2nd KreativEU Colloquium of

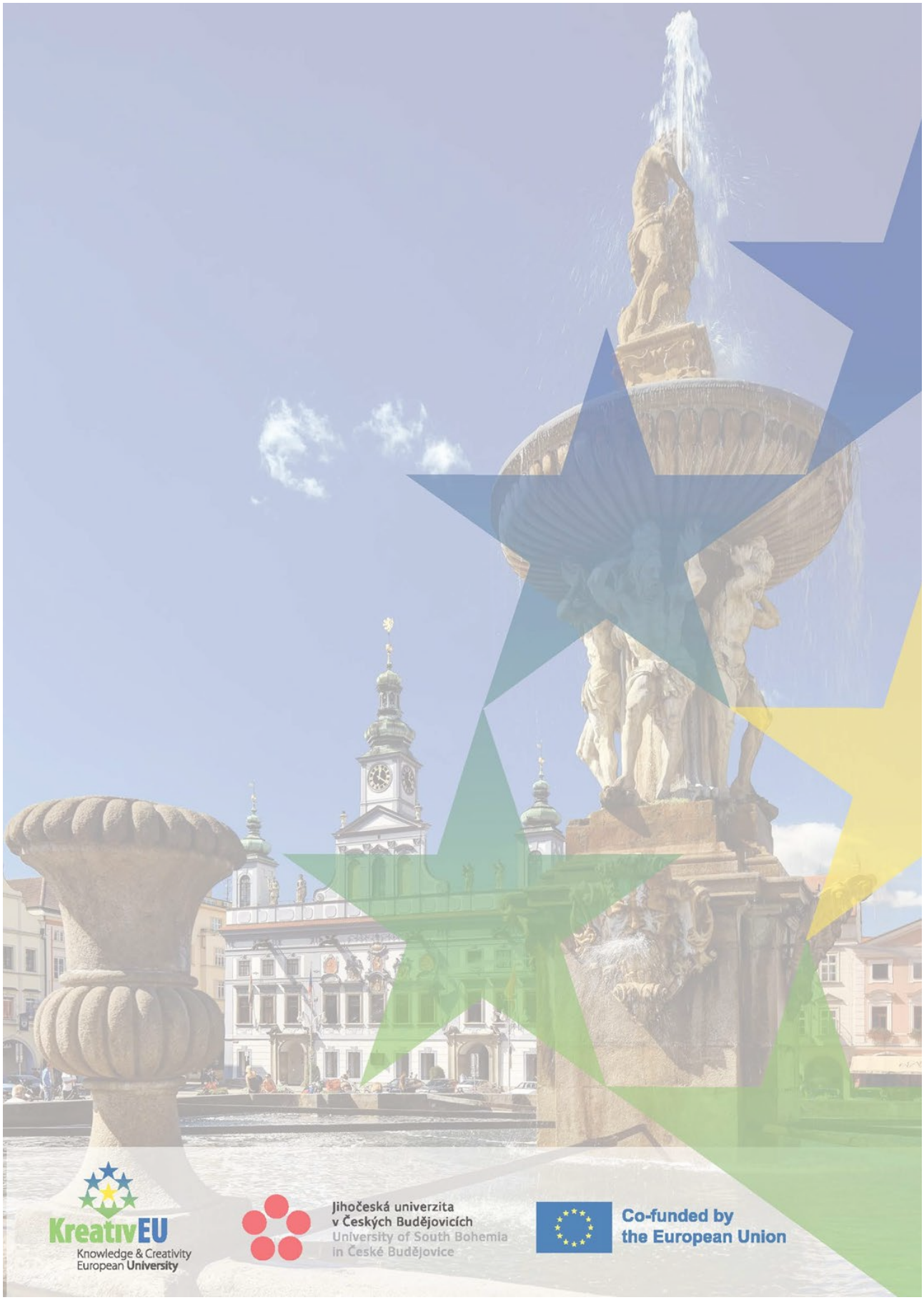
PhD STUDENTS

Book of Abstracts

22 – 24 April 2026

University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Czechia

Cultural Heritage in Doctoral Research Dialogue


KreativEU
Knowledge & Creativity
European University
Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice
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Welcome Address

It was our great pleasure to host the 2nd KreativEU Colloquium of PhD Students at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice from 22 to 24 April 2026. This event brought together doctoral researchers from across the KreativEU Alliance under the shared theme of Cultural Heritage in Doctoral Research Dialogue. The KreativEU network - grounded in the values of knowledge, creativity, and European collaboration - recognised that early-career researchers are the foundation upon which the future of scholarship is built. This colloquium offered a dedicated space for PhD students to present their work, receive constructive feedback from peers and senior academics, and forge the cross-border connections that will sustain them throughout their careers.

The programme presented in these pages reflects both the diversity and the depth of doctoral research within the Alliance. Keynote lectures from leading scholars at USB set the intellectual context; doctoral presentations across two days demonstrated the breadth of disciplinary approaches - from archaeology and legal studies to digital heritage, museum and life sciences - that characterise the KreativEU community.

We extend our warmest thanks to all presenters, moderators, and organisers whose effort made this colloquium possible. We hope all participants enjoyed stimulating discussions, meaningful encounters, and a pleasant stay in South Bohemia.

Assoc. Prof. Renata Malátová

Vice-rector for Studies

University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

About the Colloquium

KreativEU is a European University Alliance dedicated to advancing knowledge and creativity across its member institutions. The network champions collaborative research, student mobility, and joint educational initiatives aligned with European values and the priorities of the European Research Area.

The Colloquium of PhD Students is an annual event within the KreativEU framework designed specifically for doctoral researchers. Its aims are threefold: to provide a supportive venue for presenting early- and mid-stage research; to foster interdisciplinary dialogue across national and institutional boundaries; and to strengthen a sense of shared scholarly community among the next generation of European academics.

The 2nd edition was hosted by the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (USB), Czechia, and took place in hybrid format - on-site at Aula JU and online via Microsoft Teams - from 22 to 24 April 2026. The overarching theme, Cultural Heritage in Doctoral Research Dialogue, reflected USB's research strengths and the broad relevance of heritage studies across humanities, social sciences, law, and digital fields.

