

ANNIVERSARY

We are celebrating seventy years of Jan Macek

Jan Macek, one of the leading personalities of the Czech hymenopterology, celebrated his 70th birthday in 2023. His entire professional career has been associated with the Department of Entomology at the National Museum in Prague (since 2023 officially the National Museum of the Czech Republic), where he worked as a curator of the Hymenoptera Collection. He has already spent a total of 45 years at the National Museum. He is best known to entomologists as a specialist on the Hymenoptera groups Symphyta and Diapriidae, but he is also well known to public as an author of guides to Lepidoptera and Hymenoptera. Almost every entomologist in the Czech Republic has at least one of his books in his library.

Jan Macek was born in Martin, in the Slovak part of the former Czechoslovakia, on 24 June 1953. (His first name is officially Ján, the Slovak version, but we are using the Czech form – Jan – in the text, consistently with his own papers). In 1958, his family moved to Přeborn (nowadays in the Czech Republic) where he attended primary school (1959–1968) followed by secondary school (science-oriented class) completed by the final exam in 1972. During his studies, he actively participated in the Biology Olympiad and advanced to the national round several times. From 1972 to 1977 he was a student of Systematic Zoology at the Faculty of Science at Charles University in Prague. Jan finished his studies in 1977 with the successful defence of his diploma thesis under the supervision of Jaromír Dokočil. His thesis was entitled ‘The revision of the genus *Boarmia* Treitschke and *Cleorodes* Warren (Lepidoptera,

Geometridae) in Czechoslovakia’. After a further year of internship at the faculty, he became a research scientist and curator in the Department of Entomology at the National Museum where he worked since 16. August 1978. He was denied doctoral studies for political reasons. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, he completed an important internship under the supervision of Lubomír Masner at the Biosystematic Research Institute in Ottawa (Canada) in 1992. Among other important internships and foreign stays, he visited the Bavarian State Collection of Zoology (Munich, Germany), the present Senckenberg Deutsches Entomologisches Institut (Münchenberg, Germany), Hungarian Natural History Museum (Budapest, Hungary), and Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw, Poland). During his time as a curator at the National Museum, he organized number of exhibitions. Among the most important are *Man and Insects*, *Water and Life*, *Beauty of Butterfly Wings*, and *Miracles of Evolution*.

For several decades he has devoted his research mainly to the groups Symphyta and Diapriidae. He is currently one of the world’s most renowned specialists on these groups of Hymenoptera. Moreover, his brilliant memory and general knowledge of insect taxonomy also make him one of the most respected experts in this field in the Czech Republic. He is also an expert on Lepidoptera. He led a collective of authors and published four guides in the series Butterflies and caterpillars of Central Europe (MACEK et al. 2007, 2008, 2012, 2015). The first three publications were devoted to moths, and the last fourth publication to diurnal butterflies. These guides are very valuable, especially thanks to the depiction of caterpillars and distribution maps of each species.

Jan Macek has been one of the most regular and enthusiastic participants of the hymenopterology conference ‘Hymenoptera in the Czech Republic and Slovakia’ since the first meeting in Prague in 2005, where he presented his visions of the series ‘Atlas of Hymenoptera of the Czech and Slovak Republic’, which he started to prepare in parallel with the work on the butterfly guides. The demanding and challenging work on this edition series continues to these days. During the meetings in the following years, his participation was always accompanied by oral presentations on his current research. He mainly presented contributions on the ecology, taxonomy and faunistics of Symphyta. His speciality was information on their host plants, the rearing and development of their larvae. All summaries of contributions were published in the proceedings of these seminars entitled Hymenoptera



in the Czech Lands and Slovakia. The first monograph in the Hymenoptera series was devoted to the Aculeata and published in 2010 (MACEK et al. 2010). This publication is unique from a global point of view, as no one has ever dealt with the Aculeata in such a broad and detailed taxonomic framework. Although the work is written in Czech, a large part of the edition was sold abroad, for example to

