

žurnál

Magazine of Palacký University Olomouc, 2024/1

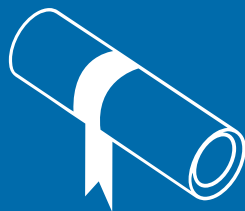
portrait

Eva Navrátilová: AFO is an affair of the heart



Palacký University
Olomouc

Genius loci...



alumni

Palacký University
Olomouc

STAY UP



invitations to academic, social,
cultural, and sporting events



discounts and benefits arranged
for you with our partners



regular updates about what's
happening at the university

Sign up at alumni.upol.cz



contents

- 2 — How to rescue a monastery library
- 5 — Martin Procházka elected Aurora President
- 6 — Faculty of Science researchers helped construct quantum codes via propagating light
- 6 — Law and Digital Technologies: Faculty of Law opens new doctoral programmes
- 7 — Institute of Clinical Rehabilitation hosts School of Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy and opens new doctoral programme
- 7 — The Mosaic of Knowledge featured fascinating contributions at the Faculty of Education
- 8 — Faculty of Medicine welcomes diamond alumni
- 8 — France in Moravia
- 9 — Faculty of Theology experts join research on the impact of digital technologies on wellbeing
- 9 — Joint project of APA Centre and "Firefly" supports visually impaired children in physical activities
- 10 — AMADEUS – a new system to speed up drug development
- 11 — Faculty of Physical Culture took part in developing a system for local muscle load evaluation
- 11 — Department of Analytical Chemistry scientists developed new method for tracking nanoparticles
- 12 — Archaeology of mountain valleys in Iraqi Kurdistan
- 13 — Portrait – Eva Navrátilová, AFO Director: With the festival, you can never grow old
- 16 — Success
- 20 — Come in! Meet the Welcome Office
- 21 — I'm the nervous Nelly with the red nose
- 23 — Neuroimmunologist Hans-Peter Hartung receives honorary degree
- 24 — Leadership Matters: First graduates highly appreciate the course
- 26 — Event – The ceremonial procession held in honour of the city's patron saint, St Pauline
- 27 — Interview – Otakar Fojt, a man of order: Science is amazing, because it is boundless
- 30 — Kaleidoscope
- 31 — Botanical Garden: New building and winter garden
- 32 — Very Bad Fairy Tales: Stories for self-destructors and the tender-hearted
- 33 — Portrait – Michal Horák, PhD student, singer-songwriter: You learn more when you start teaching
- 35 — Alumnus – Rehabilitation doctor Peter Olšák: I chose the right field
- 37 — Experience – I'm living my childhood dream – to be a scientist
- 39 — Reflection – Colombia
- 40 — Heritage – Founder of the first botanical garden in Olomouc, Martin S. Ehrmann

cover – Eva Navrátilová, AFO Director | photo: Jakub Čermák

Žurnál | Published biannually in English | Czech Registration No.: MK ČR E 12524, ISSN 1804-6754 | Published by Palacký University Olomouc, Křížkovského 8, CZ-771 47 Olomouc, Czech Republic | VAT No.: 61989592 | Editor-in-Chief: Ivana Pustějovská | Layout: Věra Marešová | Graphic Editor: Michaela Cyprová | Translation: Robert Hýsek, Matthew Sweney | Proofreading: Matthew Sweney | [Editorial Board](#) | Biskupské nám. 1, Olomouc | Telephone: +420 585 631 155 | E-mail: zurnal@upol.cz



Dear Students, Dear Colleagues,

Perhaps while reading our university magazine, you might wonder if a common denominator exists between science and art. I can think of several, right off the bat. One is creativity, which is not only made use of by artists in their work, but also in scientific research, where it is necessary to find novel solutions. And then there is curiosity, without which no scientist could find the proper spark for their research, and which also drives the artist forward with the thoughts and ideas which are applied layer by layer to gradually reveal the aesthetics in their work. But the main common denominator is without question the university, which gives space to scientists and artists alike so that they can develop their talents and so that they can meet, complement, and inspire each other on campus.

Although I am closer to the scientific community because my entire professional life has been spent more in the medical environment, as rector I get to meet with people from both the scientific and academic spheres, for which I am eternally grateful. It is immensely rewarding to me to have these opportunities to peer into the multitude of interesting fields we focus on at the university. I am proud of our students, teachers, scientists, and all my colleagues who work for our university in the most diverse fields, and I also cherish our alumni, who continue to make such a good name for us at home and abroad. Thanks to you, the university is a colourful mosaic of human skills, and each one of you contributes to it by your work.

I thank you, and I wish you lovely days here at Palacký University.

Martin Procházka, UP Rector

theme

text: Egon Havrlant
photos: Egon Havrlant, monastery archives



How to rescue a monastery library

A treasure stored in hundreds of banana boxes. Old books, covered with a layer of dust, many mildewed. Piles of volumes, some published more than five centuries ago, right after the invention of the printing press. This is how the historic library of the Želiv Monastery looked, until recently. But since March of this year, the rare books are back in their rightful place. After decades of material suffering, they have returned to their shelves in the newly restored areas of the original monastery library. Students of archiving and history at Palacký University had a large role in this – arranging the books under their teachers' tutelage took six years.

The history of mankind has shown many times that the most important chapters are written into our fate and our books, almost in parallel. This has been so since the time of the revolutionary invention of Johann Gutenberg, for the printing press changed the world forever, making it possible to distribute ideas and information en masse. The dark events in our history

have been accompanied by the destruction of human lives along with books, burnt in an attempt to stifle uncomfortable ideas by erasing memory. The Želiv Monastery has always been one of those places which did not escape those dark moments in our history. It is thus almost a miracle that its book collection, tended and expanded for centuries by the Premonstratensians, has been preserved to this day.

The monastery's history dates all the way back to 1139. It has experienced many turbulent moments in its nine centuries. It was afflicted by several fires, repeatedly occupied by Hussites and other armies, the monks had to deal with epidemics, natural catastrophes, and governmental disfavour. After the communist coup in February 1948, the monastery was dissolved as part of the government's anti-church and monastery campaign, and due to its remote location, it was used instead as an internment camp for priests and monks, then closed in February 1956. In 1950, its furnishings were removed, and its books went to the

"A monastery cannot function without books. The Želiv library was meant to be a reflection of the world, which is why it has works written mainly in German, Latin, and Czech from the most diverse fields in addition to theology. We were able to restock the library with 25,000 books published before 1860."

*Jana Oppeltová, UP FA
History Department*

Museum of Czech Literature's collection at Strahov Monastery in Prague. "In the second half of the twentieth century, the monastery was used as a psychiatric clinic and rehabilitation centre for alcoholism. The callous complex management literally devastated this rare historic monument," added the monastery's current abbot, Tadeáš Róbert Spišák. He remembers how he came to the monastery twenty years ago and guided visitors through the refectory – the monks' common dining hall: "I sighed that there was a library on the floor above us, a place for spiritual nourishment, but sadly, closed. Under the communists, the furniture had been burnt, and the books lay about in piles," said Abbot Spišák, commenting on the unfortunate situation when although the books had been returned from Strahov, the collection was incomplete, uncatalogued, and disorganised.

Attempts to return the library to its original appearance and previous function began to take a specific form six years ago, when UP Faculty of Arts (UP FA) students began coming to the monastery for a practical summer course in archiving. The difficult work was led by UP FA History Department teachers Jana Oppeltová, Ema Šimková, and Věra Slavíková for the entire duration. "We also do field work with our students at other institutions in Bo-

hemia and Moravia. We've been going to Želiv Monastery since 2018, always with a group of fifteen to twenty students. Our work there was quite difficult. We had to move the books twice, so every one of the books has passed through our hands at least thrice. In terms of their weight, it would be like moving three and a half elephants," said Jana Oppeltová with a laugh.

Joining the history students were students of music history and musicology. Together, they arranged the historic books, numbered them, and partly catalogued them. In autumn of last year, the books were transferred to their new shelves over several long weekends. The modern shelving was designed by the Šépka architectural design firm. "It's a system of concrete supports and metal shelving, and the concrete was poured in place, using stones and gravel from the Želivka River. We wanted to inscribe the place into the architecture. The whole assembly was made self-standing so we did not have to anchor it to the historic building construction in any way. In the centre of the room is a great table – an 8-metre metal surface – where the most valuable books are presented in thirteen glass-covered cases. The intention was to evoke the feeling of a banquet table, for beneath the library is the monastery dining hall," described architect Jan Šépka. →

Since 2018, more than a hundred UP FA students have taken part in restoring Želiv Monastery's historic library. UP FA Department of History students and teachers travel to other places in Bohemia and Moravia, including the Cistercian Monastery in Osek near Duchcov in the Ore Mountains foothills, the Premonstratensian Monastery in Teplá near Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), and the Diocesan Library at the bishopric in Litoměřice.





The reconstructed and sensitively furnished areas of the original library are decorated with frescoes from the 18th century. During its ceremonial reopening last spring, UP Rector Martin Procházka was in attendance. “Želiv Monastery is one of the most beautiful and important monuments in the country. I’m proud that our students and teachers had a role in its restoration, taking part in saving the cultural heritage of our nation. I think that this is a fine example of how our students manage to make practical use of their knowledge and skills. And what is especially gratifying to me is the fact that here we have a very good example of the applicability of the humanities in society,” said the UP rector.

Želiv Monastery has been a national cultural monument since 2010; last year 17,000 visitors toured the complex. While the library is not part of the tour, it is accessible to researchers and the pro-

fessional public. It is only open to visitors on special occasions, for it is part of the cloister, a place where only monks are allowed. “A monastery cannot function without books. The Želiv library was meant to be a reflection of the world, which is why it has works written mainly in German, Latin, and Czech from the most diverse fields in addition to theology. We were able to restock the library with 25,000 books published before 1860. These include medieval and Baroque manuscripts and even several incunabula – books printed before 1500. For students, it is truly something special when they first get such ancient and rare books into their hands,” noted Opletová.

In addition to the newly restored library, Želiv Monastery also opened the newly renovated spaces of the ancient prelatore – the abbot’s residence – before the start of this year’s tourist season. “We are very grateful here for the cooperation of

Dr Jana Opletová, who wrote the exhibition brochure, and with her colleagues from the Palacký University Faculty of Arts and from the Hroznata Academy at Teplá Monastery for its splendid installation,” added Spišák. The ancient prelatore is now part of the monastery tour, and the newly-installed exhibition acquaints visitors with archaeological findings and the abbot’s lodgings as they looked at the start of the 20th century, including the bedroom, study, dining room, salon, private chapel, library, and monastery museum. “I would like to thank Palacký University, its employees and students, from the bottom of my heart. Without their efforts, dedication, expertise, and remarkable enthusiasm, we never would have accomplished this. And above all, we never would have achieved the return of these historic volumes to their rightful place after almost seventy years,” the abbot added.

Martin Procházka elected Aurora President

Martin Procházka, Rector of Palacký University Olomouc, will lead the European university network Aurora as of the new academic year. He was elected its president by the Aurora General Council during the Aurora Spring Biannual 2024, which took place in Naples, Italy at the end of May. More than 170 representatives from 15 participating institutions discussed the development of international education, stakeholder engagement, and technology transfer.

Palacký University Olomouc joined Aurora as an associate member in 2020 and became a full member of the Aurora Network global university consortium in May 2022. After another term of intensive cooperation, UP Rector Martin Procházka was nominated for the position of President-Elect at the beginning of this year.

In the Naples election, he received unanimous support, and thus will replace the current president, University of Iceland Rector Jón Atli Benediktsson, in September. During the ceremony, Rector Procházka pre-

sented him with a vase made of Bohemian glass to thank him for his service. “This gift is not only a token of our friendship, but also a symbol of your excellent work for Aurora. Bohemian crystal, renowned for its exquisite craftsmanship, shines with the combination of tradition and innovation that we strive for at Aurora and reflects our commitment to excellence in education and research,” said Procházka.

In his acceptance speech, he emphasised that in his role as President, he wants to give the universities and all members of the community space for expression and the opportunity to shape the future of both Aurora and European higher education together. “My mission is to build bridges – between cultures, institutions, and even the whole world. Our commitment is to grow together within this connection, to develop Aurora, and to expand our ambitions with other global partners.”

Students are a key element of Aurora: one of its executive bodies is the Student Council; its President Hanuš Patera stud-

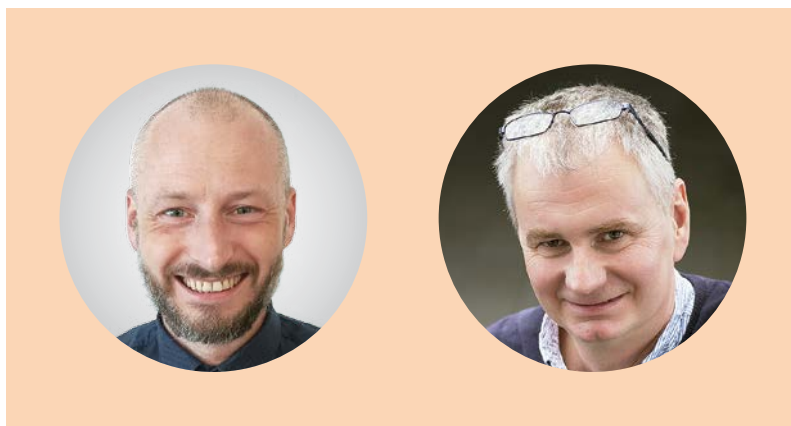
ies psychology at the UP Faculty of Arts. “The students’ enthusiasm and their ideas are a great inspiration to us all. As President, I will aim to continue working to create a student-oriented and inclusive environment,” underlined Procházka.

