

## THIRTY YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF SCHOLARSHIP: THE ARCHAEOLINGUA FOUNDATION

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*The Archaeolingua Foundation is a particular charitable organisation registered in Budapest, Hungary, in 1991. It was established by Sándor Bökönyi (1926–1994, Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and director of the former Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Wolfgang Meid (professor of linguistics at the University of Innsbruck, Austria), and the “Computer Applications in Archaeology” Research Team of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences represented by its dedicated members, Erzsébet Jerem and Ferenc Redő. This article offers a brief review of the Foundation’s first thirty years, based on the author’s impressions, with particular emphasis on publication output, a reliable objective measure of its various cultural activities.*

**Keywords:** Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Universität Innsbruck, archaeology, computer applications, publishing, academic management

### THE BEGINNINGS

According to the preamble of its memorandum of association, the Archaeolingua Foundation was created on 10 May 1991 and was officially registered on 22 July the same year. The idea of this organisation was inspired by the recognition of its founders that modern research is *ab ovo* interdisciplinary and international. Moreover, they have recognised the key importance of informatics in carrying out competitive, world-class research. Today, this latter point of view would be considered self-evident. However, over a generation ago, that was not the case in Hungary at all, as computer-aided research has only started to gain ground in academic institutions at that time.

These aspects of the initiative clearly reflect the spirit of an age which witnessed piecemeal political opening, the emergence of non-governmental organizations, and a slow expansion of international networks in Hungary already during the decade preceding the 1989 political turn in Eastern Europe. The Founders wanted to support the integrated cultivation of archaeological, linguistic, and historical research within their narrow fields and the publication of results in the increasingly difficult conditions created by the growing influence of market economy.

As the name Archaeolingua – which also refers to the institutional backgrounds of the Founders – faithfully reflects, the Foundation aims to develop archaeological, linguistic, and related historical research procedures that present the results of these fields through appropriate media. As director of the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and an internationally renowned archaeozoologist, Sándor Bökönyi maintained an extended network of connections with archaeologists and researchers in diverse fields of interdisciplinary research. So did Wolfgang Meid, an internationally esteemed researcher of Indogermanic languages and Celts, whose presence in the project represented another window to the international academic community. A research group, represented by its dedicated members, Erzsébet Jerem and Ferenc Redő, also played an important role in setting up the Foundation. Erzsébet Jerem was constantly present in the scholarly world with her research on Celts and Iron Age in general, subsidized by numerous Austrian, German, Italian, and Oxford scholarships, while Ferenc Redő, as Deputy Director of the Archaeological Institute, has participated in excavations focusing on relics of the Roman Empire abroad. The new research team was dedicated to solving the tasks seen with the help of the Foundation, with a focus on solving tasks such as digital

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cartography, database building, and the application of statistical methods, in addition to publishing archaeological books. That was especially necessary because publishers at the time, in lack of today's digital background, were no longer able to publish archaeological manuscripts within a tolerable time and matching the expected quality standards. In this context, the Foundation's and the team's supporters saw this as an effective means of supplying the Institute with a valuable base to expand its library through exchanges with archaeological publications of international standard. In accordance with this setup, the seat of the Foundation was the Archaeological Institute of the HAS, located in the buildings of the former Clarissan Monastery at 49 Úri Street, rented by the Institute since 1960 by then (TÖRÖK 2002, 21). The first independent Archaeolingua office space was under the arcades of the building's inner courtyard (Fig. 1).



*Fig. 1. The courtyard of 49 Úri utca seen from the direction of the Archaeological Institute (Photo: Mária Bondár)*

Although, after the death of Sándor Bökönyi, the research group ceased to exist and the Archaeolingua Foundation moved to a new location, the organisation did not give up its mission and has maintained the spirit and objectives of its founders ever since.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOUNDATION'S ACTIVITIES

Since the very beginning, the classification of the Foundation has been a non-profit organisation. The essence of this legal status is that the income generated during the course of its activity cannot be divided but must be re-invested into the goals defined in the memorandum of association.

