



DR. RUDOLF JAN PROKOP – 70TH BIRTHDAY

(Rudolf before his employment at the National Museum, Praha)



The range and depth of the work of Dr. Rudolf Jan Prokop is remarkable and because formerly I concentrated mostly on Rudolf's scientific activities in foreign countries (Petr 1994 a, b, 1999), it is time to say something about his home-born activities, about his odyssey through the first scientific periods of life.

Rudolf Jan Prokop was born at Praha-Vyšehrad at 1 a.m. in the morning on July 25, 1934, Na Slupi Street (in those days “Na slupy” – ‘slupy’ served as artificial blind canals parallel to the main stream – Botič Creek – very important for fisheries even in the first decade of 20th century!). His father Jan Prokop, mathematician, specialized in statistics; his mother, Jenovefa, born Filipová, was a pianist. The

newborn was baptized with freshwater from Vltava River at Svatý Apolinář on the so-called Větrná hora Hill (today Větrov near Albertov, Praha 2) and christened Rudolf Jan – but his parents and friends always called him by his first name.

Rudolf grew up and spent his early adulthood in the native region of Praha-Vyšehrad and on the banks of Botič Creek and Vltava River – i.e. at Praha-Podskalí. His father shaped Rudolf's interests in natural history, mother in music. Rudolf became interested in life sciences: botany (esp. dendrology, tree identification) and zoology (esp. entomology, lepidopterology, butterfly identification etc.). Being 14 years old, Rudolf concentrated on earth sciences (geology and palaeontology). He found his first fossil, trilobite of the genus *Odontochile*, on the trip with his father through the famous Prokop Valley near Praha (a rather important note for foreign readers – Prokop Valley is an old name and got it from an ancient hermit, Saint Prokop!).

Rudolf attended both the common school and the so-called Real Gymnasium (i.e. a gymnasium type with Latin and descriptive geometry, but without Greek) at Praha VI, Vyšehrad. He went to the gymnasium already at the end of the 4th class of the common school, on September 1, 1944, while German troops still occupied the territory of the present-day Czech Republic (in those days Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia). During the revolution in May 5–9, 1945 (Czechs started

their fight for freedom and barricades were built in Prague's streets), Rudolf took a part in this fight as a "young scouter" and imprisoned by German soldiers, he had been seriously wounded.

In 1948 the Real Gymnasium had been closed by the communist regime and Rudolf went to another one – Gymnasium of Jan Masaryk at Praha XII (Praha-Vinohrady, Lobkovicovo nám. Square), curiously the latter was closed as a "contrarevolution site" in 1949 and Rudolf finished his study at a third one, this time at Praha XI (Praha-Žižkov, Kubelíkova ul. Street), with leaving examinations in 1953.

In septima (7th class of the gymnasium) Rudolf worked out his first scientific research, particularly palaeontological research of the Zahořany Formation (Ordovician of the Barrandian area) on a hill near the eastern margin of Strašnice Crematorium. Rudolf described the section of the hill and its faunal content in his first publication already in the year 1952 and published it in the journal *Vesmír* (see the bibliography, Petr 1994 b).

On October 10, 1953, Rudolf went to the Geological-Geographical Faculty, Charles University. According to the Soviet model, Faculty of Science (i.e. natural history) of Charles University had been divided by the communist regime into two faculties, Geological-Geographical Faculty and Biological Faculty, and he began to study geology.

As a student he became demonstrator of Prof. Radim Kettner (in years 1955–1957) and then an assistant (1957–1958) of Prof. Bedřich Bouček at the Department of Geology and Palaeontology of the Pedagogical High School (= former Pedagogical Faculty of the Charles University). In 1958 Rudolf graduated at Geological-Geographical Faculty, Charles University (in today's Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Faculty of Science,

Charles University). His diploma work focused on the geological and stratigraphical survey of the Mesozoic rocks of Western Carpathians, Slovakia. Rudolf graduated and remained with Prof. Bouček as an assistant professor of geology but already in 1959 he went back to the Department of Geology, Geological-Geographical Faculty, Charles University as an assistant professor of Prof. Radim Kettner.

Because of his diploma work, Rudolf spent his early professional career especially in Slovakia – in Cergovské hory Mts., then in the karst area of Jihoslovenský kras, and carried out also investigations in the region southeast from Banská Bystrica. He mapped the terrain between Banská Bystrica and Zvolen (from the left bank of the Hron River and eastward) and described fossil lamellibranchians there (MS diploma work). His only but very important publication from this region of the Slovakian Mesozoic (palaeontologically unknown at that time) was published in *Časopis pro mineralogii a geologii* in 1960 (see bibliography, Petr 1994 b).