The Aurora Spring Biannual 2024 took place in the historic premises of the University of Naples Federico II, which celebrates 800 years of its existence this year. In addition to the election of a new president, the programme included a roundtable discussion on the development of joint international study programmes, and lectures on participatory democracy and citizen science. UP Vice-Rector for Strategy and Regional Affairs Michal Malacka was a guest speaker at the Stakeholder Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship in European Alliances roundtable. In addition to the handover of the presidency, another festive moment was the signing of the Aurora Sustainable Development Plan, which was designed thanks to the work of the Sustainable Campus team led by Palacký University.



UP Rector Martin Procházka (left) will replace University of Iceland Rector J. A. Benediktsson as Aurora President.

8 faculties
1 university



Faculty of Science researchers helped construct quantum codes via propagating light

An international team of scientists has experimentally created the world's first Gottesman-Kitaev-Preskill (GKP) quantum codes via propagating light, opening up the possibility of constructing optical quantum computers which offer exponential speed-up over classical computer technology. The unique experiment is a culmination of long-term collaboration between scientists from the University of Tokyo, Palacký University Olomouc, and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. The results were published in *Science*.

Quantum computers offer a new way to process information thanks to the principle of quantum superposition. Their qubits – the quantum counterpart to classical bits –

can contain values 0 and 1 concurrently. The international team of researchers focused on encoding logical qubits into optical oscillators, which can handle even quite complicated quantum codes and at the same time maintain their resistance to error.

“These codes can be created, for example, with help of microwave quantum circuits in superconducting resonators, in the motion of individual cold atoms, and now, thanks to our results, at room temperature as engineered states of light, which is suitable for practical use,” explained Prof Radim Filip of the UP Faculty of Science (UP FS) Department of Optics.

Pulses of propagating light working as an optical oscillator have the advantage

that they do not need cooling. The optical code is composed of a high number of photons, but they are all coherently contained within the individual pulses. “These pulses, provided by high-end photon number detectors, can be combined, processed, and measured at room temperatures and at high speeds with the techniques of modern optical communications. The key technology of nonlinear measurement was already tested by the two teams in 2023, with the results published in *Nature Communication*,” added Assoc Prof Petr Marek, UP FS Department of Optics.

This research was funded by a number of projects of the Czech Science Foundation and Horizon Europe. (cho)

Law and Digital Technologies: Faculty of Law opens new doctoral programmes

Twin doctoral programmes with an interdisciplinary foundation and further possibility of individual choices in narrower concentrations, oriented on research, with strong support of top results, and of an international character. These are not the only advantages characterising the doctoral pro-

grammes Právo a digitální technologie and Law and Digital Technologies. Their first students will matriculate in September.

Both programmes were accredited last autumn. The guarantors are the UP Faculty of Law (UP FL) in cooperation with the UP FS Department of Computer Science. “Our goal in creating the twin programmes was to fill the gap in Czech university education with an interdisciplinary doctoral programme specially profiled on the complex questions regarding the interaction of law and digital technologies. In doing so, Palacký University is joining a general global trend,” said Ondrej Hamulák, UP FS Vice-Dean for Science and Research, who significantly contributed to the creation of the programmes and who will also be one of its teachers.

Anyone with a Master's degree may apply; one does not have to have a degree in Law. “Applicants with Master's degree can apply, and students will be accepted who have successfully passed the entrance exam, during which their study prerequisites, levels of knowledge in law and digital technologies and their mutual ties will be examined, as well as whether applicants are prepared for their academic and creative duties in the field,” summarised Michael Kohajda, Vice-Dean for Doctoral Studies, Qualification Proceedings, and Finances, who prepared the programme's accreditation and who will also teach. Both programmes, the Czech and English one, are a standard 4-year study, and students can choose either in-person or combined in-person/online study. (eha)



Institute of Clinical Rehabilitation hosts School of Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy and opens new doctoral programme

Students and lecturers from universities in Bulgaria, Iceland, and Slovakia were hosted by the Institute of Clinical Rehabilitation at the UP Faculty of Health Sciences (UP FHS). The five-day Winter School of Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy followed last autumn's pilot event. "The whole programme was focused on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration. We ran workshops on interdisciplinary collaboration in voice therapy, occupational

therapy, headache therapy, multiple sclerosis therapy, movement imagery, breathing techniques, and interdisciplinary team dynamics, including practical demonstrations led by both foreign and local academics," said Petra Gaul Aláčová, the Physiotherapy guarantor at UP FHS, on behalf of the organisers. Throughout the week, groups of students worked on an interdisciplinary project, the output of which was a presentation. "The rich programme also

included a tour of historic Olomouc, arranged by the UP Welcome Office, and an excursion to the Rehabilitation Centre in Klimkovice. We are pleased that both students and academics liked the programme and found it useful and inspiring," said Jana Vyskotová, Deputy Head of the UP FHS Institute of Clinical Rehabilitation. The next winter school will take place again in autumn, from 9 to 13 September 2024.

The Institute of Clinical Rehabilitation is also planning to open a new doctoral study programme in Applied Clinical Rehabilitation for the next academic year. Eight candidates will be admitted. "The doctoral study programme is mainly focused on research into the application of modern therapeutic techniques and protocols of compensatory rehabilitation, analysis, and application of classification systems for diagnosis and evaluation of rehabilitation interventions," said Petr Konečný, Head of the Department of Clinical Rehabilitation. The new study programme will be provided as a combined in-person/online study; for the academic year 2025/2026, the department's management is preparing a study programme for doctoral students in English. (dkr)



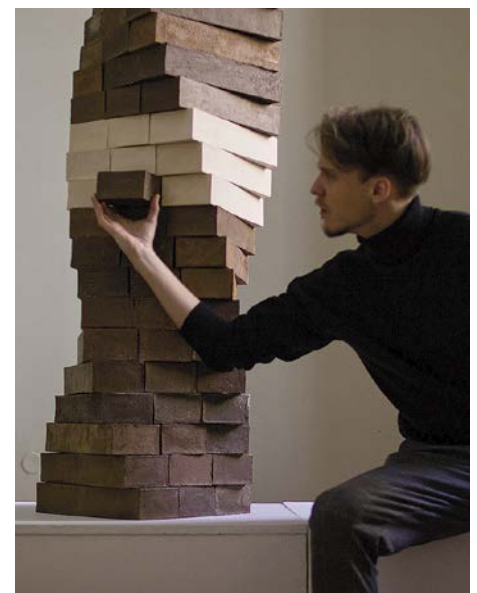
The Mosaic of Knowledge featured fascinating contributions at the Faculty of Education

The UP Faculty of Education (UP FE) organised the seventeenth annual conference Mosaic of Knowledge. Sixteen students presented their works within its competition section, thus fascinating information was presented from both educational and non-educational fields, as well as from the field of artistic creation. Among the award-winning works was *Brave New World* by Alexander Ivanov, a doctoral student in Arts Education.

"In my thesis, which is a sculptural object, I am making a reference to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. In addition to that book, I was also inspired by myths about the creation of man, and especially by the relatively new genetic engineering method CRISPR-Cas9. The morphology of my final work is reminiscent of the popular game Jenga. It is a multi-part tower folded into a double DNA helix. Each of the fif-

ty-five brown and white bricks symbolises one gene," said Ivanov.

He thought for a long time about what the final work should look like and found the answer in the Jenga game. "One of the important aspects of that game is that if you make too many changes, the tower becomes unstable. This is also true in genetic engineering. The more changes we make to the genetic information, the more we put ourselves at risk of something going wrong. This is precisely what the final sculpture draws attention to with its form. My intention was to enter the public space with the question of whether we as humanity should interfere with human DNA. If our answer is affirmative, we need to become aware of the risks associated with genome editing," added the Faculty of Education doctoral student. (map)



8 faculties
1 university



Medical faculty welcomes diamond alumni

Two spring Saturdays belonged to the graduates of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (UP FMD). While the faculty prepared a diamond graduation ceremony for the doctors who completed their studies in 1964, their colleagues who are thirty years younger sat down again in the large lecture hall of the Theoretical Institutes during the annual Radicés / Roots meeting.

Graduation oaths were once again taken by 32 diamond graduates with varied career paths. In addition to their domestic workplaces, they have left their footprints in Canada, Zambia, and Malta, to name but a few. “When we enrolled in the faculty, the Theoretical Institutes building was just be-

ing completed. We were the first ones to take the anatomy exam there,” recalled surgeon Miloslav Duda, who is still attached professionally to the faculty and University Hospital Olomouc. The same goes for Jindřich Pazdera, former vice-dean for the study of Dentistry. “It could’ve been better, but it wasn’t so bad,” Prof Pazdera commented on the past decades. “Since we last met ten years ago, our ranks have thinned again. It shows that even we dentists, unfortunately, cannot protect ourselves from the fangs of time,” he sighed.

Good memories emerged also during the Roots meeting, which brought together doctors graduating in 1994. One of them

was UP Rector Martin Procházka. “I won’t deny that it’s fascinating to see you all from down here. Even the questions asked are the same as thirty years ago,” he smiled as he greeted his former classmates, from the podium at the bottom of the large lecture hall.

“We were a good team back then, and we regretted not being able to meet again after graduation, so my colleague Lenka Ottová and I decided to make it a tradition to meet every other year in the Jeseníky mountains, some 60 to 90 schoolmates. And we help each other whenever needed. It’s great,” said Miroslav Štúr, an orthopaedist and traumatologist working in Germany. (vim)

France in Moravia

As every year, fans and lovers of French language and cultural wealth enjoyed a slice of France in the heart of Olomouc. The

Palacký University French Centre, the Department of Romance Studies at UP Faculty of Arts (UP FA), and the Olomouc Muse-

um of Art prepared the fifth edition of the Bonjour Olomouc festival.

The event opened with a talk show with Petr Janyška, diplomat, journalist, translator, and former ambassador to France. His engaging talk in the newly renovated hall of the Olomouc Museum of Art was complemented by French jazz melodies performed by Jarmila Beková, Richard Mlynář, Roman Mlynář, and Honza Beran. Over the course of ten days, the show featured evenings of French literature, theatre performances, staged readings, lectures, film screenings, and guided tours of the town.

There were also two lectures by Parisian professor emeritus, well-known comparatist Francis Claudon, as well as international DELF/DAIF mock exams. This year’s festival was also complemented with a French baking workshop, a vegetarian menu inspired by French cuisine, and a wine tasting. (map)



Faculty of Theology experts join research on the impact of digital technologies on wellbeing

Researchers from eight centres across the Czech Republic will investigate the impact of digital technologies on wellbeing, under the auspices of the DigiWELL project. The multidisciplinary research responds to the growing interest in issues such as personal



satisfaction, happiness, positive thinking, and quality of life. This is further combined with another current challenge – digital technologies in societal life. The team around Michal Kalman from the UP Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology (UP CMFT), and the HBSC (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children) study are significantly involved in the project.

“We will focus on two main directions in Olomouc. The first concerns the development of an international scientific network and the publication of articles on wellbeing in both the European and global context. The second is about application, which means putting our research data back into practice,” says Kalman.

Social networking, computer gaming, physical activity, sleep, risky behaviour, and energy drinks – these are just some of the topics that UP researchers have been working on for a long time. Now they will also focus on ecological grief. “We consid-

er it very important to look at the link between the use of technology and the mental health of society. We want to know how this new phenomenon affects our younger generation and their mental wellbeing,” says Petr Baďura, the scientific leader of the Olomouc team. The project results in more interesting data – for example, the research team of Aleš Gába from the UP FPC will contribute with its analyses of 24-hour movement behaviour and sleep in children and adolescents.

The DigiWELL project also includes a strong applied component. The efforts aim to transfer research results in a comprehensible and useful form to a “non-academic” audience, in the form of newspaper articles, podcasts, etc. Other target groups are schools and teachers, but also politicians and multinational organisations such as WHO and UNICEF. More information is available on the project’s website digiwell-opjak.cz. (per)

Joint project of APA Centre and “Firefly” supports visually impaired children in physical activities

To increase the quality of life of children with visual impairments through their participation in school and leisure-time physical activities is a common goal of the Centre for Adapted Physical Activities (APA) at the UP Faculty of Physical Culture (UP FPC) and the Světluška [Firefly] project of the Czech Radio Foundation. Thanks to this cooperation, consultants will be available to pupils, their teachers, and parents who will introduce to them various support measures and movement activities adapted for people with visual impairments.

APA consultants for schoolchildren and students with visual or combined impairments will be working in five Czech regions – the South Bohemian, South Moravian, Moravian-Silesian, Olomouc and Ústí nad Labem regions – as well as in the capital city of Prague, with an overlap to the Central Bohemian region. The two-year project is meant to provide intensive support to up to 90 pupils, however counselling services will be provided to each individual out of the hundreds of such children in each region.

“We want them to develop habits leading to a healthy and active lifestyle, which is a positive prerequisite for holistic health and thus a happier life. Developing motor skills is a continuous activity, so our aim will be for the consultants to see ‘their’ pupils and work with them

regularly, at least once a month. We anticipate that initially some pupils or their parents will be concerned about the risks of engaging in physical activities and questioning their benefits for the visually impaired,” said Ondřej Ješina, head of the APA Centre. (vim)



AMADEUS – a new system to speed up drug development

To change established stereotypes and make drug development faster, cheaper, and more sustainable. This is the aim of the AMADEUS (Automated, Miniaturized, and accelerated drUG diScovery) technology platform, which is being developed at Palacký University Olomouc by renowned chemist Alexander Dömling from the Czech Advanced Technology and Research Institute (CATRIN). For this groundbreaking project, he received a €3.4 million grant from the European Research Council, the ERC Advanced Grant, the first at UP. The system will use an autonomous, AI-controlled, and highly miniaturised procedure for identifying compounds to synthesise new substances and improve their properties.

