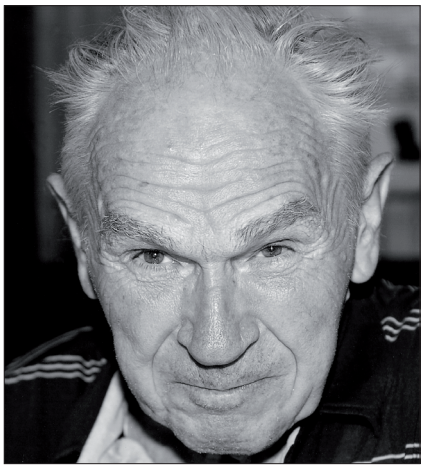
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Osmdesáté narozeniny MUDr. Aleše Smetany, CSc. v roce 2011

Eightieth birthday of MUDr. Aleš Smetana, CSc. celebrated in 2011



Ve Veroně, 2010. In Verona, 2010.

Aleš Smetana se narodil 6. dubna 1931 v Hradci Králové. Po dokončení základní školy navštěvoval osm tříd klasického gymnázia v tomtéž městě. Na lékařskou fakultu Univerzity Karlovy nastoupil v roce 1950, titul MUDr. obdržel v roce 1956.

Jeho zájem o entomologii započal v útlém věku a byl bezvýhradně podporován jeho otcem, MUDr. Oldřichem Smetanou. Tatínkova podpora trvala až do doby, než Aleš odjel do Kanady. Jeho otec, lékař, byl bibliofil. Po zjištění Alešových entomologických zájmů ihned obrátil i svůj zájem na entomologickou literaturu a zakoupil Alešovi několik klasických prací, jako byla např. Reitterova Fauna Germanica, Gangelbauerova monografie Käfer von Mitteleuropa a řada dalších. Otec Aleše učil o důležitosti publikovaných údajů a jak zacházet s bibliografickými záznamy. Tedy znalosti a zásady jsou základem, který Aleš využívá po celou svoji kariéru a který mu umožňuje sepisovat brilantní vědecké práce.

Alešovi první sběratelské snahy započaly v létě 1941. Z jeho vyprávění nelze zapomenout na popis vzrušení, které prožíval na jejich zahradě v Kuklenách (tenkrát předměstí Hradce Králové), když v nastražené improvizované pasti s návnadou kousku masa nalezl samečka střevlíka zrnitého (*Carabus granulatus*). Tato událost jistě byla důvodem, proč zpočátku obrátil svou pozornost ke střevlíkovitým broukům, a to až do doby svého osvícení a přechodu na brouky drabčíkovité. Velmi rád vzpomíná na svou lyžařskou výpravu, uskutečněnou v lednu 1944, do lesa blízko Těchlovic s několika mraveništi *Formica rufa*. Přinesl z ní domů velký vak vnitřního obsahu jednoho z hnízd, který obsahoval řadu myrmekofilních brouků, včetně drabčíka *Quedius brevis*. Doma materiál zpracovával v obýváku za zoufalých protestů své matky, když viděla okolo volně běhat mravence.

Po nástupu do Ústavu parazitologie Československé akademie věd v Praze pokračoval ve studiích a v roce 1959 obdržel po úspěšné obhajobě dizertační práce o taxonomii a bionomii parazitického řádu Anoplura Československa titul kandidáta věd (CSc.). Na Ústavu parazitologie zůstal jako vědecký pracovník. Pokračoval ve studiu ektoparasitů a později se stal členem virologické skupiny ústavu a účastnil se výzkumu přenosu a cirkulace virů přenášených klíšťaty a komáry (ARBO viry) v přirozených ohniscích. Během svých parazitologických resp. virologických bádání, které vedly samozřejmě k řadě publikací, současně pracoval a publikoval v systematice hmyzu. V následujících letech podnikl nesčetné sběratelské exkurze v Čechách, na Moravě a na Slovensku. Mnohé z nich v Čechách byly s Janem Roubalem, jenž se stal jeho