Dates	22 – 24 April 2026
Format	Hybrid (on-site + Microsoft Teams)
Venue	Aula JU, University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice
Website	www.kreativeu.org

Programme Overview

22 April 2026 – Cultural Heritage in Doctoral Research Dialogue

14:00 – 14:30

Opening Session

Welcome Address by the Rector of USB | Introduction to Doctoral Studies by the Director of the School of Doctoral Studies

14:30 – 15:15

Assoc. Prof. Ondřej Chvojka | Director of the Institute of Archeology, Faculty of Arts, USB

Does the Construction of a Motorway or the Protection of Cultural Monuments Matter More?

15:15 – 15:45

Coffee Break & Refreshments

15:45 – 16:30

MSc. Manali Das | Science and Research Office, USB

Making Research Open: Practical Approaches to Data Sharing and Management

16:30 – 17:15

Dr. Vladimír Hanáček | Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, USB

Rights of Doctoral Students in the European Union

17:15 – 18:15

Dr. Alena Čarvašová | Career Center | Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, USB

Workshop: Time Management for PhD Studies

23 – 24 April 2026 – Doctoral Student Presentations

Moderators and session chairs:

Prof. Iva Stuchlíková (Director, School of Doctoral Studies)
Assoc. Prof. Luděk Berec (Vice-Rector for Research)
Dr. Jana Strejcová (School of Doctoral Studies)

Doctoral Student Presentation Abstracts

Presentations are listed alphabetically by presenter's surname. Each slot included a presentation followed by Q&A.

From Sensors to Decisions: A Review of Big Data and IoT Applications in Precision Swine Farming

Emmanuel Onosimuan Aidelomon | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

Global pork demand is rising alongside mounting pressures on animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and biosecurity, accelerating the shift toward data-driven pig production. Precision swine farming, enabled by the Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data analytics, offers real-time, high-resolution visibility into animal behaviour and barn environments. Yet a critical gap persists: farms generate vast data streams but frequently struggle to convert them into timely management decisions. This review adopts a "sensors-to-decisions" framework to examine how IoT and advanced analytics bridge that gap. We synthesize evidence across four domains: environmental monitoring, precision feeding, welfare assessment, and disease surveillance, covering wearable sensors, RFID-based feeders, computer vision, infrared thermography, acoustic monitoring, and pathogen-specific biosensors. Our analysis evaluates data integration readiness, analytics maturity, system interoperability, and governance factors that determine whether sensor data ultimately supports farm-level action. Multimodal sensor fusion and machine learning show clear promise for early problem detection and automated control; however, adoption is constrained by sensor fragility, calibration demands, incompatible data architectures, uncertain economic returns, and variable digital readiness across farms. Future progress will depend on integrated, interoperable, and economically validated decision-support systems, underpinned by standardized data protocols and scalable cross-farm validation.

Keywords: *Precision swine farming, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data analytics, sensors, welfare monitoring*

Legal Paths to the Holocaust: Anti-Jewish Legislation in Romania and Upper Silesia, 1939-1942 – A Comparative Perspective

Dorel Bratu | Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

This article analyses, from a comparative perspective, the role of anti-Jewish legislation as a normative infrastructure of persecution and, ultimately, of mass violence, in two distinct European spaces: Romania and Upper Silesia, in the period 1939–1942, a period in which the legal arsenal evolved from civic segregation to total expropriation and, subsequently, to the logistical facilitation of extermination. Thus, starting from the premise that the Holocaust was not only a project of extermination, but also a process of gradual "legalization" of exclusion, the study follows the way in which law functioned as an instrument of defining belonging, of reorganizing the economy and of reconfiguring the relations between the state and the individual.

In Upper Silesia, legislation functioned as an instrument of demographic and ethnic engineering under the aegis of the Third Reich, while in Romania, successive regimes (the royal dictatorship, the national-legionary state and the military dictatorship of Ion Antonescu) generated a native legal framework, which mirrored but also competed, through radicalism, with German laws.

Methodologically, the article combines the legal-historical analysis of normative acts (laws, decrees, ordinances, administrative regulations) with a contextual reading of the institutional mechanisms that ensured their application (institutions, state structures).

Keywords: *Anti-Semitic laws, Poland, Upper Silesia, Romania, 1939 – 1944*

Pre-Schematic Rock Art in the Iberian Peninsula: Bridging the Last Hunter-Gatherers and the dawn of Farming Societies

Noelia Priego -Cecilla | Instituto Politécnico de Tomar, Portugal

This study reassesses the chronological and interpretative frameworks of the transition between Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic graphic expressions in the Iberian Peninsula, focusing on Levantine and pre-schematic rock art. The research addresses whether these traditions represent a rupture or continuity in symbolic behavior. The dataset includes pre-schematic and Levantine motifs from key sites in Andalusia, Aragón, Soria, and the Douro, Tagus, and Guadiana basins, selected for their geographical and stylistic variability.

A computational methodology based on machine learning and pattern recognition is applied to analyze formal similarities, moving beyond traditional typological classification. Image processing techniques and similarity metrics are used to identify recurring features and clustering patterns across motifs.

Preliminary results suggest the existence of statistically significant formal continuities between late hunter-gatherer and early farming symbolic systems, challenging strictly Neolithic interpretations of schematic art.

These findings support a model of gradual transformation rather than abrupt rupture, highlighting long-term graphic persistence and regional variability. The study demonstrates the potential of artificial intelligence to provide replicable and quantitative criteria for rock art analysis, contributing to more robust chronological and interpretative frameworks.

Keywords: *Rock art, pre-schematic art, Iberian Peninsula, transition, last hunter-gatherers*

Runestones commissioned by women (725 – 1100)

Elena-Adriana Ciocoiu | Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

My research is aiming to highlight the pivotal role women had in the process of building runestones, arguing that this activity is a sign of both their autonomy and social standing. I am proposing an analysis of the runic inscriptions throughout Sweden, in the Uppland, Smalad and Östergötland regions, whether commemorative or symbolic, casted by women individually or in conjunction with their male counterparts. In addition to discussing the construction of bridges, baptized individuals, and pilgrimages, the typology of runestones covered includes runestones with pagan motifs, cross motifs, and prayers depicted on their surfaces. My approach aims to present the complex social dynamics existing within the swedish society at the time runestones were casted, proving that women had financial independence. My research argues that, through the casting of runestones, women played a significant role in the process of cultural osmosis as well as in the propagation of the Christian message, demonstrating that they were active participants in the process of christianization of the regions explored.