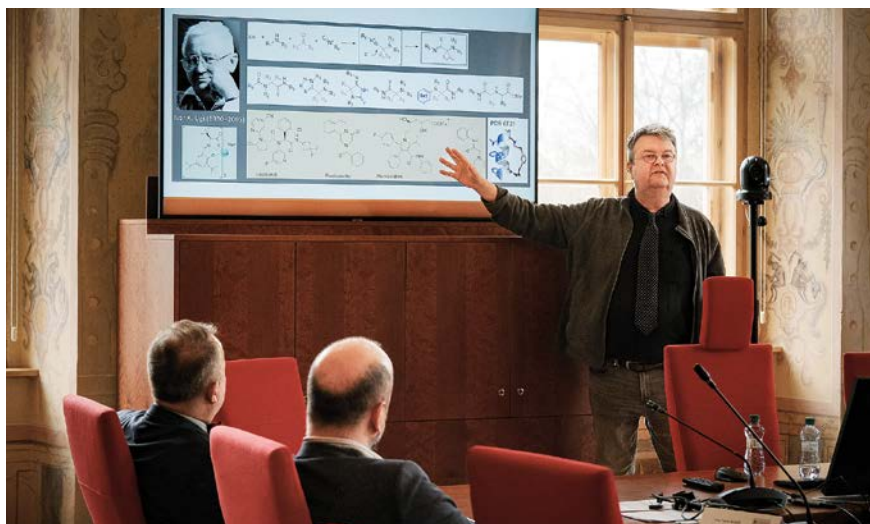
“The use of current tools such as artificial intelligence and miniaturisation brings new possibilities to scientific research. I am happy that we are among the universities that, thanks to cutting-edge research, are helping to find ways to save time and money in such an important process as the development of new drugs. Success in this area will have a visible societal impact,” said UP Rector Martin Procházka.

The five-year project aims to accelerate the development of new substances, reduce the financial costs and environmental burden of this process, and increase its safety. Unlike the current industry practices that rely on larger-scale synthesis, researchers will operate at 100,000 times smaller scales.

“We will design and validate a comprehensive AMADEUS technology platform, which will be capable of synthesising thousands of small molecules per day in nano- or picolitre-scale volumes based on hundreds of chemical reactions that we can effectively investigate and improve their properties using artificial intelligence. This downscaling will also significantly reduce the amount of toxic waste, making the drug development process more sustainable and faster at the same time. My ambition is to fundamentally change the early phase of drug discovery that has been used in pharmaceutical companies around the world for more than half a century,” said Dömling. However, AMADEUS may find applications not only in medicinal chemistry, but also in catalysis and in improving the properties of materials and plants.

The issues of miniaturisation and automation, which lead to sustainable chemistry and at the same time contribute to the more efficient development of new drugs, nanomaterials, and plant protection agents, are also addressed by Prof Dömling at CATRIN within the European ERA Chair ACCELERATOR project. “The two projects are complementary and will allow me to accelerate my research. I believe that AMADEUS will represent an important step towards achieving sustainability in R&D, and will foster innovation and progress in various scientific fields,” he added.

ERC Advanced Grants are a mark of scientific excellence. They aim to support internationally renowned experts who have already established themselves in the field and made a demonstrable impact. Olomouc’s physical chemist Michal Otyepka has also succeeded in the ERC’s demanding competition in the past – four times (three times in the Proof of Concept category, which supports successful ERC grant holders at the earliest stage of commercialising the outputs of their research activities). Both scientists work at CATRIN.



Renowned chemist Alexander Dömling explains the principle on which the AMADEUS platform works.

Faculty of Physical Culture took part in developing a system for local muscle load evaluation

Experts from five Czech universities and the Icontio company joined forces to develop a system for monitoring and evaluating selected risk factors of physical workload in the context of Industry 4.0. The project supported by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic also involved the Palacký University Faculty of Physical Culture (UP FPC).

The result of the applied research is the development of a new technology and equipment for the evaluation of local muscle load during work operations by means of electromyography, which is more user-friendly than the solutions used to date. The device is lighter in terms of weight, has a higher scanning frequency, and provides immediate feedback. Physical load is one of the risk factors considered in the categorisation of work from the perspective of public health protection. The proposed solutions are protected as a utility model and a patent application has been filed.

With regard to the orientation of UP FPC, the Olomouc experts also looked for

the possibility of using the new technology with athletes. “The use in sports is possible for monitoring and comparing data from maximum stress tests and training. We tested the new device, the sensors of which can be placed on virtually any muscle, in cooperation with the Czech national climbing team,” said David Prycl from the BALUO Application Centre.

Olomouc researchers also focused on administrative staff. The conclusion of the study was to recommend a longer-term intervention. “We monitored local muscle load and number of strokes while typing on a computer in three positions – uncorrected sitting, sitting corrected by a physiotherapist, and corrected standing. We measured the tested persons for as much as five minutes, having in mind possible future commercialisation, but did not find that the load had any effect on the measured position in such a short period of time. However, there was higher muscle activity during corrected sitting compared to un-



corrected sitting, because during correction we are spending energy to maintain the position. It would be interesting to see if longer intervention and repeated measurements would confirm our initial hypotheses,” added Prycl. (vim)

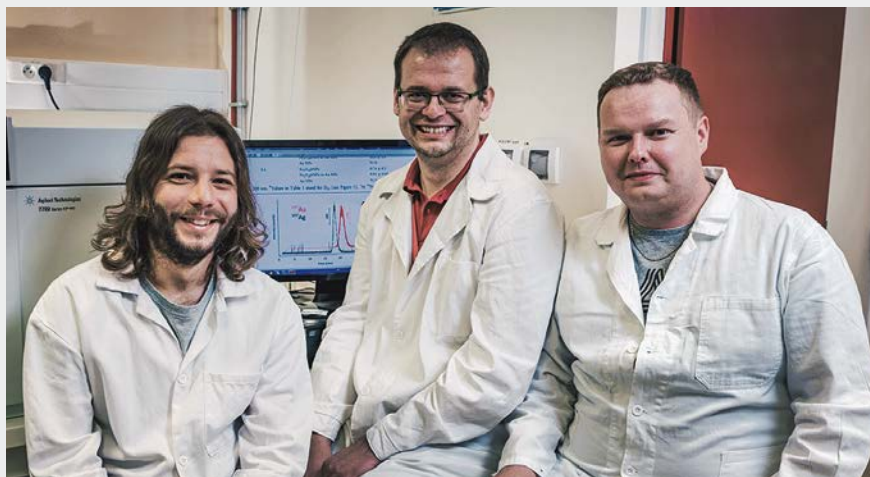
Department of Analytical Chemistry scientists developed new method for tracking nanoparticles

A new unique method that allows scientists to monitor the behaviour of nanoparticles in an environment simulating natural conditions has been developed by scientists from the Department of Analytical Chemistry at the UP Faculty of Science. The results of the Olomouc scientists’ work have been published in the renowned journal of the American Chemical Society, *Analytical Chemistry*.

The method enables, among other things, a closer study of the circulation of nanoparticles in the environment. The used nanoparticles enter wastewater and subsequently rivers, seas, and oceans. “Here, they meet other nanoparticles and can interact with each other, which can ultimately multiply their negative properties, such as toxicity. Until now, it has not been possible to study these effects

thoroughly, but thanks to our method we can now observe and describe them in detail. We believe that our method can help to prevent these undesirable effects in the future,” said Jan Petr, one of the study’s authors.

The scientists used a unique combination of capillary electrophoresis and inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (CE-ICP-MS) for their work. “We developed and constructed the interface to connect the two devices at our workplace about five years ago,” said Tomáš Pluháček, one of the authors of the combination. To observe the behaviour of the nanoparticles, the scientists used Taylor dispersion analysis, a mathematical procedure for analysing experimentally obtained data, which makes it possible to determine the size of nanoparticles. “The use of this instrumentation technique also allows us to obtain information on the elemental or isotopic composition of nanoparticles, which can be used to monitor the fate of isotopically labelled nanoparticles,” added co-author Daniel Baron. (cho)





discovery

text: Milada Křížková Hronová
photo: Karel Nováček archives

Archaeology of mountain valleys in Iraqi Kurdistan

An international team led by Karel Nováček from the Department of History at the Palacký University Olomouc Faculty of Arts has discovered and mapped five dozen archaeological sites in Iraqi Kurdistan. Their work has proved that the mountain valleys of Kurdistan had been densely populated in the past.

The landscape archaeological research in mountainous Kurdistan started in 2023 has had a follow-up. Thanks to a subsidy of almost €360,000 from the Czech Science Foundation, the team headed by Nováček was once again able to take off for Iraqi Kurdistan. At the beginning of 2024, they spent a month in the area exploring other parts of “their” archaeological concession in the Koya district. Preliminary results have confirmed the hypothesis that the investigated area was immensely attractive for human communities in the past.

“In terms of archaeology, the Mesopotamian Plain has been documented fairly well, especially southern Iraq. However, no less important processes were also taking place in the neighbouring mountains and mountain valleys, which constituted an important communications corridor. Our aim now is to formulate the hypothesis that the neighbouring mountains and mountain valleys were in some ways even

more attractive than the Mesopotamian Plain. They had better ecological resilience,” said Nováček.

Although Mesopotamia is known to have been very fertile, it is located in a zone highly dependent on unpredictable and often critically low rainfall. Although people have always tried to solve this problem with various irrigation systems, crops easily failed to germinate. It was much easier to grow crops in the mountain valleys, where water is abundant. Archaeologists therefore believe that the solid core of ancient Mesopotamian civilisation, which was not manifested by power structures and large cities but by a robust agricultural system, is to be found in these mountain valleys. Two of them, the Smaquli and Nazanin valleys, plus the Gird-a Sūr table mountain, were explored in February. These findings now complement earlier finds from a field survey that unearthed dozens of monuments with histories dating back to the Early Stone Age. In addition to the extinct settlements, adjacent field systems appear to have been discovered, which could contribute significantly to an understanding of the prehistoric agricultural landscape of the Fertile Crescent. This is a topic that Olomouc experts will continue to focus on in future seasons.

“The main goal of the project is a detailed archaeological map of the area with all the sites we can identify, their dating, their extent in the landscape, and their expected significance. We will then analyse long-term development trends in the landscape. All archaeological sites will be equally important to us – not only the Palaeolithic ones, but also villages that were abandoned fifty years ago,” explained Nováček. The results of the research could also be of importance for contemporary northern Iraq.

“The Middle East and northern Iraq, as well as the entire planet, are undergoing climate change, which is manifesting itself in very intense and rapid desiccation and water scarcity. If we can uncover the mechanisms that allowed mountain areas in the past to remain in a stable condition and dynamic equilibrium, we might even propose some ways to revive these mechanisms,” added the Palacký University archaeologist. As part of the three-year project entitled “A tale of four valleys in mountainous Kurdistan: Past landscape strategies, resilience, and sustainability in a long-term perspective”, he will spend at least five more months working in the region over the course of the next three years.

text: Ivana Pustějovská, Martina Vysloužilová
photos: Jakub Čermák

portrait

**Eva Navrátilová,
AFO Director:
With the festival, you
can never grow old**



Eva Navrátilová (b. 1986)

She graduated from the Master's programme of the Theory and History of Dramatic Arts at UP. She began working at AFO as a student, and also worked for the UP Faculties of Arts and Education, the Pastiche Filmz civic association in Olomouc, the Summer Film School in Uherské Hradiště, the festivals Cinepur Choice, Anifest, and PAF, where she was also director. In 2013, she moved to Brno to work in the Communications Department at one of the faculties at Masaryk University, and then spent seven years in the marketing department of the VIDA! science centre. In addition to her main employment, she has also worked with the distribution company Aerofilms and the Czech Association of Science Centres. She has been AFO Director since 2022.

When she was little, she and her sister used to sit in front of the television and devour the show “Once Upon a Time... Life”. This French TV show taught kids in an entertaining way how the human body functions. It was then that she realised how amazing science is, and how fascinatingly its stories can be told. Many years later, as a university student on a semester study stay in Utrecht, she convinced other Erasmus students to travel with her halfway across the Netherlands to the interactive Corpus Museum, in which visitors literally take a walk through the human body. And when, a few years later, she became the first woman to run the Academia Film Olomouc (AFO) international festival of popular science films, there was no longer any doubt. Eva Navrátilová, AFO Director, finds science fun, interesting, and fulfilling.

“All these individual experiences forged a solid foundation to develop this interest into a career in popular science and its communication,” she says of her professional career path. “I remember my first visit to the London Science Museum and the enthusiasm and intensity I got from it, which then I poured into my interview to work at the newly constructed science centre in Brno,” said the UP Faculty of Arts

graduate on the time before her directorship in Olomouc, when she ran the Brno VIDA! science centre’s marketing campaigns.

She took over the helm of AFO at the beginning of 2022, after two COVID years online, with a team that had had a difficult and exhausting period behind them. She only had four months to prepare the upcoming festival. She didn’t think twice about taking the reins of the festival with a sixty-year tradition. She knew at once she wanted to accept the charge. “AFO is close to my heart. During my studies I got such incredible support and work opportunities from it that I wanted to return at least something to the festival.”

No other festival of its kind in the Czech Republic has such student support. They are its motor, its soul, its source of ideas and energy. Eva Navrátilová understands them well. As a film studies student, she tried out various positions at the festival. When the lights go down, the audience is seated in the cinema, the curtains part, and the opening jingle begins, there is already a year of intensive work by Eva Navrátilová and her team behind it. “Year-round, I have a four-person team which meets on a daily basis. The closer we get to the festival itself,

the bigger the team grows. During the autumn, a half-year before the festival, we're already got about a dozen programmers. During the festival, the crew numbers about 250 people, and it starts to be a bit much. I try to memorise faces at staff meetings, I'd love to remember all those who put their time, strength, ideas, and energies into the festival, but when it gets to be that number, it's a bit unrealistic," she admits.