Since the beginning, the managing body of the Foundation's assets have been the International Board of Trustees, which currently has seven members, invited by the Founders for an indefinite period. This body decides, among other things, on the publishing plan, tenders, the use of funds, and the proper preservation of the assets it owns.

As mentioned, the foundation is dedicated to promoting high-quality scholarship in archaeology, history, historical linguistics, cultural heritage management, and related research, with particular consideration for interdisciplinary activity. Consistently observing the original goals, the Foundation also adapted its charitable activity to the tasks set out in the constantly evolving legislative environment in Hungary. The Foundation's commitments include disseminating knowledge on cultural and natural heritage, producing high-quality publications, as well as promoting education, and raising awareness related to these activities. In parallel with these developments, the original objective has evolved significantly. It has become clear that it is no longer necessary to spread computer culture; it is spreading by itself. It is unnecessary to develop individual programs to solve archaeological problems; the existing commercial software must be mastered at the user level for each task. However, the field of database construction and statistical applications, widely used in archaeology, have become available. Digitized cartography and graphical documentation procedures associated with remote sensing have, in fact, become a new field of science. 3D technology is becoming increasingly widespread, and spatial modelling with it - a development that was hardly possible to think about when the Foundation was born. These procedures have grown indispensable in the virtual visualization of archaeological phenomena. Nevertheless, the communication of scientific results and publication in the best quality available have remained key issues. Although digital publication has grown important in the last decades, the need to publish printed books seems to have remained, for the time being, still forming the Foundation's main activity. The redefinition of the foundation's original goals has also allowed young researchers to engage in this work in various ways.

While the Foundation has the rights and means to provide scholarships and one-time financial support as well as pay full-time and part-time employees to achieve its various goals effectively, much of its junior personnel has fluctuated over the years. Numerous doctoral students and young researchers have worked for the Foundation, mastering a wide variety of forms of book publishing and disseminating scientific results in other forms, learning practical details of daily work. This situation has somewhat deteriorated, as the Foundation has not always been in the financial position to offer competitive salaries to young talents. Academic career opportunities have diverted some; others are now working in different fields but drawing on the experience gained at the Foundation.

Against the backdrop of variegated and dynamic changes, the success of Archaeolingua's activities can be best measured by the numerical data and various trends in publishing.

In this regard, the personal efforts by Erzsébet Jerem best represent continuity in the founders' activities. Her archaeological expertise, leadership and managerial qualities, and high aesthetic standards, and, last but not least, extensive network of contacts form a personal skill set that has been instrumental in the Foundation's rise in the highly competitive arena of publishing. Naturally, this does not diminish the merits of staff who have devoted themselves for longer or shorter periods to maintaining this success. It is worth mentioning here the tireless work of Rita Kovács as editor, organiser, and distributor, which also goes back almost three decades.

### ACHIEVEMENTS IN PUBLISHING

Although the scope of the Foundation's activities goes far beyond book publishing, the most consistent and measurable evidence of its results over the last three decades are no fewer than 220 publications that have consistently accompanied its activities. These data simultaneously illustrate the diversity of research pursued, the Foundation's contributions to major projects, as well as the consistent development of the technical conditions indispensable in modern book production. In addition, the publications help outline the broad international network of academic relationships Archaeolingua has cultivated.

It is of historical interest that *Akadémiai Kiadó*, the Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1951–1996), was established as the prestigious official forum for publishing research results achieved in various research institutes within the HAS network and beyond (BARTOSIEWICZ 2017, 208). However, getting a share of its budget was difficult, which followed strict economic planning that also determined scholarly activity during its first four decades (BÖKÖNYI 1993, 142). Due to the sluggish book-editing process that often took years (with questionable success as several manuscripts never got into publication), the "Publishing House" was sarcastically dubbed the "Hibernating House" among scholars. Archaeolingua, which started with a versatile profile, was established in a market situation when the demand for flexible and fast scientific publishing increased.

As a result, the Foundation also created the Archaeolingua series of academic publications, which first began to publish works in the field of archaeology and linguistics, mainly in accordance with its declared interdisciplinary objectives. During the course of its further evolution, the Foundation itself has developed new *fora* of publication (e.g., in museology and heritage protection) with the help of the media, continuously enriching its toolbox.