rádcem a byl častým hostem i v jejich domě v Kuklenách. Od něho se naučil mnohým znalostem ve sběru brouků a jejich určování. Jeho druhým rádcem se stal Dr. Vladimír Balthasar, který byl na začátku padesátých let asistentem na katedře biologie Lékařské fakulty v Hradci Králové a později se stal ředitelem Přírodovědného muzea v Hradci Králové. Mnohé exkurze na Slovensko uskutečnil Aleš s Ivanem Löblem, některé zcela nezapomenutelné, jako je třeba zážitek neuvěřitelného množství brouků ve velkém náplavu po záplavě na řece Hron blízko Kamenného Mostu na jižním Slovensku. Jeho otec ho doprovázel na mnoha sběratelských cestách na Slovensko, zejména do Remetských Hamrů v pohoří Vihorlat, kterých se též účastnili O. Kavan a E. Lekeš. Podle Alešových slov byl sběr materiálu na těchto místech a v této době jeden z nejlepších, které kdy zažil. Jeho zahraniční cesty v časných dobách směřovaly do Albánie (1958), a to během parazitologické expedice do této země, do Bulharska (1958), Rakouska (1960 a 1965 s otcem a I. Löblem), Rumunska (1962 s otcem), Maďarsko (1964 s I. Löblem a J. Jelínkem), Velké Británie (1964 a 1966 s W. O. Steelem) a Německa (1966 s G. A. Lohsem a G. Benickem).

V roce 1967 získal postdoktorské stipendium v National Research Council of Canada v entomologii na Entomology Research Institute v Ottawě. Během dvou let trvání tohoto stipendia dokončil velkou monografii„Revision of the tribe Quediini of America north of Mexico“, která byla publikována v roce 1971 v Ottawě. V této době prováděl rozsáhlé entomologické sběry téměř ve všech provinciích Kanady (kromě provincií Newfoundland a Maritimes) a v mnoha státech západních USA (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana) a na východě ve státech Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi a Lousiana.

Po návratu do Československa na podzim roku 1969 nastoupil v roce 1970 jako vědecký pracovník do oddělení entomologie Národního muzea v Praze. Jeho povinnosti se hlavně týkaly systematiky, bionomie a zoogeografie broučích nadčeledí Staphylinoidea a Adephaga. Byl členem první entomologické expedice Národního muzea do Iránu v roce 1970.

V roce 1971 se navrátil do Kanady. Stal se vědeckým pracovníkem Entomology Research Institute v Ottawě a dostal na starost vodní brouky (zejména čeleď Hydrophilidae) a čeleď Staphylinidae. Kromě výzkumu taxonomie, fylogeneze a zoogeografie těchto skupin brouků se též účastnil práce v National Identification Service zajišťující identifikaci všech vodních brouků a několika dalších čeledí. Na žádost poskytoval konzultace a expertízy ve specifických taxonomických a příbuzných problémech a spolupracoval s četnými vědeckými pracovníky obdobného zaměření po celém světě. Pracoval po dobu 15 let jako kurátor brouků Canadian National Collection of Insects. I když v roce 1999 odešel do důchodu, pokračoval a dosud pokračuje ve svém vědeckém programu na téže instituci.

Co bylo také součástí jeho práce? Od roku 1980 se zabýval faunou drabčíků (hlavně podtribů Quediina a Staphylinina) jihovýchodní Asie, zejména Číny. Při provádění těchto projektů pracoval v Japonsku (1980 spolu s I. Löblem a 1991) v nepálských Himálajích (1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 spolu s I. Löblem a 1985), v severním Borneu (1987 spolu s I. Löblem, 1988), na Taiwanu (1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995) a v kontinentální Číně (1994, 1996 spolu s J. Farkačem a P. Kabátkem, 1998 spolu s J. Farkačem, D. Králem a J. Schneiderem, 2000, 2002, 2005).