Anyone who naively thinks that the job of the director is only watching films all year and then awarding prizes in the spotlight is sorely mistaken. To "coach" this kind of event means not only building and managing a team, but also keeping an eye on the yearly budget. "Compared to similar events in this country, AFO has one of the lowest budgets, and at the same time is one of the most highly attended film festivals. Its funding comes from multiple sources: each year we have to write 10–15 grant applications," Navrátilová said, describing its less attractive side. In addition to the primary contribution from the university, the

festival budget also comes from the Ministries of Education and Culture, the Czech Film Fund, the Olomouc Region, the City of Olomouc, private sponsors, and even the American Embassy. The responsibility for raising and subsequent spending of finances is an integral part of the director's work.

AFO has long been more than "just" a festival for six days a year. "It is a wide range of year-round activities, from its 'road shows' in many cities in the Czech Republic and even abroad, to running its own VOD platform watchandknow.cz, started during the pandemic, when the festival could not take place in person. My colleagues and I also travel to other film festivals here and abroad. The ability to break out of our regional bubble and be inspired, to experience other festivals in the role of an audience member or guest, is not only extremely beneficial to me personally, but ultimately for the festival itself," she adds.

During the festival's six-day marathon, Eva Navrátilová simply does not have the time to attend all the films, lectures, and

other items on its programme, which number more than two hundred. Can she stop for a moment and let herself soak up the festival atmosphere? Does she envy those people with their festival badges and accreditation waltzing through the city with such enthusiasm? "I envy them so much! But now I get to enjoy it from the other side, that is, when I can stop and catch my breath and look around. And I realise all that we have accomplished. Work on the festival is quite demanding, but that euphoria I get during the event is enough to keep me going for another full year."

By the way, at the beginning of this text we mentioned the series "Once Upon a Time... Life", which kept young Eva glued to the telly. "And at 'my' first AFO in 2007, its director, Albert Barillé, came to receive the award for Contribution to Communicating Science." Coincidence? Hardly. Once upon a time... Life came full circle.

PS: For Eva Navrátilová AFO also means love. Guess where, eleven years ago, she met her husband Jiří?

"AFO is close to my heart. During my studies I got such incredible support and work opportunities from AFO I thought that I should return at least something to the festival."



Hana Laudátová

Senior Manager for PR and Marketing, the Partnership Foundation

For over seven years, I worked with Eva Navrátilová promoting Brno's VIDA! science centre. I see her as an exceptional person who has a unique combination of qualities. She is usually the one who comes up with the initial ideas and innovations, and at the same time she is willing to carry things through to the last fine details. She is all about a job well done, and she sees a real purpose in popularising science. Her excellent taste and graphic sensibility set the lasting tone for the VIDA! presentations on a high level for the entire time she worked in Brno. Most of all, I appreciate the serenity with which Eva manages complicated work and personal situations. She was able to calm us down and bring us to constructive solutions so many times! And last but not least, she is such an elegant and fun person. I envy AFO, in that you get to spend so much time with her.



Petr Bilík

UP FA Vice-Dean for External Relations, Department of Theatre, Film, and Media Studies

Eva Navrátilová is a manager with intuition, she is open to innovation, while at the same time maintaining her Beskydy mountains outlook and contact with her native land. She demonstrates the most precious thing the university has: the ability to attract and keep talented people in Olomouc. Her return to Academia Film Olomouc from a successful career testifies that she is doing something she truly loves, as well as to the magnitude of this event to which she dedicates her energy. Eva lights up the festival with her charisma and natural charm, and together with her team she has created a Czech festival second to none, which considering the competition in terms of film is a small miracle.

success



Record numbers at this year's AFO

A record 8,798 visitors were accredited at this year's international festival Academia Film Olomouc (AFO) of Palacký University. The festival turned the town into a global science popularisation centre for six days and hosted over 250 Czech and foreign guests, from scientists to filmmakers, producers, and distributors.

The films at the festival explore the full spectrum of scientific endeavour. Filmmakers from around the world bring attention to nature, human empathy, and the complexities of our history, and bold-

ly experiment with cutting-edge technologies and innovative approaches to documentary filmmaking. In the International Competition, the film *Woodpeckers: The Hole Story* took the main prize. Exploring the importance of woodpeckers in global context is an extraordinarily colourful experience that shows the possibilities of contemporary wildlife documentary at its best.

"This year's programme drew a memory map, brought dinosaurs to life, didn't shy away from exploring psychedelics, and re-

vealed the magic of mycelium. The festival turned into a funfair of memories for both visitors and the festival team. It offered a unique space combining friendly openness and fun with intellectual depth. We are thrilled by the record audience numbers and sold-out venues. The festival guests – from scientists and researchers to prominent filmmakers, DJs, and musical performers – were all enchanted by the local atmosphere and the Olomouc audience," said Ondřej Kazík, head of programming. (mv)

Publication of first-ever comprehensive study on democratic innovations in three Central European countries



The local level of politics, which is essential in shaping and especially strengthening pro-democracy thinking, is the focus of a new publication entitled *Challenging Citizens: Democratic Innovations at the Local Level. The Case Study of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland*. The book was written by a team of authors led by Pavel Šaradín from the Department of Politics and European Studies at the UP Faculty of Arts and is the first-ever comprehensive work to reflect this part of Central Europe in that respect.

The book is one of the results of a three-year research project supported by the Czech Science Foundation. It was published by Palgrave/Macmillan this year. "The crisis or erosion of democracy, its

decline, is an oft-discussed theme. Sometimes rightly so; sometimes the situation is underestimated, other times overestimated. The local level enables active participation of citizens in politics, through various tools and innovations. We have evidence that if such tools are introduced and used correctly, they can indeed play a very important role in the positive meaning of democracy," said political scientist Šaradín. He and the other authors in the book focus on clarifying these tools, how they work, what experiences we have with them, and how we evaluate them. "The contribution of our book is not only in explaining why these innovations work, but also why they are sometimes abandoned or why they break down," he added. (map)

Dominik Vařinka and Miroslav Jeřek from the Department of Optics won the Werner von Siemens Award

Dominik Vařinka and Miroslav Jeřek from the UP FS Department of Optics were able to significantly refine complex quantum measurements using artificial intelligence. As a result, they won the prestig-

ious Werner von Siemens Award, with a first place in the Best Master's Thesis category. The future practical use of the results of their research focused on the application of artificial intelligence in quantum measurements is broad – it will be applied primarily in the field of metrology and control of complex systems, including quantum devices such as quantum processors and sensors.

A large number of scientific fields and technical applications require precise control of complex physical systems to achieve a desired state or process. The key to their control is the precise tuning of control signals, although the theoretical description of these systems often remains unexplored. "Moreover, the situation becomes significantly more complicated when we move into the world of quantum physics. Here, the demands on the control instrumentation are multiplied by the probabilistic nature of quantum measurements, as well as the complex and multidimensional structure of quantum states and process-

es," Vařinka said, describing the complexity of quantum measurements.

The high quality of Vařinka's scientific work is evidenced by the fact that he has presented it at several international conferences and the results of his research form the basis of the article "Bidirectional Deep Learning of Polarization Transfer in Liquid Crystal with Application to Quantum State Preparation", published in the renowned international journal *Physical Review Applied*. The Optics and Optoelectronics student is currently pursuing his PhD and is engaged in research at the intersection of quantum physics, photonics, and artificial intelligence.

Vařinka's thesis supervisor Miroslav Jeřek most values honesty and sincerity in this student, both professionally and personally. "Dominik is a very capable physicist and programmer, and I believe he has a bright scientific career ahead of him. He is also an excellent communicator and is not afraid to give his honest opinion and feedback," said Jeřek. (cho)



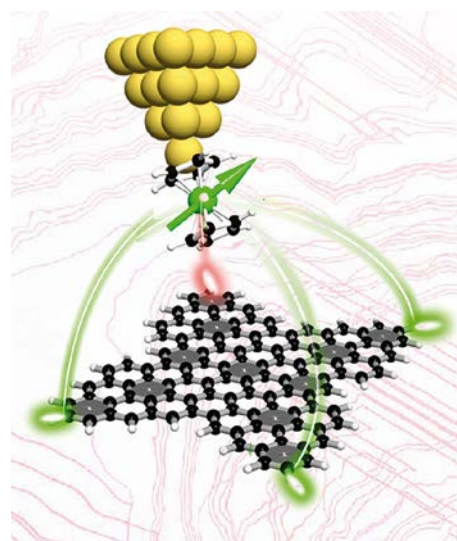
Unique butterfly-shaped magnetic graphene nanoparticle made it into Nature Chemistry

An international team of scientists, led by Czech physicists, has successfully developed a unique magnetic nanographene for the first time. They combined two concepts of magnetism and were the first to detect their magnetic signal using advanced scanning electron microscopy and quantum mechanical calculations. Graphene nanoparticles have the potential to be used for information storage and processing in quantum computing.

The paper, published in *Nature Chemistry*, describes an innovative method to design, prepare, and verify the magnetic properties of graphene in the shape of four rounded triangles resembling butterfly wings. Each of these triangles contains an unpaired pi electron responsible for the magnetic properties.

"In this work, we were able to combine two approaches for the first time to create this unique magnetic nanographene with four unpaired electrons. Moreover, by combining experimental and theoretical calculations, we were able to provide irrefutable evidence for its magnetic character," says Adam Matěj from the Institute of Physics of the Czech Academy of Sciences and CATRIN, Palacký University Olomouc.

Scientists from the National University of Singapore, CATRIN, Nanjing University in China, and two institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences – the Institute of Physics and the J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry – participated in the experimental and theoretical verification of the properties of nanographene. (srd)



success



Milan Kolář receives Olomouc City Award

Four personalities and two institutions were awarded by the City of Olomouc for their achievements in 2023. The Olomouc City Award in the Science and Research category was presented in the ceremonial hall of the Olomouc Military Hospital to Milan Kolář, Professor of Microbiology and Dean of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. The award was also presented to University Hospital Olomouc.

“It is a great honour for me to receive the Olomouc City Award; it’s not only an

award for me personally but also an important award for the entire faculty. I appreciate the fact that University Hospital Olomouc also received this award, and I am convinced that this confirms the close ties and friendly relations between the two organisations. I believe that together we will be able to create a unique centre of excellence in Olomouc, from the education of new doctors, through high-quality scientific research activities in medicine, to top-quality medical care for our patients,” said Prof Kolář.

The Prostějov native, who celebrated his sixtieth birthday this year, studied medicine at UP FMD. Since 1988, he has been employed at University Hospital Olomouc and the UP FMD Department of Microbiology, which he heads. His work focuses mainly on antibiotic treatment of bacterial diseases and the problem of bacterial resistance, which is one of the biggest problems in contemporary health care. He has been involved in UP FMD management for twenty years; in 2011–2019 and now from 2023 as its dean. (vim)

Jakub Jurka wins bronze at Paris Olympics

Fencer Jakub Jurka, a student of the UP Faculty of Physical Culture (FPC), was dubbed a national hero after winning a bronze medal as part of the Czech fencing

team at the XXXIII Olympiad in Paris in a remarkable performance against the home favourites, taking home the first Olympic medal by the Czech team.

The match could not have been more important to them. “We told ourselves that no matter what happens, this is the greatest experience of our lives, because we are fencing the French on their home turf, before their public. For an Olympic medal – no matter if gold, silver, or bronze!” the youngest of the bronze-winning Czech fencers told Sport.cz. It was his second Olympic appearance. In 2021, he took part in the Tokyo Olympics which were affected by COVID-19.

Although in 2021 the fencers did not make it into the second round, in 2024 they are returning to the Czech Republic accompanied by the applause of their fans. Jurka was given a hero’s welcome not only at the Olympic festival in Most, but also home in

Olomouc, when he showed his medal to the crowds on the Upper Square – where UP Rector Martin Procházka and Svatopluk Horák of UP FPC personally congratulated the fencer on his success and thanked him for representing the country and university.

Other athletes connected with Palacký University represented the Czech Republic in Paris. Impressive performances in rowing were given by fellow alumni Radka Novotníková from the Faculty of Arts (finishing in 10th place), and Miroslav Vraštil of UP FPC (6th place), the latter making his fourth appearance at the Olympic Games.

Experiencing the Olympic atmosphere for the first time were judoka Renata Zachová and archer Adam Li, both FPC students. While neither made it into the medal rounds, the fact that they fought the world’s best remains unchanged. (vim)



Olomouc Faculty of Law experts helped their Ukrainian colleagues via an important publication project

The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the Treaty on the EU, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU are the three fundamental documents governing the European Union, and the *Commentary* on these is now also available in Ukrainian. Experts from the UP Faculty of Law in Olomouc have contributed significantly to its publication.

The documents governing the functioning of the European Union are the cornerstones of the European community which Ukraine would like to join. Even some Member States have not yet published the *Commentary* in their own languages. However, a team of experts from the law faculties of Charles University in Prague, Masaryk University in Brno, Palacký University Olomouc, and the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen published its Czech translation on the occasion of the Czech EU Presidency in 2022. The same team also came up

with the idea of approaching experienced translators and publishing the *Commentary* in Ukrainian. The project was then taken under the auspices of Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

“At the time, we unanimously agreed to translate the work and make it available online free of charge, without any royalties, to all Ukrainian readers, academics, students, and practicing lawyers. The work – we can rightly say opus – of 1780 pages, has been successfully prepared and the *Commentary* has just been published,” said Ondrej Hamulák, one of the co-authors, Vice Dean for Science and Research at the UP Faculty of Law. Along with him, five other Olomouc experts – Michal Petr, Václav Stehlík, Helena Kopa Bončková, and Ondřej Dostal, all from the Department of International and European Law, and Martin Kopa from the Department of Constitutional Law – contributed to the creation of the *Commentary*.