Moving from the physical design of publications toward some gross characteristics of content, it is worth reviewing the products of the last thirty years. All of Archaeolingua's publications are characterised by a high degree of aesthetic sophistication, manifested in both hardcover and somewhat cheaper

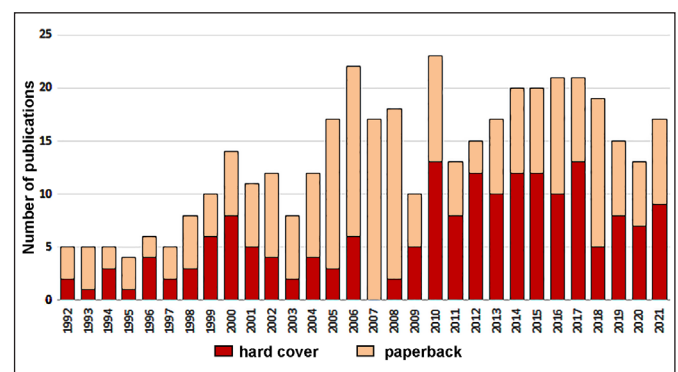


Fig. 2. The diachronic distribution of hardcover and paperback publications by the Archaeolingua Foundation



paperback books. These two types have been present in parallel in the publisher’s selection, although the share of hardcover products appears to have somewhat increased over the last fifteen years (Fig. 2). The same chart shows a slight decline in the number of publications by the mid-2000s when a higher proportion of paperback editions were published.

Archaeolingua’s publishing tradition started with two series characterised by a consistent image. The A4-sized, hardcover *Series Maior* has become a forum for typically edited collection volumes. Published in B5 size, the paperback *Series Minor* specializes in publishing smaller monographs, although there were sometimes overlaps of format between these two genres (large monographs and small edited volumes). Archaeolingua’s unique visual marks include apt cover designs and a particular range of blue shades.

The very first representative book embodied the fundamental objectives of the Foundation both in its title and content. It can thus be considered a paradigmatic flagship publication. The volume penned by several authors and edited by Sándor Bökönyi summarized the micro-regional research carried out by the Archaeological Institute in Békés County (Fig. 3). These results were obtained through the extremely intensive multi-period archaeological and scientific study of a clearly defined area, much along the lines of Bökönyi’s strategic vision at the time (BÖKÖNYI 1993, 143–144).

Although the aesthetic viewpoints have always been important in the work of Archaeolingua as a publisher, it should be emphasised that in addition to sheer attractive looks, the publication and authentic reproduction of colours are of particular documentary importance in archaeology (artefacts, aerial photographs, maps) and many other disciplines based on visual analysis (e.g., art history, Egyptology). For this reason, Archaeolingua publications have included not only black-and-white but also colour illustrations from the very beginning, even though the latter are notoriously expensive to produce. Colour printing was not common at all at the time of the Foundation’s launch, and many major publishers (and not only in Hungary) were still reluctant to publish larger numbers of color illustrations precisely because of the cost and the resulting increase in book prices. The time series in Fig. 4 shows that, except for some non-illustrated, usually linguistic works, the use of colour images has steadily increased in combination with black-and-white (BW) illustrations, and nowadays, volumes containing almost exclusively colour pictures are common.

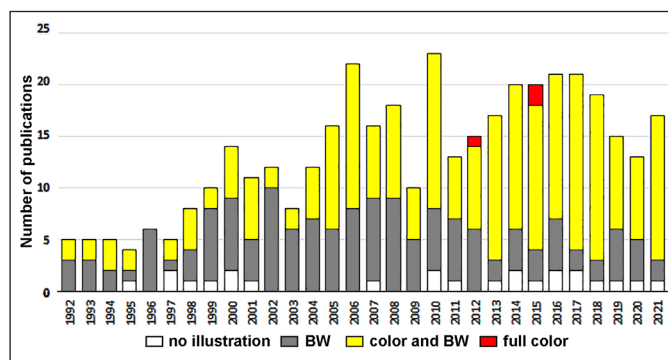


Fig. 4. The diachronic distribution of illustrations in publications by the Archaeolingua Foundation (BW: black-and-white pictures)

