

# žurnál

Magazine of Palacký University Olomouc, 2019/2

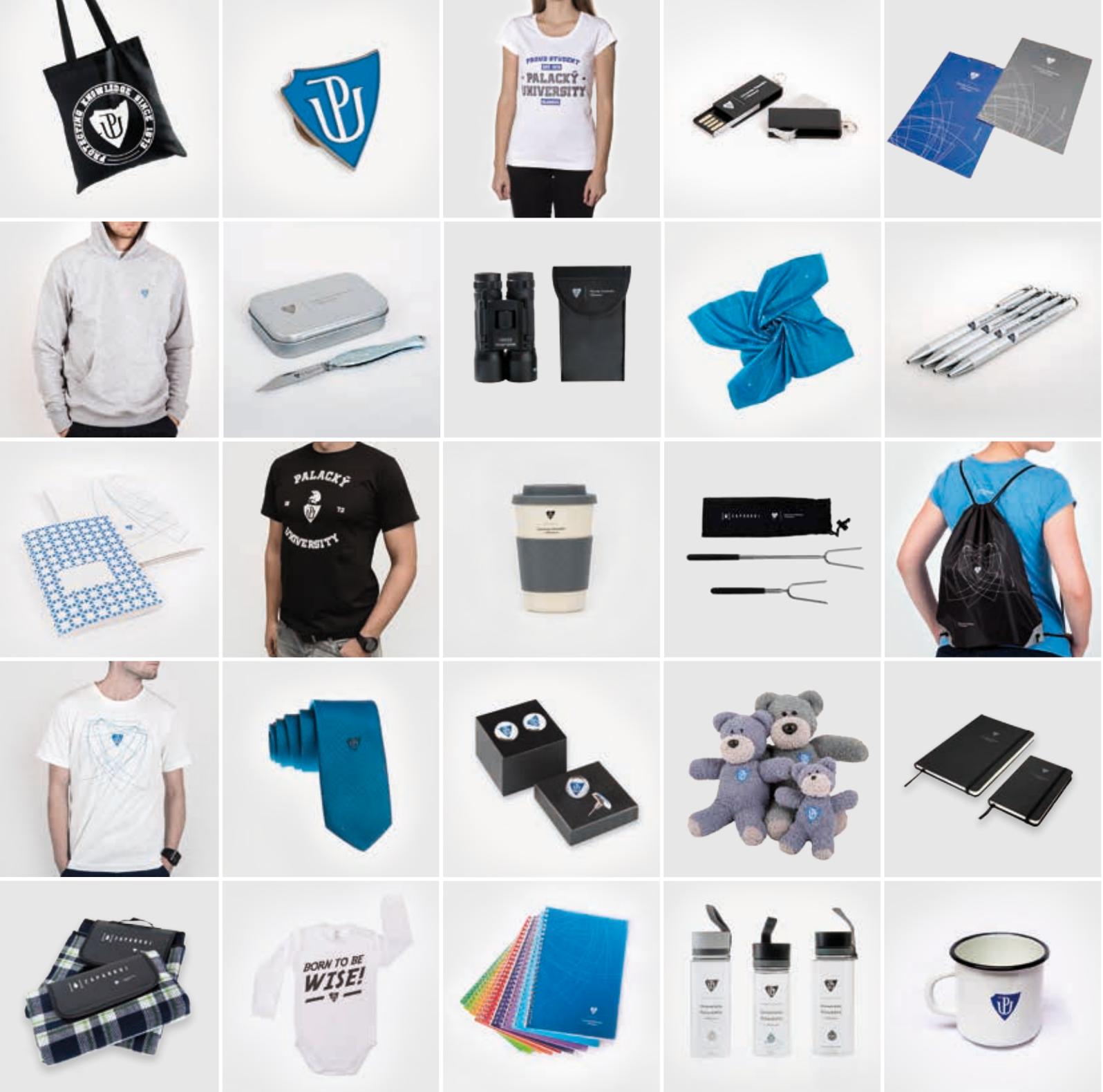
theme

**We fight  
against myths**



Univerzita Palackého  
v Olomouci

*Genius loci...*



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# UPoint

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title page: UP student and Czech lightweight boxing champion Dominika Čiklová  
photo: Gabriela Knyblová

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MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,  
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY



Dear colleagues, students, and friends  
of Palacký University,

You are holding in your hands forty  
pages capturing the current goings-  
on at our alma mater. It is just a small  
cross-section of life at the university;  
still, I dare say that this small sample  
shows off our indomitable spirit quite  
well. Just like the generations before  
us, we still endeavour to move things  
forward.

I'm proud when I see the splendid results  
of my colleagues in the areas of science,  
research, and teaching, and I'm very  
much aware of how many pitfalls and  
setbacks they have had to overcome,  
and how much energy and self-sacrifice  
they have contributed to our alma  
mater. I'm filled with optimism by the  
successes of our students – not just in  
their studies, but also for example in  
sports. And I'm proud of our graduates,  
who have gone on to establish  
themselves in so many fields.

Another academic year is behind us.  
It was a tough one, just like those  
before it, and just like those to follow.  
That's the way things are in life at the  
university. I would like to thank all of  
our academics, employees, students,  
and also our many supporters for  
what they have achieved this year for  
Palacký University, and for not losing  
faith in our university community and  
its values. I appreciate this, and I believe  
that we will manage the upcoming  
academic year just as well, together.

Wishing you a lovely summer,  
enough time and opportunities for  
regeneration, and I'm already looking  
forward to seeing you all in the autumn.

Jaroslav Miller  
Rector



# Time to dismiss fears of GMO crops, say experts

Genetically-modified organisms – GMOs – are surrounded by many myths, even paradoxes. While they represent a dynamically developing area of science, their use in Europe is prevented by legislative obstacles. And so Palacký University scientists have decided to speak up and enter the fray.

“Without new strains of agricultural crops adapted to the changing climate, resistant to disease and pests, with higher yields and qualities, it will not be possible in the future to ensure enough food for the rising world population; otherwise the environment will be extremely damaged by pesticides and by huge amounts of artificial fertilisers – the results of which would threaten the health of the planet’s inhabitants. The only way to achieve such new strains is to use the new techniques of selective breeding based on changes to plants’ genetic infor-

mation,” states Jaroslav Doležel, scientific director of the Centre of the Region Haná for Biotechnology and Agricultural Research (CRH), which coordinates the scientific teams of Palacký University and the Olomouc workplaces of the Institute of Experimental Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Crop Research Institute.

This is why the plant geneticist and laureate of the 2018 National Czech Mind award, together with the CRH director Ivo Frébort, have written a letter to Czech PM Andrej Babiš and the Ministries of

Agriculture and the Environment urging changes European legislation regarding genetically modified crops to better correspond with current scientific findings. They also reacted to a decision by the European Court, according to which organisms arrived at by modern methods for directed editing of the genome, such as CRISPR/Cas9, fall under the same strict regulations as genetically-modified organisms. According to them, the verdict could irreversibly impact European agriculture and the environment and create an exodus of innovations outside the EU.

## Europe does not grow GM products, yet actively imports them

When speaking of plants, GMOs are those to which new genes have been inserted. For example, commercially successful products such as soybeans resistant to glyphosate and Bt-corn have genes inserted from soil bacteria for resistance against herbicides, or for resistance against insect pests. Both are often used in combination, such as in cotton. They produce higher yields, using smaller amounts of less toxic herbicides and without insecticides. They are grown mainly in North and South America and Asia. For example, GM soybeans predominate in the global production of this crop. Yet GM crops are found only exceptionally in the fields of EU countries. However, Europe is the main importer of GM products. And this is only one of a number of paradoxes concerning GMOs. While Europe is dependent on GM products, the majority of farmers have no access to them. The legislative process allowing GM crops to be raised in the EU is quite lengthy and costly for applicants, which supports the

dominant position of supranational biotechnology firms. Permission has been granted for growing only ten strains in Europe – seven of which are carnations. There are roughly two hundred crop strains allowed elsewhere in the world.

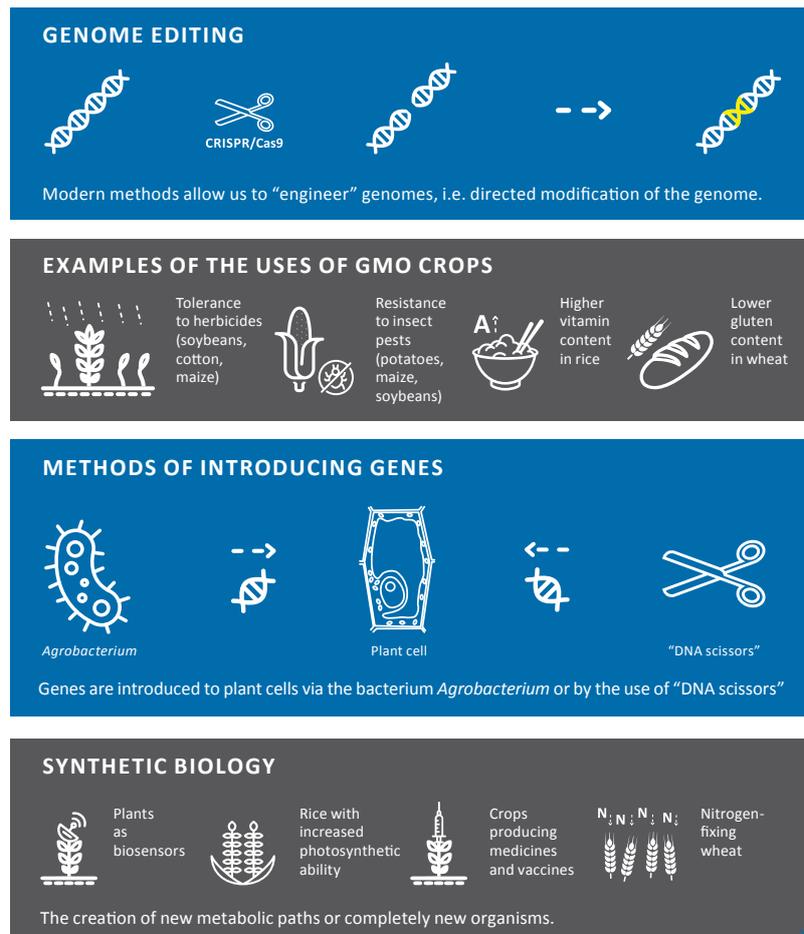
## Extraneous genes are not spliced during targeted gene-editing

New organisms have been obtained on the basis of a different principle by the CRISPR/Cas9 method of directed genome editing. Using this method, researchers know how to “turn off” the inherited information of genes which carry specific unwanted qualities. Thus it is possible to breed plants with better qualities – for example with resistance to drought or diseases. Olomouc researchers are most interested in this type of research, especially in agriculturally important crops. They point out that organisms gained by this method do not contain foreign genes, so they ought to fall under legislative regulations pertaining to plants bred by traditional methods.

The scientists also point out that all domestic crops have arisen from genetic mu-

tations of their predecessors in the wild. From about the middle of the past century such mutations have been induced artificially by chemical substances or by radiation. Whereas these procedures have developed hundreds or thousands of cases of randomly damaged genetic information with unknown effects, using the CRISPR/Cas9 method, all the changes are directed and controlled. Despite this, the European Court has slapped strict regulations on methods of directed genome editing.

“This makes no sense from the scientific viewpoint: crops with minor improvements to the genome are just as safe as crops developed by classic mutagenesis and traditional breeding methods. The results of this decision will be far-reaching. Innovative agricultural research will shift away from Europe, which will fall behind in this area, and it will be difficult to catch up. It will also be difficult to introduce new crop strains, which will reduce the competitiveness of European agriculture, and also retard the introduction of methods of sustainable agriculture,” pointed out Ivo Frébort, an expert on plant biotechnology. →



### Misplaced fears

According to Frébort, people fear GMOs out of ignorance. To properly understand evolution and genetic changes on the molecular level, one must grasp at least the basics of molecular biology. “People in the EU are surprisingly afraid of GM crops, but they’re not afraid of GM bacteria, with whose help insulin and a number of other products are produced for pharmacies, cosmetics, and for the chemical and food industries,” he adds.

Doležel, a geneticist, also dismisses fears of GMOs. “So far, not even one scientific study has shown the negative impact of GMOs on people or animals. With respect to the extent of cultivation of GMOs, we can consider this a long-term and global experiment without one proven example of harm. Even our livestock are fed with genetically modified soybeans, and I have not found any report of damage to the health of our citizens who consume animal products,” he said, adding additional arguments.

### Legislative changes are necessary

Scientists from the Centre of the Region Haná are seeking an easier path towards approval of genetically modified crops. Their standpoint was supported in February by a resolution by the Academic Senate of the UP Faculty of Science, which stated: “[We] support steps toward a complete overhaul of the legislation relating to genetically modified organisms, which is backward and does not reflect current scientific findings.”

And the Czech Ministry of the Environment agrees with the claim that EU regulations no longer reflect contemporary developments in biotechnology. “From discussions regarding the decision of the European Court and from the experience of the administrative offices, it is evident that the implementation of regulations,

written almost twenty years ago, today is causing many unresolved issues,” wrote CRH leadership and the Minister of the Environment, Richard Brabec. According to him, there should be a broad discussion involving all participating parties – including the public – regarding possible changes in these regulations. The ministry, on the basis of a request from the European Commission, is gathering information on specific projects using gene editing in the Czech Republic, their possible benefits, and problems connected with the implementation of a GMO directive.

According to information provided by Biotrin, a non-profit organisation created by scientific professionals for distributing information on modern biotechnologies, the period of the approval process for GMOs is incomparably longer than for other products regulated in the EU. “For example, the approval process for new medicines is seven times quicker. Thus it is no wonder that the scientific-research institutions, investors, and firms in the area of GMO have given up on many projects prepared for realisation in the EU and have transferred their activities to other parts of the world,” says the organisation’s website.

