



Rudolf Musil  
\*5 May 1926



Oldřich Fejfar  
\*8 January 1931

## **Prof. RNDr. Rudolf Musil, DrSc.**

Prof. RNDr. Rudolf Musil, DrSc., a prominent Czech palaeontologist, celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 5, 2016. His birthday found him not only in good physical condition and fitness, but still in full working activity.

Professor Musil was born in Líšeň near Brno, in the southernmost part of the Moravian Karst. He studied natural history and geography at Masaryk University in Brno. In his Alma Mater, he was influenced by outstanding scientists from different fields of earth and biological sciences, including Professors Zahálka, Zapletal, Vitásek, Krejčí, Ulehla, Podpěra, Suk and Hrabě. After defence of his dissertation at Charles University, Prague in 1960, he completed his habilitation, and was named a Docent at the Faculty of Sciences, Masaryk University in Brno, focused on vertebrate palaeontology and Quaternary geology. In 1968, he received a Doctor of Science (DrSc.) degree, based on his research on the evolution of cave bears, and in 1980, he was appointed Professor of Palaeontology. For most of his life, Professor Musil's pedagogical activities have been connected with Masaryk University, and particularly with the Department of Geological Sciences, where he is an emeritus professor. However, for many years, Professor Musil was also a member of the Department of Museology in the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, where he gave lectures for students of archaeology and museology.

As a palaeontologist, Professor Musil focused mainly on research of fossil vertebrates, particularly Neogene and Pleistocene mammals. He focused his attention mainly on systematics, evolution, palaeoecology and biostratigraphy. Professor Musil's research, based in particular on rich osteological material, was focused on famous Czech localities, including open-air localities (e.g., Stránská Skála Hill, Dolní Věstonice, Pavlov, Předmostí), as well as cave localities (e.g., Švédův Stůl, Pod Hradem, Kůlna, Barová and Za Hájovnou caves). However, his research achieved an extensive international audience as well, which was supported by his research on foreign localities, including German open-air and cave localities, for example Süssenborn, Weimar-Ehringsdorf, Taubach, Schöningen, Bilzingsleben, Untermassfeld, Voigstedt and Kniegrotte, and Austrian localities Grubgraben and Willendorf. His monograph on mammoths from the Předmostí site, further contributions to the phylogeny of Pleistocene horses, a three-volume monograph dealing exhaustively with geographic and stratigraphic distribution of cave bears, and many other detailed papers on morphology and phylogeny of fossil vertebrates are all of crucial importance.

The wide scope of Professor Musil's research is reflected in his general interest in Quaternary geology. Over the course of more than six decades of research, he has published a number of publications devoted to fluvial deposits, loesses, fossil soils and cave deposits, as well as general aspects of Quaternary stratigraphy. Moreover, as a member of the International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences (INHIGEO), he published extensive contributions to the history of geological research, in particular in his beloved Moravian Karst. Professor Musil is a lifelong propagator of Quaternary palaeontology and geology among those interested in the development of natural environments in Central Europe. This statement is best documented by his latest monograph, devoted to development of the natural environment in Moravia during the Last Glacial.

Professor Musil always liked to be surrounded by the young people. He established working teams with younger colleagues, including PhD and MA students of the Department of Geological Sciences, Masaryk University in Brno. Under Professor Musil's supervision, his team organizes annual international Quaternary conferences devoted to a multidisciplinary approach to research on the Quaternary period. Professor Musil's extensive international connections enabled him to organize the Summer School of Quaternary Studies in 2005 – 2007. This project was met with great interest by all participants, including both domestic and foreign specialists and students.

Despite his respectable age, Professor Musil still spends a good bit of time in the field. Since 2001, he has conducted comprehensive research of cave sediments in the Za Hájovnou Cave in Javoříčko Karst. The first collected results were published in 2005, and a number of new publications appeared in 2014. Professor Musil is currently working on summarization of new field research in Dagmar Cave in the Moravian Karst, which took place over the last few years.

