

žurnál

Magazine of Palacký University Olomouc, 2018/2

theme

UP hosted
the prestigious
THE summit



Palacký University
Olomouc



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contents

- 2 — UP hosted the prestigious THE summit, and got top marks for its handling of the event
- 5 — Photostory – Academia Film Olomouc
- 6 — Rectors and deans of music universities in CEEC states debated at UP for the first time
- 6 — Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology helmed again by Peter Tavel
- 7 — Faculty of Physical Culture moves and modernises its workplaces
- 7 — Conference on the future of the EU and European law
- 8 — Medical faculty hosted diamond alumni for the second time
- 8 — Faculty of Health Sciences celebrated the tenth anniversary of its foundation
- 9 — Students at the Faculty of Science competed for the Dean's Award
- 9 — Sanatoria Klimkovice became a faculty workplace of the Faculty of Education
- 10 — International team led by Olomouc scientists reveals how Antabuse kills cancer
- 13 — Top-notch science and advanced technologies from UP save unique works of art
- 15 — Portrait – Květoslava Princová
- 18 — Success
- 22 — Kaleidoscope of news briefs
- 24 — UniON – The University sets forth into the region
- 25 — Interview – Tomáš Lebeda: Referendums are my nightmare
- 28 — Bacterial resistance to silver nanoparticles can be overcome
- 31 — Give Opportunity: Support young talent
- 32 — BALUO Application Centre: Attracting crowds for the uniqueness of its equipment and its comprehensive services
- 33 — Alumni – Pavel Sladký: Lawyer in the service of the state
- 35 — Experience – Seven years in Shanghai: From martial arts to Olomouc
- 37 — On a Fulbright in New York
- 39 — Reflection – Iran
- 40 — Host to a musical genius

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MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY



Dear Colleagues, Students, and Friends
of Palacký University,

You are holding in your hands the latest issue of the university magazine, which should show how rich and varied our spring semester has been. We were the first in Central Europe to host the global Times Higher Education Summit, thanks to which top academicians and scientists from all over the world came to our city.

At the same time, we held the 53rd annual Academia Film Olomouc international science documentary film festival, and its seven thousand attendees proved the popularity and interest in this field. If you take those two events, and add the unique, still ongoing scientific project Arteca dedicated to saving and preserving cultural heritage which you will read about in this edition of Žurnál, you will get which may seem at first glance a somewhat kaleidoscopic picture of the events and activities taking place at our university.

It is, however, a true picture. These myriad examples clearly show Palacký University's manifold directions. We are a school which educates and fosters students, at the same time investing considerable resources into research.

UP is also an institution which is aware of its social responsibility. And this is why we are initiating discussions on the future directions of society, for example via the Civic University project UniON, where we are engaging ourselves in the public space and its shaping, where we are actively entering the cultural sphere and inviting the most important global figures in science and academia to our city.

It was truly a demanding semester, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for successfully getting through it. I wish all students, academics, and employees a nice summer. Rest up and gather strength, because in just a few months, we'll be continuing on our "journey" at Palacký University Olomouc.

Jaroslav Miller
Rector, Palacký University Olomouc

theme

Building a hub for world-class research

text:
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photos:
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Martin Holík
Tereza Hrubá

UP hosted the prestigious THE summit, and got top marks for its handling of the event

Determining the strong and weak points of Central European universities and research institutions and building new strategic partnerships. These are just several of the results gleaned from the global summit Research Excellence: New Europe Summit, which was hosted by Palacký University in June. At the unique meeting, the first ever held in Central Europe, the prestigious Times Higher Education ranking company announced the first evaluation of the universities of the countries in the “New Europe”.

One of the goals of the summit was to make the Central European region more visible, in regards to its huge potential to compete at the top level in Europe within ten or fifteen years in education and research. The institutions here however face a number of challenges, often quite significant ones. And thus this summit became a suitable space for sharing experiences and subsequent ideas of strategies on how to improve weaknesses.

New international partnerships

“I had hoped that the summit would allow rectors, vice-rectors, university and research institution representatives to meet and agree on strategic partnerships. We have several projects that we’d like to implement within an international consortium, and I believe that we will be successful in these. The summit fulfilled all our expect-

tations,” said Palacký University Rector Jaroslav Miller.