The scientists are convinced that the current situation is leading to retardation of developments in this area and that European agriculture will lose its competitive ability. “In the USA, there have been many start-ups and some of them have already developed crops with the help of new methods which have qualities desired by consumers, and their cultivation will be lucrative in the changing environmental conditions while respecting the requirements of sustainable agriculture,” Doležel points out. The biggest producers of GM crops are in the USA, but there are also GM producers in Brazil, Argentina, India, and Canada.

### Paradoxes connected with GMOs

- *GM crops are not cultivated in the EU, however they are imported – primarily corn, soybeans, rape, and cotton. Livestock are fed GM crops to a great extent.*
- *Foreign DNA originally from bacteria are found in sweet potatoes. Because their insertion occurred without human intervention, sweet potatoes are not considered GMOs.*
- *In the years 2000 and 2010, the European Commission published reports containing 25 years of research which proved that GMOs are just as safe as ordinary crops. Yet strict regulations remain in force in the EU.*

Source: EuropaBio





photos: Martin Višňa, Milada Hronová

**May Celebrations.** The Queen of this year's UP May Student Celebrations was actress and singer Erika Stárková. "My greatest wish is for everyone to walk down the path of their own heart and soul," declared Queen Erika before her subjects. The theme of the two-day celebrations was pop culture in all its forms. The programme included concerts, theatres, exhibitions, and workshops. "This year's programme was the most colourful one ever in terms of genres. The motto of pop culture was fulfilled in every respect," said Ondřej Martínek from the UP Communications Office, the main coordinator of the organising team. (ipu)



8 faculties  
1 university



## An interactive map will help students to choose study abroad

A new interactive map application for students who wish to study abroad via Erasmus+ has been created by the UP Faculty of Science. The application enables students to search basic information about foreign partner institutions of the faculty.

“At the Department of Geography, we try to support and motivate students in various ways so that they are not afraid to take the opportunity to travel abroad. Thanks to the feedback, we have learned that the most important thing is to overcome one’s fear of the unknown and set one’s sails. In fact,

everyone comes back with experience which is both fun and valuable,” said Petr Šimáček, of the Department of Geography, co-author of the map of mobilities abroad.

The foreign partner institutions are divided in the map app into layers according to the discipline and to the individual mobilities that are used. “The user can find basic information about the partner universities abroad directly on the map, such as links to their websites, information about the town, or even the previous experience of students who have stayed there. I believe that the

map will open doors to other students interested in foreign stays,” added Šimáček.

They can use their language competencies acquired abroad subsequently in their careers. “Much research as well as feedback from practice confirms that there is no better reference for today’s employers than study abroad. Thanks to their foreign stays, students build all the self-confidence and resolution they need for their future lives and careers,” concluded Dana Gronychová, Student International Affairs Officer at the Faculty of Science. (cho)

## UP Student Athletics Championship

The traditional spring sports championship of Palacký University has revealed this year’s winners. The best performances in athletic disciplines were shown by Daniela Janatová of the Faculty of Science and Recreation student Štěpán Smutný, while in climbing mostly well-known athletes took over. The first-year students Veronika

Strýčková and Ondřej Pospíšil managed to win medals in both contests.

Strýčková, a student of Physical Culture and Mathematics, was the fastest at the 4-metre rope climbing, and she was no. 3 in climbing the 8m rope. “I’m into athletics, I do pole vaulting. My arms are strong, that’s why,” said Veronika Strýčková, com-

menting on her performance. She confirmed the strength in her arms later at the athletic stadium where she won in javelin throwing, in addition to a silver medal in high jumping. The complete set of medals belongs also to Ondřej Pospíšil, a student of Physical Culture and English in Education. He won a gold medal in the 100-metre run and a silver and a bronze medal in climbing.

Daniela Janatová triumphed altogether in four disciplines at the athletic championship: in the relay run, in the 100 and 400 metre runs and in the long jump. The prize for the best male athlete was won by her colleague from the Olomouc Athletic Club, Štěpán Smutný.

Those who also excelled at the championship attended by 200 athletes included Soňa Lisníková from the Faculty of Science, high-jumper Ondřej Tesař, and Jan Uhrin, who won the shot put and was second in the discus throw. The climbing contest had a fabulous atmosphere, where apart from Veronika Strýčková, the individual disciplines were championed by Michaela Veličková, Jonáš Vilikovský and Michal Sláma, favourites from previous years. (vim)



## Former dormitory to become the Faculty of Theology's centre of research excellence

The Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology will build its centre of science and research in the former Marie Kudeřiková dormitory on Kateřinská Street, Olomouc. The reconstruction, according to a design by the Ječmen studio, will develop a state-of-the-art facility for the scientific

teams from the Olomouc University Social Health Institute (OUSHI), the Centre for Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Texts, scientists participating in the international HBSC study, and doctoral students.

The renovated building will provide classrooms, workrooms, counsel-

ling and therapeutic rooms, plus a lab for measuring biomarkers in social sciences research. "We have managed to create a methodology how to measure levels of oxytocin. Its connection to spirituality is not investigated anywhere in the Czech Republic to such an extent. The lab will enable us to measure other hormones too, such as cortisol, electrodermal activity and ECG. It may sound strange for a theological faculty; however, these measurements will provide us with precious data for our research into social health," said Dean Peter Tavel.

The constructions involve mainly the interiors, but there will be renovations in the external appearance as well. The main entrance will be moved to the corner tower, where an attic chapel of St Catherine will be built. The construction costs are estimated at €1.5 million, and funding was acquired thanks to the programme ISPRO-FIN at the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. (vim)



## Completed funding will increase the number of medics and competitiveness of the medical faculty

In September, 250 first-year students – fifteen percent more than in previous years – will be enrolled at the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry to study General Medicine. The increase in the number of students is one of the specific impacts of the National Programme of the Completion of Funding for Medical Faculties, from which the Olomouc faculty will receive a total of €30 million in the years to come.

Vice-Dean Milan Kolář pointed out this is not a mere increase in the number of students, respectively graduates. "The philosophy of the programme is to secure the education of future physicians. Thanks to this funding, we're not so dependent on English-language study programmes which subsidised the Czech ones. We can support the motivation of our teachers and increase the competitiveness of the faculty, as compared to healthcare facilities, in regards to salaries. The financial means will be divided among all our workplaces, a portion will be used to purchase necessary equipment and for repairs and operations. We also need new premises for training on simulators and a large au-

ditorium for 400 students. We are ready to participate in financing the upcoming building shared with the Faculty of Health Sciences," added Kolář.

For the next decade, more than €250 million has been allocated for the completion of financing of medical schools in the Czech

Republic. This sum is based on qualified estimates by the Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic, according to which the 15% increase in student enrolment will cover the demand for new doctors caused by the retirement of existing ones. (vim)



8 faculties  
1 university



## Tandem teaching: An interesting experience for Faculty of Education academics

Selected academic workers of the UP Faculty of Education have the opportunity to experience the reality of education at primary and secondary schools by means of tandem teaching. The project “Innovative education of teachers by connection of theory and practice” (ITEP) will allow them to improve their didactic skills and competencies.

“It is definitely an interesting experience for me. Two teachers will be present in the classroom and both will contrib-

ute their own perspective to the topic and the form of presentation. It does not mean they would divide the class into two sections – on the contrary, they can complement and help each other throughout the class,” said Petr Anténe of the Institute of Foreign Languages at the UP Faculty of Education, who has tried tandem teaching at the Church Grammar School of the German Order in Olomouc.

Tandem teaching is not so common in the Czech Republic. Only rarely are there

two teachers in one classroom. “For the teachers themselves, their colleague’s feedback is very helpful and enriching. Feedback is generally limited to ordinary inspections, which they perceive as a means of control rather than an equal partnership,” added Pavla Andrysová of The Institute of Education and Social Studies. According to her, the same benefit for the development of didactic competencies can be found in mentoring, which can also be tried within the ITEP project by the academics. (map)

## The Faculty of Law commenced its largest construction investment

In the beginning of 2019, the UP Faculty of Law began the largest construction investment in its modern history. The desired and needed completion of the faculty building was brought significantly closer thanks to the successful application for construction funding, submitted in the Operational Programme “Research, Development and Education”, financed from EU funds. The faculty is supposed to receive up to €1.6 million. If everything runs smoothly, the new wing of the faculty ought to be operational in the summer term 2020.

The objective of the project “The development of infrastructure at the UP Faculty of Law for the improvement of education and the internationalisation of study” is the completion of a new central wing with a library and study centre and the construction of a new Centre for Clinical Legal Education. The modernisation will also involve the B building, where a completely new two-storey tract will be built.

The Faculty of Law will participate in financing the whole project. The required participation is 5%. The faculty will also

have to cover other expenses necessarily related to the project.

And what will they gain? A new study centre with a library will become the architectural, functional, and symbolical heart of the faculty and will allow students, teachers, and guests to spend their time more effectively and in higher comfort. “We want our library to be vibrant, a place where students will spend a considerable part of their studies and which will offer various forms of preparations and study. The study centre will include specialised rooms for training in key competencies needed for practising law, as well as offices for foreign guests. There will be access from the study hall to an outdoor terrace,” described the faculty’s dean, Zdenka Papoušková, Thanks to the modernisation of the existing complex, there will be enough room for legal clinics too, especially for a student legal advisory centre.

The construction should be completed in October 2019, then in November and December the new premises will be equipped with furniture and electrical devices. In February 2020, it should be ready to serve the faculty’s students and employees. (eha)



## A team from three institutions completes a research work on Karl von Lichtenstein-Castlecorno

Experts from the Olomouc Museum of Art, Palacký University Olomouc, and Masaryk University in Brno focussed their four-year research on Bishop Karl von Lichtenstein-Castlecorno. He was the person responsible for the rebuilding of the Kroměříž Chateau, as well as Olomouc Archbishop's Palace, he built the world-renowned Flower Garden of Kroměříž, and

gathered precious collections of paintings, graphic arts, sculptures, coins, books, and sheet music. Without his contribution, Olomouc as well as other places in Moravia would look completely different today.

“We have been postponing such a complex study on Karl von Lichtenstein-Castlecorno for several decades. It is an extraordinarily broad and demanding theme.

However now a team of experts from all three institutions is finishing two large publications. They will be published in both Czech and English versions and launched on the occasion of an exposition. It will present not only the Bishop's art collections and patronage, but also his strategies in the economic and spiritual management of the Olomouc diocese,” said Jana Zapletalová, Head of the Department of Art History at the UP Faculty of Arts.

Karl von Lichtenstein-Castlecorno was one of the most powerful noblemen of the second half of the 17th century. The Olomouc Museum of Art has presented him during this year by means of an extensive exhibition project “For the Cathedral, City, and Country”. The exposition also features a documentary film “The Baroque Nobleman”, in whose preparations dozens of experts of the above-mentioned institutions participated. It was filmed by screenwriter and director Theodor Mojžíš in co-production with Czech Television. (map)



## HELP2 project provides English as well as German courses for medics

As a follow-up to the recently concluded international project Healthcare English Language Programme (HELP) awarded by the European Commission, the UP Faculty of Health Sciences created an online platform for providing English courses for medics. This platform will be further elaborated, as the main investigators from the faculty along with investigators from partner universities and organisations of seven European countries plan to complement new topics according to users' feedback, and also translate some parts into German.

“The users lacked for example nutrition, physiotherapy, dental medicine, and caregiving. Our aim is to complement those areas and more,” said the main investigator of the project, Lukáš Merz of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Users – not only medics and physicians, but also interested parties from the public – can already attend twenty interactive courses on the project's website, fourteen

of which are focused on healthcare issues, whereas the remaining ones deal with intercultural competencies. The materials are also available in the form of PDF files to be downloaded.

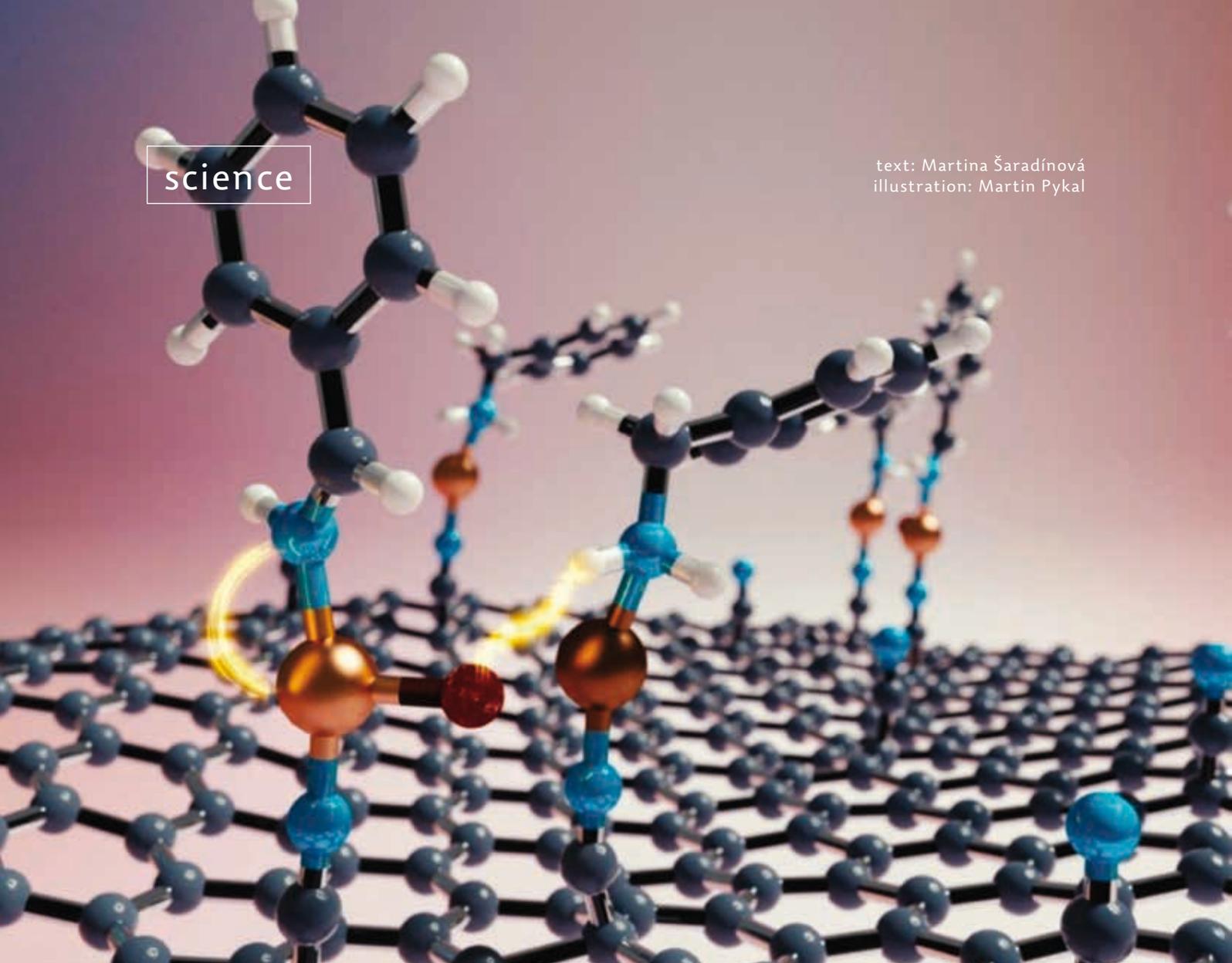
“The innovation of the HELP2 project is in the fact that we are going to use all the possibilities of the new version of

Moodle and advance the level of our interactive exercises up a notch,” added Merz. The first novelties for pilot testing and users' feedback will be accessible in summer 2019. The whole project will culminate with an official presentation of its results at the final conference in March 2021 in Olomouc. (vim)



science

text: Martina Šaradínová  
illustration: Martin Pykal



A demonstration of the interaction of a graphene derivative with molecules for applications in chemical catalysis.