This comprehensive scholarly work was published by Wolters Kluwer publishing house on the occasion of the two-year anniversary of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. (eha)

Emergency Medicine students brought home silver from First-Aid Day Ostrava

Future paramedics from the UP Faculty of Health Sciences (UP FHS) did an excellent job at the 17th annual competition First-Aid Day Ostrava. Among fifteen teams from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the team consisting of Bohdana Vařeková, Sa-

bina Zálešáková, and David Horák won second place.

This year the competition of students of medical rescue took place over two days. “Upon arrival we had an afternoon stage with four stations. We had the opportuni-

ty to cooperate with other teams in dealing with an emergency – a simulated bus accident and treatment of a large number of patients. We also intervened in a simulation of a pub fight that resulted in a stab wound,” said Vařeková, a third-year student of emergency medicine.

The night stage, which ended after 2 am, was followed by the day stage, and that was when sleep deprivation and fatigue began to take their toll on the team. “We didn’t do all the tasks to our liking, but we were happy after successfully passing a station, and that kept our spirits high,” said Zálešáková.

The second team from UP FHS, consisting of Kateřina Nedomová, Jaroslav Kubíček, and Kryštof Kubíček, finished seventh. “This is a real success, as our students repeatedly take top positions at this competition. It shows the quality of their preparation for their future profession. I’m really proud of our students,” summed up Marinella Danosová, head of the Department of Emergency Medicine and Intensive Care. (dkr)



Come in! Meet the Welcome Office

A friendly environment, help, service, empathy, professionalism. Any of these words could be used to describe a certain building in Olomouc's Vodární Street. Just a few dozen metres from the city centre down a side street at no. 6 is a university building – the home of the UP Welcome Office (WO).

Officially speaking, it is the UP contact and information point, providing help to international students, employees, and other visitors in the areas of administration, studies, accommodation, visas, health insurance, and more. Less officially, it is a place where foreigners can find all the services they need so as not to feel lost at the university and in the city. "One of our key tasks is active support in the field of visas and residency permits. As the head of the office, I am the contact person between the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Department of the Ministry of the Interior, and the university. We provide comprehensive assistance in filling out application forms, preparing and checking documents, and everything that entails," said Alena Vyskočilová, the head of WO.

To illustrate what sort of agenda such a university office has, where a thousand foreign nationals visit yearly, let us take a look at a few numbers: last year, our team had 567 personal appointments with international students and employees regarding visas and residency permits, more than 250 international students came to the office for information, and another 50 received assistance outside the office. This year, they took interested parties on some three dozen town tours. And who

are "they"? "In the office, we have a team of four experienced and trained assistants who are prepared to provide personal assistance in the field," added Vyskočilová.

The basic principle behind this type of office is having the ability to communicate. The number of languages spoken at WO is impressive: in addition to Czech, they speak English, German, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Polish, Italian, and Slovak. Another important emphasis is communicating on social media and the internet. "During 2023, we completed a redesign of our web page, which contains extensive information for both academic and personal life for the international community, all fully accessible in English. We also maintain a presence on a wide variety of social media, thanks to which we can quickly and dynamically react to happening events and at the same time support information transfer between the members of the university's international community," said the head of the Welcome Office.

And if it seems that the WO would have no time for anything else, far from it: "We try to actively contribute to creating an internationally friendly environment at the university, which is why we prepare various events for international students and staff during the year. Important ones are for example orientation days for newly arriving students of degree programmes and for new employees. Another example was at the request of students and faculties – in the spring semester we prepared a series of lectures called "Welcome to Wellbeing: A Journey to Your Mental Harmony", added Vyskočilová.



Alena Vyskočilová
Head of the Welcome Office



Welcome Office

Palacký University Olomouc
+420 585 631 245
welcome@upol.cz
upol.cz/welcome-office



text: Martin Višša
photos: Jakub Čermák

lifestyle



I'm the nervous Nelly with the red nose

You might spy him in a white doctor's coat... but he sure ain't no ordinary doctor. As he strolls through the hospital corridors on his rounds – in a red nose – he cures the often-heavy atmosphere with laughter. Sometimes all it takes is for him to introduce himself: Herbert Buzzard. The new member of the Olomouc team of clown doctors bears a striking resemblance to Daniel Kunz, production manager of UP Audiovisual Productions and member of the Olomouc improvisation ensemble O.Li.V.Y. (the Olives).

The resemblance is no accident, it really is Daniel Kunz underneath. “Herbert is a novice doctor, trying to spread a little joy among patients, young and old alike. He might be a bit of a nervous Nelly, but he tries to be prudent. He does everything like he has ants in his pants, he’s some-

times a bit over the top, sometimes he says more than he should, but I think the folks love him. Even if he has managed to crash into a desk and knock a nurse’s photos off it,” he says, introducing his alter ego.

“In Olomouc, we have a ‘bird’ team, made up of also Doctors Goose and Turtledove, and I’ve replaced Dr Crow. I call him ‘Doc Buzz’, which is as short as ‘Kunz’, and ‘Herbert’ teaches children how to pronounce their ‘R’s and it’s also variable – they can call me ‘Herb’, ‘Herbie’, ‘Bert’ or ‘Bertie,’” he says, explaining his clown name.

He has been visiting hospitals in Central Moravia as a hospital clown since February. His fellow improvisers urged him into his new role. “My friends Saša Dvořák and Vít Piskala have been putting pressure on me to join for about three



photo: Barbora Polášková

years. It's a job that has meaning and overlap, and one the organisation takes great care of, arranging training in various areas. I finally applied," he says, adding that during the three-round application process, apprentices had to show basic acting and clowning talent, and at the same time learn how to operate in the hospital environment, where personnel often work under great pressure.

Out of the 110 people who applied nationwide, only one-fifth were accepted, who after cooperation with the artistic leadership created their characters including costumes and attended auditions with established clown pairs directly in hospitals. First in civilian garb, and then in costume. "On the visits, our coach Ondra Klíč from the Janáček Academy of the Performing Arts told me what clowns do, what their goal is, what works and what doesn't. That was great for getting my bearings. After three sessions in civilian gear, then I had three try-outs as a clown, after which they threw me into the deep end."

The mission of a clown doctor is to make the rounds. Clowns make their rounds in pairs: one as the leader, the other trusting the leader implicitly and carrying out tasks, often earlier than the request is even uttered, sometimes blindly and nonsensically, creating comic situations. They even play musical instruments and sing. But the visit of clown doctors is not just about prescribing joy.

"In our own way, we are returning dignity and the possibility of free choice to hospital patients, in an environment where there is a certain regime and set treatment procedures. Before we enter a room, we knock, we say hello, and we ask if we may come in. If so, we enter as someone who looks like a doctor, but who in no time starts gradually losing their dignity in these situations. By the way, according to our artistic direction, a clown should be clever enough to board a tram, but then not have the slightest idea how to stamp his ticket," says Kunz.

Sometimes, however, it can get to be a bit of a chore when for more than two hours he makes the rounds of the hospital trying to cheer up patients, staff, and those in waiting rooms, to make them smile. In the car home, he is usually mum. The patients' health condition is something he doesn't let get to him. "If I started thinking about illnesses and injuries, I wouldn't be able to get my foot in the door. I want to bring joy. Luckily, I can hide behind that red nose, where the burden gets transferred to Buzz, and Kunz remains unaffected," he adds, saying being a clown doctor is a new artistic impulse for him, in addition to improv, poetry slams, and his work for UP Audiovisual Productions.

And where does he get the time for all that filming, performing, the hospital rounds, and the improv courses? "I have an understanding, loving, and dear wife," Kunz says, in closing.

Daniel Kunz (b. 1988)

He hails from northern Bohemia and graduated in Journalism and Sociology-Andragogy at the UP Faculty of Arts. During his studies, he began making films for UP Student TV, which opened the doors to employment at UP AV Productions, where he has worked for almost eight years. He also became a member of the Olomouc improv group O.Li.V.Y., which he now leads and organises training in improvisation. He also performs slam poetry, appearing in the national finals several times. He's thinking about doing stand-up comedy in the future. Since February 2024, he has been a member of the Olomouc team of REDNOSES Clowndoctors, who visit healthcare facilities mostly in Central Moravia.

REDNOSES
CLOWN-
DOCTORS



text: Martin Višňá
photo: Vojtěch Duda

doctor honoris causa

Neuroimmunologist Hans-Peter Hartung receives honorary degree

On the proposal of the Scholarly Board of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FMD), Palacký University Olomouc awarded the honorary degree of doctor honoris causa to Hans-Peter Hartung, the world-renowned physician and scientist who has significantly contributed to the elucidation of the mechanism of new treatment for demyelinating diseases of the nervous system, especially multiple sclerosis, and who has been intensively collaborating with the FMD Department of Neurology and University Hospital Olomouc for more than twenty years.

The honorary doctorate was presented to Prof Hartung by UP Rector Martin Procházka, together with Lucie Plíhalová, Vice-Rector for Science and Research, during a ceremony at the Archbishop's Palace in Olomouc. Milan Kolář, UP FMD Dean, introduced the laureate.

"This is really a very touching moment for me and one of the highlights of my academic career," said Prof Hartung at the ceremony. In his speech, he recalled the beginning of his cooperation with Olomouc physicians and scientists when he headed the neurology department at the University of Graz, and when Olomouc neurologist Jan Mareš,

now head of the Centre for Diagnostics and Treatment of Demyelinating Diseases at University Hospital Olomouc, visited the laboratories in Graz as a young assistant.

"Our common goal was to improve the quality of life for our patients. This was the starting point of a long-term productive scientific collaboration that resulted in repeated mutual visits and many a joint publication. The head of Olomouc neurology, Petr Kaňovský, fully supported this cooperation. Over the years, Professors Mareš and Kaňovský have become my close friends, which I appreciate very much. Such relationships are one of the most valuable things one can achieve when working in academia," said Prof Hartung. He also pointed out that the honorary doctorate from UP means a lot to him in the context of the renewed good neighbourly relations between the Czech Republic and Germany.

Hans-Peter Hartung is mainly involved in clinical and translational research in basic and clinical neuroimmunology, particularly in multiple sclerosis and immune neuropathies, and in the development of novel immunological, neuroprotective, and neurorepair therapeutic strategies. His work has contributed significantly to the eluci-

dation of the mechanism of contemporary therapies for demyelinating diseases of the nervous system. He currently heads the Centre for Neurology and Neuropsychiatry at Heinrich Heine University and University Hospital Düsseldorf.

The long-term collaboration with Prof Hartung enables UP students to undertake research internships in Germany and has resulted in a number of important publications in the field of contemporary neurological research.

Prof Hartung was appointed a Visiting Professor at Palacký University in 2022, regularly attends Olomouc neuroimmunology symposia as an invited speaker, and is a member of the editorial board of the professional journal *Biomedical Papers*, published by UP FMD.

Since 1990, Palacký University has awarded honorary doctorates to five dozen personalities for their contributions to the development of science, culture, and other activities for the benefit of society. Among them are the first Czech and Czechoslovakian post-1989 president Václav Havel, chemist Antonín Holý, plastic surgeon Bohdan Pomahač, and jazz composer and musician Emil Viklický.

talent

text: Ivana Pustějovská
photos: Vojtěch Duda



Student impressions of the course

Lucie Riegerová (FA)

I felt understood, supported, and most of all inspired in the course. Over time, I began to realise that this course was about much more than just pouring knowledge into us. It taught me to be more attentive to my thoughts and to become more aware of my goals.

Matyáš Jurák (FA)

The lecturing team was not only highly qualified but also very inspiring. More importantly, however, is the respect and genuine interest in dialogue with the students; this brings real value to the course, even beyond the actual workshop topics. The Leadership Matters course could not have come at a better time. It has helped me navigate my own life and give it a direction that makes sense.

Jarmila Stanková (FMD)

The quality of the course is most evidenced by the strongly positive reactions of all participants. Personally, I appreciate the networking across faculties and disciplines, which allowed looking at the topics of the lessons from different angles and with different specific comments and questions. The course gave me guidance on how to practically manage the implementation of my projects and visions, as well as a feeling of community support.

Lukáš Zmeškal (FPC)

It was great to hear people working directly in the field telling us what it is like in real life. I think it's something I have missed in school. I liked the focus on the different types of leadership, such as Colonel Zelinka's lecture.

Dominik Brož (FA)

I'd like to highlight the fact that the programme allows us wonderful networking with active people from different faculties and with different backgrounds. Such interdisciplinary interaction is extremely difficult to get as an ordinary student, so I appreciate it very much.

Lucie Víková (FA)

The leadership course was one of the best things that has happened to me so far in my life. I'm taking back plenty of inspiration, skills, new knowledge, contacts, and friends.

Hana Marie Kuželová (FA)

I will use the experience and the certificate itself hopefully this semester, as I am applying for several internships where I hope to succeed thanks to what I've learned in the Leadership Matters course.

Leadership Matters:

First graduates highly appreciate the course

Knowing how to make decisions, knowing how to manage a team and how to handle a crisis or media pressure, these are just some of the many competences characterising a good leader. None of them are to be taken for granted. One may have a natural talent for something, or even charisma and intuition. These days, however, that is not nearly enough. Succeeding and becoming a leader means having not only knowledge but also many skills which can be acquired in practice over the years – or, alternatively, one can get “a head start” and learn many of them while studying at university. And this is the opportunity that students at Palacký University now have. This academic year, the school has opened a new leadership training programme.