Nemohu nevzpomenout naše první setkání. Bylo to 19. července 1994, v pozdních večerních hodinách, v pátém patře hotelu Jiao Tong v Cheng Du, hlavním městě čínské provincie Sečuán. Spolu s D. Králem jsme balili na cestu domů, když se rozezněly pokojové dveře

nekompromisním zabušením. Následovalo okamžité otevření dveří bez našeho vyzvání a do našeho pokoje sebevědomě vkročil chlap se slovy (česky): „Slyším tady češtinu, jsem tu dobře? ... já jsem Aleš Smetana, ahoj.“ A bylo to. Následující dvě čínské expedice jsme absolvovali spolu v jednom stanu.

Na základě nasbíraného materiálu publikoval mnoho vědeckých prací včetně velkých monografií o drabčíkovitých broucích podtribů Quediina Himálají (1988) a Taiwanu (1995) a řady prací o různých čínských druzích podtribů Quediina a Staphylinina (první řada má nyní 42 částí, druhá 24 částí).

Je spolu se svým kamarádem Ivanem Löblem editorem Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera, ze kterého bylo dosud publikováno sedm dílů. Jsem rád, že nápad zrealizovat tento katalog, jako přehled palearktické broučí systematiky ke konci druhého milénia, vznikl v Praze, a že tento nápad dokázali Aleš s Ivanem dotáhnout do konce.

Aleš je autorem nebo spoluautorem více než 388 publikací, z nichž mnohé z nich jsou velké taxonomické monografie určitých skupin brouků.

Je členem Royal Entomological Society od London, České společnosti entomologické, Asociación Europea de Coleopterología, Coleopterological Society of Japan a Wiener Coleopterologen Verein. Česká společnost entomologická Aleše Smetanu jmenovala v roce 1997 za mimořádné zásluhy za rozvoj entomologie a její popularizaci svým čestným členem.

Aleš si dobrou fyzickou kondici udržuje pravidelně volejbalem (spolu s jeho třemi syny a dvěma vnoučaty jsou schopni sestavit úplný „tým Smetanů“), hodně jezdí na kole a dosud ho těší řízení rychlých automobilů.

Milý Aleši, při našich společných čínských expedicích, nebo když jsme před čtrnácti lety na mé zahrádce na Střížkově v Praze, spolu s mým tatínkem, prof. K. Hůrkou, dr. J. Jelínkem a mnoha dalšími hledali v zahradním sudu studené pivo, a také když jsi se po společné večeři v mém obýváku v pražských Řepích zeptal Luciena Genesta, který brouk ho k nám přivádí, jsem pochopil význam atmosféry i co je to kamarádství. Mockrát ti za to děkuji. A k Tvým letošním narozeninám Ti upřímně přeji pohodu, zdraví a spousty nových entomologických zážitků. Honza.

Aleš Smetana was born on April 6, 1931 in Hradec Králové. After finishing primary school, he attended eight classes of classical secondary school (= high school) in the same city. After finishing school in 1950, he started studying at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, and obtained his M.D. from the medical faculty of this university in 1956.

His interest in entomology started at a very tender age and was supported unconditionally by his father MUDr. Oldřich Smetana. This support lasted until Aleš left the country for Canada. His father, a physician, was a bibliophile and after discovering Aleš' entomological tendencies, he immediately turned his interest to entomological literature and bought several classical works for Aleš, such as Reitter's Fauna Germanica, Ganglbauer's Käfer von Mitteleuropa, etc. He also taught Aleš about the importance of published data and how to handle bibliographic records – knowledge that Aleš used constantly during his career and that still helps him in writing his brilliant entomological works.

Aleš first collecting attempts started in the summer of 1941 and it is impossible to forget his narration of his excitement with an improvised pitfall trap with a piece of meat, set in their garden in Kukleny (a suburb of Hradec Králové at that time), in which he found a male specimen of *Carabus granulatus*. Actually, that event may have been the reason that he

originally turned his attention to carabids, until he was enlightened by the staphylinids and switched over to their study. He also fondly remembers a fairly long ski trip in January 1944 to a forest near Těchlovice, were he explored nests of *Formica rufa*. A large bag filled with the interior of an ant nest, and containing many myrmecophiles including *Quedius brevis*, was brought home and processed in the living room, amid the desperate protests of his mother, who saw the ants running around.