# Scientists fine-tune molecules with the help of 2D chemistry

The physical chemists Pavel Hobza and Radek Zbořil, from the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) of Palacký University respectively, together with their team, have been searching for new ways in chemistry as of this year, thanks to an EXPRO project funded by the Czech Science Foundation. For the next five years they have been granted funding for a research project for excellence in the amount of €2 million.

The project “Influencing the electronic properties of organometallic molecules through the help of their noncovalent interactions with solvents, ligands and 2D systems” follows up on many years of research by both scientists and their labs in this country.

“The idea of the project is to make use of the 2D chemistry of graphene for the first time to influence the electronic states and properties of molecules. It is based on the assumption that graphene or its derivatives could be a suitable substrate, which could, through covalent and noncovalent interactions, influence the electronic, magnetic, and optical qualities of molecules,” explained Radek Zbořil, who is also the RCPTM director.

The scientists must create a communications path between the molecules and the 2D surface. They will make use of the chem-

ical bonds which will arise between the two components of the system. “We’re starting off mainly via the path of covalent chemistry, because it has been shown that in these stronger bonds the interaction between a molecule and the substrate is stronger, which could enhance the mutual synergy. We are also going to try noncovalent bonds. The chosen approach will depend on which 2D material we use,” explained Pavel Hobza, the most-cited Czech scientist and the discoverer of improper hydrogen bonds. The scientists chose planar ligands on the basis of iron phthalocyanines for their research. These molecules, structurally similar to haemoglobin, are the ones that the scientists will try to influence.

Although the fundamental contribution of the project should be to prove the hypothesis of the possibility of influencing the properties of molecules via two-di-

dimensional chemistry, in the second phase, the researchers would like to apply their findings in real applications. Such hybrid systems of 2D materials with a bonded molecule offer applications in molecular electronics, biomedicine, electrocatalysis, or in new battery technologies.

The aim of the new EXPRO group of projects is to support research teams led by a top, internationally recognised expert or by a young scientist with convincing potential for excellence – i.e., direct support to where excellence already exists or where it has a chance to be created. The goal is to contribute to raising the excellence of science in the country. One of the conditions is that the key scientist must apply for a grant from the European Research Council (ERC) during the course of the project. Thirty-six EXPRO projects were awarded in the first competition.

## Faculty of Law journal included in Scopus database

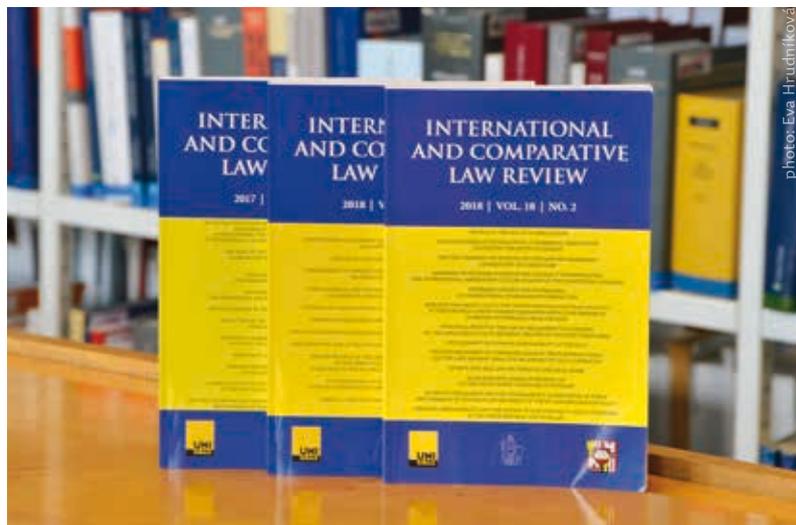
The Faculty of Law is celebrating one of the most important academic achievements in its modern history. Its peer-reviewed journal *International and Comparative Law Review* (ICLR) was proposed by the international commission Scopus Content Selection & Advisory Board to be included in the prestigious Scopus abstract and citation database. It is one of the key tools for the bibliometric evaluation of quality in scientific and academic journals.

The inclusion of ICLR among the elite academic periodicals is a confirmation of the journal’s quality and at the same time an acknowledgement of the many years of hard work by the editorial team. Its chief since 2016 has been Ondrej Hamulák from the Department of International and European Law. “The process of selection and inclusion of journals into the Scopus database is very demanding. It took our journal, from the application to the positive evaluation, almost four years,” said Hamulák. Throughout that period, they had to pay heed to the regularity of publication, the originality of texts, and high citation index. The Scopus Content Selection & Advisory Board also judged the composition of the editorial board, the quality and geographic diversity of authors, the selection of topics, and the journal’s potential.

Successful completion of the process of indexation into Scopus was significantly influenced also by a decision of the faculty’s management, who allocated special funding within the institutional plan for internalisation in order to support the development of this journal. This funding facilitated some time ago inclusion of the journal into the Scopus database, which contributed to its visibility and impact. One sign of the grow-

ing prestige of ICLR, which is published twice a year in English, is the current interest of authors to publish there. The editorial board receives around one hundred texts annually.

The Scopus database lists only four journals in Law published in the Czech Republic. Altogether, Palacký University has three indexed periodicals in the database – *Biomedical Papers Olomouc*, *Acta Gymnica*, and *Studia Theologica*. (eha)





research

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photos: Gabriela Knýblová, KM archives

Namibian girls  
in Bartošovice, 1987

# "Africans with a Czech soul"

## *Olomouc scientist describes the forgotten fates of Namibian children*

It's a story partly heart-warming, partly tragic, and partly disturbing. It's the story of 56 African children, half-orphaned by war, taken in by what was then the Czechoslovakian regime under the auspices of socialist cooperation, in order for them to study in Czechoslovakia and forget about the war. It's the story of Namibian Czechs – African on the outside, European on the inside – who years later had to return to Namibia – a land they did not know, whose language they did not speak, and a country in which they did not want to live. But mainly, it is testimony to how regimes and politicians played with children like piec-

es in a board game. The almost unknown fates of these Namibian Czechs are being mapped by Kateřina Mildnerová of the UP Faculty of Arts in her research.

The African studies scholar from the Department of Sociology, Andragogy and Cultural Anthropology first learned about the Namibians who consider themselves Czechs in the year 2000, during her studies at the university in Pilsen. There she met two female students from Namibia who spoke Czech and proudly declared themselves Czechs. "I was interested in the theme of an ordinary person against the backdrop of history. A person caught up in

the storm of events, and because he or she is a child, they cannot influence things on their own. That child is like a plant we have dug up and then repotted into a different environment, where it has no roots and is not capable of another full life," she says, explaining the beginnings of her research.

### **Czechoslovakian idyll**

Kateřina Mildnerová is talking about 56 children who found themselves in the mid-1980s in what was then socialist Czechoslovakia. A years-long fight for independence was underway in Namibia, one of the last African colonies. The guerrilla war

was being led by the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO – the national liberation front), and its activities were supported by the countries of the former Soviet bloc. And so SWAPO's military leaders were made an offer to send almost sixty boys and girls, aged five to seven, to be brought up and educated in a friendly socialist country.

Starting in 1985, the children were placed in a boarding school in Bartošovice, and in 1988 were transferred to a newly remodelled boarding school in Prachaticce. They learned Czech, they played sports, they went to school. Some of them were “adopted” by Czech families who took them home on weekends and holidays. And they were also used as propaganda – smiling black children – for the regime, as these SWAPO socialist youths sang and marched in May Day parades. “Their stay here was idyllic for them, they were well taken care of, they had exotic fresh fruit and good facilities,” describes Mildnerová.

### End of the dream, African reality begins

The idyll ended for the unsuspecting children at the beginning of the 1990s, when Namibia declared its independence. Its newly ratified constitution requested the repatriation of its citizens. After complicated diplomatic discussions, the children were definitively returned in autumn 1991. It was not a happy return. They arrived in a country they did not know, whose lan-

guage they did not speak. Plus for years, the group had gotten used to being together all the time. Which also came to an end.

Kateřina Mildnerová first went to Namibia in 2017 to do fieldwork. She had already been acquainted with the situation there because the theme had been taken up by her husband – an anthropologist – before her. But he had not finished his work and so she took it over. “My arrival was incredible, they welcomed me with open arms. I was a symbol of everything they love. The trust normally earned from a respondent over a long period of weeks and months was instantaneous,” the scientist describes.

She was able to contact and map the fates of 38 of the children, now in their forties. In the majority of cases, these were not stories with a happy ending. “They varied. Some were parents, or rather mothers, because the fathers either died in battle or were unknown, or were high officials in the ruling party which smoothed the way for their children. But those were few. The majority lived in difficult living conditions, in slums, in tin huts without drinking water on the poverty line,” she says, and remembers for instance a young woman living in a tent, who to this day has preserved her crumpled school report card with straight As from Prachaticce. The return to Namibia for the Prachaticce children was very difficult – they were scattered among their real or adoptive parents across the entire country, many finding themselves in a backward countryside without electricity. →

### Kateřina Mildnerová (b. 1978)

African studies scholar and social and cultural anthropologist working at the Department of Sociology, Andragogy, and Cultural Anthropology, UP Faculty of Arts. Head of the Czech Association of African Studies. She is interested professionally in the religions of sub-Saharan Africa and the problem of identity and the concept of home for migrants; she has had several research stays in Zambia, Benin, and Namibia. She is the author of three monographs: *Můj soused čaroděj* (My neighbour the warlock, 2008), *Pití fetišů – Náboženství a umění vodun v Beninu* (Drinking fetishes – Religion and the voodoo arts in Benin, 2012), and *From Where Does the Bad Wind Blow? Spiritual Healing and Witchcraft in Zambia, Lusaka* (2015). At present she is preparing a monograph on identity and the concept of home for Namibian Czechs.

“I was interested in the theme of an ordinary person against the backdrop of history. A person caught up in the storm of events, and because he or she is a child, they cannot influence things on their own. That child is like a plant we have dug up and then repotted into a different environment, where it has no roots and is not capable of another full life.”



Some of the families of girls who were then thirteen-year-olds with a European education – and thus a good commodity – immediately “married” them.

“Many had great psychological difficulties – they did not know the local language, not even English, and thus they had trouble even integrating into the local educational system; some became homeless, reaching absolute rock bottom, some fell prey to alcohol or drugs. They all experienced difficult states of cultural uprooting, loneliness, and powerlessness,” explains Mildnerová.

### Difficult returns

As she adds, many of them have not given up on their dream to return home – to Czechia – even after 28 years of life in Namibia. “One of the almost unbelievable findings of my study is that even after so many years they feel they are Czechs, they still speak Czech, they use the Czech names they were given by their caretakers here, and they still keep in touch. By the way, their children are even named after Czech fairy tale characters – Růženka (Sleeping Beauty), Zlatovláska (Goldilocks), Popelka (Cinderella),” the UP scientist enumerates.

A possible return by these now adults to a transformed country however will not be easy. Some of them have had the experience, though. In the 1990s, they could again return and study at university. “Fifteen were accepted, but the majority did not graduate – only four or five. The rest perceived it as a return to their care-free childhood and were not able to manage university life. In the end, they were deported. But those that did graduate found themselves in a difficult position after their return to Namibia. Their degrees were not accepted, and nobody wanted to employ them. However, it worked out in the end, and at present the ones who had a Czech university education have quite decent jobs.”

### Social experiments do not end well

In addition to fieldwork, Kateřina Mildnerová does archival research, and one result of her work ought to be the autumn publication of a book about Namibian Czechs. “The book is not the only result. I’m currently preparing a documentary film as well, in cooperation with Audio-Visual Productions at UP. And thanks to the research, I was also able to connect the Czech families with their ‘adopted’

children via social networks. It has been very emotional.”

Some of the heroes of this story ought to return to Czechia at the beginning of summer to work. “Their vision is that they will work here, and once they earn enough money, they want to bring their children here to live with them,” Mildnerová says, adding in an aside that none of the Namibians are planning to bring their spouses along with them. “None of their marriages are going very well; the cultural differences were so vast that things didn’t work out. The only happy marriages are those which involve a Czech partner. These are for example young women who studied at Czech universities, found Czech men, and live together with them in Namibia. That works.”