Keywords: *Runestone, woman, christianization, Sweden, pagan*

Heritage and Identity in Alice in Wonderland

Corina Elena Guță | Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

The narrative universe of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) offers a fertile ground for interrogating the fluidity of identity within a destabilised cultural framework. Situated at the intersection of Victorian anxieties and imaginative subversion, Lewis Carroll's text problematises the notion of a coherent self by exposing its susceptibility to linguistic play, shifting bodily proportions, and arbitrary social conventions. Identity emerges not as a fixed essence but as a performative construct, continuously negotiated through encounters with authority figures and absurd logic.

Heritage, in this context, is reframed as both a burden and a point of departure: the rigid moral and educational structures of Victorian England are simultaneously invoked and undermined. Alice's journey may thus be read as a symbolic negotiation between inherited cultural scripts and the desire for self-definition. The instability of language, manifested in riddles, paradoxes, and semantic reversals, further erodes any stable grounding of identity, suggesting that subjectivity itself is contingent upon systems of meaning that are inherently unstable.

Through a close reading informed by post-structuralist and cultural-historical perspectives, the analysis foregrounds the ways in which Carroll constructs a liminal space where heritage is questioned and identity is perpetually reconstituted. Wonderland becomes a site of epistemological uncertainty, reflecting broader nineteenth-century tensions regarding childhood, authority, and the formation of the modern self.

Keywords: *Identity, Heritage, Victorian culture, Nonsense literature, Language instability*

How Is the Socialist Past Visualized in Slovak History Textbooks?

Petra Horváthová | Trnava University, Slovakia

This study examines how visual materials in Slovak upper-secondary history textbooks contribute to the construction of collective memory of the socialist period. Drawing on visual sociology, it approaches photographs, illustrations, and symbolic imagery as active components in the production of social knowledge. Informed by visual semiotics and collective memory, the research focuses on how these representations influence students' understanding of the communist past. The dataset consists of selected textbooks currently used in formal education, with attention to chapters covering 1948–1989. Methodologically, the study applies a qualitative visual analysis combining visual semiotics with content analysis, with particular emphasis on how images and text interact to produce meaning. The analysis examines recurring patterns, themes, and representational strategies across the selected materials. The study is guided by the framework of social representations, specifically the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization. Its aim is to develop an analytical approach for examining how visual elements participate in the construction of historical narratives in educational contexts. It argues that textbook images actively shape collective memory rather than merely illustrating it, contributing to broader debates on how post-socialist societies mediate their communist heritage.

Keywords: *History textbooks, collective memory, visual sociology, photography, Slovakia*

Analysing Refugee Inclusion Policies (2022–2025): A Comparative Study of Ukrainian Refugees in the Czech Republic and Syrians in Türkiye

Dilek Hayirli Isler | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

This study examines refugee inclusion policies implemented between 2022 and 2025 in the Czech Republic and Türkiye, focusing on Ukrainian refugees in the Czech context and Syrian refugees in Türkiye. It aims to understand how different policy frameworks shape access to key social systems, including education, labour, healthcare, and social protection. The research is grounded in Social Systems Theory, which allows for an analysis of how institutional structures either facilitate or restrict refugee inclusion. In addition, the study incorporates Caritas as an ethical perspective, alongside debates on solidarity and membership, to explore how moral frameworks influence policy responses. By bringing together these theoretical approaches, the study positions refugee inclusion not only as a technical or administrative issue but also as a deeply social and ethical question. Methodologically, the research adopts a comparative qualitative approach, drawing on policy documents, international reports, and secondary data. It also engages with sociocultural interpretations to capture the lived realities behind policy implementation. The findings suggest that while both countries have developed mechanisms to respond to large-scale displacement, their approaches differ significantly in terms of institutional coordination, access to services, and long-term integration strategies. A key contribution of the study is the conceptualisation of displacement as a passage-like condition, structured through phases of separation, liminality, and uneven incorporation. This framework highlights that refugee inclusion is not linear but fragmented, shaped by shifting legal statuses, labour market access, and social acceptance. The study argues that successful inclusion policies require not only functional system alignment but also a stronger ethical grounding that bridges institutional practices with forms of social solidarity. In doing so, it offers a comparative perspective that contributes to ongoing debates in social work, migration studies, and refugee policy in Europe and beyond.

Keywords: *Refugee inclusion, Social Systems Theory, Caritas, solidarity, Ukrainian refugees*

Nature-Inspired Adaptive Aerodynamic Design for Sustainable Energy Applications

Javad Rashid Jafari | Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University, Turkey

The increasing demand for sustainable energy solutions has highlighted the need for more efficient aerodynamic systems, particularly in applications operating across a wide range of flow conditions. This study investigates the aerodynamic performance of a morphing airfoil inspired by natural wing adaptability, aiming to improve energy efficiency through bioinspired design. Wind tunnel experiments were conducted over a broad range of Reynolds numbers and angles of attack to evaluate aerodynamic behavior under varying operating conditions. Lift, drag, moment coefficients, and aerodynamic efficiency were measured using standard force balance techniques. The results indicate that the morphing configuration significantly enhances the lift-to-drag ratio compared to a baseline airfoil, particularly at moderate angles of attack, demonstrating improved aerodynamic adaptability. These findings highlight the potential of adaptive, nature-inspired structures not only for enhancing aerodynamic performance but also for reducing fuel consumption and minimizing environmental emissions. The study contributes to interdisciplinary discussions by linking engineering innovation with sustainable and eco-conscious design principles inspired by natural systems.

Keywords: *Morphing Airfoil, Bio-Inspired Design, Aerodynamic Efficiency, Sustainable Energy, Environmental Impact*

Biodegradable Plastics in Crop Production: Effects on Soil Environment and Agronomic Performance

Zameer Hussain Jamali | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

Conventional polyethylene (PE) mulch films improve crop productivity by conserving soil moisture, regulating temperature, and suppressing weeds, but their persistence in soil contributes to plastic pollution and soil degradation. Biodegradable mulch films (BDMs) represent a promising sustainable alternative; however, their effects under Central European conditions remain insufficiently understood.

This Ph.D. research evaluates the impact of biodegradable mulches on soil properties, crop performance, weed suppression, and soil microclimate compared with polyethylene mulch, straw mulch, herbicide treatment, and bare soil. A multi-year field experiment using soybean (Glycine max L.) will be conducted at the Faculty of Agriculture and Technology, University of South Bohemia. The study will assess soil physical, chemical, and biological parameters together with crop growth, yield, and mulch degradation dynamics. Biodegradable films based on PLA, PBAT, and their blends will be tested under different placement methods.

The research is expected to demonstrate that biodegradable mulches can provide agronomic benefits comparable to polyethylene while reducing environmental risks associated with persistent plastic residues. The findings will contribute to sustainable crop production and environmentally responsible mulching strategies.