In the years 1960–1969 (beginning from August 31, 1960), Rudolf joined Central Geological Survey (Ústřední ústav geologický), now Czech Geological Survey, Praha. He spent a relatively short period of time in a research group for Proterozoic under the heading of Zdeněk Vejnar, mapping especially the neighbourhood of Horšovský Týn and Meclov, SW Bohemia, including randings and pit tips near Meclov (Meclov is well-known by its early Medieval exploitation of gold and copper ores), and coordinated his research with archaeologists.

As a field geologist he was involved in the geological survey, creating maps to the scale of 1 : 25 000 (for maps to the scale of 1 : 50 000) of Český les, later editing the map sheet for the region of Karlovy Vary (continuing the work of Vladimír

Zoubek) and neighbourhood. In 1963 Rudolf joined a research group for his beloved Palaeozoic. Here Rudolf began with mapping of the Moravian Culm (with Ivo Chlupáč), especially in Nížký Jeseník, and with an editorship of the map sheet 1 : 50 000 Olomouc-east. He also carried out geological survey for map sheets 1 : 50 000 in the Bohemian Ordovician, and in Moravian Palaeozoic (esp. in Moravo-Silesian Culm). Even in Culm he edited some map sheets (e.g., Hranice) and in 1967 he had been appointed to the position of the main editor.

In those years Rudolf was already driven by his personal interests in palaeontological and stratigraphical investigations of echinoderms of the Lower Palaeozoic, especially in cystoids and crinoids, and even in Mesozoic echinoderms; most of his publications were concerned with echinoderms. For example, already in 1963, Rudolf wrote about Devonian crinoid columnals from the region of Rožmítál, coming from the rocks identified wrongly by Prof. Radim Kettner as Proterozoic (relatively very young Rudolf published his important discovery and the article destroyed his friendship with the older scientist).

In the years 1964–1965 Rudolf embarked on the textbook-project of Prof. Z. V. Špínar (*Systematic Palaeontology of Invertebrates*) and wrote all the important chapters on Echinodermata, including Carpoidea, and on Machaeridia, while he continued in the geological survey of Nížký Jeseník and Oderské vrchy, and participated in preparations for the International Geological Congress, Praha 1968 (esp. excursion guides; during the congress he joined the Stratigraphical Commission for Palaeozoic, co-organized the sessions, served as excursion leader, etc.).

From 1962 to 1965 Rudolf embarked on his postgradual education. In 1968 he was passing successfully an additional state exam from zoology, defended a postdoctoral dissertation thesis on crinoids of the family Calceocrinidae and received both his RNDr. and CSc. degree from palaeontology.

In 1968 Rudolf spent about two months at Max-Planck-Institute in München, presented series of lectures at the University of München, and at the end of summer, 1968 had been invited by the Institute of Oceanography at Marseilles, and participated in extensive geological undersea mapping of the French coast of the Mediterranean Sea (long strip from Marseilles to Saint Tropez, see the birthday article by Petr 1994 b). However, the officials of the Central Geological Survey did not recognize Rudolf for his efforts. He was not allowed to continue the research in France in spring, 1969. In fact, as a consequence of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia (August, 1968), Rudolf had been charged as a “western type of scientist” and in August 15, 1969 he retired to the brewery “Pražan”, Praha-Holešovice, as a storekeeper.

At the beginning of October, 1969 Rudolf had been “discovered” by the Palaeontological Department, Museum of Natural History, National Museum, Praha, represented by Radvan Horný and headed by Vlastislav Zázvorka, and had been offered a position of the scientific research worker. In November 13, 1969 he went to the National Museum and after his early career as a geologist, he focused entirely on palaeontology, beginning his major work on echinoderms, for which he is best known, in which he established his reputation and gained popularity in the scientific world.

REFERENCES

- Petr, V. (1994a): Z čeho vlastně jsou vápence Českého krasu? aneb RNDr. Rudolf Prokop, CSc. šedesátníkem. – Český kras, 19: 55–62. Beroun. (including Rudolf Prokop's "carbonate" bibliography 1962–1993–)
- Petr, V. (1994b): 60th Birthday of Rudolf J. Prokop. – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná, 163(1–4): 121–128. Praha. (including Rudolf Prokop's complete bibliography 1952–1994–)
- Petr, V. (1999): 65th Birthday of dr. Rudolf J. Prokop. – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 168(1–4): 5–6. Praha. (including supplement to Rudolf Prokop's bibliography, 1994–1999–)

References to Rudolf Prokop's diploma work and dissertation thesis

- Prokop, R. (1958): Geologický výzkum území jižně od Banské Bystrice (Geological investigations of the region south of Banská Bystrica). 48 pp., Tab. I–IV., geologická mapa, profily. 7 s. dokumentace. *Diplomová práce*, MS Karlova univerzita. Praha. *Diploma work*, MS Charles University, Praha.
- Prokop, R. (1968): Čeleď Calceocrinidae Meek et Worthen, 1869 v českém siluru a devonu (Crinoidea). (Family Calceocrinidae Meek et Worthen, 1869 in the Bohemian Silurian and Devonian (Crinoidea)). 131 pp., 21 text-figs. *Kandidátská disertační práce*, MS Ústřední ústav geologický. Praha. *Dissertation thesis*, MS Charles University.