“As part of the Talented Palacký programme, in close cooperation with the American Center Olomouc, we have prepared a new training programme for active and motivated students focused on the development of leadership competences. We want to prepare future graduates for a career path in key leadership positions in var-

ious fields,” said Dita Palaščíková, the programme’s guarantor.

The first twelve students who initially succeeded in the selection procedure have already been through the programme. Over the course of several months, they worked together with lecturers from various fields to develop their skills and abilities. For instance, Bob Kartous, a university teacher and journalist specialising on innovation in education but also on disinformation, the phenomenon of hoaxes, disinformation websites, fake news and their impact on society, shared his knowledge with them.

Colonel Ivo Zelinka, Commander of the Cyber and Information Operations Group within the Czech Army, presented to the students what team management and the role of a leader in the army looks like. He considers such education to be beneficial and was therefore happy to participate as a lecturer. “I was impressed by how diverse a group of students was selected, and especially by the breadth of disciplines they come from, from the natural to the social

sciences. Such a make-up leads to better networking that wouldn’t otherwise be possible. Normally, I can’t imagine future doctors meeting the humanities students on a daily basis anywhere. The second thing that has pleasantly surprised me are the trainees’ personality characteristics. If these are typical members of the young generation, I have no worries about our republic at all,” said Col Zelinka, summing up his impressions.

Together with other lecturers, he took part in the final presentation of student projects, which was also attended by Rector Martin Procházka. “What you have learned now will certainly be put to good use in your future careers, and I am very happy that we have managed to launch this course at our university and we will continue to do so. It is already evident that you stand out from the crowd and that you have acquired or enhanced competences that are important for practical life. You yourselves are living proofs that investment in education is the best investment one can make,” said the UP Rector.

Kristýna Knotová (FE)

I’d like to say that I can see a tremendous amount of work behind this programme – in the perfect structure of the course, in the choice of topics that were nicely related and interconnected. The lecturers were great. The course was a huge enrichment to my life. As a Faculty of Education student, I’ve received knowledge that I can further disseminate in practice among pupils, students, and young people in general.

I got to be among people who have a similar mindset and passion! It motivated me a lot to be active and develop further. I started to think more complexly, it helped me anchor my plans in reality, and consider realistic steps.



event

photos: Vojtěch Duda



The ceremonial procession has become a symbol of the city's connections to ecclesiastical, military, and university traditions, held in honour of the city's patron saint, St Pauline, with university dignitaries taking part. Olomouc regularly holds a several-day Town Feast in June to commemorate its rich history. (ipu)



text: Ivana Pustějovská, Egon Havrlant
photos: Jakub Čermák

interview

Otakar Fojt, a man of order: Science is amazing, because it is boundless

The basic unit of diplomatic stability should perhaps be declared the “fojt”. At least in Great Britain. Why? Because what is more stable than being Scientific Attaché at the British Embassy in Prague? Otakar Fojt is now working for his sixth ambassador in a row. Whereas his bosses change every three or four years, he stays. “Diplomats change; so too science. When I started, my mission was to support the development of relations with the Czech Republic, which was just about to join the EU. Today my mission is to support Czech-British relations in a time when Great Britain has left the EU. The world is multifaceted and full of irony,” says the diplomat and current Chair of the Palacký University Board of Trustees, awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his scientific work.

— When I hear about someone getting an award for advancement in science, I think of a scientist who has made a discovery. This is true of you as well, but in a figurative sense – in your case there is no new “molecule”, but rather new opportunities and possibilities. Would you agree?

I do indeed. My work is to connect research teams from the Czech Republic and the UK. We create the opportunities, and we prove the possibilities. I am always glad when I see scientists who cooperate on a project which might not have happened without the embassy’s involvement.

— Your OBE must represent the apex of your professional pyramid. What was the first stone in that pyramid? When did young Ota start becoming interested in science?

I think it’s always been there, it’s a very human thing. That longing to keep discovering something and to marvel at the things around us, and to never stop that discovery process. I remember when I bought my first issue of the popular science magazine *Vesmír* (The Universe). That was sometime in 1981. I couldn’t tear myself away from it, I still have it somewhere up in the attic.

— And you ended up graduating with a degree in biomedical engineering from Brno, a PhD from Oxford, and now find yourself in the company of the world’s scientific elite. In your opinion, how do our universities rate? Do we have worthy graduates?

Czech scientists, academics, and professors are top-notch, on the global scale. If we only look at universities in the UK, there are more than five hundred Czech professors, doctors, experts, and technicians working as scientists or teachers. Our graduates find employment in the best jobs in the world and

are received very positively. We definitely have something to offer the world. We have to ask ourselves rather if it isn’t a pity that they don’t find their way back home more often, where they are also needed.

— Is foreign inspiration still desirable for us?

We still have much to inspire us. Science is international, and if you want to compare your work with others, and get recommendations where to take it further, then it is essential to consult the best in the world. To communicate solely with those whom you share an office with, or even a university, is simply not enough.

— What does the job of a science diplomat entail?

It encompasses several areas. One is providing information, when I meet with colleagues from the Czech government, Czech universities, the Czech Academy of Science, and research teams to share what is interesting, state-of-the-art, and new in science in Great Britain. And I do the same with my British colleagues, informing them of what is new in science in the Czech Republic. Another area is building cooperation. On the government level, for example this is about how to improve science diplomacy, evaluating science and research, and management and operations of research centres. On the university level, it might be about student and academic exchanges, or joint research projects. We also support cooperation in specific fields, when a group of experts from both countries can work together in the areas of artificial intelligence, new advanced nanomaterials, and so on. There are numerous possibilities.

— You must have a huge overview of what is happening in British and Czech science. How is it possible to have insight into the scientific world of two countries and be able to continually update information on them?

I am always learning new things, and that is exactly what I like about my work. But it’s much more than our two countries. Great Britain has science diplomats in another 50 countries. So when someone from Britain asks what is going on in the world in the area of, say, antimicrobial resistance, they get summaries from all of those countries. And I also have access to this information. When a person works in science, they focus on just a tiny fraction of human knowledge, and they are an expert in their specialisation. In my profession, I’ve traded that for the possibility to have a strategic overview on many diverse fields. There are only a handful of similar jobs, and I am grateful for mine.

— Is it an advantage to be a scientist in your role of a science diplomat?

Undeniably. My science education has given me the ability to understand what science is – it is about the process, not the final product. But the fact remains that in our science diplomacy network, roughly one half of my colleagues do not have a science education. Of course they still do a top job, because much depends on one’s skills as regards communication, organisation, and connecting teams.

— Big money is going into science, world-wide. I suppose there is no debate on whether it is necessary to invest in this area...

Most of the money going into science comes from private sources. Globally, that is roughly two thirds of the total amount of money invested in science – the majority investments by huge multinational corporations. Public investment mostly finances basic research. But that is incredibly important, because without basic research, there would be no applied research, no new technologies, products, or anything we see around us today which is the end result of science.

— How important is it, do you think, to know how to explain to the public what the money is being spent on, especially from public budgets?

If it is money for research paid for by the taxpayers, then the scientists need to be well aware as to what that science is good for – and to know how to explain that. Ten years ago in Britain, research evaluation included the criterion of “socio-economic impact assessment” for the first time. That data must be included in every grant evaluation at British universities. I consider that important.

By the way, I used to try to convince publishers of science journals that in addition to abstracts, they should also contain a “light summary”. Let’s say a three-hundred-word summary, written as if you were explaining your research to your grandmother. I haven’t been successful in this quest yet, but we do need professional science communicators who can talk to the experts and who can also translate their professional jargon into the language of ordinary people.

— Popularising science has been trending for some time in the Czech Republic. What is it like in Britain?

BBC Television started regularly broadcasting stories on science and its results in the 1990s. The Brits have the excellent Science Media Centre, which selects key themes, conducts interviews with top scientists, and then offers science content to all media. By the way – at some universities

My relationship to the university actually began many years ago. I had the feeling that if I was connecting British and Czech science, and at the same time living in a city which is the seat of such an important institution as Palacký University, I could help. My offer of cooperation was accepted. I became a member of its Board of Trustees, of which I am now chair, and I do whatever I can for the university.



Otakar Fojt (b. 1971)

He graduated with a degree in biomedical engineering from the Brno University of Technology and completed his PhD at Oxford. He has lectured at British and Canadian universities. He has been Scientific Attaché at the British Embassy in the Czech Republic since 2003. He dedicates himself to developing Czech-British relations in the areas of science, modern technology, and innovation. He is the chair of the Palacký University Board of Trustees and is co-author of the book *Science Communication. An introduction*. For his long-standing services to science and innovation in the Czech Republic, King Charles III awarded him the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (Civil Division).

it is written in professors' contracts that they have to do a public popularisation lecture once a year. It's a duty.

— And here things are looking up...

Definitely. In the past, we've had the Meteor programme, which many of us watched, as well as the Okna vesmíru dokořán (Wide Open Windows on the Universe) show by astronomer, astrophysicist, and science populariser Jiří Grygar. Today on Czech TV, we have science moderator Dan Stach and his wonderful show Hyde Park Civilisation, the envy of many countries. Science communication has the green light now, young scientists can choose from diverse educational programmes, and they can learn communication and other soft skills. But that does not mean the work is done, there is still so much ahead of us.

— Do you have a favourite scientist who popularises science in Britain?

David Attenborough, without a doubt. He is an icon, the jewel of British popularisation. Of course, I also like Brian Cox, and many more.

— We live in the information age and science is no exception. How can one absorb all that information?

For some time now I have been thinking about the limited amount of time which we all have to take in new information. How to proceed so that we have relevant information, but do not spend the entire day merely getting it, searching for it,

and verifying it? And how best to share it in a team? To illustrate: about two million scientific publications are published every year. If you calculate that we have roughly five thousand scientific fields, that comes out to an average of four hundred publications per field. You cannot read it all. So either you don't leaf through them and then you run the risk of missing something interesting and investing time and money into something which has already been discovered. Or you have to have a really large research team where everyone reads something and then together you can quickly and effectively share ideas. And that is the way science is gradually going. Perhaps artificial intelligence will help us with the selecting and sorting. But the verification of science experiments, repeating them, their control, this will be done by research teams, in my opinion. I don't believe that autonomous robots with general AI will be capable of doing this for a long time to come.

— What discoveries still await us?

It's hard to say, because we don't know what we don't know. And this is why science is so amazing, because it is boundless. But exploring the paths is important. Even the dead ends. They show us that something does not work, and it's not necessary to waste more money on it. Science is the inter-zone between what we know and don't know. And scientists are those at the boundaries who keep gradually pushing those boundaries, little by little.

— Are you ever sorry – especially due to what you are doing and whom you meet – that you are no longer devoting yourself to pure science?

Sometimes – and then quite a bit. But again, I will say that I would lose that overview and insight into a number of other fields which I would never have known if I had stayed a scientist. It's quid pro quo. You cannot have everything in life, it's too short.

— We began the interview congratulating you on receiving the Order of the British Empire. How does it feel to receive such an honour?

It is a tremendous honour, and I did not accept it as mine alone. I consider it an award for Czech-British scientific cooperation. I appreciate it very much, because diplomatic work is often unseen. And when I look at the domestic company in which I find myself, that the list of our OBE recipients starts with the Czechoslovak RAF airmen and pilots from the Second World War, and that Prof Hilský has the same award for translating the complete works of Shakespeare, I feel I do not deserve it. I must add that while the OBE is in my name, if my wife had not looked after the children, which allowed me to travel to Britain and Prague and all over the world, I wouldn't have been able to accomplish a quarter of the work I have. So that OBE belongs to her, just as much as me. We're a team, one which shares the joys and worries of family life. I hope that it pleased her as much as it pleased me.