Keywords: *Biodegradable mulch, Soil health, Soybean, Sustainable agriculture, Mulch degradation*

Bronze Age Hoards as Evidence of a Sacred Landscape

Zuzana Jarůšková | Trnava University, Slovakia

The so-called Urnfield period (1300–750 BC) lasted throughout the entire Late and Final Bronze Age in Europe and is characterized by significant changes, including the development of metallurgical production. One source of knowledge about this era is the phenomenon of bronze hoard deposition. Hoards (assemblies of bronze objects) were deliberately deposited not only at settlements but very often in the landscape. This is also the case in the lowland area of Malá Haná (northwestern Moravia), where a total of 92 hoards have been discovered to date using metal detectors. Most of them come from the slopes of the hills surrounding the settled lowland, with a notable presence of rocks or water sources nearby. These deposits can be regarded as offerings to natural deities. Some locations, which we can consider natural sanctuaries, were used repeatedly for deposition, and the hoards placed there thus form natural accumulations - hoarding areas. The aim of the dissertation is to study 11 depositional areas and conduct a detailed analysis of 71 hoards. The exhibition Sacred Landscape of the Bronze Age, currently taking place at the museum in Boskovice, brings the topic of bronze hoards, the spiritual world, and the religious ideas of Bronze Age people closer to the public.

Keywords: *Bronze Age, Hoards, Landscape, Offerings*

Autonomous Robotic Platforms for Agricultural Image Data Pipeline: A Meta-Analysis

Kalimu Karimunda | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

Autonomous robotic platforms routinely collect the image data used to train and validate agricultural AI systems, yet the field still lacks a clear, evidence-based benchmark for robust performance across both plant and livestock settings. We conducted a PRISMA-guided systematic review and random-effects meta-analysis of autonomous robotic imaging systems to quantify overall performance and identify key technological drivers. Across included studies in meta-analysis, the pooled estimate corresponded to an F1-score of 0.8966 (95% CI: 0.8598 - 0.9245), indicating consistently high performance. Subgroup analyses showed higher pooled F1-scores for fully autonomous systems compared with semi-autonomous approaches, and for multispectral imaging relative to RGB sensors. Sensitivity analyses confirmed that results were robust to the removal of individual studies. These findings provide the first quantitative benchmark of Agri vision performance and highlight the importance of autonomy, dataset size, and sensing fidelity for reliable robotic data collection in agriculture.

Keywords: *Precision agriculture, autonomous robotics, image data gathering, meta-analysis, heterogeneity analysis*

How Technological and Artificial Intelligence Awareness Affect Perceived Job Automation Risk: Evidence from Polish Academic Youth

Barbara Kesler | Opole University of Technology, Poland

The primary objective of the study is to determine whether technological and artificial intelligence awareness levels differentiate labour market perceptions and automation risks. Data were gathered via a diagnostic survey among 207 Polish university students recruited through snowball sampling. The study verified specific hypotheses regarding whether self-assessed technological awareness correlates with the perceived negative impact on educational and professional pathways, whether AI tool usage frequency relates to the recognition of technological benefits, and participation in specialized AI courses increases the students' career susceptibility to automation. Using Spearman's rank correlation, results showed no significant link between general awareness and perceived negative impacts. However, AI tool usage across various domains positively correlated with recognized benefits, particularly for professional, educational, and academic purpose. Furthermore, the Mann-Whitney U test proved that formal AI training significantly increased the personal career susceptibility to automation, confirming the illusion of professional immunity among non-participants and fosters more realistic labour market assessments.

Keywords: *Technological awareness, artificial intelligence awareness, job automation, academic youth, professional pathway*

Effect of humic acids on soil

Eva Klenotová | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

The ongoing climate change and decreasing quality of agricultural land bring risks associated with further soil degradation processes. Therefore, it is in our interest to improve soil properties, for which soil structure is essential. The presentation is dedicated to humic acids. These are substances that support the formation of water-stable macroaggregates, one of the most important indicators of healthy soil. Humic acids were obtained by extraction and subsequent isolation from various sources known to have a high content of humic acids (leonardite, peat, compost). Solutions were diluted to the required concentration and applied to soil samples. The amount of water-stable macroaggregates was determined by wet sieving. Determination of TOC (total organic matter) content was also used to evaluate individual parameters. The positive effect of humic acids on the support of water-stable macroaggregates was confirmed for several variants. Since humic acids are a natural component of soils, their use to improve soil quality is more than appropriate.

Keywords: *Humic acids, organic matter, soil, structure, water-stable macroaggregates*

What an incomplete hoard can (and cannot) tell us

Vanessa Kornhäuserová | Trnava University, Slovakia

This paper focuses the Roman coin hoard from Reka Devnia (ancient Marcianopolis) in the context of the Gothic raids of the mid-third century AD, with particular attention to methodological challenges associated with the study of a secondarily separated assemblage. The original hoard contained approximately 81,000 coins; however, only 2,005 coins are currently preserved in collections in the Czech Republic and available for analysis, representing a small and incomplete fraction of the original hoard.

The study evaluates the interpretative potential of such a fragmentary dataset. Although the reduced sample does not allow detailed quantitative or compositional analysis of the hoard as a whole, it nevertheless provides evidence for the general chronological structure of the hoard. The preserved material suggests a deposition horizon broadly consistent with the historical events of AD 249–251.

Three main interpretative scenarios concerning the ownership and circumstances of the hoard's deposition are discussed: an institutional accumulation associated with the Roman administration or military, a private deposit belonging to the urban elite of Marcianopolis, and a Germanic accumulation connected with Gothic plunder in the aftermath of military conflict, possibly related to the Battle of Abrittus.

The paper demonstrates that even a partially preserved assemblage can contribute to the discussion of crisis responses, patterns of mobility, and hoarding behaviour in Roman frontier provinces.

Keywords: *Roman coinage, third-century crisis, Gothic raids, Marcianopolis*

Organosulfur compounds of onion

Monika Křížová | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

Our research focuses on organosulfur compounds in common onion that remain insufficiently explored, particularly on the principles of their formation and their biological activity. A diverse range of these compounds is generated during onion processing through the enzymatic degradation of their precursors, the S alkenylcysteine S oxides. Special attention is given to compounds containing a thiolane ring, as they can significantly influence both the sensory properties and the biological effects of processed onion.