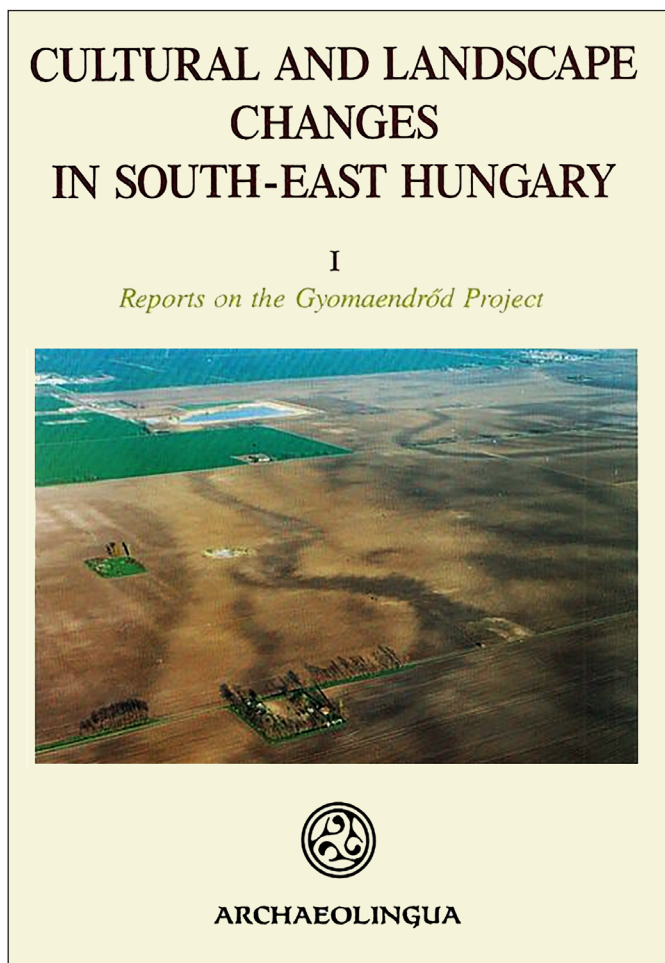


Fig. 3. Cover design of the first book published by the Archaeolingua Foundation

A subtle phenomenon may be recognised in the background of the trend shown in Fig. 4. During its three-decade-long existence, the Foundation has always been keeping pace with technical develop-

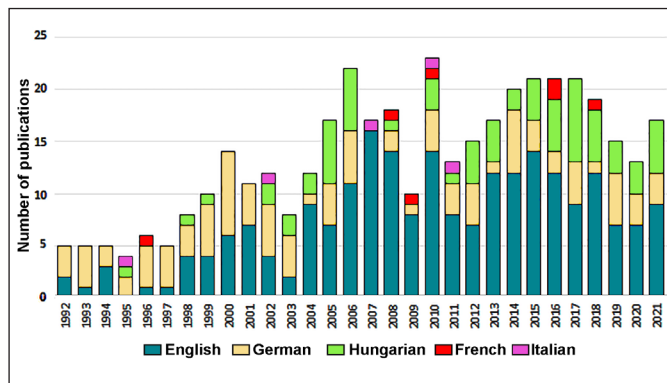


Fig. 5. The diachronic distribution of languages of publication by the Archaeolingua Foundation

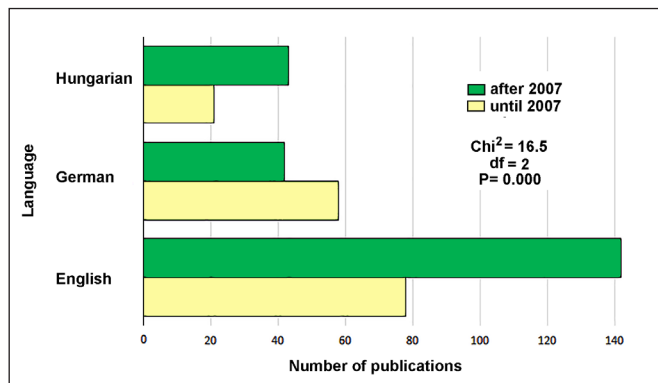


Fig. 6. Testing diachronic changes in the main languages of publication used by the Archaeolingua Foundation