UP Faculty of Medicine able to compete on the global scale

The UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (UP FMD) underwent a demanding external evaluation as a representative of Czech medical faculties when it hosted an accreditation commission from the National Accreditation Office for Higher Education (NAÚ) and a commission from the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME). “The NAÚ’s efforts to obtain accreditation by the federation are related to the fact that after 2025, only doctors who have studied medicine at faculties accredited by an agency recognised by the WFME will be able to take the equivalency examination for entry into the US labour market,” explained Milan Raška, Vice-Dean for International Relations at UP FMD. Preliminary findings have confirmed that UP FMD is able to compete on the global scale. (vim)

University of Vienna Professor Emeritus lectured to future lawyers



Helmut Koziol is one of the most renowned experts on tort law in Europe. Students and academics of the Olomouc Faculty of Law had a unique opportunity to meet him in person. The professor emeritus of the University of Vienna prepared a lecture for them on the “Moving System”. He came to Olomouc at the invitation of Filip Melzer from the Department of Private Law and Civil Procedure. “It is a great honour for me to have been in regular contact with Prof Koziol for the last five years or more. Together with my colleague Tomáš Doležal

from the Institute of State and Law of the Czech Academy of Sciences, we consult him on current issues of tort law, including new Czech law, which I consider to be an extraordinary privilege,” said Melzer. (eha)

UP Gold Medal awarded to Hong Kong Prof Lo

Prof Yuk-Ming Dennis Lo from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, who proved that the DNA of an unborn child can be detected in the blood of a pregnant woman and who is considered a serious candidate for the Nobel Prize, received the Gold Medal for Merit in the Development of Palacký University for his long-term cooperation with Olomouc doctors and scientists. He received the medal from the hands of Rector Martin Procházka at the Congress on Cell-free DNA in Olomouc. “Prof Lo’s cooperation with the Department of Medical Genetics at the UP Faculty of Medicine and University Hospital Olomouc began twelve years ago. Since then, he has been collaborating with doctors and scientists not only in Olomouc but throughout the Czech Republic on a regular basis, giving lectures and participating in several projects,” said the rector. (vim)



Taking a Walk with... Procházková



The second episode of the university debate series “Taking a Walk with...” took visitors to Russia. The guest of the debate, moderated and hosted by UP Rector Martin Procházka, was journalist Petra Procházková (both surnames mean “Walker”). Ukraine, Afghanistan, Georgia... These are countries where something intense has happened or is happening. Therefore, these places are the focus of this reporter’s attention. The transformation of politics, Boris Yeltsin, the role of the EU, Vladimir Putin, freedom and its different perceptions in different parts of the world, all of this was discussed at the debate. (ipu)

Olomouc Photographers present Vladislav Galgonek



His documentary photographs are part of the permanent collection of the Czech Press Agency (ČTK). President Václav Havel, Pope John Paul II, and tennis player Ivan Lendl have not escaped his reportorial eye. Photographer Vladislav Galgonek has published a book that comprehensively maps his pre-revolutionary photojournalistic work from 1973–1989, full of unadulterated emotions and stories hidden in the everyday life of real socialism. The book was published as part of the Olomouc Photographers series in collaboration with the Olomouc Museum of Art, UP Press, and Czech Television. (tof)

text: Šárka Chovancová
photo: Ota Blahoušek

university town

Botanical Garden: New building and winter garden

The new multi-purpose building in the Botanical Garden of the Palacký University Olomouc Faculty of Science (UP FS) provides the academic community and the public alike with a lecture hall, a winter garden, and high-quality social and technical facilities. The preparations for the project of a modern building with low energy consumption started three years ago. The construction itself required an investment of €1,250,000.

The Botanical Garden is located near Smetana Park and is the oldest facility managed by the UP FS. The original building on the garden grounds was built more than a hundred years ago, so its technical condition did not correspond to current needs. UP FS management therefore considered whether to renovate the old building expensively, or to erect a new building. “In the end, the most economical solution was to build a new one in the front section of the garden. The new building will not only provide space for administrative fa-

cilities, but also a hall in which classes and public events can be held. This should not only expand the possibilities for practical teaching using the valuable botanical collections we maintain, but also provide a platform for popularisation events in an attractive environment,” said UP FS Dean Martin Kubala.

The core of the new building is the lecture hall, which bears the name of Josef Otruba, an important Moravian botanist of the first half of the 20th century. “We decided to name the hall after him for several reasons. Firstly, he managed the garden for thirty years, and thanks to his care the plant collections survived the hardships of World War II. In addition, Otruba was a great field botanist who discovered many new and rare plant species – not only in Central Moravia. He also contributed to the designation of several small protected areas in the local region of Haná,” said the head of the botanical garden, Václav Dvořák.

The modern hall has a capacity of 49 seats and is equipped with audio-visual equipment enabling the organisation of conferences, lectures, and screenings. It will be used not only for education but also for public events. “We’d like to hold exhibitions in the hall in semi-annual cycles and with a natural sciences orientation, conceived either scientifically or artistically. We believe that the cultural community of Olomouc will soon adopt this unusual format,” said Dvořák.

The new building was designed in a passive standard so that its operation would not be demanding on energy and water consumption. “We have adapted the used technologies, such as photovoltaic roof panels, heat pumps, and heat recovery. We also included a green roof, a rainwater retention tank, and a trellis system on the facades, which is used to grow climbing plants,” added Dvořák. The building also features a winter garden with tropical and subtropical plants from the collection of the UP FS Department of Botany.



Very Bad Fairy Tales

Stories for self-destructors and the tender-hearted

“Very Bad Fairy Tales”, as the UP Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology doctoral student Marta Sýkorová calls her collection of eight tales, written to be an aid for those who try to please the people around them as much as possible, suppressing themselves and their own needs in the meantime, not putting faith in their own dreams. This book full of (not only) tragic endings will be published this autumn, made possible due to the support of the UP Endowment Fund (UP EF).

The stories’ motifs, set in a fairy tale environment to reinforce their consequences, are related to higher sensitivity, the topic that Marta Sýkorová investigates at the Olomouc University Social Health Institute (OUSHI). “Highly sensitive people are marked by a great degree of empathy and care for other people, which they consider the most important thing; meanwhile, they neglect themselves, and may be significantly more inclined to stress and/or burn-out. These fairy tales have bad endings; their urgency is underlined by their graphic appearance: white letters against a black

background. The stories also offer an alternate ending, which should inspire readers on how to change the situation. Questions then follow, related to the idea behind the fairy tale, plus useful tips on how to work on one’s mental and physical fitness,” explained the doctoral student.

At the same time, she adds that writing *Very Bad Fairy Tales* was important for her as well. She wrote the first one after she failed her first Bachelor’s exam because she was involved in so many activities she wasn’t able to adequately prepare for it. “That was when I began asking myself why it is that I did not prioritise such an important task,” she said.

After graduating in molecular biology and genetics in Brno, she began doctoral studies at UP and found support at OUSHI and UP EF to make her dream come true – publication of a book of “self-development” fairy tales for adults. “I am ever so grateful. UP EF Director Jiří Rudolf met with me immediately to discuss my vision, how to realise it properly, and make some decisions. Together we visited bookshops,

and the typesetter at the printer’s, who advised me on the book’s graphic lay-out. Thanks to Katrin Stark who takes such good care of us grant-holders, I could prepare properly for presenting my project before various audiences, including this year’s Academia Film Olomouc festival. Now I’m about to be published by Malvern, sometime at the beginning of the new academic year. I can’t wait,” added Sýkorová, who impresses one with her passion and creativity for her cause.

In addition to studies and writing stories for “self-destructors and the tender-hearted”, as she alternatively calls her book, she also sings and plays in the group *Dobrá otázka* (Good Question), she paints, and she has had training in improv. In the future, she would like to combine all her activities and experiences in the concept of embodiment, which takes a holistic look at working with the mind-body relationship, combining elements of meditation, dance, yoga, and yes, improv. “I want to enlighten people’s lives,” said the OUSHI doctoral student, in closing.



text: Milada Křížková Hronová
photo: Jakub Čermák

portrait



Michal Horák, PhD student, singer-songwriter

You learn more when you start teaching

“Tell me where you live, we’re probably going to play there,” says twenty-six-year-old Michal Horák, the well-known singer-songwriter. But in addition, he is a doctoral student in the Music Theory and Education programme at the UP Faculty of Education, and also the new King of the Student Májales May Celebrations at UP. Playing about one hundred concerts a year, his songs reverberate throughout the country. And for balance, he feels the need to teach. He says being on the musical merry-go-round of constant adrenaline, it is necessary to find something different to do that grounds him.

“I realised for me, it’s very important to spread my activities out into more places. I like alternating performing and teaching.

I think that kind of grounding is healthy,” he says. A life in music was never in doubt. He started playing the piano at the age of three, later picked up the guitar, and once he discovered the Beatles at the ripe old age of eleven, his fate was sealed.

Until he was sixteen, he played more or less by ear, intuitively. He would listen to a song and then play it. “I attended a parochial elementary school in Hradec Králové, and if you didn’t want to go to the after-school play club, you could play piano with one of the nuns. I did finger exercises with her for a year. After a while, my parents learned about it, and they enrolled me in an elementary arts school. But it wasn’t until I was sixteen when I discovered the world of musicology, thanks to my teacher

Radek Škeřík. I owe him a lot. He literally filled my head with music education, and I fell in love with it.”

He doesn’t regret not studying music at secondary school or university. He chose to study primary school education at the Charles University Prague Faculty of Education, and his Master’s thesis topic was based on his teaching practice, where he did spelling drills with children. “When I ran out of ideas during my teaching practice, in desperation I composed songs to teach spelling. Then I invented music activities of all sorts, which I could also use in other subjects. For instance, I adapted music to drama and art classes, so there was always a sort of balance between music classes and Czech classes. →

The kids were entertained, and my materials were in huge demand from primary school teachers. At the time I chose my thesis topic, I thought it would be interesting to expand on the theme, gather relevant data, and ideally to pass it on.”

He originally enrolled in the doctoral programme at Palacký University thinking he would devote himself to further interdisciplinary music education. Instead, he realised that there was much more to musicology than what was in the textbooks for primary school education. “The subject is taught with a heavy emphasis on theory, without a broader, practical context. And also, perhaps because I came to it at a time when I already had everything thoroughly ingrained by hands-on practice, it filled in some gaps. It filled me with great joy then, and I am still full of passion about it to this day.”

Michal Horák (b. 1998)

Singer-songwriter, doctoral student of Music Theory and Education at the Palacký University Faculty of Education. In 2021, he won the Discovery of the Year award in the Czech Zlatý slavík (Golden Nightingale) poll and an Anděl (Czech Grammy) nomination. His hit songs are full of real humour from true life situations. His special approach to music appeals to listeners in all age groups. He has released three albums, and his clips on YouTube have had more than forty-one million views.

During his first year of doctoral studies at Palacký University, he taught students musicology and intonation. “It’s not easy to teach roughly two hundred students who are only a few years younger than you are. I was thrown into much deeper water than I had expected. Luckily, I think I managed, thanks to the help of one of my colleagues in the department. But I am still a greenhorn. I’ve only started learning the ropes. I’ve learned more in the past year than the several years before. But that’s how it is, you learn more when you start teaching.”

But teaching is only one part of Michal Horák’s work week. He does not have time for more, due to his musical commitments. And he and his group have a lot of those. His concert calendar is full for the next two years. Michal stands out due to his multi-genre songs, for which he draws inspi-

ration from both academia and the personal lives of himself and his friends, and also from the folklore of his village.

He has been writing songs since he was thirteen. What does he consider as success these days? “I could say my three CDs, on which I worked with people I really admire. For example, Jan Steinsdörfer, the keyboard player in the band Chinaski, and Jan Vávra, who writes songs for singer Ewa Farná, took part in my third album. I also worked with one of the most sought-after producers, Filip Vlček, in whose studio we recorded. However, I would personally choose other things. For example, sometimes people come up to me after a concert and say that it was my music which inspired them to make music. Also that we sell out concerts and people know my songs. That doesn’t happen overnight, that’s the result of years of effort.”



Jaromír Synek

UP FE Department of Music Education

I really like Michal Horák. Is that strange? Ok, backtrack, erase that full stop, and I’ll say more: I really like Michal Horák, he’s a great singer-songwriter whose warm-hearted songs keep “egging” me on. He’d like that word, the same way I like his fresh music and novel lyrics that he-he-he-help me to see the world through his waggish eyes. I really like Michal Horák as a teacher, too, who wears his primary school teaching qualifications on his chest, even though at present he’s throwing out his safety net to students only a few years younger than he is, drowning in a sea of tones, scales, intervals, and harmonies. I also really like Michal Horák as a student, because I like all students, and finally, I really like Michal Horák as a person, because he’s cool – and because his songs actually helped me to write this column. Oh yeah!



Martin Kudla

Executive Director of Supraphon Music Publishing

We signed Michal Horák after seeing him at an unusual outdoor concert outside of Prague. He enchanted us with his original humour, his unaffected style, and his enormous musical talent, with a real feel for both melody and lyrics. So far, he’s released three successful albums at Supraphon, dozens of singles and videoclips, and recently a *Songbook* with stories, something long-awaited by his fans. He entertains the public playing solo, with his group, and even with symphony orchestras, by his energetic dose of pure musicianship, positive energy, and often situational humour or improvisation. I treasure most his firm principles, determination, work ethic, and the good feeling you have around him – and I mean that in general, not just in terms of our working relationship. He’s simply a true original, both artistically and personally, and I’m very glad that I’ve had and have the privilege to be there when he writes his songs and his story.

text: Martin Višňa
photos: Jakub Čermák

alumnus

A portrait of Peter Olšák, a man with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark blue blazer over a teal shirt. He is leaning on a concrete ledge outdoors, with a building and greenery in the background.

Rehabilitation doctor Peter Olšák: I chose the right field



Peter Olšák (b. 1985)

Rehabilitation doctor, originally from Slovakia. He graduated with a medical degree at UP FMD, afterwards worked for ten years at University Hospital Olomouc, and is currently at the Vesna Children's Sanatorium in Janské Lázně. In 2016, he started using one method of electroacupuncture on patients with serious mobility disorders, which he continually focuses on, developing it, and even lecturing on it. He has treated more than 700 patients, and his team's innovative needle project was successful in the 2023 Technology Transfer Day competition. He is the Scientific Secretary of the Czech Medical Acupuncture Society of the Czech Medical Association of J.E. Purkyně. He spends his free time with his family, reading, and taking walks in the country – and his heart is in the Slovak mountains.

Acupuncture. For some, this is an effective treatment method worthy of further professional attention; for others, it is pseudoscience and quackery. It doesn't take a long search to find both views side by side. Rehabilitation doctor Peter Olšák was also an acupuncture sceptic a few years back. But he began to devote more attention to it, and in time, he came up with his own method of electroacupuncture, with improved needles. Above all, he can be proud of the hundreds of patients, adults, and now children whom he has helped without adverse effects.

Recently, some news articles have spoken of a "miracle": Peter Olšák, a graduate of UP's Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FMD), now working at the Vesna Children's Sanatorium in Janské Lázně, has been able to restore free movement in several paralysed parts of the body of a sixteen-year-old boy who was paralysed from the waist down when his spinal cord was completely severed after being buried by logs.