After he joined the staff of the Institute of Parasitology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague, he continued his studies and obtained his CSc. degree in biology in 1959, successfully defending a thesis on the taxonomy and bionomics of the parasitic order Anoplura of Czechoslovakia. He kept his appointment as a research scientist at the Institute of Parasitology and continued studying Anoplura. Later, he joined the virological unit of the Institute and was involved in research into the transmission and circulation of tick- and mosquito-borne viruses (ARBO viruses) in natural foci. During his parasitological/virological activities, resulting in a number of publications, he simultaneously worked and published in insect systematics. In the following years he undertook countless collecting excursions to Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, many in Bohemia with Jan Roubal, who became his mentor and was a frequent guest in the family's house in Kukleny. From him he learned a lot about collecting beetles and their identification. His second mentor became Dr. V. Balthasar, who in the early fifties held the position of an assistant at the department of biology of the Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové and later became the director of the Natural History Museum in Hradec Králové. Many of the excursions in Slovakia were with Ivan Löbl, some quite memorable, like the experience of collecting unbelievable masses of beetles in a huge deposit of flood debris at the Hron river near Kamenný Most in southern Slovakia. His father accompanied him on many collecting trips in Slovakia, particularly on those to Remetské Hamre in Vihorlat in eastern Slovakia, together with O. Kavan and E. Lekeš. Aleš points out that collecting there at that time was among the best he has ever experienced. The earlier foreign trips included Albania (1958) organized by the Parasitological Institute, Bulgaria (1958), Austria (1960 and 1965, with I. Löbl and his father), Romania (1962, with his father), Hungary (1964, with I. Löbl and J. Jelínek), Great Britain (1964 and 1966, with W. O. Steel), and Germany (1966, with G. Lohse and G. Benick).

In 1967, he was awarded a National Research Council of Canada postdoctoral fellowship in entomology at the Entomology Research Institute in Ottawa. During the two years tenure of this fellowship he completed a large monograph "Revision of the tribe Quediini of America north of Mexico", which was published later in 1971 in Ottawa. Over that time, he did extensive collecting in almost all provinces of Canada (except Newfoundland and the Maritimes), and in many states of the western United States (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho Arizona, New Mexico, Montana), and in the east in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia , Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

He returned to Czechoslovakia in the fall of 1969, and in 1970 joined the staff of the Department of Entomology of the National Museum in Prague as a research scientist. His responsibilities there were primarily concerned with the systematics, bionomics and zoogeography of the coleopterous groups Staphylinoidea and Adephaga. He was a member of the National Museum's first entomological expedition to Iran in 1970.

In 1971, he returned to Canada. He was appointed as a research scientist at the Entomology Research Institute in Ottawa with responsibilities for aquatic Coleoptera (particularly the family Hydrophilidae) and the family Staphylinidae. In addition to the research in taxonomy,

phylogeny and zoogeography of these groups of beetles, he also participated in the National Identification Service, providing identifications of all aquatic and several non-aquatic families of beetles. Upon request, he provided consultations and expertise in specific taxonomic and related problems and cooperated with numerous scientists in his field all over the world. He was for about 15 years Curator of the Coleoptera part of the Canadian National Collection of Insects. He retired from service in 1999, but continued and still continues to work on his scientific programme (see below) at the same institution.

What were his further activities? Since 1980 he became quite interested in the staphylinid fauna (particularly of the subtribes Quediina and Staphylinina) of southeast Asia, particularly of China. In pursuing these projects, he worked in Japan (1980, together with I. Löbl, and 1991), in the Nepal Himalaya (1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, together with I. Löbl, and in 1985), in northern Borneo (1987 together with I. Löbl, 1988), in Taiwan (1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995) and in mainland China: (1994, 1996 together with J. Farkač and P. Kabátek, 1998 together with J. Farkač. D. Král and J. Schneider), 2000, 2002, 2005. I must mention our first encounter. It was on July 19, 1994, late evening, on the 5th floor of the hotel Jiao Tong in Cheng Du, the capital of the Chinese province of Sichuan, when David Král and I were packaging our belongings to leave for home, when suddenly we heard a pounding on the door. A man entered assertively without invitation and said (in Czech): "I heard Czech language. Am I at the right place here? ... Hello, my name is Aleš Smetana". And everything was settled. On our next two Chinese expeditions, we shared a tent.

