

RNDr. Josef Jelínek CSc. seventy years old

Dr. Josef Jelínek, one of the leading personalities of Czech entomology, celebrated his 70th birthday in 2009. He is known among the world entomologists mainly as a specialist for the superfamily Cucujoidea, and the family Nitidulidae in particular, as well as a long-standing head of the Department of Entomology at the National Museum in Prague.

Josef Jelínek was born on 12 August 1939 in Prague, where he also completed his secondary education. He started to collect beetles already as a young student and over the years, his interests became serious enough to make him to take the logical step forward by enrolling into the entomology study program at the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Prague under the leadership of the world-renowned specialist and eminent pedagogue Prof. Jan Obenberger. Jelínek's approach to entomology that combined both taxonomy and faunistics subsequently formed during regular meetings with the giants of the Czechoslovak entomology of that time, such as Jan Roubal, Leo Heyrovský, Bohumil Štícha, Cyril Purkyně, Oldřich Šustera and Antonín Pfeffer. Jelínek finished his studies in 1961 by successfully defending his diploma thesis 'The Czechoslovak species of the genus *Meligethes* (Coleoptera, Nitidulidae)'. In the same year, he obtained a position of a research scientist in the entomology department at the National Museum in Prague lead by Josef Mařan. He started his work with the moving of the department to the Kunratice chateau and worked there for more than 40 years until his retirement in 2005. He served as the head of the department from 1991 through 2004.

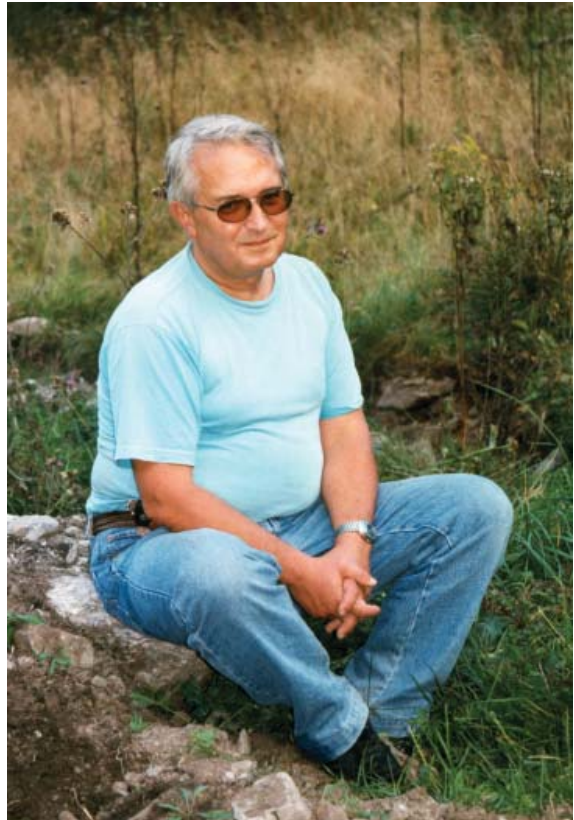


Fig. 1. Josef Jelínek during a field excursion in the Orlické hory PLA (September 1999). Photo: J. Hájek.



Fig. 2. Svatopluk Bílý and Josef Jelínek in the Lednice arboretum (autumn 1972). Photo: Archive of S. Bílý.