Professors Musil's bibliography represents over 290 scientific publications published both in the Czech Republic and abroad, 18 monographs and books, and over 130 popular and informational papers. For years he was also very active as editor and leading organizer of the publication *Folia historica Facultatis Rerum Naturalium Universitatis Masarykianae Brunensis*.

During his professional life, Professor Musil has become a member of a number of associations, and has received many important awards. He is a member the UIS Commission on Archaeology and Palaeontology in Caves (UIS = International Union of Speleology). Since 1960, he has been a member of the Czech Geological Society (formerly Czechoslovak Society for Mineralogy and Geology). In 1963 – 1967, he was a chairman of the Brno branch of the Society, and in 1965 – 1978 he was a chairman of the Palaeontological group of the Czech Geological Society. Professor Musil was a member of the Karstic commission of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences during 1963 – 1994. In 1971 – 2005, he was a member of the Stratigraphic Commission of the Czech Republic at the Czech Geological Survey. As regards awards, Professor Musil is the winner of the Silver Medal of the Museum für Naturkunde der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In 1986, he received the Silver Plaque of F. Pošepný for Merit for the Development of Geological Sciences (No. 19), awarded by the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. In 1996, he received the Jaroslav Petrbok Memorial Medal from the Czech Speleological Society for long-term activity in the field of speleology. In 1996, he received the Golden Commemorative Medal of Masaryk University.

Professor Musil is renowned for his life optimism and vitality. For years to come, we sincerely wish him good health, success in all future activities and plenty nice moments with his family, friends and colleagues.

Martin Ivanov

## Prof. RNDr. Oldřich Fejfar, CSc.

Prof. Oldřich Fejfar, a prominent Czech palaeontologist of impressive international reputation, was born in Prague on January 8, 1931. His study of palaeontology at the Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague (1948 to 1954) was capped by a thesis on early Pleistocene mammal faunas in Bohemian karst, in particular the enormously rich record from the stratigraphic sequence in the Koněprusy C718 site. Contrary to traditional focus on large mammals, he concentrated on small mammals, insectivores and rodents, a group then largely omitted from European palaeontological studies. Oldřich Fejfar developed techniques of quantitative investigation of that group, and demonstrated their usefulness for detailed biostratigraphic and palaeoecological analyses. Among others things, he described two taxa from the C718 sequence, later recognized as true index fossils of the Early/Middle Pleistocene transition: *Dicrostonyx simplicior* and *Macroneomys brachygnathus*.

In 1954, Dr. Fejfar accepted the professional position of research fellow in the Czech Geological Survey, where he worked until 1990, when his former Alma Mater drafted him to chair their Palaeontological Department.

At the INQUA conference on Pleistocene stratigraphy in Prague in 1955 he first met Miklós Kretzoi, a founding father of modern Late Cenozoic biostratigraphy of Central Europe, and a leading personality in mammalian palaeontology in this region, who invited him to joint a large-scale investigation of Plio-Pleistocene deposits in Hungary. A close cooperation with Kretzoi, extended into a lifelong friendship of both personalities, became essential an impulse in Dr. Fejfar's scientific career. In 1955, he started a systematic search for mammalian deposits of Pliocene and Plio-Pleistocene age. His excavations with washing and sorting tons of sediments in numerous sites of former Czechoslovakia soon brought a series of exciting discoveries. In the volcanic and limnic deposits of Hajnáčka, known for the appearance of Villafranchian macrofauna, he succeeded in finding remains of micromammals, and demonstrated that the forms he described from there (*Mimomys hajnackensis*, *minor* etc.) represent a much older stage of arvicolid evolution than was formerly assumed.

A rich fauna obtained from karst infillings in Ivanovce, also discovered at that time, revealed an even older stage of Pliocene faunal development, and provided material which significantly enlarged knowledge of that horizon – among other curious forms, *Allosorex stenodus*, an extreme phenotype offshoot and new subfamily of shrew. Detailed taxonomic analyses of particular clades in a series of papers entitled Die plio-pleistozänen Wirbeltierfaunen von Hajnáčka und Ivanovce (1961a, b, c, 1966, 1970 – 2017) established a robust platform for mammalian biostratigraphy of the European Pliocene, and deep comprehension of phylogenetic dynamics of the respective clades in the Plio-Pleistocene period.