He and other researchers published many papers based on material Aleš collected, including large monographs on the staphylinid subtribe Quediina of the Himalaya (1988) and of Taiwan (1995) and many papers on various Chinese members of the subtribes Quediina and Staphylinina (the first and second series by now in 42 and 24 parts, respectively).

Together with his friend Ivan Löbl, he is the coeditor of the Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera, seven volumes of which were published so far. I am happy that the idea to organize this catalogue as a comprehensible summary of the systematics of Palaearctic Coleoptera at the end of the second millennium originated in Prague, and that Aleš and Ivan were able to carry the idea through.

Aleš is the author or joint author of about 388 publications, many of which are large taxonomic monographs of certain groups of beetles.

He is a fellow of the Royal Entomological Society of London and a member of the Asociación Europea de Coleopterología, Coleopterological Society of Japan, and Wiener Coleopterologen Verein. In 1997, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the development and popularization of entomology, the Czech Entomological Society elected him as an honorary member.

He is trying to keep himself physically fit, he is still playing volleyball on a regular basis (together with his three sons and two grandchildren they can put together a complete "Smetana team"), he does a lot of cycling, and still enjoys driving high performance cars.

Dear Aleš, during our Chinese expeditions, or when we, together with my father, Professor K. Hůrka, Dr. J. Jelínek and many others, searched for cold beer in a barrel in our garden, or when you asked Lucien Genest what beetle he brought to us in Řepy, Prague, I understood the meaning of real friendship. Thank you very much for this. At the opportunity of the anniversary you enjoy this year, I am sincerely wishing you well-being, excellent health end numerous new entomological experiences. Honza.

Jan Farkač

Jako kdybych byl malomocný: staří známí se mi vyhýbali v obavě, že by mohli být obviněni ze styku s protistátními živly, což v padesátých letech v lepším případě mohlo jen podrýt jejich společenské postavení, v horším ohrozit jejich existenci. Bylo to v roce 1954, kdy už ale byl nejostřejší politický teror na ústupu. Přesto jsem s matkou potřeboval povolení ministerstva vnitra k tomu, abychom se mohli přestěhovat z Dvora Králové nad Labem do blízkého Hradce Králové. Tehdy bylo ještě asi jedno procento obyvatel republiky uvězněné, nebo v pracovních táborech či nějakým způsobem postižené.

V Hradci Králové se má matka seznámila podivnou a šťastnou shodou okolností s manžely Barbierovými, kteří se přátelili s rodinou MUDr. Oldřicha Smetany, tatínka Aleše. Tato rodina očividně patřila k oné nepočetné frakci intelektuálů, kteří zůstali věrni svým ideálům a etice, a to i za cenu možných nepříjemností. Netrvalo dlouho a já seděl v pracovně Aleše. Bylo to jako v Jiříkově vidění. Aleš mi ochotně ukazoval své oblíbené Philonthusy a Gabriusy uložené v baterii krabic, vše vzorně vypreparované a urovnané. Jeho sbírka byla pro mne naprosto neskutečná, nic podobného jsem předtím neviděl. Příležitostně jsme se pak setkávali. Aleš nedal nikdy najevo, že bych toho měl vědět více, lépe ovládat techniky sběru a preparace, cizí jazyky, nebo že mně chybí teoretické vědomosti. Byl tehdy ještě studentem medicíny. Nikdy nepochopím, jak zvládl náročné studium současně s intenzivním zájmem o entomologii, sbíráním, publikováním, přípravou drabčíkovitých k vydaní ve Fauně ČSR, sportováním, a to vše bez toho, aby by mu to nějak omezilo normální společenský život.