The studied compounds are not commercially available and therefore must be obtained either by synthesis or by direct isolation from onion. Their isolation and purification will be carried out using multistep chromatographic procedures, primarily preparative HPLC. Subsequent identification will be performed mainly using HPLC/PDA MS.

The current objective is to develop and validate an HPLC/MS method for the quantitative determination of thiosulfinates, cepaenes, onionins, cepathiolanes, allithiolanes, cepathiolactones, cepathiolactols, and cepadithiolactone, ideally within a single injection. The following experimental phase will focus on monitoring the dynamics of their formation depending on time, temperature, and pH during various onion processing methods.

The isolated pure compounds will be further tested at collaborating institutions for their anti inflammatory, anticancer, and anticoagulant activities. A deeper understanding of the chemical processes and biological effects of these compounds may contribute to improving the quality of onion containing food products and may also open the door to their potential applications in medicine.

Keywords: *Organicsulfur compounds, HPLC, onion*

Protecting Portuguese coastal heritage under climate change: towards integrated management strategies

Sarah Martinville | Instituto Politécnico de Tomar, Portugal

Portugal's coastline, shaped by both natural processes and human occupation over millennia, is today under increasing pressure from climate change. This research explores how climate-induced coastal dynamics—such as erosion, flooding, and sea-level rise—are affecting archaeological sites, and how these risks can be better integrated into heritage management strategies.

Focusing on a dataset of 486 archaeological sites located within 100 metres of the coastline, this study combines Geographic Information Systems (GIS), environmental data from the Portuguese Environment Agency, and field verification. A first phase of analysis revealed that a significant proportion of sites are already at risk, with 220 out of 288 analysed sites showing exposure to coastal hazards. These results also highlight persistent issues of data inaccuracy and uneven documentation.

Building on these findings, the project develops a vulnerability assessment framework that integrates environmental exposure, site characteristics, adaptive capacity, and heritage value. This framework is supported by practical tools, including an interactive map and a Digital Emergency Archive.

By bridging scientific analysis and heritage management, this research aims to support more informed decision-making and contribute to the long-term preservation of Portugal's coastal archaeological heritage in a rapidly changing environment.

Keywords: *Coastal Archaeology, Climate Change, Heritage Management*

Remediation of Heavy Metal-Contaminated Soils Using Phosphate-Enriched Sewage Sludge Biochar

Protogene Mbasabire | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

Heavy metals represent long-lasting contaminants that pose significant risks to both human health and ecosystem integrity. Originating from both natural and anthropogenic activities, they bioaccumulate in organisms through the food web, leading to widespread and long-lasting contamination. Industrialization, agriculture, and urbanization have exacerbated soil and water contamination through activities such as mining, industrial production, and wastewater use. In response to this challenge, biochar produced from waste materials such as sewage sludge has emerged as a promising remediation strategy, offering a cost-effective and sustainable means to immobilize heavy metals and reduce their bioavailability in contaminated environments. Here we explore the potential of phosphate-enriched biochar, derived from sewage sludge, to adsorb and stabilize heavy metals in polluted soils. Sewage sludge was pyrolyzed at various temperatures to produce biochar. A soil incubation experiment was conducted by adding phosphate-amended biochar to contaminated soil and maintaining it for one month. Heavy metals were extracted using a CaCl2 extraction method and analyzed using atomic absorption spectrophotometry. Results demonstrated that phosphate amendment significantly enhanced the biochar's capacity to immobilize heavy metals. Amending soils with 2.5 wt% phosphate-enriched sewage sludge biochar led to reductions in bioavailable Cd (by 65–82%), Zn (40–75%), and Pb (52–88%) across varying pyrolysis temperatures. Specifically, phosphate-amended biochar reduced the mobility of Cd and Zn more effectively than unamended biochar, with a significant decrease in their concentrations in soil extracts. For Cu and Pb, the effectiveness varied with pyrolysis temperature and phosphate amendment, highlighting the importance of optimization for specific metal contaminants. Biochar generated from elevated pyrolysis temperatures (500 °C) showed an increase in ash content and pH, which improved their ability to retain heavy metals and limit their mobility. These findings suggest that phosphate-amended biochar reduces heavy metal bioavailability, minimizing their entry into the food chain. This supports a sustainable approach for managing hazardous waste and remediating contaminated soils, safeguarding ecosystem health, and mitigating public health risks.

Keywords: *Sewage sludge, phosphorus-amended biochar, heavy metal remediation, sustainable waste management, ecosystem health*

Bridging Tradition and Innovation in Sustainable Heritage Conservation: Hydroxyapatite-Modified Lime Mortars for Historic Masonry

Alina Mosiu| Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

The conservation of historic masonry requires materials that ensure compatibility with traditional substrates while responding to increasingly aggressive environmental conditions. Lime-based mortars remain a reference solution in heritage interventions due to their physico-chemical compatibility with original materials; however, their performance under intensified climatic stress highlights the need for eco-compatible enhancement strategies.

This study is developed within the framework of ongoing doctoral research on sustaInable repair mortars for historic masonry and investigates the potential of hydroxyapatite as a bioinspired mineral additive. The approach aims to improve the microstructural stability and durability of lime-based systems while preserving their compatibility with historic materials, in accordance with key conservation principles such as authenticity, minimal intervention, and reversibility.

The research methodology combines theoretical analysis with experimental investigation, addressing the physico-chemical and microstructural behavior of modified mortars. The findings are interpreted in relation to real intervention requirements and are contextualized through the case of the historic Banloc estate, providing a relevant framework for assessing the applicability of eco-compatible materials.

By integrating perspectives from architecture, materials science, and conservation theory, the study highlights the role of interdisciplinary doctoral research in advancing sustainable conservation practices. In this context, the proposed contribution extends beyond material optimization, outlining an approach in which scientific innovation remains inherently connected to the cultural and ethical values of heritage conservation.

Keywords: *Heritage conservation, Sustainable repair mortars, Hydroxyapatite, Lime-based mortars, Historic masonry*

Administration and nation building: the Romanian districts in the Papazoglu maps, 1863-1866

Răzvan Necula | Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

During the reign of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866), a series of administrative reforms marked the institutional and territorial evolution of the newly created Romanian state. These reforms produced significant administrative-territorial transformations, which were transposed cartographically through maps reflecting new geographical realities, such as the district, the network, the commune and the village. Until 1859, Romanian territories were predominantly represented in maps produced by the great empires, serving mainly external strategic interests. Notable exceptions were the maps created by local personalities: Johannes Honterus (Transylvania, 1523), Constantin Cantacuzino (Wallachia, in three variants dedicated to Constantin Brâncoveanu-1700, 1707, and 1718), and Dimitrie Cantemir (Moldova, printed in 1737).