Every story should also have some sort of moral. Kateřina Mildnerová formulates it quite precisely, even though it is not a very optimistic one. “The fate of the Namibian children is proof that any political manipulation whatsoever with children is dangerous and can permanently damage the children psychologically. Because of this social experiment, these children will have psychological scars for the rest of their lives.”



Namibian adolescents with their music idols at their departure from Prachatice, 1991



Namibian children on a trip to Anín, 1989  
Repatriation of the children from Prachatice to Namibia, 1991

text: Martin Višňa  
photos: Gabriela Knýblová

portrait

A portrait of a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling and wearing a white lab coat over a white top. She is standing on a balcony with a white railing. A small red and black Minnie Mouse pin is visible on her lab coat pocket.

# Dagmar Pospíšilová

Paediatric Haematologist and Professor,  
UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry



### **Dagmar Pospíšilová (b. 1956)**

Professor of Paediatrics, scientist, doctor, born in Prostějov. She graduated from the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, after her studies she entered the Olomouc University Hospital Children's Clinic, which she now heads, and where since the mid-1980s has been a specialist in the field of Paediatric Haematology. In the 1990s she had work stays in St. Anna Kinderspital in Vienna and at Harvard Medical School in the USA. In 2015 she was named Professor of Paediatrics. She is a member of several professional workgroups, for example the expert panel for Diamond-Blackfan anaemia in the European Network for Rare and Congenital Anaemias, and is the deputy head of the Paediatric Haematology Workgroup of the Czech Haematology Society.

To watch your child die is doubtless the worst thing a parent can experience. The loss of a young person's life is of course also experienced by doctors, when they must face the fact that our medical knowledge is limited. One such loss was not accepted by Dagmar Pospíšilová, currently the Head of the Children's Clinic of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and the Olomouc University Hospital, where her professional life started with research on anaemia.

Paediatric haematology and oncology are still considered the most depressing fields in medicine. However, once you start to discuss this theme with a woman who radiates optimism and energy, your preconceptions get blown to smithereens. "The last twenty or twenty-five years have been an amazing period, something which the young doctors of today may never experience. We have been eyewitnesses to perhaps the greatest advance in medicine, when such a pessimistic field as paediatric haematology and oncology actually became a fascinating and optimistic one. Thanks to the cooperation of experts from all over the world, treatment for childhood leukaemia has improved so much that we are now able to cure nearly ninety percent of our patients and return them back to life – with no after-effects. Beforehand it was the opposite – ninety percent of our young patients faced fatal consequences," says Dagmar Pospíšilová, with visible enthusiasm.

#### **Maths fell by the wayside**

She refers to herself as a pupil of Vladimír Mihála – her colleague from the Department of Haemato-Oncology and predecessor as Head of the Children's Clinic. "When I started out in haematology, he

was already an expert, he taught me a lot. Especially a love for paediatrics, science, and medicine based on proof."

The road for the now renowned doctor and expert in haematology took her through three crucial moments. "I loved maths from the very beginning. At primary school I took part successfully in Mathematics Olympics and wanted to study maths. However at secondary school, they put me in the natural sciences class. In the end, maths fell by the wayside and I applied for university studies in medicine. At the Department of Sports Medicine and Cardiovascular Rehabilitation, I started to work as an assistant in Cardiology. When later I went to the University Hospital, there was no opening in Internal Medicine. I could choose between Radiology and Paediatrics. The third turning point took place in Paediatrics, when the head doctor called me to say that a colleague in Haematology was leaving and they needed a replacement. My dream of Cardiology quickly evaporated. My beginnings in Haematology were difficult and depressing, but I swear by the field today," remembers the professor.

#### **Rare disease**

After the death of one of her patients from Diamond-Blackfan anaemia, research into this extremely rare blood disease became a life-long theme for her. In all of Czechia and Slovakia, just over sixty patients suffer from this syndrome. There is no cure, but hope could be just a few years away. The cause of the disease has now been identified.

"These are abnormal ribosomal protein genes which control protein biosynthesis in cells. Their discovery was one of the biggest

surprises in medicine over the past twenty years and allowed the definition of an entirely new group of diseases and the rise of extensive and interesting research into them. We are also studying the individual problems which this anaemia causes, and we're trying to determine how to influence them. We've found for example that administering the amino acid leucine leads to improving patients' conditions. We're also looking at the possibility of gene therapy, repairing the mutated genes. Our colleagues from Sweden – with whom we are cooperating – are furthest along in this research. I believe that I'll still be around to employ gene treatment," hopes the scientist, whose workplace is the centre of research in rare anaemias in the Czech Republic and a member of the ENERCA – the European Network for Rare and Congenital Anaemias.

Dagmar Pospíšilová, a highly-cited researcher, was nominated for the Milada Paulová Award for lifelong achievement in science for women researchers. "I was very surprised by the nomination, and it was a great honour for me. And because of it, I realised how few female professors of medicine there are. I think that women have absolutely the same preconditions as men to carry out science and research. The key moment in the case of women is motherhood. Their new life role logically overwhelms them, and the way that sci-

ence today so quickly evolves, returning to work can be, and often is, demanding. It would help if a female researcher in that period could, thanks to some special benefit or programme, most effectively combine the time dedicated to work and family and to the maximum possible extent be able to dedicate herself to her scientific work. It would require however the huge support, understanding and tolerance of all members of the family," she surmises.

### One huge marathon

The problem of the number of women in science is reflected in her answer to the question of role models. Among the personalities whom she values for their expert contributions are the immunologist Anna Šedivá from Motol University Hospital in Prague, the haematologist Šárka Pospíšilová from Brno, and then men – the Olomouc scientists and doctors Marián Hajdúch, Vladimír Divoký, Milan Raška, and Vladimír Mihál, the head of the Motol Paediatric Haematology and Ontology Clinic Jan Starý, and the scientists Jan Trka and Jan Zuna.

"I also take my hat off to our nurses for their patience. It's no wonder people call them angels. We have excellent nurses in our clinic," points out Prof Pospíšilová, who recently added to her medical and scientific responsibilities by becoming head of the clinic. "I'm responsible for everything

that goes on here. It's one huge marathon. We are dedicated to treating patients, and educating students – paediatrics is a required state medical course and a certification field. It's also necessary to resolve personnel problems and possible patient complaints. And you never know when you go home on a Friday if everything will be the same on Monday."

### Classical music lover

Responsibilities obviously require some kind of compensation, relaxation. The greatest relaxation for Dagmar Pospíšilová at present is her four-year-old grandson; she also unwinds through sport. She used to do gymnastics, then aerobics, and after that regularly went to the fitness centre. Recently her free time has been significantly diminished, but she still cycles, skis in winter, and keeps fit.

She also has another hobby: classical music, and not just passively. She used to play piano and still practices her favourite, Chopin. "Like everything else, you need to practise, and I don't have such nimble fingers as I used to. I do sit down at the piano, when nobody's there to listen," the professor confides, whose favourites also include Mozart and Shostakovich. "Sometimes when I'm all in, I sit down in my armchair, close my eyes, and listen to something by them – that's real relaxation," she adds.

**"The work of a doctor is a calling. It is our job, but I wouldn't call it heroic. I quite humbly bow to the real heroes, those who risk their own lives to save others."**



**Vladimír Mihál**

Professor, former Head of the Children's Clinic of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and the Olomouc University Hospital

Dagmar Pospíšilová is a respected and mature personality in the field of Czech Paediatrics and Haematology, with high professional capital. She cooperates closely with foreign colleagues on the problem of congenital erythropoiesis. Her copious publishing and lecturing activities with multiple citations and extensive foreign scientific and research cooperation complete her qualities. Her scientific work is a great boon for the clinic.



**Jan Starý**

Professor, Head of the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Clinic, Second Faculty of Medicine at the Charles University in Prague Faculty of Medicine and the Motol University Hospital

Prof Dagmar Pospíšilová is one of the leading representatives of the traditionally excellent Olomouc haematology school, an internationally known and respected expert in the problem of non-cancerous blood diseases. She is an experienced clinician with a great knowledge of theory and differential diagnoses in paediatrics, thinking about the uncured diseases of her patients and stimulating her laboratory co-workers to introducing new diagnostic and explorational methods and approaches.

success



## Patrik Farkaš of the Faculty of Arts received the Bader Scholarship

Patrik Farkaš, a doctoral student at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Arts, received the highly prestigious scholarship of the U.S. chemist and art collector Alfred Bader. The scholarship, in the sum of \$11,000, was granted to support his scientific research and stay abroad.

“Being awarded the Alfred Bader Scholarship is a tremendous honour and also an obligation to provide quality research findings during my doctoral study,” said Patrik Farkaš. His research delves into secular

themes in Hungarian painting of the 17th and 18th centuries, especially still lifes and landscape painting. “We are trying to detect their European models and outline how the contemporary market with these artworks operated,” he added.

The Bader Scholarship was awarded to enable him to study the still lifes of Eastern Slovakia and research the work of a local native, Jakub Bogdani. “In addition to staying in the countries of the former Hungarian Empire, it also involves a stay in Lon-

don and at the Netherlands Institute for Art History in the Haag, where I will spend altogether three months,” said the UP doctoral student. During his study stays, he will collaborate with natural scientists. The collaboration will consist in providing chemical-technological analyses of paintings with dubious authorship and comparing the findings with related works as well as a preserved manuscript that describes the technical procedures in Bogdani’s painting. (map)

## Surgeon Vladimír Král dubbed Knight of the Czech Medical Profession



The honorary title Knight of the Czech Medical Profession was bestowed upon Vladimír Král, emeritus head of the Department of Surgery I at the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and the University Hospital Olomouc, as an appraisal of his work. He entered the medical hall of fame as its twenty-fifth member during a ceremonial act of the Czech Medical Chamber in Prague’s Břevnov Monastery.

“Professor Vladimír Král excels both in professionalism and innate gentility, natural elegance, and a cultivated demeanour that elevate him to the status of a master surgeon. Therefore, he deserves to be decorated by the title Knight of the Czech Medical Profession. Wisdom, modesty, selflessness, and diligence, along with firm moral principles, are virtues inherent in knights,” stated the chamber’s President, Milan Kubek.

The Czech Medical Chamber awards the title of knight to extraordinary personalities among medical doctors whose practice or scientific work significantly contributed to the development of medicine and whose moral conduct has become a model for their colleagues. “It is an honour that I accept with utmost humbleness. I think this acknowledgement does not belong to me only, but also to all my colleagues,” said the renowned surgeon and educator with an excellent reputation in the country and abroad, who headed the Department of Surgery I in Olomouc and who still shares his experience with students despite being retired. In 2018, Vladimír Král received the Gold Medal for Merit in the Development of Palacký University from UP Rector Jaroslav Miller. (vim)

## Tomáš Pluháček from the Faculty of Science received the Zdeněk Herman Prize



The endowment fund Resonance granted the 2018 Zdeněk Herman Prize to Tomáš Pluháček from the Faculty of Science, for his dissertation called “Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry in metabolomics and forensic analysis”. “I appreciate the prize I have received very much, and it will, most of all, motivate me for further work. I also perceive it as acknowledgement of my colleagues who have helped me with solving the scientific challenges,” said Tomáš Pluháček from the Department of Analytical Chemistry.

The work was conceived during his postgraduate study at the Department of Analytical Chemistry at the UP Faculty of Science and in the Laboratory of Molecular Structure Characterisation at the Institute of Microbiology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, under the supervision of Prof Vladimír Havlíček.

“In the area of metabolomics, I dealt with the development of a method for the detection of invasive pulmonary aspergillosis (IPA) in rat lungs, which may be an alternative for histological tissue staining. Mass spectrometry imaging enables detailed study of a massively expanding infection with a subsequent unambiguous localisation of areas affected by IPA infection,” explained Pluháček.

Another part, dedicated to forensic analysis, was focused on the imaging of post-firing residues adhering to the hands of the shooter after using a firearm, with subsequent direct identification of the person. “The mass spectrometry mapping of copper, zinc, antimony, mercury, barium, and lead on the surface of latent fingerprints allows, among other things, a reliable and accurate reconstruction of the shooter’s fingerprint, so that he or she can be directly identified,” added Pluháček. (cho)

## Austrian prize for Olomouc Jewish Studies

The Kurt and Ursula Schubert Center of Jewish Studies at the UP Faculty of Arts and its founder, Professor of German Studies Ingeborg Fialová, received the Kurt Schubert Memorial Award for interreligious dialogue.

The award was granted for the sixth time by the Forum for World Religions in Austria; this was the first time it was given to laureates from abroad. “Thanks to the work of several volunteers, the Department of Jewish Studies was established at the UP Faculty of Arts in 2004. In 2008, the workplace was renamed the Kurt and Ursula Schubert Center of Jewish Studies. Academic debate and research into Jewish studies, which have a strong and rich tradition in Bohemia, thus gained its space in the Moravian context,” said Fialová.

“Kurt Schubert had a very close relationship to Moravia, especially Olomouc. This is also why we have decided to award the local Center of Jewish Studies and Prof Fialová as successors of Schu-

bert’s ideas – that is, the development of friendly relations in Central Europe and mutual understanding of nations, cul-

tures, and religions,” said Petrus Bsteh from the Forum for World Religions in explanation of their choice. (ipu)



Ingeborg Fialová (left) received the award from Sigrid Jalkotzy-Deger from the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

success



## Rector awards students and academics

A total of 86 awards were presented by Rector Jaroslav Miller at a ceremony in the auditorium of the Faculty of Education. The ceremony for the Rector's Award for Students and Honorary Mention for Academic Books for 2018 was one of the traditional pillars in the UP Academic Week, commemorating the university's restoration in 1946.