By the end of 1950s, Dr. Fejfar had extended his focus onto fossils of Early Miocene age. He started large-scale excavations in numerous localities of the North Bohemian Tertiary basin, first in those from which remains of large mammals had already been reported by J. W. Goethe, M. Schlosser and E. Suess. From the karst-fillings in Devínská Nová Ves, freshwater limestones of Tuchořice, calcareous marl in Cheb basin (Dolnice, Františkovy Lázně) and particularly, brown coal deposits near Chomutov (Ahníkov, Merkur Nord), he obtained rich communities covering several hundreds species of diverse vertebrate groups, including numerous small mammals until then unknown from that region. Subsequent analyses of these materials contributed markedly to understanding of Early Miocene history of Central Europe in regards to detailed stratigraphy and sedimentation dynamics of the basin, palaeoenvironmental context, and evolutionary history of particular mammalian clades during the covered period (MN 3 – MN 5). In the neighboring region of Doupovské Mts., he discovered fauna of Early Oligocene age (MP 21– MP 22), and by a thorough re-examination, he arranged in its context a famous fossil “*rodent from Walsch*”, many times reported in historical compendia, including that by Cuvier (1827).

In 1968, Dr. Fejfar received the Alexander von Humboldt Award, which enabled him to join a research team of the Institute of Palaeontology and historical Geology in Munich University, where during the years 1969 to 1971, he continued his studies on Miocene and Pliocene rodents in close co-operation with Richard Dehm, Heinz Tobien, Volker Fahlbuch, Johannes Hützel and Erich Thenius. Among other, this resulted in a voluminous monograph on Miocene evolution of the Eomyidae and Cricetidae families, published in *Palaeontographica* in 1974.

At the same time, Oldřich Fejfar continued his studies on Quaternary rodents, particularly arvicolids, and subsequently refined a detailed setting of Quaternary and Plio-Pleistocene biostratigraphy, based essentially on that group. His concept (1976) was further extended into the Holarctic correlation of arvicolid rodents (with C. A. Repenning 1979), and a series of subsequently improved biostratigraphic concepts, particularly in co-operation with W. D. Heinrich (1981, 1982, 1983, 1986, 1997). The Fejfar's work on the global history of arvicolid rodents was stimulated by his stays in the USA in 1971 and 1976, and continuous co-operation with Charles Repenning, with whom he compiled a voluminous monograph (catalogue) of fossil arvicolids, unfortunately, not yet published in full.

In May, 1987, Oldřich organized the 1<sup>st</sup> International Arvicolid meeting in Rohanov, attended by nearly all prominent specialists in the field. The meeting and its proceedings formed a robust platform for current research in evolution and biostratigraphic significance of that group.

Last but not least, it should be remembered that Oldřich Fejfar participated in numerous international expeditions and excavation works abroad, all with considerable scientific outputs (e.g. Cuba 1966, USA 1976, 2004, Ecuador 1984, Mongolia 1996, China 1996 and Lybia 1983, 1996).

He authored around 160 papers on diverse topics of mammalian palaeontology and biostratigraphy, including voluminous monographs and summarizing chapters in various international compendia. His achievements heavily influenced current views on these topics, and made him one of the most respected experts in his field. He was appointed a corresponding member of the Senckenberg Society in 2002, honorary member of the Paläontologische Gesellschaft in 2003, and as one of few non-American scientists, was awarded an honorary membership in the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology in 2009.

Regardless of all his extraordinary achievements, and the secular honors he received, Oldřich never lost his brilliant sense of humor and helpful attitude to his fellows. All who have met him personally not only appreciate his impressive intellect and profound knowledge of diverse spheres of science, history and art, but value him first as a human being, a friendly person, rich in deep comprehension of a matter of life. On behalf of all, the editors wish Oldřich Fejfar lasting good health in the years to come, continued enjoyment in his fields of interest, and many pleasant times.

Ivan Horáček