Among those who contributed decisively to the cartographic representation of the new state entity was Dimitrie Papazoglu-geographer, historian, archaeologist, and colonel-through maps of the United Principalities, Bucharest, as well as district maps produced between 1863 and 1866, including that of Ilfov District with its capital, Bucharest. This article analyzes the content of these district maps, their intended purpose, and the methods used in their production, employing descriptive, comparative, and statistical approaches. From the perspective of further research, these cartographic sources enable clarification of topographical, toponymic, statistical, and demographic aspects specific to the period.

Keywords: *Papazoglu, Romania, map, district, 1863-1866*

Agronomic Performance and Yield Evaluation of 8 Beetroot (Beta vulgaris L.) Cultivars under Central European Field Conditions in the Czech Republic

Mangala Nissanka | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

This study investigated the agronomic performance and yield stability of eight beetroot (Beta vulgaris L.) cultivars under Central European field conditions, considering the influence of weather and soil characteristics. Eight cultivars were evaluated over three growing seasons (2023–2025) using a randomised complete block design with four replications. Plant height and leaf number were measured repeatedly during crop development, while yield, plant density, average root weight, and dry matter content were determined at harvest. During the growing period (May–September), mean air temperature ranged from 14.5°C to 19.8 °C, while total precipitation varied from 280 to 520 mm, with the highest rainfall recorded in 2024. Soil pH ranged from 5.15 to 6.50, with variable levels of available P, K, Ca, and Mg. Factorial ANOVA showed significant effects of year and cultivar on yield ($p < 0.001$), whereas the year × cultivar interaction was not significant ($p = 0.774$), indicating stable cultivar ranking. Yield ranged from 23.7 t/ha to 43.9 t/ha, with Monoruba and Betina showing the highest productivity. Dry matter content ranged from 10.5% to 17.8% and was significantly affected by year and cultivar. These findings highlight the importance of cultivar selection and environmental conditions for stable beetroot production and support improved cultivar recommendations and breeding strategies.

Keywords: *Beetroot, RCBD, yield stability, dry matter, cultivar evaluation*

The role of awns and the flag leaf in the quality of organic winter wheat

Hong Quan Nong | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

Maintaining grain quality in organic farming systems remains a significant challenge due to restricted nitrogen (N) inputs. Among morphological traits affecting source–sink dynamics, awn presence has long been associated with enhanced photosynthetic capacity and stress tolerance during grain filling. This study examined whether awned and awnless varieties differ in their compensatory ability following flag leaf loss under N-limited organic conditions during the 2024–2025 season. Field trials were conducted at two certified organic sites in the Czech Republic (České Budějovice and Zvíkov) using eight winter wheat varieties classified into awned and awnless groups. Flag leaf removal was applied at heading and grain protein content was measured at harvest. Awned varieties consistently demonstrated superior compensation across both sites, maintaining or increasing grain protein content after flag leaf removal, with gains of up to +0.50 percentage units. Awnless varieties, by contrast, generally showed protein decline under the same treatment, with reductions of up to −0.67 percentage points. This advantage is attributed to awn photosynthesis partially substituting for flag leaf function, sustaining assimilate supply and nitrogen remobilization to the grain under source-limited conditions. These findings highlight awn presence as a functionally relevant trait in low-input systems, with practical implications for variety selection and breeding programs aimed at improving grain quality in European organic wheat production.

Keywords: *Flag leaf, grain protein content, source–sink dynamics, winter wheat*

Resource-Efficient and Explainable Models for Real-Time Crop Monitoring

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This study proposes the development of "resource-efficient and explainable computer vision models for real-time crop monitoring" in agricultural environments with specific focus on edge devices. The problem addressed is the limited applicability of existing high-accuracy AI-based models due to their high computation demands and lack of interpretability, particularly in low-resource, real-time settings. The study will utilize publicly available agricultural image datasets alongside real-world field data to capture variations in practical conditions. The methodology involves the use of lightweight convolutional neural network architectures, MobileNet and EfficientNet, combined with model optimization techniques such as pruning to reduce computational cost. In addition, explainable artificial intelligence (GradCAM) method will be integrated to improve transparency and user understanding. Model performance will be evaluated using CPU-based inference on edge devices, focusing on efficiency, robustness, XAi, trade-off and practical impact metrics. The expected outcome is a system capable of delivering low-latency predictions with reduced computational requirements while maintaining acceptable accuracy level. The study aims to contribute to the development of practical, interpretable AI tools that support decision-making in real-world agricultural applications.
Keywords: *Computer Vision, Edge Computing, Explainable AI, Crop Monitoring, Model Optimization*

The beginning of the Disarmament Conference and the Little Entente: Romania and Czechoslovakia (February-July 1932)

Adrian Petre | Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

This paper analyzes the diplomatic synergy between Romania and Czechoslovakia within the Little Entente during the opening phase of the 1932 Disarmament Conference. Central to this study are two pivotal moments of regional coordination: the Montreux Conference (February 1, 1932) and the Inter-Allied Conference in Belgrade (May 13–15, 1932). These meetings allowed the three allied states—Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia—to harmonize their national interests and refine a unified strategy in response to the evolving negotiations in Geneva.

The research examines how the alliance navigated the conflicting proposals of the Great Powers (Germany, France, and Great Britain) by conditioning any arms reduction on the preservation of the territorial status quo and the establishment of firm international guarantees. Special emphasis is placed on the specific contributions of the Romania-Czechoslovakia axis: Edvard Beneš's framework for collective security as a prerequisite for disarmament, and Vespasian V. Pella's landmark Memorandum on Moral Disarmament, which sought to delegitimize war through international law. Ultimately, the study illustrates how these nations sought to defend the post-war order through innovative legal and political mechanisms amidst mounting systemic pressures.
Keywords: *Romania, Czechoslovakia, Little Entente, Edvard Beneš, Collective Security*

Landscape today: communities POV, contexts, perception, action and future choices