Bachelor's and Master's theses as well as other academic texts were submitted to the contest by students of seven faculties. The

majority of 33 awarded students were from the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science. "I appreciate this award very much, it gives me a certain satisfaction my efforts were not in vain and perhaps it will motivate me for further research," said Anna Blatecká from the Faculty of Arts. Rector's Awards for Student Athletes were also awarded.

According to Rector Miller, the results from the student part of the contest confirm the creativity, expertise, and compet-

itiveness of the applying students. "Our students successfully represent Palacký University in contests beyond the domestic context. Their works often have a practical impact. I thank all those who have submitted their works," said the rector.

Honorary Mentions for Academic Books published in the years 2017 and 2018 were granted to 48 authors from the academic community for 46 publications. The rector thus aims to increase the prestige of academic work at Palacký University. (křej)

## Lawyer Ondrej Hamulák named member of professorial board at Tallinn university

Ondrej Hamulák from the Faculty of Law has been given the important academic position of "cooperating professor" at the prestigious Tallinn University of Technology. This member of the Department of International and European Law will hold this position for three years, granted by a decision of the rector of the university in Tallinn. Hamulák has thus become a full member of the Tallinn Law School professorial board. Meanwhile, the Olomouc Faculty of Law will remain his main workplace.

The main job Hamulák will be charged with as Adjunct Professor in EU Strategic Legal Affairs is intensive research into strategic questions in European law – including the constitutional challenges in European law after Brexit, EU measures enforcing the rule of law and basic rights, democratisation of EU government, legal aspects of global digital challenges for the

EU, and more. "At the same time my task is to connect Central European and Baltic research in the field of law on the level of collaborating in events, projects, and publications," Hamulák explained. He can now also advise on internal decisions and strategic planning of the Tallinn Law School in the area of research and development and lead research teams in Tallinn.

Receiving such a position at a top European university is not only a recognition of the qualities of Ondrej Hamulák, but it is also an important nod to his home faculty. "The success of our colleague means at the same time international recognition of our entire faculty. It is another indicator of how the growing quality of our faculty, made up of both students and teachers, is perceived abroad," said Martin Faix, Vice-Dean of International Relations at the UP Faculty of Law, in appraisal. (eha)



# Academia Film Olomouc: mythic, filmic, scientific

The international festival of science documentary films Academia Film Olomouc broke two records this year. The 54th year of the festival, organised by Palacký University, offered the largest number of films in its history, and also hosted an unprecedented number of visitors. Nine and half thousand accredited visitors saw more than eighty science documentary films from all over the world and had the opportunity to meet in person with six hundred guests from the ranks of scientists, filmmakers, producers, publicists, and even musicians. The festival audience enjoyed the company of evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, Egyptologists Zahi Hawass, Mostafa Waziri, Miroslav Bárta, and Miroslav Verner, experts

on Nordic mythology Joshua Rood, Argrímur Víðalín, and Einar Selvik, and cosmonaut Vladimír Remek. The main theme of the 54th year was myth, in all its forms and appearances. At the same time, the festival commemorated several anniversaries: one hundred years of Czech Egyptology, and fifty years since landing on the Moon.

“Fifteen years ago, we would never have believed that science and science documentaries might be so popular and sought-after by the greater public. The increasing interest in the festival – and the themes it is dedicated to – makes us believe that what we are doing is really meaningful,” said the festival director, Jakub Ráliš, during closing night. (ipu)

## AWARDED FILMS AND PERSONALITIES

- *Prize for the Best International Popular Science Film: Potěšení z úspěchu (The Joy of Winning)*
- *Prize for the Best Czech or Slovak Popular Science Film: Magion*
- *Audience Award: Lidská podstata (Human Nature)*
- *AFO Spotlight: Petr Salaba*
- *Best Short Subject Popular Science film: Analogový astronaut (Analogue Astronaut)*
- *Student Jury Prize: Vor (The Raft)*
- *Prize for Personal Contribution to Popularising Science: historian Robin Lane Fox, Egyptologist and archaeologist Zahi Hawass*
- *Prize for Contribution to Popularising Science – Institution: Toulky českou minulostí (Roaming through Czech History), Czech Radio*



## Palacký University successful in new university impact rankings

Palacký University has been listed in the 101st to 200th positions in the new international Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings 2019. These global performance tables assess universities against the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and also measure institutions' social and economic impact. Together with the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Palacký University has achieved the best result among the Czech universities listed.

In order to place in the rankings, the competing universities had to score in four out of eleven areas or goals. The over-

all score was based on the three best results. Olomouc's university achieved them in Industry, innovation, and infrastructure (101st–200th), Sustainable cities and communities (93rd), and Climate action (101st–200th). One of the prerequisites for inclusion in the rankings was also evaluation in the category Partnerships for the goals, where UP also occupied within the 101st–200th positions.

UP Rector Jaroslav Miller considers the placement of UP in the THE international rankings to be a big success. “Our university has proven to be one of the global pio-

neers who consciously support the goals of sustainable development by means of education as well as research, one that advocates the principles of collaboration with regional partners and the support of solutions in contemporary society. A large number of our activities attest to that. One of them is the Civil University, which offers educational and counselling services to the greater public free of charge, by means of UP teacher and student volunteers,” said Rector Miller. The first edition of the rankings includes 450 universities from 76 countries. (srd)

## Best athletes at the Faculty of Physical Culture: a cyclist, rugby player, skier, and judo wrestler

The dean of the Faculty of Physical Culture, Michal Šafář, awarded students who excelled in their sports. The awarded students included rugby player Martin Kovář, judo wrestler Adéla Szarzecová, track cyclist Ema Kaňkovská, and hearing-impaired skier Veronika Grygarová. “I was pleasantly surprised that the spectrum of sports has widened, so we could choose from a significantly higher number of nominated athletes. It is a positive signal that athletes found their way to study at our faculty and that we are capable of finding a way how to make their study plans more individual and thus enable them to handle both their studies and sporting career,” said the dean. (vim)



## Midwifery across Europe



Twenty participants from Czechia, Belgium, and Estonia took part in the Winter School of Midwifery, the first year of which was prepared by the UP Faculty of Health Sciences. During the four days of the conference, they compared the specifics of care for the pregnant in the three countries, had practical lessons on simulators, and a course with renowned German midwife Barbara Kosfeld. The practical lessons allowed participants to simulate birth including various potential complications. They also visited the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the Neonatal Ward in the University Hospital Olomouc and learned about the possibilities of physiotherapy in midwifery. (vim)

## Finn finishes first

The UP Faculty of Law has the historically first graduate of the English-language doctoral study programme Theoretical Legal Sciences in the field European and International Law. Tuomas Heikkinen from Finland fulfilled his final condition to successfully



complete his studies when he defended his dissertation “The Unified Standard of Application of International Humanitarian Law in Multinational Military Operations”. His tutor was Martin Faix. The Faculty of Law opened this doctoral programme in the academic year 2014/2015. Applicants go through a strict selection process. There is now another student in the first year of this English programme, this time from Italy. (eha)

## Donate



Blue is Good! Another year of the event “Donate Blood with the Rector” commenced under a motto referring to the university’s colours. During the five days, 122 UP students and employees participated in this event supporting blood donation. Out of them, 113 were admitted for donation, and half were first-time donors. The event was co-organised with the Transfusion Department of the University Hospital Olomouc and the initiative called 470 ml (Pint of Blood) was held for the eighth time already, and it was part of the Academic Week, commemorating the re-establishment of the university in 1946. (vim)

### Film about Professor Jařab



“Homo academicus” is the name of the film documentary about American Studies scholar and UP Professor Emeritus, Josef Jařab, directed by Martin Müller, head of UP Audio-Visual Productions. The film was co-produced by Czech Television and premiered at the international festival of science documentary films Academia Film Olomouc. The documentary was created over a period of seven years, capturing Prof Jařab in many occasions, either official ones, when he hosted renowned personalities at the university, such as poet Allen Ginsberg or theatre director and actor Peter Ustinov, or less official ones, like during the Student May Celebrations. The respected expert and translator of English and American literature is also seen in archival footage as a jazz lover and popular teacher.

(ipu)

### Japanese students at the Faculty of Education



Students of Music Therapy at the Mukogawa Women’s University in Japan participated in a two-day conference at the UP Faculty of Education. They attended a lecture about the specifics and history of art therapies in the Czech Republic as well as practical workshops on music therapy for person with special needs.

(map)

### Champions!

The Palacký University women’s volleyball team crushed the defending champions from Prostějov in the play-off final series and became the champions of the Czech Republic, the first time in twenty-three years. They won in three matches.

(map)



### Dean’s inauguration

The dean of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Peter Tavel, was installed into office during a ceremony in the Archbishop’s Palace in Olomouc. He was elected for the second time and received the nomination decree for the years 2018–2022 from Rector Jaroslav Miller in September 2018. His nomination was approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education in the Vatican. “I’m grateful that I can live in times which I consider extraordinary and exceptional. I hereby assume the responsibility for the faculty and will try to seize the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I have with this faculty,” said Peter Tavel.

(map)



# Scientists fight a dangerous parasite

An article by Olomouc chemists, printed at the end of 2018 by the prestigious *Journal of Organic Chemistry*, has achieved elite selection in *Synfacts* magazine. The editors usually include articles focused on organic synthesis, with assumed major scientific impact and application in pharmaceutical research. Olomouc scientists have focussed on a method for developing substances that might be effective in combating *Leishmania* parasites.

The authors of the article, Jiří Pospíšil, Daniela Konrádová and David Jean-Yves Denis Bon from the Laboratory of Growth Regulators and the Olomouc branch of the Institute of Experimental Botany at the Czech Academy of Sciences, part of the Centre of the Region Haná for Biotechnological and Agricultural Research and the Department of Organic Chemistry of the Faculty of Science, have been devoted to studying natural substances. This time, they focused on phenylpropanoid-type substances that are known to exhibit some biological activity. Because scientists have

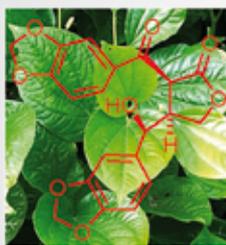
long been looking for an effective way to fight the *Leishmania* parasite, they have started with kava extract, which has been used by shamans in South America to treat illnesses.

“Our goal was not to develop a cure but to understand the principle of how to destroy the parasite without harming the host organism. So we have tried to develop a method for developing substances that are structurally similar to our kava extract, but have a slightly different architecture. We do not know the precise mechanism of the effect of the substance, so we actually do not know what exactly we are aiming for. That is why we tried to prepare substances based on the same molecule, which we transform in two or three steps to an entire library of structurally diverse substances. This is called a diversity-oriented synthesis, and it has been applied extensively to search for new biologically active substances since its inception in the first decade of this century. We have probably intrigued the

evaluators by this approach,” explained Jiří Pospíšil, the first author of the article.

*Leishmania* is a genus of parasitic protozoa that causes various forms of a disease called leishmaniasis. Among vertebrates, including humans, they are spread by blood-sucking insects. The parasite affects the immune system, internal organs, and the skin. It is common mainly in the Middle East, South America, India, Afghanistan, and it is gradually penetrating into southern Europe. According to the World Health Organization, the parasite annually infects 350 million people.

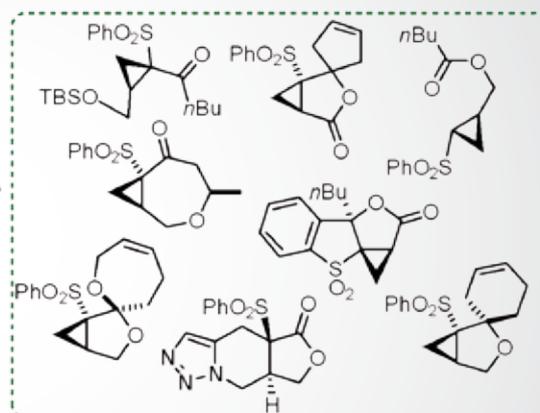
The research by Olomouc scientists continues and Daniela Konrádová has been testing the efficiency of substances directly on *Leishmania* at Hebrew University, one of the best laboratories in this field in the world. The young researcher was supported by the UP Endowment Fund. “If it turns out that one of our substances is usable for further development, it would of course be great,” concluded Pospíšil.



*Piper Sanguinespicum*  
inspiration  
sanguinolignan A



the identification  
of a common  
intermediate for  
the preparation of  
structurally similar  
substances



a library of structurally diverse substances developed  
from a common intermediate (selected examples)

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: JD archives

interview

# Jakub Dürr – Our man in Brussels

A worker in a compromise factory. That title came to me about halfway through our interview. Sure, it's a bit of an exaggeration. Because the man who explained the complexity of the Brussels machinery is not a nameless cog in the machine. He's the top Czech diplomat, a UP graduate, and a former UP Vice-Rector. But perhaps this cruel simplification will better explain his diplomatic mission and actually demystify Brussels for us. And that, in addition to a mountain of other agendas, is part of the work of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union, Jakub Dürr.

— You have a degree in politics. Is that theoretical background an advantage for a diplomat?

It's a definite advantage. The combination of both, theoretical grounding and practical handling of things in the field, has helped me with the everyday reality in Brussels. On one hand, I make use of the horizons my studies and work in the academic sphere gave me; on the other hand, the sectoral perspective which I have from working here helps me, as well as the knowledge of European legislation I prepare on the job. Both go hand in hand; I would not omit a background in theory. Goethe said, "All theory is grey, my friend – but forever green is the tree of life" – but I do not think that both colours are so sharply contrasting and diametrically opposed.

— You've had an interesting experience – you used to lecture on the EU and EU integration at the university, and a few years down the line you now find yourself an eyewitness in the heart of an unexpected transformation, the departure of one of its principal countries. How do you see Brexit?