Aleš mě také seznámil se staršími entomology, z nichž na mě svojí osobností zcela zvlášť zapůsobil prof. Jan Roubal, nejen vzácnou všestranností a hlubokým odporem ke komunistickému režimu. J. Roubal mě imponoval i svojí postavou, dynamikou, ale i schopností spolykat vřelou polévku. Začátkem června roku 1954 jsme s Alešem již poprvé společně sbírali. Bylo to v doubravě u Hrádku u Nechanic. Tam nalezení *Hesperus rufipennis* a hlavně *Trichonyx sulcicollis* rozhodli o mé entomologické orientaci. Následovaly další společné exkurze do okolí Hradce. Aleš neměl v povaze nechat si „dobrá" místa jen pro sebe, s naprostou samozřejmostí sdílel své zkušenosti a vědomosti. Zvlášť památná pak byla cesta na východní a jižní Slovensko v květnu 1955, kterou jsme podnikli spolu s jeho tatínkem. Tehdy ještě pesticidy a podobné moderní vymoženosti neexistovaly: louky a pastviny bývaly entomologickým rájem i v bezprostřední blízkosti sídlišť. Hned za nádražím Michalan byla vlhká louka, na které jsme si mohli úspěšně „zapracovat" do odjezdu vlaku na Královsky Chlmec. Byl tam i *Polystichus connexus*. Prvního mi daroval MUDr. Smetana v domnění, že je to běžný druh. Aleš nepohnul ani brvou, i když ho to nemohlo nemrzet. K vyvrcholení sběru došlo 5. května, když jsme narazili na čerstvý náplav, který překrýval zaplavenou prolákllinu blízko Hronu. Brouci se na něm jen hemžili a jak jsme se náplavu dotkli, přelézali na nás, až do vlasů. Bylo to jedinečné, nejen nasbíranými *Chlaenius decipiens*, *Pterostichus cylindricus*, kompletní sbírkou *Lathrobium*, *Achenium* atd., ale také tím, že jsme si po pás ve studené vodě ověřili možnost překonat zákony termodynamiky pouhým nadšením.

Mám v paměti vryté další pěkné exkurze, zvláště na Čergov v roce 1959, pak spolu s Josefem Jelínkem do jižního Maďarska v roce 1964, kde se nám mimo jiné podařilo za soumraku utábořit pod křížem poutního místa v domnění, že jsme mimo civilizaci. O rok nato jsme se vypravili za endemity rakouských Alp, kam cesta vedla přes vinné sklepy městečka Retz. V Rakousku mě Aleš zachránil náhradními pinzetami, když se mé vytratily nenápadnou dírou v kapse. Jak to často bývá, osud nás každého později zavál jinam, Aleše do Ottawy, mne do Ženevy. V roce 1980 jsme se po delší době sešli v Tokyu. Ještě jsem nezvládl druhé pivo a už přišel s návrhem na společnou expedici do Nepálu. Z jedné expedice byly nakonec



Aleš s otcem Oldřichem, 1942. Aleš with his father Oldřich, 1942.

tři. Nemyslím, že bych s někým jiným zvládl brodění po kolena ve sněhu s pytli prosevů na zádech a s vyhlídkou na nejelementárnější pohodlí v nejbližších týdnech nahrazenou recitáty římských a řeckých klasiků. Druhá nepálská cesta vedla okolo Annapurny: těch přibližně 360 km chůze zahájil Aleš novými botami, které se z počátku zdály být vhodné. I tu se ukázalo, že pevná vůle překoná pevnou kůži. Na jedné z nepálských poutí mě opět zachránil Aleš svým náhradním prosívadlem a s eklektory, moje se ztratily někde mezi Paříží a Delhi.

Pevná vůle, určitá dávka stoicismu a smysl pro humor, to jsou patrně také nejdůležitější předpoklady úspěchu v naší úzké spolupráci na katalogu palearktických brouků.

Je mi ctí, že mohu s Alešem na tomto díle spolupracovat.