"It might be on the level of a small medical miracle; nevertheless, only time will tell why it happened. Meanwhile, we do know that electroacupuncture can improve the quality of a large number of patients' lives, but it will take a lot of time and work to explore all its mechanisms in detail," as the doctor cautiously explains, adding that it is necessary to expect the possibility of failure. "Of course I want to do more to help my patients, but it can happen that we don't make them better, there are limits.

But I also get word from current patients that even if I could not help them anymore, they are pleased with the results to date."

Peter Olšák uses his own Ac-tive ENF® method on patients with serious locomotor disorders, musculoskeletal pain, and now even with severed spinal cords. It differs from ordinary electroacupuncture in that it makes use of the latest medical findings and in how it cooperates with the patient. "For stimulating individual acupuncture points we work with electric pulse modulation. During the roughly half-hour application, the localisation of the points and type of current is changed several times. For optimal results, it is necessary to properly arrange the selection of points and application of the current, while at the same time we must respect the patient's subjective perception," he explains.

Even more positive effects are promised by the innovative needles which he developed in cooperation with UP through a project at its Science and Technology Park, supported by a grant from the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic. The new needles are more effective, and their use is also more comfortable for the patient. Intensive negotiations are currently underway regarding their certification. Putting them on the market is the goal of a new spin-off company, in which the university has a stake. "I believe that with these needles, I will be able to help people with damaged spinal cords more, to im-

prove their treatment," says Dr Olšák, who as a practically-oriented person appreciates that he was primarily involved as an inventor in their development and did not have to deal with the administrative side.

Just as when studying medicine, he preferred the clinical subjects to the theoretical ones. But he looks back on his studies fondly. The UP Faculty of Physical Culture (FPC), to which he also applied, played a role in him choosing rehabilitation medicine, as did renowned physiotherapist Pavel Kolář. "Originally, I thought I would be a cardiologist or cardiac surgeon, and studied those fields in more depth. But then thanks to friends studying physiotherapy, I went to a lecture by Pavel Kolář at FPC, and he really captivated me, showing how he could realise and treat many symptoms without using any tools except his hands and his head. That was the first glimmer that rehabilitation medicine could be my field. And I think that I chose well."

After he graduated, he worked for ten years at the University Hospital Olomouc rehabilitation department. "It was very educational, and I have to say that had it not been for that environment, the support of my colleagues, and the good atmosphere, my method would not have come about. I always return there and I'm glad to see how my colleagues are doing, in all aspects. Without exaggeration, I think it's one of the best workplaces of its kind in the country," he adds.

text: Martina Šaradínová
photos: Viktor Čáp, FIJR archives

experience

I'm living my childhood dream – to be a scientist

Plant biologist Francisco Ignacio Jaso Robles has wanted to be scientist ever since he was a child. But in his wildest dreams, he never thought he would be working abroad, outside his native Mexico. But then a conference he attended in Argentina became a turning point in his life when he met his current colleagues from the Czech Advanced Technology and Research Institute – CATRIN – of Palacký University. Meeting Lukáš Spíchal and Nuria De Diego, and information about the research and instrumentation of the Olomouc team, were decisive in the young scientist working now for more than two years in the Phenotyping research group in Olomouc, focusing on the interactions between plants and pathogens.

“I’m specifically interested in the metabolism of polyamines and their key role

in combatting biotic stress. My approach involves the use of non-invasive methods of high-throughput phenotyping, metabolomics, and also molecular biological and biochemical analyses. The goal is to comprehensively understand the dynamic of the development of infection in plant cells, and gain knowledge about the subtle interplay which governs plant responses to pathogens,” explained the scientist, who has a degree from Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí in biochemistry and molecular biology with a focus on plants, and who then delved into the complicated world of interactions between toxic substances and cellular processes. In addition, he also taught several classes there.

However, the Olomouc scientists’ experience and equipment encouraged him to make the move to CATRIN. →



Francisco Ignacio Jasso Robles
(b. 1991)

His academic career began at Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí in Mexico. During his Bachelor's studies, he had three majors: chemistry, pharmacy, and biology. During his Master's and doctoral studies, he specialised in plant biochemistry and molecular biology. He taught organic and inorganic chemistry at his alma mater. He is the recipient of a 2024–2026 UP junior grant entitled "Unraveling the role of polyamines metabolism and its impact on plant-pathogen interaction".

Perhaps thanks to that fateful meeting, he truly knows how important it is to take part in international scientific events which can open the doors to invaluable opportunities.

He says his decision to change workplaces has been his greatest success to date. The recent awarding of a UP grant for young researchers has been an important milestone in his career. "It allows me to continue in my research, but I also consider it as a great achievement for a Mexican scientist abroad. It reinforces my commitment to contribute to our scientific community and at the same time overcome barriers to show that it is a good idea to connect researchers from different backgrounds," he adds.

Even though there are top-notch scientists in Mexico, in his opinion, research-

ers in the Czech Republic have much more support and better opportunities to get grants. He greatly appreciates the support system here for young scientists, providing the finances and mentoring needed to develop their careers. He considers this a key aspect of science, and he is very glad that he, too, can make use of these benefits at Palacký University. "When I think about my current position, I find that I am living my childhood dream – to be a scientist. I'm so grateful for the opportunity and support which my colleagues, and especially the head of the research group at CATRIN, are giving me. It has significantly helped me to develop my scientific work," he says.

He adds that Olomouc and its inhabitants are very hospitable. He admits to

having experienced a few culture shocks, mostly caused by the language barrier. "Nonetheless, I must say that local people are incredibly warm and welcoming, especially when foreigners try to speak Czech. Their responses are encouraging, and I'm taking on learning Czech as an exciting challenge. Not only does it help me to better acclimate, but it also makes it possible for me to hear so many fascinating stories from the local people. I have to say that Olomouc cheese and garlic soup have quickly become my favourite foods and I also enjoy meeting up with friends and drinking good Czech beer," he reveals. But his passion for science doesn't end at plants. He is also fascinated by themes such as astrophysics, quantum mechanics, and black holes.



photo: Jakub Čermák

reflection



Maria Del Rosario Tribin Bernal

The twenty-one-year-old student from the Universidad de La Sabana in Chía, Colombia, chose the Palacký University Olomouc Faculty of Law for her exchange stay. She spent a summer semester at the faculty, thanks to a cooperation agreement between the two schools.

Llegué el 01 de febrero de 2024 a República Checa después de un año de planear una nueva aventura que me formaría personal y profesionalmente, me sentía muy emocionada, asustada y con muchas ganas de disfrutar esta experiencia al máximo. En la estación principal de Olomouc, lugar que en ese momento no sabía pero que iba a frecuentar durante mi semestre de intercambio, me estaba esperando mi buddy Checa, Vendy, sin la cual el proceso de adaptarme a mi nueva vida en Olomouc no hubiese sido tan fácil.

Cuando llegamos a los dormitorios, me asomé de que tuviese que convivir con tantas personas, sin embargo, nos llevamos muy bien al compartir una cultura similar con mis roomies. Después, conocí a mis vecinos de diferentes países quienes iban a ser unos de mis mejores amigos del intercambio y con los que compartiría además de clase, memorias para toda la vida. Me encantó poder conocer República Checa y los países con los que comparte frontera, sus paisajes y comida siempre los recordaré.

La Universidad de Palacky, me dio la oportunidad conocer muchas personas de diferentes culturas por su variedad de programas y en mi carrera de derecho con su catálogo de cursos me permitió aprender terminología de mi carrera en inglés y entender el derecho internacional público y privado.

Por esto, estoy inmensamente feliz de haber escogido Palacký University Olomouc y sumamente agradecida por todo lo que esta experiencia me ayudó a alcanzar. Siempre lo recordaré con cariño y espero en algún momento poder volver.

I arrived in the Czech Republic on 1 February 2024. I had been planning my foreign adventure for about a year. I came with the goal of personal development, excited, eager to fully enjoy everything here, but also scared. My Czech friend Vendy was waiting for me at the train station in Olomouc, and she helped me adapt quickly to the new environment.

When we arrived at the dorms, I was surprised that I had to live with so many people. However, everyone got along great. I quickly got to know my roommates from different countries. We became friends and spent time together outside of school. Thanks to them, I have a lifetime of memories. I was also happy to enthusiastically explore the beautiful and interesting sights of Moravia and the whole Czech Republic. I will always remember the landscapes and the food. I also took trips to neighbouring countries.

Palacký University with its varied study programmes gave me the opportunity to get to know many people from different cultures. During my studies at the Faculty of Law, I learned to use English professional terminology and to understand international public and private law much better.

I'm so glad that I chose Olomouc and Palacký University for my study abroad. I will always remember my stay with smiles and love. I sincerely hope that I'll be able to return to Olomouc and the university one day.

Founder of the first botanical garden in Olomouc

Martin S. Ehrmann (1795–1870)

The opening of a new, multi-purpose building at the Palacký University Olomouc Faculty of Science Botanical Garden presents the opportunity to recall the existence of an Olomouc Botanical Garden already in the 19th century, and its connection with the personality of Martin S. Ehrmann, the eminent Austrian pharmacologist and chemist.

Martin S. Ehrmann, born in Brno on 6 November 1795, was originally a merchant in Frýdek (now Frýdek-Místek), but in 1819, he began studying pharmacy in Vienna. In 1804, regular pharmacy studies were enacted in the Habsburg monarchy: eight years of pre-university pharmacy practice, culminating in a tirocinial (from Latin “tironum”: recruit, journeyman) examination (under the supervision of the regional pharmacy boards) and then one year of university studies at a medical faculty, incorporating mineralogy, zoology, botany, and chemistry. The Imperial-Royal Polytechnic Institute opened on 6 November 1815 in Vienna (since 1975, the University of Technology

in Vienna), and Martin S. Ehrmann attended classes in business and technical subjects and passed his oral exams in chemistry there. In 1824, he was appointed Full and Public Professor of Pharmaceutical Commodities at the University of Vienna, and three years later he expanded his lectures to include complete pharmacology.

Martin S. Ehrmann in Olomouc

It was quite a boon to the Imperial-Royal Francis University Olomouc when in April 1836, Martin S. Ehrmann, Master of Pharmacy and Doctor of Chemistry, was named Full and Public Professor of Practical Surgical Medicine (i.e. surgical propaedeutics), for his publication and organisational activities were extraordinary.

On the grounds of the former Dominican Monastery (now the complex of the Olomouc Archbishop’s Seminary, Žerotínovo Sq. 605/2), not far from the university building (today the building of the UP Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Univerzitní St. 244/22), Prof Ehrmann ran the Botanical Garden, and from 1839 also the chemistry laboratory. This is probably where he also conducted his introductory lectures on surgery, physics, botany, and chemistry, and amassed his pharmacognosy and pharmacology collections. In 1846, he was Rector of Imperial-Royal Francis University Olomouc, where he also worked as a sworn chemist of the court.

A friend of beauty...

Ehrmann’s publications include primarily pharmacopoeias, and also pharmaceutical and pharmacological handbooks. He did not shrink from popularising his scientific disciplines, such as in his *Handbuch der Chemie in deren vielseitiger Beziehung zum gemeinen Leben* (Handbook of Chemistry in its Multifaceted Relationship to Every-

day Life), Wien 1840, based on which from 1840 he led a special two-semester lecture series in Olomouc on commercial and technical chemistry, as well as a popular overview of technical chemistry for those interested. Ehrmann had a remarkable interest in cosmetics, which resulted in his reworking of Johann Karl Lübeck’s (1770–1814) *Der Schönheitsfreund. Handbuch für Damen zur Belehrung in der Kunst, die Schönheit zu erhalten, zu erhöhen, die mangelhafte zu ersetzen und die verlorene wieder herzustellen. Mit einer Anweisung zur Verfertigung der Schönheitsmitte. 3., nach Dr. Lübeck gänzlich umgearbeitete Auflage* (The Friend of Beauty. A Handbook for Ladies in the Instruction of the Art of maintaining and enhancing Beauty, replacing its deficiencies, and restoring its loss. With Instructions on Preparing Cosmetics, 3rd and completely revised edition after Dr Lübeck), Pesth, 1837.

Starting in 1846, M. S. Ehrmann published the *Oesterreichische Zeitschrift für Pharmacie* (Austrian Journal for Pharmacy), with treatises and communications spanning the entire field of pharmacy. He received many awards for his professional activities, such as Member of the Imperial-Royal Viennese Medical Society, and the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium.

Closing and reopening

During the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, Martin S. Ehrmann moved from Olomouc to retire in Vienna, where he died on 19 June 1870. When the Imperial-Royal Medical-Surgical Institute in Olomouc was shut down in 1874, the institute’s botanical garden also closed. A new botanical garden was built in 1901 by the Botanischer Verein in Olmütz (Botanical Society in Olomouc) inside the complex now known as Smetana Park, where it survives to this day.



Martin Ehrmann. Doctor of Chemistry, Imperial-Royal University Full Professor, Member of many Professional Societies. Lithography: u Škarničla a Domka, Olomouc. Circa 1838–1849. Regional Archives in Opava, Olomouc branch.



Palacký University
Olomouc

Genius loci...

Study in the Heart of Europe

Get the best out of what Palacký University has to offer

- Unique combination of prestigious education with long-standing traditions in a true university city
- Eight faculties with more than 800 accredited study programmes (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral) in Czech and foreign languages
- Three Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree Programmes: Euroculture, Global Development Policy, and Copernicus Digital Earth
- Various study stays, traineeships and internships abroad with financial support to almost anywhere in the world
- Rich variety of short-term programmes (summer schools, tailor-made programmes) for visiting students
- Member of the Aurora European Universities Alliance

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLOMOUC
admissions@upol.cz
international.upol.cz/en



Find more detailed information by
choosing your programme here:
studijniprogramy.upol.cz/en