The results of the June 2016 referendum in the UK shocked not only other EU countries, but the UK itself. We're seeing the repercussions of this shockwave only now, because for more than two years since, we have not been able to get a handle on what has happened. Suddenly something completely different is going on than what has been the norm for decades. Until Brexit, in addition to deeper integration, i.e. deepening the cooperation of countries in individual areas and political spheres, there was a parallel process of expansion. Nobody a few years ago would have imagined that someone would break away from the Euro-

pean Union. There were never enough serious reasons to do so. Today we have a precedent which we must manage responsibly. We have to examine all the scenarios and anticipate all the impacts which it will bring about. It is clear however that Brexit is causing significant damages not only in Britain, but also in the remaining countries.

— Do you think there might be a snowball effect, inspiring other countries to do the same?

No, I don't think so. It's quite frightening to see a large, successful, and friendly country buffeted by such big problems that suddenly it has lost its ability to make decisions on simple matters. It is a dismal outlook, giving one a bitter feeling.

— You're an expert on European politics. Can you explain to me what has happened in the Czech Republic? The 2003 referendum on joining the EU passed with 77% of the voters agreeing (with a 42% turnout of eligible voters), whereas today, our relationship to the EU is rather lukewarm. Why is that?

I think that in addition to the inability of the political and media spheres to mediate and perceive several everyday aspects of Brussels – or respectively, the European reality – positively, it is also a psychological and mental issue. There is a certain inability and non-desire to step out, speaking metaphorically, from our Czech hamlet and realise that the clear majority of legislation – and everything that affects everyday life everywhere in the Czech Republic – is being prepared in Brussels, and we are always part of that. Nobody here is doing anything behind our backs or at our expense. There's no conspiracy: I and my colleagues who represent the Czech Republic, we have a discussed mandate and prepared instructions, we enter each negotiation with the consciousness that we are acting from a position advantageous for our country. If there is something which is a problem for the Czech Republic after negotiations around the table, if it is necessary to protect our interests, then we block or veto such proposals. But this is normal procedure, according to established rules.

What really irks me is that fifteen years after entering the EU, the Czech European debate – or Czech European politics – is in a worse state in several respects than it was in the time when we were getting ready to join the EU and after we joined. Brussels is the headquarters of two main anchors

of our new era democracy – NATO and the EU. And it's probably worth remembering that we had to strive hard to enter those structures, and we finally did – voluntarily. In my opinion, our membership in these groups is very important and brings indisputable benefits. Thanks to them we are part of something bigger, which helps us to succeed, which can propel us further. Many people however lose sight of the fact that Brussels is, after Prague, our second capital city.

— Everyday Brussels reality is incomprehensible to the rest of the world. When all is said and done, Brussels does not have such a good reputation, even in the "old" EU member states....

Yes, even the countries which for more than forty years have experienced great advantages, such as Britain itself, to this day perhaps have not truly understood several processes which are in place here and have not been able to understand or get over the mental barrier which their citizens often feel against Brussels. And those politicians who always hide behind Brussels when they have had to resolve something unpopular have not helped things. In addition, it can be really hard to point out the differences between the European and national parliaments, to explain what the Council of Ministers is, what the European Commission does, that European Commissioner Věra Jourová is not a European MP, etc. I myself quite often have to explain that as Czech Ambassador to the EU, I am not a politician, nor an official connected with the EC or European Parliament. Just the opposite – I am the "Prague man" in Brussels. I am aware that not I, nor even a number of other people who live here, are able to easily explain the sense and usefulness of our work. How to explain simply that all of Brussels is one big factory for making compromises, something completely harmless in the end?

— In your eyes, where do things stand in the "Old World" today? Could there be an end to Europe as we know it?

No. Europe is in better condition than it has been in the course of various recent crises. It has always been able to manage each crisis. I remain an optimist. It seems that all of the most problematical events are behind us and it is not necessary to keep repeating that everything is bad and think about what we need to fear. Flagellation and self-scru-

**Jakub Dürr (b. 1976)**

Born in Boskovice. He has a Master's degree in Political Science – European Studies from UP and a Bachelor's degree in Polish language and literature. He has had study stays in the USA, Great Britain, Hungary, and Poland. He was twice Vice-Rector at UP, for Internal Relations and Foreign Relations. For the Czech government, he has worked as the Deputy Minister of Education, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. From 2011–2016, he was a representative of the Czech Republic to the EU. Since autumn 2018 he has been Czech Ambassador of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union.



tiny are often detrimental. The European Union is the best place in the world in terms of quality of life. Its five hundred million citizens are part of a huge community, a huge success story, which is being played out in an economic, social, and environmental boom. I don't see any serious problem at the moment which would lead us to reflect that something quite catastrophic is going on. The migration crisis has ended, the financial and economic crises ended some time ago. If, however, we're going to still cast doubt on whether we're okay and doubt our resolve to solving simple everyday operational problems, then we will never move forward. We are also doing damage to ourselves in situations on the global scene, when we are more and more tested by several nations hostile to us – or even by our partners.

— **Who are you, actually? Sometimes they refer to you as a Brussels footman, others say you are Mr Europe. How do you see yourself?**

What's important for me is to keep conscious of the reality which is going on in my native Haná town. That barometer plays essentially the basic role in whether I am successful here or have become a mere cog in the Brussels machine. Who am I? I am a Czech diplomat who works for the Czech Republic. In addition, I have to understand Brussels in all its complexity, and I also should be aware of the political and socio-economic situation at home. For my work to be successful, it is important to balance these two positions. I think that I am rather fulfilling the function of a bridge which connects Prague and Brussels – a bridge which brings Brussels nearer to Prague

and Prague nearer to Brussels. It's a mere 900 kilometres, but believe me, sometimes that distance is mortal.

— **You entered the position held before you by Martin Povejšil, another UP graduate. In an interview I held with him some time ago, we discussed the qualities a good diplomat should have. He named patience, in addition to others. Would you like to add something?**

I'm glad you mentioned Martin, because in the role of a diplomat we certainly share not only the same values, but also the same approaches. I agree with patience, and I'd add tenacity and also one other hybrid category: a combination of assertiveness and humbleness. It's important to have a natural amount of modesty and empathy. The balance of these qualities and their mutual ratio depends on what's happening during the specific period and its problems.

— **You're a UP graduate, you were a UP employee, and you still claim allegiance to UP. Why?**

Because for me it is very important – both mentally and practically. I'm glad to be a part of a kind of rational whole, which has established rules and where I can play a certain role. For me, the academic community is that kind of community, one in which I also have the possibility to further my own knowledge and experience. If you find a community which grows in your heart and you feel like you're a part of it, you also simultaneously accept its burdens. This is why I feel not only gratitude to Palacký University, but also the responsibility to keep in touch with it, and to help it.



text and photos: Martin Višňa

# How paramedic methods are tested

The party is in full swing, a thousand party-goers are living it up. But someone attacks them with an unknown chemical substance. Panic ensues, dozens of people lie wounded on the ground. Luckily, nothing like this has happened, it was merely the subject of a training session for the project “Decontamination of Wounded Persons in the Framework of Safety Research” by the Czech Ministry of the Interior, in which the UP Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) is taking part.

The idea of this exercise, unique in Central Europe, is to test the plans of methods for decontamination of a large number of wounded in pre-hospital care and reveal possible shortcomings prior to forthcoming certification. The Czech Republic does not yet have this methodology in place. “Once

it’s ready, we’ll transfer it to the hospital environment. It is better to transport a patient with a small amount of contamination to the hospital where there are personnel trained and equipped for such cases, than us perfectly cleaning the wounded in place and the patient dying on us,” explained the leader of the training, Radka Filipčíková of the FHS Science and Research Centre.

## Student stand-ins

At the Zábřeh airport located in Hlučín, where the training took place, things were already in full-swing, just two hours after dawn. An early wake-up was required for making up FHS students for their roles as stand-ins; the make-up artists worked in place, when the morning cold was pierced by the sun’s first rays. Then the wound-

ed were sorted according to the severity of the wound and paramedics gave them first aid before transport to the decontamination post. Before showering, the paramedics stripped the clothes off the wounded, examined them again, and established the state of the wounded persons in closer detail. They tested three types of tents for the decontamination itself. In addition to ordinary showers used for fire personnel, there was also a prototype with a stretcher conveyor for the wounded and other innovations which were developed within the auspices of the project. Afterwards the stand-ins went to the National Institute for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Protection’s tent, where traces of the contaminant on the body were determined, and thus the efficacy of the decontamination.

“It was a problem for me being almost naked in front of strangers, but the worst was waiting for the inspection after the shower. It was really cold. On the other hand, the paramedics and fire personnel behaved very professionally toward us, they explained what they were going to do, so that was good,” summarised a future nurse, Jana Kozlovská – made up with a broken forearm, she was one of the least-wounded stand-ins.

Vojtěch Koranda, who played an unconscious person with arterial bleeding, also commended the paramedics. “They asked me if I could hear them, they induced a pain

stimulus, they listened to see whether I was breathing, or if I was already beyond help. Also transport from one stretcher to another went fine. And I survived the shower, although my knees were knocking,” said the student of Paramedics, who has also had practical experience on ambulance runs.

### Closely watched exercises

The course of the exercises was closely watched by twelve evaluators, including experts on urgent medicine, traumatology and healthcare management, as well as military experts. Prof Alison Hutton of the University of Newcastle in Australia, an expert on

healthcare during catastrophes and extraordinary situations, also contributed her observations. “I was surprised by the level and the theme which we’ve chosen, because it is unique and not often the subject of exercises to such an extent, and in such detail. It offered us some recommendations on how to mediate contacts with other experts, and we could compare our approach to the Australian ones. I’ll also continue to take part in the project as a consultant,” said Filipčíková, adding that there will be another exercise in autumn which will determine certification of the proposed methodology for decontamination of wounded persons.



# Faculty of Physical Culture hosted largest conference on a healthy lifestyle

The current challenges in a healthy lifestyle and its political support, nutrition, and the influence of the environment on movement activity were debated at the annual International Society of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity (ISBNPA) conference, whose co-organiser was the Faculty of Physical Culture. One of the largest academic events on this specialisation, it attracted more than 1300 experts from all over the world.

The hectic four-day programme in the Congress Centre in Prague featured lectures by experts such as British epidemiologist Sir Andrew Haines and Bruce Y. Lee of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The interesting array of lectures, symposia, and poster presentations was complemented with several workshops dealing with the prevention of cancer and the electronic healthcare system eHealth.

Representatives of the UP Faculty of Physical Culture introduced their own scientific projects, among others Jana Pelclová, Zdeněk Hamřík, Josef Mitáš, and Michal Vorlíček. The category of Young Researchers was dominated by Lukáš Rubín, who was selected by the evaluation board out of 140 applicants to present his talk. “It was a great honour for me. I presented an overview of the most important findings from the Czech research called IPEN Adolescent, which investigates the associations between a developed environment and physical activity in Czech children and youths. I must thank all my colleagues from the Czech IPEN Working Group, without whom the final work would never have been done. This is a success for the whole team,” said Lukáš Rubín.

“The conference was a success. It was not only a very nice event, but also a pro-

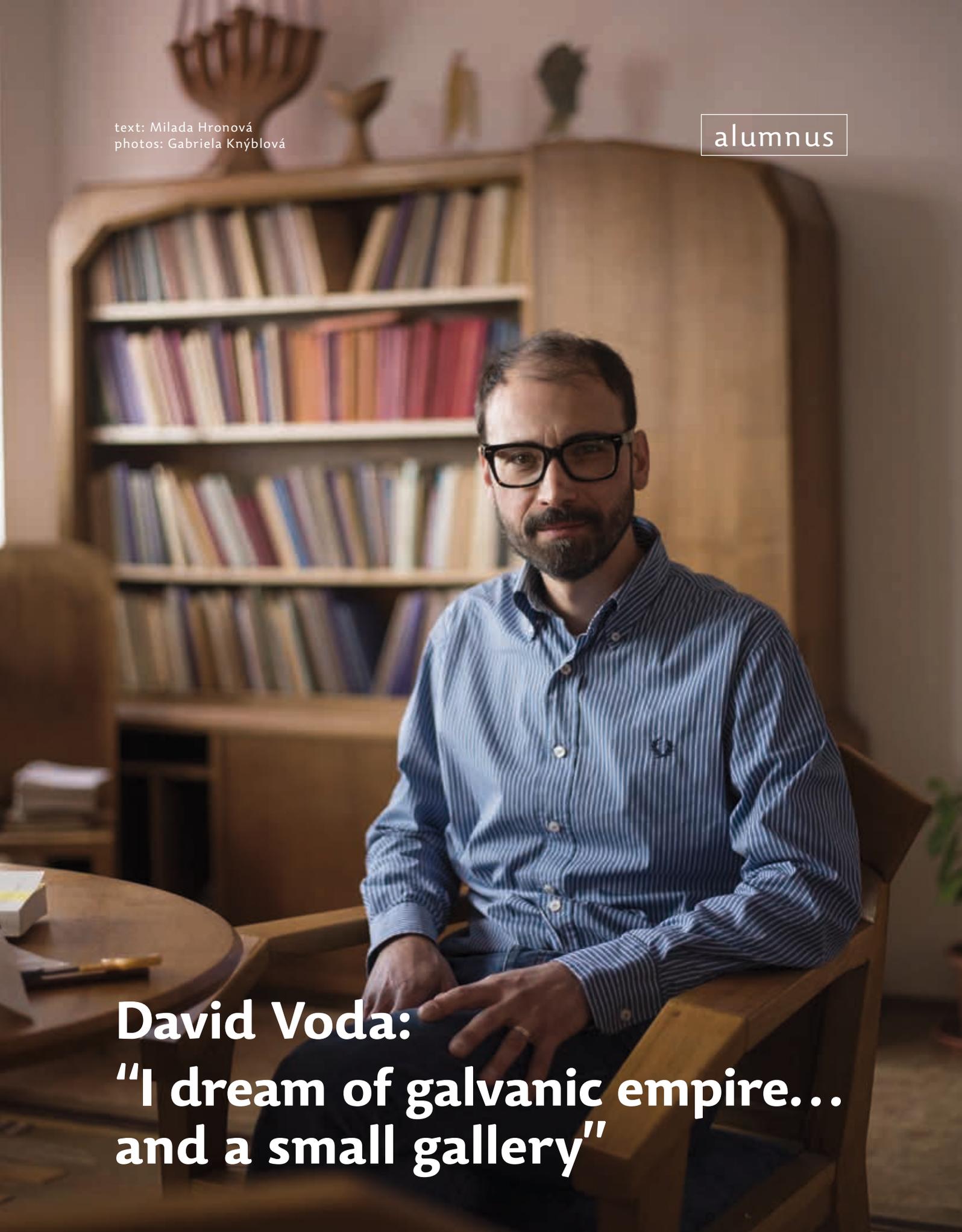
fessionally stimulating one. And that is not only my opinion, there were many foreign guests who said the same. The organising team under the leadership of Ferdinand Salonna deserves congratulations and big thanks, not only because they have managed to introduce this prestigious conference into the Czech Republic, but also because they’ve managed to run it so smoothly,” he added.