The summit was successful in terms of content and organisation, with Czech and foreign participants praising the Olomouc event for both. “Speaking for myself, I can say that the cooperation with colleagues from Times Higher Education was very professional. I’m especially pleased with our summit programme. In choosing the themes of the panel discussions, we tried to concentrate on questions which are emerging today in conjunction with the ‘New Europe’ region. Placing discussions into the political context and acquainting participants with the issues and challenges which this region faces was the right choice,” said Zuzana Polanská, Head of the UP Department for International Strategy, who – along with the THE team as the main organiser – was responsible for preparing the summit. →



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The Times Higher Education New Europe ranking 2018

Rank	Institution	Country	Teaching score	Research score	Citation score	Industry score	International score	Overall score
1	University of Tartu	Estonia	24.5	25.3	83.6	33.5	50.4	44.6
2	Cyprus University of Technology	Cyprus	17.8	13.8	88.6	33	69.9	42.1
3	University of Cyprus	Cyprus	20.8	25	63.1	48.1	76.8	39.6
4	Charles University in Prague	Czech Republic	29	22	56.3	32.1	55.6	37.2
5	Semmelweis University	Hungary	22.6	11.9	61.5	34.4	73.8	35.2
6	University of Warsaw	Poland	25.9	18.3	47.1	32.4	44.6	31.5
7	Masaryk University	Czech Republic	22.2	22.7	42.8	33.7	56.3	31.4
8	University of Split	Croatia	16.8	12.5	60.3	33.5	41.7	30.9
9	University of Maribor	Slovenia	18.9	15.3	49	39.2	36.7	28.7
10	Palacký University Olomouc	Czech Republic	19.3	12.2	45	32.5	54.6	27.9

“Central Europe is a rapidly developing and highly ambitious region. It’s fantastic to be exploring its current centres of excellence, its rising stars of higher education – and considering the steps it must now take to boost its reputation and influence on the global stage, to rival the traditional heavyweight research regions of Western Europe, Australia, East Asia, and North America,” said Phil Baty, Editor-in-Chief of the THE World University Rankings.

Palacký University in the Top Ten

The highlight of the summit was the publication of the THE New Europe 2018 ranking, which for the first time evaluated universities from the 13 countries which have joined the EU since 2004. The ranking included 53 institutions, with the University of Tartu in Estonia taking the top position, followed by

the Cyprus University of Technology and the University of Cyprus. Czechia has the highest number of universities listed in the rankings, with 13. Three Czech universities placed in the Top Ten: Charles University in Prague at number four, Masaryk University Brno at number seven, and Palacký University Olomouc at number ten.

“On one hand, we can be satisfied that we are in the Top Ten, above many other universities. On the other hand, we have a reason to keep improving. We were catapulted into the Top Ten mainly due to science, in which our indicators rocketed upward. And that is combined with publications in prestigious professional journals and works which are often cited,” said UP’s rector, commenting on its placement.

The ranking wanted to call attention to the area of Central Europe as one under-

going dynamic development, and proving that the Czech Republic has the opportunity to be included on the world level in terms of science, research and academics. Results of the summit however also pointed out the fact that Czech universities are not able to adequately “sell” their expertise in the global context.

Participants however also brought a recipe on how to further advance Czech science and research. “We support what’s average, instead of true excellence. We have to rid ourselves of the egalitarian approach to funding. And if a scientist carries out above-average science, let him or her be compensated in an above-average way. We also lag behind in our support of young scientists and internationalisation,” pointed out the world-famous physical chemist Pavel Hobza, of UP.



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AFO broke its own record. Seven prizes and three honourable mentions were brought home by domestic and foreign film-makers at this year's International Festival of Science Documentary Films – Academia Film Olomouc. It can pride itself in its 53rd year, which brought a record number of seven thousand viewers and five hundred Czech and foreign guests. "The festival perfectly fulfilled its mission and became an active, stirring, opinionated platform – and for the very first time in its history it became a living protest to save the Earth and ocean life," said the festival spokesman, Ondřej Čížek. The Award for Personal Contribution to Science Communication was awarded both to the undersea documentary film-maker Steve Lichtag, and to the NGO Ocean Ark Alliance, a world-wide platform for deeper understanding and appreciation of the oceans, sea corals, and the life in them. (ipu)

8 faculties
1 university



Rectors and deans of music universities in CEEC states debated at UP for the first time

For the first time ever, rectors and deans of music faculties and academies in the Central and Eastern Europe Countries (CEEC) had a meeting at the UP Faculty of Arts. The two-day symposium of leading representatives of music schools in the former Eastern bloc discussed their new possibilities of cooperation.