ments in its field of research, in accordance with the objectives set out in its memorandum of association. Such a steady increase in the number of illustrations (in addition to a consistent improvement in their quality) would have been unthinkable without the use of computer-based analytical and editing tools also aiding digital book publishing. The volume honouring László Török is a great example of high-standard top-quality computer-aided publishing.

Proceeding further with the analysis, it is worth considering the languages of publication, which sheds light on the network of researchers and research groups behind the publishing activity. Reviewing the major languages in chronological order, it is unsurprising that English became largely dominant (Fig. 5). Another world language, the use of which should be almost self-evident (given the Austro-Hungarian nature of the Foundation) is German. It seems to show, however, a relative decline. In comparison, the number of Hungarian-language publications has been increasing in the Publisher’s selection since the beginning of the third millennium. Books published in French and Italian are additional tokens of linguistic diversity, representing small but important colouring elements in the publisher’s selection.

These tendencies, visible to the naked eye, are worth testing statistically. If the data of the first and last fifteen years of publishing activity are pooled in two separate groups, a statistically significant difference can be found between the two periods (Fig. 6), confirming the observation that, in the long run, in line with global trends, the number of English and Hungarian-language publications more-or-less doubled, while those of the German-language publications decreased by almost a third. An expanding market demand explains the increase in the number of publications published in Hungary in Hungarian. The books of the Foundation have long been read not only by professional archaeologists or linguists but also by educated members of the public interested in new scientific discoveries. They represent a broad range from college students to amateur archaeologists, schoolteachers, and tour guides.

Moving on in the direction of content evaluation, in addition to the international embeddedness of the Foundation, the diversity of its activities is well illustrated by the number of series of Hungarian and international publications that have joined Archaeolingua’s own series over time. They are of crucial importance in the Foundation’s survival. A summary of their rich repertoire

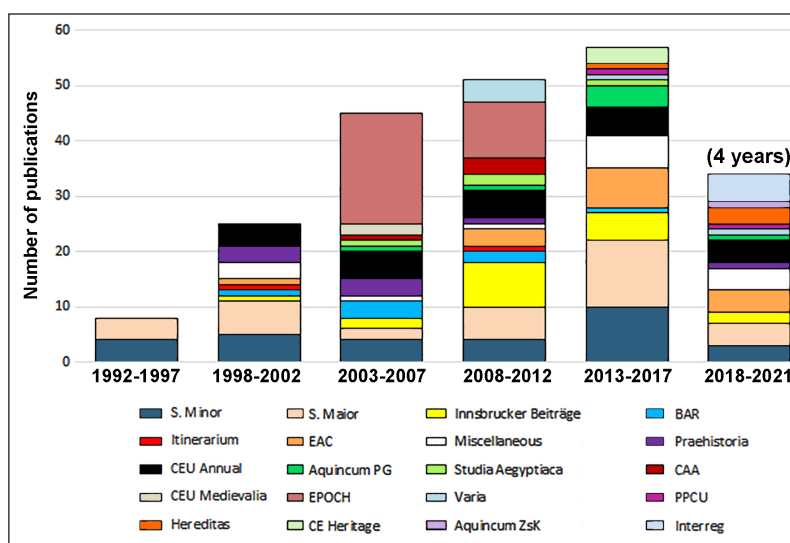


Fig. 7. The diachronic summary of the series published by the Archaeolingua Foundation shown in five-year increments

is shown in Fig. 7 and the table in the Appendix in five-year increments (only four years' output was available for 2018–2021). As shown in the diagram, the fundamental nature of these series is immensely diverse. They are variably linked to projects, regular conferences, publishing, and university/institutional cooperations on the national and international levels. Due to this, in addition to its publishing activity, the Foundation was able to become increasingly involved in international research networks, i.e., also performs *bona fide* research and project partner tasks.