Part of the programme were also several satellite events in Olomouc, including an educational course on the evaluation of the effectivity of programmes and inroads to a healthy lifestyle, and a meeting of the research group INTUE – International Network of Time-Use Epidemiologists. The Baroque premises of the UP Arts Centre hosted the conference Are V4 Living Actively?, where the impact of the environment on movement activities was debated.



text: Milada Hronová  
photos: Gabriela Knýblová

alumnus



**David Voda:**  
**“I dream of galvanic empire...  
and a small gallery”**



**David Voda (b. 1976)**

He is an alumnus of the Department of Art Theory and Art History, UP Faculty of Arts. An art historian, poet, and industrialist. He has worked for the Olomouc Museum of Art and the Olomouc Theatre of Music. He has published political commentary in the bi-monthly *Listy*. His first collection of poems, *Sněhy a další* [Snows and Others – fra Publishers, Prague] was published in 2010, and was nominated for Poetry Book of the Year. He and his wife Sabine Voda Eschgfäller (UP Faculty of Arts) have written a book together, *Antroposofové na Moravě (a v Čechách)* [Anthroposophists in Moravia (and Bohemia), Palacký University Press, 2014]. He has worked for the firm FESTA SERVIS since 2005; in 2014 he became its co-owner and one of its CEOs (together with Ervín and Dagmar Schleser). His collections can be viewed on Instagram (#bibliotecaenigmatica).

He's a lover of art. Especially the avant-garde with esoteric and occult elements. He says he's lucky to have studied at the Department of Art History in the legendary '90s, and fondly remembers professors Milan Togner, Ivo Hlobil, Rostislav Švácha, Pavol Černý, Josef Bláha, Pavel Štěpánek, and Rudolf Chadraba. Now, however, he's a businessman. And not a small one. He runs a zinc galvanizing factory, with an annual turnover of 4 million euros. An artist and a manufacturer in one.

"I admit that it's a kind of schizophrenic situation, but at the same time it's all about passion. I am a megalomaniac and I go after the unobtainable: to manage my own 'galvanic empire' and at the same time a small gallery," he confides.

He studied at the Department of Art from 1995–2002, at a time when it featured a constellation of legendary art historians. "It was located in the wonderfully decrepit Baroque residence at 13 Wurmova Street, and while materially it was a bit of an eyesore, it had spirit to burn. We were only sixteen in the class but sometimes we felt like we were in the Hamburg library of Aby Warburg in the 1920s or in the Vienna School of Art History. Imagine sitting in a dark room where Prof Hlobil shows an hour and a half of slides of cracked walls. Those were seminars on monument preservation! Before his test on the Gothic, I was shaking like a leaf and I had been cramming for two solid months," he remembers.

He started work as a curator at the Olomouc Museum of Art when he was still doing his studies. Nobody could have imagined then that in time, fate would throw a switch. "I had no idea that I had other abilities. But in the end, I am my father's son," says the energetic, dark-haired forty-year-old.

He has been acquainted with zinc factories since his youth. His father worked in the Olomouc firm Kovo-Dřevo (Metal-Wood) in the socialist era, and after the Velvet Revolution, he decided to go into business for himself. So the son would spend weekends with his father in the factory. "My dad and Ervín Schleser built up quite a big firm, and I used to be the dogsbody there. And though I would never have imagined it, I began to work there as a company representative. I spent almost another ten good years there with my dad," he adds, arriving at the moment when his father's untimely death meant taking over the factory.

"Without the huge support of my wife Sabine, a historian, literature expert, and also a poet, none of this would have been possible. She was able to balance taking care of the house and two sons with a career in the German Department, where she has been since 2001. Now she is doing research on the Moravian Enlightenment in the European context, i.e. at the start of the Age of Reason – which, by the way, at present in the postfactual era is coming to an end.

Thanks to her Italian origin and deep erudition, I dare say that she is an extraordinarily successful and talented literary expert," he says.

He does not complain that he has no time for art at the moment. That's life. Nothing is free, nor forever. In the last five years the firm has increased its turnover by fifty percent. "Courage played a role when we started to get into bigger things. We built another zinc works, we're trying our wares in the European market, we're seeking customers in Germany and France. We've been installing new technology, and we have started working in cooperation with the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials at UP regarding nanotechnology," the young factory owner enumerates. He enjoys the everyday adrenaline, which demands a large dose of creativity, as well as foresight. He cannot imagine leaving the job.

"I arrive in the morning and the odour of the zinc factory hits me in the nostrils, and I get swallowed up in it. I had to learn to live with the fact that I am not my own master. I'm usually playing on several chessboards at once. Constantly you have to resolve both technical and personnel problems. As you go along, you also deal with your employees' social situations. You have to be prepared for meetings with the upper crust at Prague Castle and to deal with the wide boys who offer you workers from Ukraine. Many times I've contradicted myself thrice in the same sentence. That's business," he adds. In his free time, he studies languages – he's picked up German thanks to his wife, and now he is dusting off his high school French. He always has a headful of plans, some of them relating to art.

"In September, the fourth annual Václav Burian Prize poetry competition will take place, of which I am a co-founder. I am connected with his generation and I really appreciate how I have been able to meet a number of excellent Central European poets," he says. He also writes. Several years ago, a poetry collection of his was nominated for Poetry Book of the Year.

"I'd like to return sometime to the art world, do the things I used to do. The pinnacle for me was the exhibition *AENIGMA: One Hundred Years of Anthroposophical Art*, which took place in 2015 at the Olomouc Museum of Art. It featured the work of 125 artists from 1913–2013, and we had items on loan from seven European countries – the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* even wrote a review of it," he reminisces. And another of his passions surfaces: collecting. He collects furniture, artistic handicrafts, free-style art, graphic art, paintings, and books. For the time being, everything is located in a depository in the firm. "One day it will be different. I need to see that things are moving along. In the meantime, I remain a big sinner – for as Kafka wrote, 'Perhaps there is only one cardinal sin: Impatience.'"

text: Milada Hronová  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

# Dominika Čiklová: Boxing is speed chess



lifestyle

“Without any glamour, I come out and show them what I’ve got,” says the demure brunette in the university coffee house. That sentence would sound banal, if the girl who said it was only a student of archaeology – but she is more. Dominika Čiklová, a Faculty of Arts student, is also the reigning Czech women’s lightweight boxing champion.

“I’m really looking forward to my career as an archaeologist! I’d like to devote myself to the early Stone Age,” she says. However, before she can defend her Bachelor’s thesis on the flaking industry in the Pavlov I locale, she has to fulfil her study obligations. Despite the fact that they certainly are not few, she cannot imagine life without boxing. For her, it’s an elegant and distinguished sport.

“In the ring, I’m completely on my own, which suits me. Boxing is a contact sport, but at the same time it’s a very pure sport. In a way, it’s like playing speed chess. You have to figure out your opponent’s tactics. In order to win, you have to always be a few steps ahead of her.” Every training session for Dominika is a kind of release and at the same time a moment when her explosiveness, strength, and harmony of movement can be put to the test. She devotes a lot of time to it and says that in order to defend her champion’s belt, she ought to devote even more.

“I’m training at the Dukla Olomouc Boxing Club right now three times a week, and soon it will be four. That’s obviously not enough, I need to work out and run, even outside training. When needed, I also go there for individual training weekends and week-long training camps,” she says. She’s happy to be led by experienced trainers Standa Tót, Karel Tulpa, Karel Outlý, Tonda Hauer, and Jan Chytil, who represent the generation at Dukla when the Olomouc ring was at its height. “They are giving me the best of what they’ve learned in years of training,” the Czech champ believes.

She began boxing when she was twenty-one. Before that, she devoted four years to kick boxing. “My dad got me into it, he does karate. When I started, it was even clear to my mom that there was no way I was ever going to be a majorette or a dancer.” From her very beginnings, her style has been marked by her ferocity and dynamics. “I’m always boxing – even when I’m walking down the street, I’m boxing in my head. Boxing fills me with happiness. I don’t have to rely on another ten people, I don’t have to wear make-up or a fake smile. I just come out and show them what I’ve got.”

## **Dominika Čiklová (b. 1993)**

A student of Archaeology at the UP Faculty of Arts, she brought the first ever championship (men’s or women’s) boxing belt to Olomouc in 2018 in the women’s lightweight class. She boxes for the Dukla Olomouc club.

# Andrew Feustel – Astronaut inspiring people all over the world

“An Astronaut’s Story” was presented to the Olomouc audience by Andrew Feustel. He and his wife Indira arrived in the Czech Republic on the invitation by the Czech Academy of Sciences as official NASA representatives. They were the guests of Palacký University Olomouc – first the Rector received them and then talks for the public followed in the Faculty of Education’s Assembly Hall and in Fort Science.

“I am very honoured that Mr and Mrs Feustel paid a visit to us. These walls have seen prime ministers, princesses and kings, but this is our first astronaut,” said Rector Jaroslav Miller during the reception at the UP Rector’s Office Ceremonial Hall. He also awarded Andrew Feustel with the Palacký University Commemorative Medal. This medal depicts two patrons

of the university in Olomouc, Josef Dobrovský and František Palacký, and Feustel was awarded for his popularisation of science and promotion of the Czech Republic abroad.

Andrew Feustel is one of the most experienced U.S. astronauts, with three space missions behind him. The last time he was launched into orbit was March of last year, when he had a six-month stay on the International Space Station (ISS). He explained in detail the astronauts’ daily routine during the stay on the ISS, which included scientific experiments, technical repairs, approximately eight hours of work per day. Several hours had to be spent on physical exercises, without which health problems could impact the astronauts. “You have to exercise on a daily basis, because you are

not using your legs for six months,” he said, when showing photographs from the space station. In total, Andrew Feustel has spent 226 days in space, out of which 61 hours and 48 minutes were spent on spacewalks.

His wife also answered question related to the Czech Republic, as her mother comes from Znojmo, while her father is from India. “It has been a very heartfelt welcome, and I thank you for that,” she said and added that she and her husband believe that such meetings with the public, especially with children and students, are very important. “His story can become an inspiration for young people,” she emphasised. Her husband also received a little “colleague” on his departure – the Rector gave him a special edition of the UP teddy bear, dressed in a spacesuit.



## Andrew Jay Feustel (b. 1965)

Born in Pennsylvania, grew up in Michigan. He attended Purdue University, where he received an MS degree in Geophysics, and Queen’s University in Canada, where he received his PhD in Geological Sciences. This American geophysicist and astronaut has been on three space missions. His wife Indira has family in the Czech Republic – her mother is from Znojmo. They have two sons.

text: Eva Hrudníková  
photos: Gabriela Knýblová

alumna

A full-length portrait of Veronika Ježková, a woman with short, light brown hair, wearing a black long-sleeved top and black pants. She is standing in a well-lit, modern interior space with large windows and columns in the background. Her hands are clasped in front of her, and she is wearing a gold watch on her left wrist.

# Veronika Ježková: Lawyer in the service of society



**Veronika Ježková (b. 1977)**

In 2000 she graduated from the Palacký University Olomouc Faculty of Law. Then she worked in advocacy, since 2007 as an independent attorney. Since July 2015 she has fully devoted herself to legal counselling in the non-profit organisation proFem, actively participating in their projects. In June 2016 she joined the team of workers in the Pro Bono Alliance, where she is the chair. She is a member of the nomination board of the contest Czech Law of the Year, which highlights high-quality legal acts. Since September 2017 she has been a judicial assistant at the Municipal Court in Prague. She specialises in civil law, family law, and labour law.

When she starts listing her daily activities, you have to wonder whether her day has more than 24 hours. And when she talks about them with such fervour and absorption, it is so contagious you feel that you also need to do something, think, organise. Not for yourself, but for others. Veronika Ježková, an alumna of the Palacký University Olomouc Faculty of Law, leads the legal team of the non-profit organisation proFem, which aids victims of domestic and sexual violence. In addition, she is the chair of the Pro Bono Alliance, an organisation that strives to increase the efficiency of the legal system in the protection of human rights and the public interest. As if that were not enough, she took on a fulltime job, too – being a judicial assistant.

Veronika Ježková always inclined toward the humanities, so enrolling in the study of Law was her obvious choice after she graduated from grammar school. Besides that, several of her male ancestors (excepting her father) were advocates.

She studied at the faculty in the mid-1990s – in times when the faculty had to fight for its accreditation. “I have admiration for the previous management that they managed to save the school. There were about ninety of us in the year. Unlike at large law faculties, our classes were different, more personal and intense. And our teachers also placed higher demands on us in order to prove that law education in Olomouc is worth it.”

She now closely observes what is happening at the faculty, and also directly collaborates with several academics. “I have to say I’m proud of Olomouc. It is lovely to see the course our faculty has taken. I’m a big supporter.”