Supplement to the bibliography of Rudolf J. Prokop (1999–2004)

- Prokop, R. J., Petr, V. (1999): *Carpocrinus ornatus* (Angelin, 1878) (Crinoidea, Camerata) from the Silurian of the Barrandian area (Czech Republic). – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 168(1–4): 135–136. Praha.
- Hotchkiss, F. H. C., Prokop, R. J., Petr, V. (1999): Isolated vertebrae of brittlestars of the Family Klasmuridae Spencer, 1925 (Echinodermata: Ophiuroidea) in the Devonian of Bohemia (Czech Republic). – Journal of the Czech Geological Society, 44(3–4): 329–333. Praha. (Czech summary)
- Prokop, R., Turek, V. (1999): Correlation of Barrande's nomenclature and stratigraphy with contemporary usage: Addendum to the facsimile of J. Barrande (1852): Systeme silurien du centre de la Boheme, Vol. I, Planches: Crustacés, Trilobites..., 8 pp., 1 Tab., Granit Publishing House. Praha.
- Turek, V., Prokop, R. J., Straková, M. (1999): Paleontologické oddělení. (in Czech) *In*: Průvodce, Přírodovědecké muzeum, Národní muzeum, Praha, p. 19–32, 25 text-figs. Národní muzeum, Praha.
- Parsley, R. L., Prokop, R. J. (1999): Phylogeny and functional morphology of kirkocystid ankyroids (Stylophora, Echinodermata). – Geological Society of America, Annual Meeting, Abstracts with Programs (Session 15, Paleontology I: Phylogeny and Functional Morphology, October 25, Denver), 31(7): A43. Boulder.
- Parsley, R. L., Prokop, R. J., Derstler, K. (2000): Kirkocystid ankyroids (Stylophora: Echinodermata) from the Šárka Formation (Ordovician) of Bohemia. – Bulletin of the Czech Geological Survey, 75(1): 37–47. Praha.
- Galle, A., Prokop, R. J. (2000): Complex parasitism and symbiosis of crinoid, subepidermal parasite, and tabulate coral: Lower Devonian (Pragian), Barrandian, Czech Republic. – Bulletin of the Czech Geological Survey, 75(4): 441–444. Praha.
- Slámová, R., Prokop, R. J. (2000): *Pentacauliscus* cf. *nodosus* Moore et Jeffords, 1968 (Crinoidea, Col.) from the Zlíchov Limestone (Lower Devonian, Lower Emsian) of Bohemia. – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 169(1–4): 34. Praha.
- Turek, V., Prokop, R. J., Straková, M. (2000): Die Paläontologische Abteilung. *In*: Museumführer, Naturwissenschaftliches Museum, Praha, p. 23–40, 25 text-figs. Národní muzeum, Praha.
- Turek, V., Prokop, R. J., Straková, M. (2000): Department of Palaeontology. *In*: A Guidebook, Natural History Museum, Praha, p. 19–34, 25 text-figs. National Museum, Prague.
- Prokop, R. J. (2000): Investigation of echinoderms of the Koněprusy Limestone (Lower Devonian, Pragian) in the Barrandian area (Czech Republic) (in Czech with English summary). – Zprávy o geologických výzkumech v roce 1999 (Geoscience Research Reports for 1999), 71–72. Praha.
- Parsley, R. L., Prokop, R. J. (2001): Functional morphology and paleoecology of Middle Cambrian echinoderms from marginal Gondwana basins in Bohemia. – The Geological Society of America, Paper, Abstract ID#: 24159 (GSA Annual Meeting, November 5–8, 2001, oral presentation). Boulder.
- Prokop, R. J., Petr, V. (2001): Remarks on palaeobiology of juvenile scyphocrinitids and marhoumacrinids (Crinoidea, Camerata) in the Bohemian uppermost Silurian and lowermost Devonian. – Journal of the Czech Geological Society, 46(3/4): 259–268. 11 text-figs. Praha.