The regular business partners include the Institute of Archaeology of the Research Centre for the Humanities of the ELKH Research Network (successor to the same institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Budapest; the Central European University (CEU), Budapest/Vienna; the *Europae Archaeologiae* Consilium; the Pázmány Péter Catholic University; and the University of Miskolc. The cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of the Research Centre for the Humanities of the ELKH Research Network is particularly fruitful, although its leading journal (*Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*) is still published by the successor of *Akadémiai Kiadó*. However, the Institute also published its own yearbook entitled *Antaeus* (until 1985 *Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*; BARTOSIEWICZ ET AL. 2011, 317), the newer volumes of which were published by *Archaeolingua*. The first volume of a new series, *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica*, was published in 1986. This series was devoted to publishing archaeological sites and collections of finds studied by the staff of the Archeological Institute of the HAS, as well as monographs and collections on such subjects (TÖRÖK 2002, 58). *Archaeolingua* has been commissioned to care for this series since Volume 23, published in 2009. Furthermore, the recently published volumes of the *Hungarian Archaeological Topography* series and other major monographs, as well as a new bilingual series launched and edited in cooperation with the Research Centre for the Humanities, *Hereditas Archaeologica Hungariae* (with four published volumes so far), are also of great importance. Other series of *Archaeolingua* include the *Central European Archaeological Heritage Series* made in collaboration with Archaeopress Oxford and special thematic publications with the Department of Archaeology of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University and the Department of Egyptology at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. For over a decade, *Archaeolingua* has also issued an open-access online bilingual (Hungarian and English) journal, *Hungarian Archaeology / Magyar Régészet*, addressing diverse topics of archaeology and cultural heritage. This activity has grown into an essential part of the Foundation's work, and the journal has become a source often cited by both professionals and public readers. A detailed description of the work and achievements related to the journal can be found in the Spring 2022 issue of the magazine (MESTER 2022, 1–7). Today, studies are now published in the journal with a doi number. Its importance is also reflected by the fact that in 2021, the Scientific Committee of Archaeology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences included it on the list of journals eligible for consideration in scholarly performance and scientometric analyses.

Its publication output shows that *Archaeolingua* has always participated in various Hungarian and international research projects (cf. Appendix). Such an abundance of series is impossible to analyse graphically. At the end of our review, however, it is worth considering the lessons of another summary diagram that points to the nature of the key role

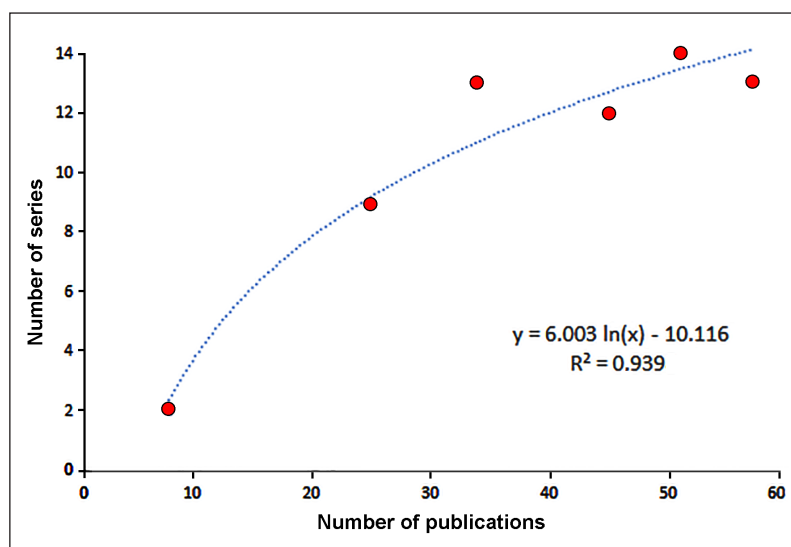


Fig. 8. The non-linear relationship between the number of publications and the number of series published by the *Archaeolingua* Foundation shown in five-year increments

series play in the Foundation's publishing activity. If we analyse the change in the numbers of series as a function of the number of publications in the five-yearly compilation also used in *Fig. 7* (and the Appendix), we obtain a slightly degressive curve instead of a straight, linear relationship (*Fig. 8*). According to the relevant statistical calculations, these two series of numbers are extremely closely related, as can also be understood with common sense. However, the declining trend of the curve shows that at a given publishing capacity, the sustainable diversity, i.e., the number of series, is finite and does not follow the increase in the number of publications in a straight, linear fashion. Therefore, in addition to occasional collaborations, series that can be reliably published in the longer term are of crucial importance.