“Our goal was to newly define strategic partners, on both bilateral and multilateral levels. We together pondered what else should be done so that music activities of universities had greater global impact in all their areas of influence – in music education, art, as well as research. We considered specific steps that need to be done so that the most important productions were more visible and had wider and more pronounced feedback. Our discussions also revealed how we struggle, at national levels, with unsuitable scientometrics and ci-

tation tools that are not based in the humanities. Key publications in the area of musicology and music education do not correspond with them, and then it may seem that the citation index and impact of our monographs is negligible. The exact opposite is true,” said Vít Zouhar, UP Vice-Rector for Studies. Therefore, rectors and deans of European music schools presented particularly those key activities that are in need of partners for musicological, music educational and interdisciplinary research, partners for education of outstanding interpreters and composers, and partners for the production of joint artistic projects.

The prestigious conference in Olomouc was attended by the majority of the main representatives of leading music universities in the CEEC countries. Among those who visited Palacký University for the very

first time were the rector of the University of Arts in Belgrade and respected music composer, Zoran Erić; and an important violoncellist and vice-rector for science at the Estonian Music Academy in Tallinn, Henry-David Varema. “I am very happy that all the invited guests arrived in Olomouc and acknowledged the importance of this meeting. They also highly appreciated the scientific, educational, and artistic activities of the Department of Music Education at the UP Faculty of Education and the Department of Musicology at the UP Faculty of Arts, from monographs, critical editions, and CD recordings to the music-neurological research and the educational programme Different Hearing,” added Zouhar. The organisers of the conference were Palacký University and the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno. (map)

Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology helmed again by Peter Tavel

The current dean of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology (CMFT) at Palacký University, Peter Tavel, will again take the helm of his office for next four years. The faculty senators made this decision in the first round of a secret ballot. Peter Tavel received 11 affirmative votes and only one negative. “I thank you for your trust and the strong mandate. During the election campaign I was very moved by learning that we are all pulling togeth-



er. There is a superb atmosphere at the faculty, even among staff. We are one team in the same boat,” said Peter Tavel immediately after his re-election.

In his next four years in office, the dean will mainly strive for further improvement of both academics and studies, and systematic education of the young academic generation. His priorities also include increased internationalisation of the faculty, more intense use of modern technologies in education, and maintaining the continuity of growing performance in academics. The strong points of the faculty, according to him, include the quality of theological study and the study programmes Charity and Social Work, International Social and Humanitarian Work, and Social and Spiritual Determinants of Health, which are unparalleled in the whole of the Czech Republic.

One of the challenges for the future is to use the faculty’s potential in establish-

ing new forms of philanthropy as well as the readiness in responding to current society-wide themes, such as gender issues, homosexuality, the virtual world, smart technologies, and all kinds of new addictions that the young generation are liable to. “It is necessary to have the courage and proceed to a solid discussion supported by objective facts, professional expertise, and well-informed knowledge,” emphasised Tavel.

His second term will begin on 14 September 2018. Until then the statement of the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome, which must approve the result of the election in accordance with religious law, should be known. The request for *nihil obstat* – no objections – was sent by the Olomouc Archbishop Jan Graubner, Great Chancellor of the CMFT, who is the clerical guarantor of the faculty. The UP Rector will then install Peter Tavel into office. (mav)

The Faculty of Physical Culture moves and modernises its workplaces

The UP Faculty of Physical Culture (FPC) has undertaken the long and difficult task of moving and renovating its facilities. The recently completed building of the Centre for Kinanthropological Research is gradually being occupied, while the fifth floor of the teachers' building, faculty building C in the Neředín campus, is being refurbished.

The new building of the Centre for Kinanthropological Research was erected during 2017 in the place of a former military laundry in close proximity to the BAL-
UO Application Centre, and together they

form a state-of-the-art environment for the faculty's research projects and the application of their findings into practice. The majestic premises will host laboratories and the offices of the Department of Natural Sciences in Kinanthropology and the Active Lifestyle Institute from the beginning of the new academic year. "This will allow us to move the headquarters of the Department of Physiotherapy closer to the RRR Centre (Centre for Treatment of Painful Conditions and Movement Disorders), and also to move the Department of Sport

from the Hynaisova street in the town centre to the Neředín campus. Things will be topsy-turvy for a while, but I believe we'll make it, and the conditions for our work will be significantly improved," said Dean Michal Šafář at the meeting of the faculty's academic community.