As if I was a leper: old friends avoided me, anxious not to be accused of contact with "traitorous elements", as the official terminology defined so many of us, an accusation that may have threatened their existence. This was in 1954 when the most severe political terror had already passed. Nevertheless, my mother and I needed a special permit to move from Dvůr Králové nad Labem to the nearby Hradec Králové. At that time about one percent of the population of Czechoslovakia was in prisons, gulags, or had suffered in various ways.

By extraordinary chance, in Hradec Králové my mother met the Barbiers, friends of the parents of Aleš. The Smetana family was one of a minority of intellectuals that kept their ideals and ethics, even if they were a cause of trouble. In a short time I was invited around by the Smetanas and found myself in Aleš's home study. Being in front of drawers full of admirably mounted *Philonthus* and *Gabrius*, and many other beetles, was like a dream. His study was for me a wonderland; I have never seen anything like it before. After that, we saw

each other occasionally. Aleš never let me feel that he was superior in knowledge, or a better master of techniques or languages, or that I had any kind of gaps of knowledge. At that time he was still a medical student. I am even now unable to understand how he mastered his university studies while intensively collecting and identifying beetles, publishing numerous papers and preparing the Staphylininae volume of the Fauna ČSR series for publication, all this without limiting his social life and sports. Aleš also introduced me to older entomologists. The most impressive among whom was Prof. Jan Roubal, for his universal knowledge, exalted character, capacity to swallow almost boiling soup, and obvious aversion to communism. As early as June 1954, Aleš took me on our first excursion. It was at Hrádek at Nechanice where we collected *Hesperus rufipennis* and in particular *Trichonyx sulcicollis,* which decided my future orientation in entomology. Several other excursions followed. Aleš shared quite naturally his field experiences, like the knowledge of good sites. Particularly memorable was a trip to eastern and southern Slovakia, in May 1955, with his father, Dr. Oldřich Smetana. At that time pesticides and other similar modern "improvements" were non-existent: meadows and pastures even close to habitations were still a kind of paradise for entomologists, with respect to diversity of species. So, while waiting for our train to Královský Chlmec, Aleš's father found a *Polystichus connexus* in a meadow just behind Michalany railway station. He gave me the specimen, the first I had ever seen, believing it was a common species. Though displeased, Aleš made no comment. The culmination of the trip was on May 5, when we came to a pond near Hron. It was covered with floating debris literally full of beetles which climbed over us as we touched it. This was unique not only for the *Chlaenius decipiens*, *Pterostichus cylindricus*, an almost complete collection of *Lathrobium*, a number of *Achenium*, etc. that we collected, but also for a demonstration that even in pretty cold water, the laws of thermodynamics may be overcome by enthusiasm. A number of other delightful trips together are implanted in my memory, especially to Čergov in 1959 and in 1964 with Josef Jelínek to southern Hungary. At Máriagüd, where we arrived during the night, we managed to camp under a cross on a shrine. The next year we took our chances with Alpine endemics in Austria, via wine cellars in Retz, near the Moravian border. Aleš rescued me in Austria with his spare forceps, as mine continually disappeared through a hole in a pocket.

As so often happens, fate separated us for some time. Aleš started a new life in Ottawa, I in Geneva. We met again in Tokyo in 1980. Before having finished our second Japanese beer we had already talked about an expedition to Nepal. Eventually, from one, there were three Himalayan trips. I doubt that there is anyone else with whom I would have been able to cross steep slopes in deep snow, with a rucksack filled with bags of sieved samples, and with the prospect of elementary comfort replaced by recitations from Roman and Greek classics. Our second trip led around Annapurna. Aleš began the walk of approximately 360 km and over 5000 m range of altitude with shoes that were useful only at the beginning of the trail. Here he demonstrated that strong will masters robust leather. He saved me again on one of our Nepal trips with his spare sifters and extractors, as mine got lost somewhere between Paris and Delhi, and on another one by fishing out my glasses, dropped in a torrent. A firm will, a good dose of stoicism and a sense of humour were probably also the main prerequisites for success in our common work on the Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera.

Collaboration with him was and is a privilege for me.

Ivan Löbl

Vědecké práce – Scientific papers

1948

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1950

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