## EPILOGUE

In the end, Archaeolingua's memorandum of association is worth quoting here:

*"The founders established the Foundation to promote the modern, integrated cultivation of archaeology, linguistics and historical research and the publication of their results under the prevailing difficult economic circumstances."*

After thirty years, it can be said that this mission has lost none of its significance; the cultivation of "modern, integrated" sciences still has many untapped opportunities (e.g., *BARTOSIEWICZ 2021*). Moreover, "the prevailing difficult economic circumstances" have not consistently improved either. It is important to note that the Foundation is an independent organisation. It does not engage in political activities, is independent of political parties, and neither provides nor receives financial support to or from them.

The Foundation has faced several financial and existential challenges throughout its history. Despite all this, Archaeolingua Publishing now competes with renowned international publishers within the book industry, even if it is not backed by a world-renowned university or serious sponsors like most major academic publishing houses in more affluent countries of Europe and North America. For this reason, although the economic history of the Foundation is less spectacular than the evaluation of its publications, it would by no means be less instructive. Unfortunately, evaluating this aspect of thirty years of history would have been beyond the scope of this summary. A detailed description of the rich inventory of the Foundation's publications would also have gone beyond the limits of the article, although it would faithfully illustrate the frequently mentioned thematic diversity of Archaeolingua. Fortunately, the Foundation has its website ([www.archaeolingua.hu](http://www.archaeolingua.hu)), where interested visitors can find a list of titles of publications, news on actions, and guidelines on new publications.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## APPENDIX

Series title	1992-1997	1998-2002	2003-2007	2008- 2012	2013-2017	2018-2021	Total
Series Minor	4	5	4	4	10	3	30
Series Maior	4	6	2	6	12	4	34
Innsbrucker Beiträge		1	2	8	5	2	18
BAR		1	3	2	1		7
Itinerarium		1		1			2
EAC		1		3	7	4	15
Praehistoria		3	3	1		1	8
CEU Annual		4	5	5	5	4	23
Aquincum PG			1	1	4	1	7
Studia Aegyptiaca			1	2	1		4
CAA			1	3			4
CEU Medievalia			2				2
EPOCH			20	10			30
Varia				4	1	1	6
PPCU					1	1	2
Hereditas					1	3	4
CE Heritage					3		3
Aquincum ZsK						1	1
Interreg						5	5
Miscellanea		3	1	1	6	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>220</b>

*Abbreviations used in the table:*

Innsbrucker Beiträge = *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft*, publication by the *Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck*, Austria

BAR = British Archaeological Reports

Itinerarium = *Itinerarium Hungaricum*, series on Hungary's cultural monuments

EAC = *Europae Archaeologiae Consilium*

Praehistoria = journal by the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology of the University of Miskolc, Hungary

CEU Annual = yearbook of the Central European University, Budapest/Vienna

Aquincum ZsK = *Aquincumi Zsebkönyvek* (Aquincum Pocket Guides)

Studia Aegyptiaca = publications by the Department of Egyptology at Eötvös Loránd University

CAA = Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology

CEU Medievalia = publication by the Department of Medieval Studies at Central European University, Budapest/Vienna



EPOCH = European Network of Excellence on ICT Applications to Cultural Heritage

Varia = *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica*, Institute of Archaeology at the Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest

PPCU = Archaeological Studies, Department of Archaeology of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest

Hereditas = Hereditas Archaeologica Hungariae

CE Heritage = Central European Heritage Series, Archaeolingua and Archeopress

Interreg = Iron Age Danube Project, funded by the European Council