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This ongoing Research is aimed to support institutional or personal future choices at small Villages (<1,900 inhabitants) starting from their inheritance by 5 indexes and a global one.
Being the Landscape a reference for these decisions, among others a new perspective should be considered after 25 years from the European Landscape Convention.
A transdisciplinary approach involving 27 fields (archaeology, anthropology, philosophy, social sciences, genetics, neurosciences, economics, IT…) lead to consider seriously a re-definition of "Landscape" according to theories like the Theory of Everything by E. Laszlo.
The definition proposed is:
"We can qualify the Landscape, from the geological to the industrial one, as the result of an individual or collective multisensory perception of a space/time and of the consequent in-formed cognitive elaborations (in a quantum sense) after the acquisition of a cultural memory with its material and immaterial aspects." (Quagliuolo, 2026)
A methodology following an holistic model makes large use of Complex Systems analysis mainly based on Fuzzy Maps and related tools (hardware, software and brainware according to M. Zeleny vision).
In 2026 thirty sites in EU will be involved to test the model and confirm or reinforce the indicators for the indexes, to answer questions like where to live, where to invest, Public policy efficacy in different territories, What to visit.
Keywords: *Landscape, Past, Future, In-formation, Heritage*

The role of organic matter in soil fertility

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Soil organic matter (SOM) plays a central role in maintaining soil fertility, enhancing crop productivity, and sustaining ecological balance within agricultural systems. Soil fertility refers to the capacity of soil to provide essential nutrients and favourable physical, chemical, and biological conditions necessary for plant growth. This paper examines the role of soil organic matter in soil fertility by analysing its influence on soil physical, chemical, and biological properties. Soil organic matter contributes to nutrient cycling, improves soil structure, enhances water-holding capacity, stimulates microbial activity, and promotes carbon sequestration. Despite its importance, soil organic matter levels have declined in many agricultural systems due to intensive cultivation, soil erosion, burning of crop residues, and insufficient organic inputs. Sustainable soil management practices such as conservation agriculture, crop residue management, compost and manure application, reduced tillage, and integrated soil fertility management are therefore essential for maintaining and improving soil organic matter. The paper highlights the importance of integrating organic matter management into modern agricultural systems to ensure long-term soil productivity, environmental sustainability, and agricultural resilience.
Keywords: *Soil organic matter, soil fertility, soil health, nutrient cycling, sustainable agriculture*

Conserving Equine Genetic Resources: Lyophilization Improves Sperm DNA Preservation

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This study assesses the issue of DNA fragmentation in equine spermatozoa caused by standard cryopreservation and unconventional lyophilization. Cryopreservation is problematic for stallions classified as "bad freezers", threatening the conservation of genetic material from endangered horse breeds and local genetic resources, where non-standard methods of long-term storage can provide a solution. Ejaculates from four stallions, representing genetic resources of the Czech Republic (Czech-Moravian Belgian horse, Hucul horse, and Kladruber), were processed using both cryopreservation and lyophilization. To assess DNA integrity, the processed spermatozoa were injected into mouse oocytes via interspecific intracytoplasmic sperm injection (iICSI). Resulting zygotes were immunofluorescently stained for γH2AX, a specific marker for DNA double-strand breaks and the intensity of the fluorescent signal was quantified. Preliminary results indicate that lyophilized spermatozoa exhibit lower mean DNA damage compared to cryopreserved spermatozoa (36,058 vs. 83,941 relative fluorescence units). While some stallions showed minimal differences between methods, some exhibited severe DNA fragmentation after cryopreservation, which was significantly reduced by lyophilization. Beyond its targeted efficacy in sensitive individuals, lyophilization offers crucial logistical and economic advantages, such as simplified long-term storage. Conclusively, lyophilization presents a valuable biotechnological tool for preserving the gene pool of historically and culturally significant horse breeds.

Keywords: *Sperm preservation, Equine Genetic Resources, Cryopreservation, Lyophilization, DNA fragmentation*

Synthetic Agricultural Imagery for Bridging the Computer Vision Gap

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Crop diseases and pests destroy 20-40% of global food production each year, costing about €200 billion and threatening the agricultural heritage that has sustained communities for centuries. Livestock diseases add further losses of around 20% annually, contributing €257 billion more. Artificial intelligence offers promise for early detection, but its success depends on large, well-labelled image datasets that are costly and difficult to obtain. Field data collection is slow and seasonal, while labelling requires expert knowledge. This research addresses the data shortage by exploring synthetic images, which are artificially generated by computers rather than captured by cameras, as a training alternative. A review of 35 studies (2020-2026) shows synthetic data improves model performance by a median of 7.7%. However, no study has examined how realistic these images need to be under challenging field conditions. Early findings suggest simpler, less photorealistic images may perform just as well as highly detailed ones, reducing cost and effort considerably. To investigate this further, the study proposes a framework that will test AI models under six real-world challenges including low light, motion blur, occlusion, weather, camouflage, and capture difficulty, with the aim of building detection systems that perform reliably in real agricultural environments.

Keywords: *Synthetic imagery, Computer vision, Domain gap, Agricultural AI, Challenging environments*

Artificial Intelligence as a Driver of Circular Business Models: Implications for Sustainable Management in the European Union

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The convergence of digitalization and sustainability is reshaping contemporary business strategies, particularly within the European Union, where the transition towards a circular economy has become a strategic priority. Circular business models aim to optimize resource use, extend product lifecycles, and minimize waste, yet their implementation remains complex due to challenges related to data management, reverse logistics, and system integration. In this context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as a critical enabler of circular transformation.

This paper examines the role of AI as a driver of circular business models and explores its implications for sustainable management. Drawing on an integrative review of the literature, the study develops a conceptual framework that links key AI capabilities, including predictive analytics, machine learning, and data-driven decision-making, with circular strategies such as reuse, remanufacturing, and recycling. The analysis highlights how AI enhances operational efficiency, improves resource allocation, and supports more informed managerial decisions.

Furthermore, the paper discusses the managerial and policy implications of AI adoption in the European context, emphasizing both opportunities and barriers, including technological complexity and organizational readiness. The findings contribute to the growing body of research on digital and sustainable transformation, offering insights for both practitioners and policymakers.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Circular Economy, Circular Business Models, Sustainable Management, European Union*

Cultural heritage in Great expectations

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Grounded in the premise that cultural heritage functions as a formative yet contested framework in nineteenth-century literature, Great Expectations is examined for its representation of identity shaped by inherited class structures and moral values. The subjects comprised 120 undergraduate literature students (aged 19–24; 78 female, 42 male) enrolled in a British literature programme, selected for their prior familiarity with Victorian fiction. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining close textual analysis with reader-response questionnaires and semi-structured interviews; instruments included a Likert-scale survey measuring perceptions of heritage and identity, alongside thematic coding procedures. Data were analysed using SPSS, with chi-square tests and Pearson correlations applied to determine relationships between variables.