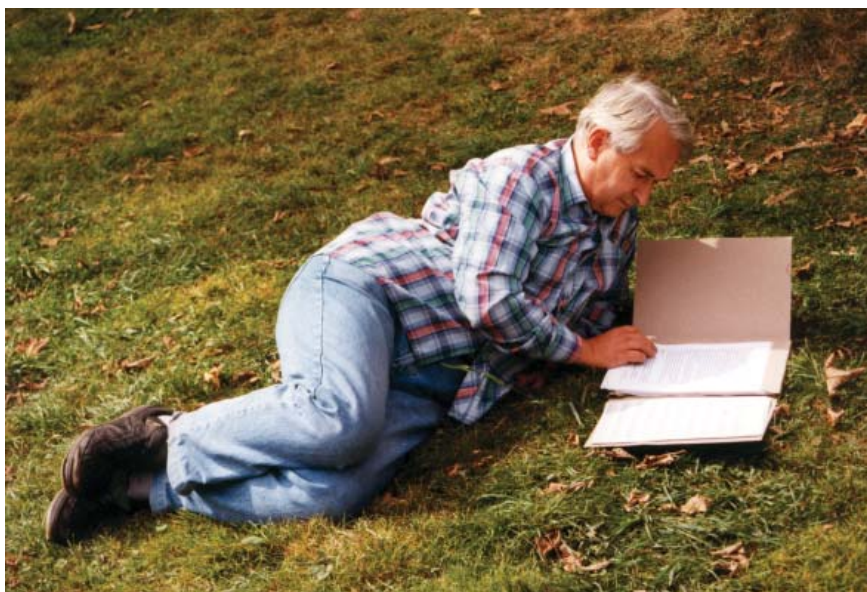


Fig. 3. Josef Jelínek correcting a manuscript during a field excursion in the Orlické hory PLA (September 1999). Photo: J. Hájek.



Fig. 4. Josef Jelínek enjoying the entomological feast in Újezd u Chcebuze (August 2007). Photo: J. Hájek.

In 1971 Jelínek finished his post-gradual education by successfully defending the dissertation thesis ‘Revision of the suprageneric systematics of the family Nitidulidae (Coleoptera)’. He is at present one of the most renowned world specialists on this group of beetles and his general knowledge of insect taxonomy puts him among the top experts in that field.

Josef Jelínek is the honorary member and president of the Czech Entomological Society, in which he also for a long time served as the leader of the faunistic section. He is an honorary member of the Erste Vorarlberger Coleopterologischer Verein and a member of the editorial boards of the journals *Folia Heyrovskyana*, *Časopis Národního muzea*, *Acta Entomologica Musei Nationalis Pragae* and *Annales Zoologici*. For many years he also was an editor of the *European Journal of Entomology* (formerly *Acta Entomologica Bohemoslovaca*), and he remains a member of its editorial board. Josef Jelínek has published about 120 original

scientific papers and numerous popular science articles. Important is also his influence as a lecturer and popularizer in daily press and radio.

Josef Jelínek was never just a theoretician and an ‘arm-chair’ entomologist, studying his beetles only through the objectives of his microscope; he was always, from the beginnings, an excellent field worker and insect collector. From his student times and later as an employee of the National Museum, he undertook numerous excursions and expeditions, during which he collected enormous amounts of insects. Three entomological expeditions organized by the Department to Iran and trips to Cuba, Spain, Italy, Hungary, former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Central Asia and to Vietnam should be mentioned in particular. We know from our own experience how the fieldwork with Josef enlarges one’s knowledge. His knowledge of botany is enormous and extremely useful during the fieldwork. His knowledge of cultural and historical events, as well as his language proficiency, is sometimes almost frustrating: he could offer cultural and historical comments on just about any place we visited with him in

the Czech Republic and even abroad. Josef is also a connoisseur of music who prefers jazz, chansons and renaissance and baroque music – he was also an active violin player of classical music. His culinary abilities, drawn from a large collection of Czech and foreign cookbooks, made the field days more enjoyable for many of his colleagues.

All Josef's friends and colleagues know him as a respectable, honest, positive and altruistic fellow. It is our utmost pleasure to wish him in the name of all his friends and colleagues, as well as of the Czech Entomological Society, good health, lots of vim and successes in the years to come.

Svatopluk Bílý, Aleš Smetana & Jiří Hájek

Josef (Jozífek) Jelínek – luncheon meat visionary

A story that might well sum up Josef's attitudes to life happened during our second expedition to Iran in June 1973. We were camping and collecting insects in the valley of Naqsh-e Rostam, the most famous tomb area in Iran. The place was infested with stray dogs and all of them looked the same: large and of light colour. They did not look exactly like pets and we tried to stay away from them as much as possible. Nevertheless, one of them befriended the magnanimous Jozífek.

At about 2 a.m. one night, a strange noise could be heard coming from 'Beruška', our Praga V3-S expedition truck. What is that? We woke up to see that Jozífek is moving half of our canned meat out of the truck and the dog is standing next to him.

"What are you doing here, Jozífek?" we asked.

"I am searching for luncheon meat," replied Jozífek.

"Why?" we wondered.

"It's for the dog and I cannot find it," said Jozífek, still busy with the cans.

We thought he needed some help: "Give him the hamburgers, there is plenty of them here."

But Jozífek was not impressed: "I can't do that, I promised him a luncheon meat!"

Jan Ježek & Čárli Štich

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