After her graduation in 2000, Ježková headed to advocacy. She began working in her hometown of Hradec Králové, but soon moved to big attorneys’ offices in Prague. Those where staying overtime and being under enormous pressure on performance are a natural part of the job. The demanding nature of the job, in connection with serious events in her life, resulted in her personal restart in 2015. “I abandoned my previous world and began focusing on helping others. In retrospect, I think the new start went really well.”

Since then her name has been associated with the non-profit organisation proFem that offers aid to victims of domestic, sexual, and other violence. Today she is in charge of the legal office. “I work directly with clients only exceptionally now. As a boss, I supervise the work of my colleagues, and we’re a wonderful team.

I check all legal filings that go through proFem. The output must always be of adequate quality, guaranteed by us,” says Veronika Ježková over a cup of coffee, and then adds statistics. “In proFem we deal with three hundred contacts annually. Out of this, about two hundred are long-term clients – women as well as men, who make an appointment with us and then we work further with them.”

The ambition of proFem is not “only” helping victims, but also making an impact on the system. This is where another dimension opens for Veronika Ježková – she holds lectures for both laymen and experts, teaches courses, organises conferences, publishes and also strives for legislative lobbying. One successful example for all: in 2016, the Czech Ministry of Justice negotiated with proFem as a partner during preparations of an amendment to the law on victims of crime.

What is the situation of victims in Czech legislation? “I think our legislation is well written, however hardly anybody can handle it properly. Which is a shame. What we owe to victims is help from within the system, available experts. By that I mean all the professions which work with the victims. There are few experts and they are not paid well.”

Veronika Ježková can also be seen and heard in connection to the Pro Bono Alliance, the chair of which she has been for three years. Under the auspices of the project, she mainly participates in two projects – Human Rights Live and Human Rights School, both designed for students of law faculties. She organises them and takes part in teaching.

The graduates of such projects and schools often take an interest in the non-profit sector. “They are not taught to get close to the non-profit sector; that is not the faculty’s job, after all. What matters is that school shows them such an option. Then it’s up to them. There are lawyers in the country for whom social responsibility is second nature. However, all in all, this society has not grown mature in this aspect, and we are lagging behind more developed countries.”

When asked what makes her happiest in her profession, Veronika Ježková does not hesitate. “My clients. When we bring our professional help to a successful conclusion. When I see the client sigh with relief and start her life anew.” She immediately adds: “A letter of thanks from the ministry saying that my legislative proposal has been taken into consideration will always please me. Because then I know I did not get worked up over it in vain.”

text: Martin Višňa  
photos: M. Igazová archives

experience

# Martina Igazová: I store my treasures in Heaven

Moldova is usually not a topic for conversation, unless you talk about local wines. One student of the International Humanitarian and Community Social Work at the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Palacký University Olomouc, has more to say about this destitute country: Martina Igazová. She has visited the country several times, not only during her school stays, to help the needy and gather experience for her future employment. She worked in a centre for children from poor families, also taking an interest in seniors and the infirm.

The first time she travelled to Moldova was during her Bachelor's studies. In fact, a mistake stood at the beginning of her relationship to the country between Romania and Ukraine. "In the second year, when we were to choose a country to visit, I wanted to go to Mongolia. However, I somehow mixed up Mongolia and Moldavia in the application. But then it interested me that Moldova is said to be one of the poorest countries in Europe, and that made me look for more information," reminisces the student. When this text was being writ-

ten, she was packing for another, perhaps her eighth journey. For a whole month. "Sometimes I say it is my second home. My family has gotten used to my constant peregrinations. What else can they do? I told my Mum she could go with me, though. She said she still lacked the courage," smiles Martina Igazová.

Guest in the house, God in the house. According to the theology student, this proverb captures the nature of the Moldovans. They may not treat each other well; however, they are very nice and friendly to their guests, even capable of borrowing money to treat them. "I learned Romanian a bit and wanted to try my proficiency in common conversation. The shop assistant was quite rude, speaking offhand to me, but when I switched to Russian, she realised I was a foreigner, and completely changed her tone," she says and admits that the language barrier was perhaps the most difficult problem she had to cope with. Although she studied Russian at school as well as some basic Romanian, the firsthand experience was quite a challenge. Today she can speak Russian fluently. →

## Martina Igazová (b. 1992)

A native of Kopřivnice. She graduated in Pre-School and Extracurricular Education at a secondary school in Odry and then enrolled in the study of humanitarian work at CARITAS – College of Social Work Olomouc and the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology in Olomouc. She is now in the second year of her Master's study programme. She loves riding horses, drawing, reading adventure books, and organising various events.

## Second home, but....

She still cannot come to terms with how things work in Moldova, how profoundly corrupt the system is, such as health-care, which results in resignation to any attempts for change. “At first, I was trying to encourage people not to give up, but as I kept learning about how the local system works, I began to understand their despair. The only way out for them is to travel abroad, get a job and earn some money,” says Martina, who has been helping the most vulnerable ones in Moldova for several years, and as a Christian she “stores her treasures in Heaven”.

She has been working at several locations. Via the humanitarian organisation ADRA she was employed in a children’s home, via another two church organisations she worked in centres for children in the Moldovan countryside. “The place I was at the last time supports more than twenty kids from destitute families, among others by feeding them or helping them with their homework. At the same time, they tried to help them whenever they were in any kind of trouble. We also organised various leisure time or educational activities. I created a group of older girls and

we cooked meals together or talked about relationships, about how one perceives herself – typical things for girls at their age,” concludes the student.

Her experience was not always pleasant. “I was really upset when we brought food to one family and we saw their four kids, between two and five years-old, dirty, neglected, in a very bad condition. The mother never looked after them, beat them, they were often left home alone. Step by step other things came out. In the end, in collaboration with a social worker we managed to place the kids in a children’s home. However, then you ask yourself what is better for the kids – to stay home with parents and in very poor conditions, or in a children’s home, where things are not ideal either.”

## Worthwhile efforts

During her Master’s studies internship, she also travelled to Moldova via the Diocesan Caritas Ostrava-Opava. Under the auspices of a homecare centre in a Russian-speaking village she attended the ill and elderly, finding out what they needed and helping them write letters asking for funding. “Some of the clients literally needed to unburden themselves of their problems,

which are rather different from what we are experiencing in Czechia. They told me their stories, and I translated them into Czech and used them to address sponsors who are participating in the programme Dignified Life. Every six months these people receive a contribution that helps them cover the expenses for medications which are too expensive in Moldova, or to buy wood or coal for the winter,” explains the student. During the talks with her clients she came to know a more than 80-year-old woman who in spite of her age still looks after her grown children – a mentally-challenged daughter and a physically disabled son.

“Thanks to my experience from Moldova I’m not afraid to step into professional life and I’m not scared to stay abroad. I have tested practically what I learned at school, and I have improved in many things. I still have no plan in mind, but I’d love to focus on children, after all I used to study preschool and after-school education at secondary school. I also ruminated about founding a public children’s home in Moldova. That would involve a lot of bureaucratic obstacles and hard work, but it would be worth it. There are so many needy children there,” adds Igazová.





photo:  
Gabriela Knýblová

### Amr Mohamed Zaki Zaatar

comes from Egypt, however his home has been Olomouc for many years. He educates the future physiotherapists at the UP Faculty of Physical Culture and is part of the management team of the UP Women's Volleyball Club.

الدراسة والمعيشة في الخارج تكون صعبة وبالأخص مع اختلاف اللغة والحضارة. في البدايه تعلمت اللغة التشيكية في مدينة ماريانسكي لازني ثم درست العلاج الطبيعي في الموموتس في جامعه بالاتسكي. وتعد مدينة الموموتس و جامعهه بالاتسكي من الأماكن التي تساعد الطالب الأجنبي علي التأقلم و النجاح في الدراسة و العمل بها. وفي جامعهه الموموتس تمكنت من التعرف علي زملائي الاجانب من دول عديده و زملائي الاتشيك، الذين كانوا داعمين لي في دراستي خاصه مع صعوبه اللغة التشيكية التي درست بها، وكذلك كانوا عوناً لي للتأقلم علي العيش في مدينة الموموتس. ولا أنسي مجهود وفضل أساتذتي وكل من قام بتدريسي الي ان انهيت دراسته الدكتوراه فلهم مني كل الشكر و الاحترام. واثناء الدراسة ومع مرور الوقت استطعت ان يكون لي أيضاً أصدقاء كثيرين من الاتشيك من مدن عديده واعتز بصداقتهم الي الان. ولقد كنت محظوظاً بالعمل أيضاً في جامعهه بالاتسكي و في كليه التربيه الرياضيه في قسم العلاج الطبيعي الذي اكملت دراستي به. حيث اعمل الي الآن مع مجموعه متميزه من الأساتذة و المدرسين و الأصدقاء. واتمنا ان أساعد طلابي كما ساعدنا أساتذتنا

*Studying and living abroad is always difficult, especially when it is connected with a different language and culture. When I came from Egypt, at first I learnt Czech in Mariánské Lázně, and then I began studying physiotherapy at Palacký University. Olomouc is a marvellous city, and it allows Palacký University to create optimal conditions for its students who can quickly adapt to new environments and prepare well for their future professions. I have made many new friends here, and we've been in touch ever since. Many supported me a lot during my studies, and I'm very grateful to them. I cannot but remember my professors who passed an abundance of precious knowledge on to me and enabled me to complete the demanding doctoral study as well. I have stayed faithful to the university, presently working as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Physical Culture's Department of Physiotherapy. I believe I will not squander the trust I have earned here, and I wish to give my students the same support I got when I studied here.*

# From an Olomouc theologian to the Archbishop of Vienna

## Johann Baptista Rudolf Kutschker (1810–1881)

The life trajectory of Johann Baptista Rudolf Kutschker proves that even the talented son of a German weaver could achieve the highest ecclesiastical rank within the Hapsburg monarchy.

His father Johann plied the weaver's trade in the village of Seifersdorf (now Loučky, part of the Zátor township in the Bruntál district), where J.B.R. Kutschker was born on 11 April 1810. After graduating from high school in Opava, he studied Philosophy (at that time it was a prerequisite for all applicants for studies at the faculties of Theology, Medicine, and Law) at the Imperial and Royal Lycée in Olomouc, and from 1828 he studied Theology at the Frintaneum seminary in Vienna, founded in 1816 by Jakob Frint, father confessor to the imperial court. Kutschker was ordained as a deacon on 21 April 1833 and the following year graduated as a Doctor of Theology after successfully defending his dissertation *Die gemischten Ehen vom katholisch-kirchlichen Standpunkte betrachtet* [Mixed Marriages Considered from the Catholic-Ecclesiastical Perspective] – later published.



### Professor of Moral Theology

In 1835, the twenty-five-year-old priest J.B.R. Kutschker was named Professor of Moral Theology at the Emperor and King Francis University in Olomouc, and in that same year held the position of Dean of the Faculty of Theology; in 1843–1844 he was Rector of the university. In addition, he worked as a church administrator, as the secretary to the archbishop, and also in the consistory. A personal meeting with Emperor Ferdinand I was a career changer for him. It took place during the Vienna court's stay in Olomouc (during the revolution in Vienna) from 14 October to 2 December 1848, when Emperor Ferdinand I abdicated the throne in favour of his eighteen-year-old nephew Francis Joseph I. Doubtless, circumstances also played a role, since – as Miloslav Hýsek wrote in his monograph *Literary Moravia 1849–1895* (1911), “the antidote to the Orthodox direction was firmly espoused by the Olomouc professor of Morality, Jan Kutschker, later the Archbishop of Vienna, and the Brno professor of Dogma (...) Ferdinand Panschab, both staunch Germans, who were full of hatred towards Slavic patriotism, and were even more dangerous to the young nationalist movement in that they had a deciding influence on their bishops”.

### Viennese Church dignitary

Kutschker, Olomouc professor of Moral Theology, evidently made an impression on the young monarch and his inner circle, for in 1852 he was called from Olomouc to Vienna, where he assumed the position of imperial and royal father confessor, the Monsignor of Frintaneum, in 1858–1859 the Rector Magnificus of Vienna University, and in 1856–1876, he was a ministerial official for the Ministry of Cultus and Teaching. As an expert on canon law and the close co-worker of Cardinal Archbish-

op of Vienna Sir Joseph Othmar von Rauscher, he took a significant part in preparations for the concord signed 18 August 1855 between Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph I and Pope Pius IX.

J.B.R. Kutschker also assumed the ecclesiastical duties of provost at St. Stephen's Cathedral (1861), the general vicariate of the Vienna Archbishopric (1862), the mitred abbey of the Monastery of the Holy Virgin of Pagnany in Hungary, the baptismal office of the Bishop of Vienna, and the titular Archbishopric of Carrhae (at that time and now the city of Harran in Turkey). During these demanding activities he managed to find time to prepare and publish his summary legal writings *Das Ehe-recht der katholischen Kirche nach seiner Theorie und Praxis* [Marriage Laws of the Catholic Church in Their Theory and Practice] in five volumes from 1856–1859.

### Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna

After the death of the Cardinal Prince Archbishop Sir J.O. von Rauscher, Bishop J.B.R. Kutschker was named by Emperor Francis Joseph I on 12 January 1876 to the seat of the Vienna Prince Archbishop. The nomination was confirmed by Pope Pius IX on 18 April of that year, and on 25 July 1875 the installed archbishop was conferred the cardinal's biretta and was assigned to the title of the Roman church of Sant'Eusebio. With this title, Cardinal Archbishop Kutschker took part in the papal conclave called by Pope Leo XIII in 1878. On 23 January 1881, J.B.R. Kutschker died after having had a stroke and was buried in the tomb of the Viennese bishops in St Stephen's Cathedral. His name is memorialised to this day by a street (Kutschkergasse) in the Währing district in Vienna, where there is also a daily market (Kutschkermarkt) and the restaurant and wine bar KUTSCHKER 44.

Adolf Dauthage (1825–1883): Cardinal Johann Rudolf Kutschker with the Star and Grand Cross of the Austrian Imperial Order of Leopold and the insignia of the order. Lithograph from 1876, *Albertinum* in Vienna.





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