- Prokop, R. J. (2001): Z dějin padělatelství u nás, aneb “celí” krinoidi z barrandienského siluru. From the history of forgery of fossils in our country: the “complete” crinoids from the Silurian of the Barrandian. – Český kras (Beroun), 27: 51. Beroun.
- Prokop, R. J. (2001): Occurrence of echinoderms in the quarry “Kosov” near Beroun (Silurian: Wenlock-Ludlow), Barrandian, Czech Republic (in Czech with English summary). – Zprávy o geologických výzkumech v roce 2000 (Geoscience Research Reports for 2000), 46–48. Praha.
- Kraft, P., Kraft, J., Prokop, R. J. (2001): A possible hydroid from the Lower and Middle Ordovician of Bohemia. – Alcheringa, 25: 143–154. 9 text-figs.
- Vonka, V., Prokop, R. J. (2001): Nález křídové ježovky *Galerites vulgaris* u Vidnavy ve Slezsku. Ein Fund der Oberkreide-Stachelhauer bei Vidnava (Schlesien) (in Czech with German summary). – Časopis Slezského muzea, Opava (A), 50: 215–216. Opava.
- Prokop, R. J. (2002): *Kerrycoleus* gen. n. (Machaeridia, Lepidocoleidae) from the Devonian of Bohemia (Czech Republic). – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 170 (for 2001) (1–4): 89–90. 2 text-figs. Praha.
- Prokop, R. J., Petr, V. (2002): Second find of crinoid “*Vletavocrinus haueri*” Waagen et Jahn, 1899 in Přídolí Limestone, Upper Silurian, Barrandian area (Czech Republic). – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 170 (for 2001) (1–4): 105–106. 1 text-fig. Praha.
- Prokop, R. J., Petr, V. (2002): Survey of echinoderms and a new ophiocistioid *Branzoviella talpa* gen et sp. n. (Echinodermata, Ophiocistioidea) in the Lower Devonian, Lochkov Formation of the Barrandian area, Czech Republic. – Bulletin of the Czech Geological Survey, 77(3): 237–240. 1 Pl., 3 text-figs. Praha.
- Prokop, R. J. (2002): *Ramacrinus robustus* sp. n. (Crinoidea, Inadunata) from the Koněprusy Limestone, Lower Devonian, Barrandian area (Czech Republic). – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 171(1–4): 63–64. 1 text-fig. Praha.
- Prokop, R. J. (2002): *Myelodactylus spatulatus* LeMenn, 1987 (Crinoidea, col.) from the Lower Devonian Zlíčov Limestone of the Barrandian area, Czech Republic. – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 171(1–4): 65–67. 1 Pl. Praha.
- Sevastopulo, G. D., Jackson, P. N. W., Prokop, R. J. (2002): Functional morphology of *Pygmaeocrinus* (Disparida; Crinoidea). – Special Papers in Palaeontology, 67: 251–260. 1 Pl. London.
- Prokop, R. J. (2002): Z historie výzkumu ostnokožců českého staršího paleozoika (From the history of echinoderm research of the Czech Lower Paleozoic). – Český kras (Beroun), 28: 27–30. 6 text-figs. Beroun.
- Turek, V., Horný, R., Prokop, R. J. (2003): Ztracená moře uprostřed Evropy. Vanished seas in the centre of Europe. Illustrated by Jan Sovák. 193 pp., English summary. Academia, Praha.
- Prokop, R. J. (2003): Výzkum ostnokožců koněpruských vápenců Barrandienu (spodní devon, prag) – II. Investigation of echinoderms of the Koněprusy Limestone (Lower Devonian, Pragian) in the Barrandian area (Czech Republic) II. – Zprávy o geologických výzkumech v roce 2002 (Geoscience Research Reports for 2002), 141–142, příloha VI/1–3b. Praha.
- Mikuláš, R., Prokop, R. J. (2003): Společenstvo ostnokožců (Cystoidea a Blastoidea) z bazálních poloh královodvorského souvrství (svrchní ordovik Barrandienu). Assemblage of echinoderms (Cystoidea and Blastoidea) from the basal layers of the Králův Dvůr Formation (Upper Ordovician, Barrandian area, Czech Republic). – Zprávy o geologických výzkumech v roce 2002 (Geoscience Research Reports for 2002), 133–134, příloha XI/A–J. Praha.
- Prokop, R. J., Petr, V. (2003): *Plasiacystis mobilis*, gen. et sp. n., a strange “carpoid” (Echinodermata, ?Homoiostelea: Soluta) in the Bohemian Ordovician (Czech Republic). – Acta Musei Nationalis Pragae, Series B, Historia Naturalis, 59 (2003) (3–4): 151–162. Praha. in press.
- Parsley, R. L., Prokop, R. J. (2004): Functional morphology and palaeoecology of some sessile Middle Cambrian echinoderms from Barrandian region of Bohemia. – Bulletin of Geosciences, 79(3): 147–156. Praha.
- Prokop, R. J., Petr, V. (2004): Pleurocystitidae indet. (Cystoidea, Rhombifera) in the Bohemian Devonian (Czech Republic). – Časopis Národního muzea, Řada přírodovědná (Journal of the National Museum, Natural History Series), 172 (1–4): 00–00. Praha.