Findings indicate a statistically significant correlation ($p < .05$) between participants' interpretation of Pip's social mobility and their perception of heritage as restrictive rather than enabling. Qualitative data further suggest that inherited class structures and moral values are consistently viewed as determinants of identity formation, though subject to reinterpretation.

The results support the conclusion that cultural heritage operates as both constraint and transformative framework, shaping individual agency and self-construction, with implications for literary pedagogy and the study of Victorian cultural identity.

Keywords: *Cultural heritage, Identity formation, Victorian literature, Social class, Charles Dickens*

Deep Learning in Poultry Farming: Comparative Analysis of Computer Vision Models for Dead Chickens Detection

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Automated detection of dead chickens is essential for enhancing biosecurity, animal welfare, and operational efficiency in poultry farms. This study evaluates the performance of YOLOv8n, YOLOv9c, YOLOv10n, and YOLOv11n for detecting dead chickens in cage-free poultry farms. A synthetic dataset of 3413 images was created by compositing manually annotated images of dead and healthy chickens into realistic stall backgrounds to simulate real farm conditions. The models were assessed using standard object detection metrics (precision, recall, and mean average precision (mAP) at IoU thresholds of 0.5 and 0.5–0.95) alongside computational efficiency indicators including inference speed, frames per second (FPS), model size, and training time. YOLOv9c achieved the highest detection accuracy (mAP@50 = 0.983, mAP@50-95 = 0.93), making it the most reliable for minimising false positives and missed detections. YOLOv11n delivered the fastest inference speed (2.8 ms/frame, ~357 FPS), making it more suitable for real-time applications. These results underscore the importance of selecting a YOLO model based on farm-specific operational constraints. YOLOv9c is recommended for accuracy- critical tasks, YOLOv11n for real-time monitoring, and YOLOv8n or YOLOv10n for resource-limited deployments. Comparative analysis with earlier YOLO models (YOLOv3–YOLOv7) shows that newer versions improve both detection reliability and processing speed. This work contributes a performance benchmark to guide AI-based poultry monitoring and highlights future directions, including real-world deployment and validation under live farm conditions. The problem under investigation (in one sentence if possible)

Keywords: *Smart farming, Computer vision, Object detection, Poultry farm monitoring, Animal welfare*

Agroforestry Potential of Selected Native Tree Species in Rwanda

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The deliberate integration of trees into crop and livestock farming systems has garnered significant attention for its ability to deliver environmental, economic, and social benefits. In Rwanda, this agroforestry approach is increasingly embraced because of its capacity to conserve the soil, produce food, feed, and wood products, and provide other essential ecosystem services. However, the limited integration and undervaluation of indigenous tree species in Rwandan farming practices reveal a critical gap in the sustainability of this practice.

This study evaluated the agroforestry potential of nine native tree species by examining their compatibility with beans and maize, and their growth outside forest environments. The experiment was conducted using a randomized complete block design with three replications across two cropping seasons, where tree growth parameters and crop yield responses were measured under different tree-crop combinations.

Among the species tested, Pterygota mildbraedii exhibited the highest mean annual height growth (0.27 m yr^{-1}), while Erythrina abyssinica recorded the largest diameter increment (0.30 cm yr^{-1}). Tree presence significantly reduced crop yield ($p < 0.05$), with compatibility varying among species in the following order: Ficus thonningii, Markhamia platycalyx, Podocarpus falcatus, Maesopsis eminii, and Polyscias fulva.

While further studies are needed, these compatibility levels indicate that integrating one or more of the tested species into farming systems may be feasible if the benefits from tree products and ecosystem services outweigh any crop competition.

Keywords: *Agroforestry potential, Tree-crop interaction, Native species, Sustainable farming systems, Ecosystem services*

Alternative Strategies for Long-term Preservation of Genetic Resources

Kristýna Vacková | University of South Bohemia, Czechia

This study evaluates alternative long-term storage methods for bovine oocytes and sex-estimated embryos, and protocols for storage of somatic cells in biobanks.

Bovine ovaries and tissues were collected at a local slaughterhouse. In vitro fertilization was performed using conventional insemination doses.

The experimental procedures involve isolation of karyoplasts from germinal vesicle (GV) stage oocytes, followed by vitrification. In vitro fertilization (IVF) to produce embryos was performed using partially separated sperm into male and female fractions. To improve the accuracy of predicting an embryo's sex, it is being tested by monitoring the kinetics of embryo development using time-lapse imaging. Additionally, tissue fibroblasts were isolated, cultivated, cryopreserved, and will be tested for DNA damage after thawing by immunofluorescence staining with a γH2AX antibody.

Preliminary data suggests, that cryosurvival of vitrified GV karyoplasts (72.6 %) compared to vitrification of whole oocytes (36.1 %) is significantly higher (p = 0.0002, Fisher´s exact test). The R848-mediated X sperm separation (55 % female) significantly altered the embryo sex ratio compared to the control group (37 % female, p=0,0024, X^2 test) although this result should be amplified by kinetic evaluation.

Complete results could provide a tool to maximize the effectiveness of long-term storage of biological material of rare breeds (genetic resources) or other more endangered animal species.

Keywords: *Oocyt, embryo, somatic cells, cryopreservation, genetic resources*

Conversion in the Kings' Sagas

Ioan Alexandru Vălu | Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

This presentation explores the process of conversion in the Old Norse kings' sagas, with a focus on Heimskringla, through a gender-oriented approach. While traditional scholarship has emphasized the role of kings as primary agents of Christianization, this study shifts attention toward the broader social dynamics of conversion and the ways in which gender shapes these narratives.

Methodologically, the presentation is based on close textual analysis of selected saga episodes, combined with insights from gender theory. It identifies and examines specific "conversion moments" within the sagas: scenes in which the transition from paganism to Christianity becomes visible through conflict, negotiation, or ritual change. These moments are analyzed not only in terms of political authority and religious transformation, but also in relation to the representation of gender roles.

A key objective of the presentation is to highlight the presence and significance of female actors in the process of conversion. Although often marginalized in the narratives, women appear in various roles, such as participants, intermediaries, or figures associated with pre-Christian practices. By focusing on these instances, the presentation seeks to demonstrate that women were not absent from the process of Christianization but actively involved in ways that have been insufficiently explored.

Keywords: *Conversion, gender, christianization, king's sagas*

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Views expressed by individual speakers and participants represent their own academic positions and do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Union or the Alliance as a whole.

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