on the events of the World War II. The thirteenth chapter describes a non-destructive survey of field fortification features in the neighbourhood of the Smolkov Artillery Fort, which belonged to the system of Czechoslovak border fortifications in 1935–1938 and was used by the Nazi army at the end of the war. The fourteenth chapter maps out the research on the crash site of an American Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber, which was shot down nearby the Slovak town of Trenčín in 1944. The fifteenth chapter summarises the present state and possibilities of archaeological research into the World War II events in the territory of Slovakia.

At the end we can conclude that the past military conflicts are studied by several disciplines of science. Each of them generates specific questions and solves them with the help of its own methods. During the discussions among the authors, we several times heard the idea that this area of interest should be approached within an interdisciplinary research.

However, to the best of our knowledge, no interdisciplinary project focused on the problem of conflicts is currently in progress in the Czech Republic. The so far isolated example to be followed thus remains a systematic exploration of a 1647 battlefield near Třebel.¹

¹ Matoušek, V. 2007: Třebel. Obraz krajiny s bitvou. Praha.