Germany or Spain. The second part of the series, published in 2020 (MACEK et al. 2020), focused on the Symphyta and presented a complete monograph of the central European species. A great contribution of this publication is that it is not just a guide, but a publication of enormous scientific value. Firstly, it contains a very effective identification key to most species. It also stands out for its depiction of the



Figs 1–3. 1 – Jan Macek at the beginning of the work in the National Museum in Prague (late 1970s). Photo credit: National Museum archive. 2 – Jan Macek collecting larvae of Symphyta from trees using clap net during the 5th Czech and Slovak Hymenopterologist Seminar in Frýdek-Místek (Czech Republic) in 2009. Photo credit: Ladislav Roller. 3 – Jan Macek discussing news about Symphyta with his long-time colleague and collaborator Ladislav Roller. Photo credit: Karel Beneš.

larvae; many of them are described and pictured for the first time. An important contribution is the information on the host plants, which is the result of Jan's lifelong experience in rearing larvae. In the year of its publication, this work was awarded as the best publication in the category 'Dictionary or encyclopaedic publication' by the Academia publishing house. Nowadays he is working intensively on

the next volume of the Atlas concerning parasitoid groups (Hymenoptera: Parasitica).

Jan Macek has published 69 original scientific papers and numerous popular science articles. Important is also his influence as an organiser and lecturer in summer camps and competitions for talented secondary school students. He started organizing the Biology Olympiad



Figs 4–5. 4 – Participants of the 2nd Czech and Slovak Hymenopterologist Seminar in České Budějovice (Czech Republic, 2007) at the social event. Jan Macek and Igor Malenovský in the foreground. Photo credit: Ladislav Roller. 5 – Participants of the 5th Czech and Slovak Hymenopterologist Seminar in Labské pískovce PLA (Czech Republic) in 2013. From left: Petr Bogusch, Zdeněk Karas, Jakub Straka, Jan Macek. Photo credit: Pavel Bezděčka.



Fig. 6. Malaise trap installation near Zadní Doubice (České Švýcarsko NP) in April 2010. From left: Miloš Trýzna, Jan Ježek, Jan Macek. Photo credit: Lukáš Blažej.



Fig. 7. Guides to Lepidoptera and Hymenoptera of Central Europe published by the Academia publishing house in the 'Atlas' edition in 2007–2020. Jan Macek was the leading author of all of them. Credit: Academia.

immediately after entering the Charles University in 1972. As an entomologist, he was also a member of the evaluation committee for the national round of 'Středoškolská odborná činnost [= Secondary-School Students Professional Activities]' competition in biology. He is best known for his role as a lecturer and popularizer of science at the summer scientific camp Běstvína where he brought up several generations of professional entomologists and scientists.

Jan participated as an expert on Symphyta in several inventory projects of the fauna of protected nature areas and postindustrial areas in the Czech Republic – e.g. protected areas in Prague, Bílé Karpaty Protected Landscape Area, Králický Sněžník National Nature Reserve, or Sokolov district. During these surveys, he expanded the Hymenoptera collection and other insect collections in National Museum of the Czech Republic with a numerous recent material. He

also enriched the collections with material from foreign trips to Morocco or Vietnam. His most significant achievement is the collection of Diapriidae of world importance, which is among the largest in Europe. During his tenure, the museum also acquired important collections of Chalcidoidea (Bouček, Kalina) and Ichneumonidae (Šedivý). After moving the Department of Entomology and its collections from Kunratice to a new building in Horní Počernice in 2014, with the help of other collaborators, he sorted the old collections according to the recent taxonomy, which will make it easier for the next generation of specialists to work with the collections. Although Jan officially retired on December 31, 2023, he continues to actively work at the National Museum as an emeritus employee.

Dear Jan, it is our utmost pleasure to wish you in the name of all your friends and colleagues many active years, good health and abiding interest in entomology!

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