Along with moving comes the first stage of the project "Modernisation of the FPC buildings in Olomouc-Neředín", thanks to which the faculty will receive a modern educational infrastructure for students and teachers corresponding to the 21st century. During the summer of 2018, classrooms on the fifth floor in the faculty building C will be completely renovated. "The work should be finished by the end of August, so the classrooms will be ready in September. The reconstruction of the auditorium and other spaces in the Dean's Office building will take place next year in the same season," added the dean.

Needless to say, construction workers were regularly seen at the faculty premises even before the commencement of present construction works. The premises of the RRR Centre were renovated and modernised at a cost of €80,000, and opened at the beginning of the summer term. (vim)



Conference on the future of the EU and European Law

To make professional contributions to the debate on which direction the European Union should take, and to increase the awareness of its current development in the broad Czech public – those were the main goals of the conference called "The Future of the EU and European Law (Including Relevant Issues of National Law of the Member States)", organised by the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in EU Law at Palacký University.

The two-day international and multidisciplinary event brought 273 participants to the Faculty of Law, out of whom 36 gave presentations. "The theme of the conference was not chosen randomly. We tried to reflect the reality that the Union is in a critical moment of its further development. Discussions on the perspective of the EU have been our daily bread, but at this very moment such debates have abandoned the realm of mere theory and advanced to the choice of specific political scenarios and realistic foundations for in-depth reform and transformation of the very grounds of the Union," explained Naděžda Šišková, Head of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in EU Law.

She further related the two dimensions of the conference: the professional one, trying to make an academic contribution to the present political debate; and the civic one. "The awareness of the issues related to the future of the EU and their understanding are important for scientists and citizens alike," added Šišková.

The plenary session around the conference table brought together Dana

Kovaříková, Acting Head of the European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic; Nataša Chmelíčková, Head of the Section of Asylum and Legislation, Department of Asylum and Migration Policy, Czech Ministry of Interior; and Petr Kolář, former Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States and the Russian Federation. The plenary session was followed by five specialised conference sections. (eha)



8 faculties
1 university



Medical faculty hosted diamond alumni for the second time

After an unbelievable sixty years, twenty-one former students of medicine took a ceremonial graduation oath when they accepted the invitation for the historic second Diamond Graduation at the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. In addition, almost eighty former students of the graduation year 1988 also returned to their alma mater as participants of the meeting called Radicēs (Roots).

Two generations of students, who concluded their studies with the interval of thirty years, thus had an opportunity to meet again their schoolmates as well as the current leaders of the faculty. Their common alma mater opened for them the “old” Theoretical Institutes as well as its modern, recently completed building.

“We belong to a generation who lived

through two-thirds of the tragic twentieth century, and the more so we are able to appreciate the present successful development of the medical faculty and the whole university. Praiseworthy is also the university’s focus on the care for development of general education. I believe that this is the only guarantee that alumni will leave their individual faculties with full professional training as well as broad knowledge in the social and cultural spheres,” said one of the diamond alumni, Vít Krupař, who worked as an internist for the most of his productive life at the medical faculty in Hradec Králové.

Vice-Rector Jitka Ulrichová, speaking on behalf of the university management and her medical faculty, expressed her admiration and respect to the abundant legacy of their former students. “I want to thank you all

for, in particular, having enriched numerous people at home and abroad with your profession and for bringing love, wisdom, selflessness, and patience to your society. You lived the most active parts of your lives in times when perhaps rather than productive professional work, you had to demonstrate your moral strength,” emphasised Ulrichová.

On the same day, the 1988 alumni arrived in Olomouc to join their Radicēs. This year’s “thirty-year-olds” included even the current dean, Milan Kolář. “Let’s please erase the time that has passed since our last graduation, and let’s return to those times when we still studied in these rooms. I hope that we will cherish those memories in our hearts forever and that the feeling of togetherness will never abandon us,” said the dean. (mav)

The Faculty of Health Sciences celebrated the tenth anniversary of its foundation

Almost 2000 graduates, cooperation with three dozen foreign universities, eight study programmes, and an identical number of institutes – this is but a brief account of achievements of the UP Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) since its inception in 2008 as the eighth faculty of Palacký University. This year’s tenth anniversary was commemorated by a festive three-day academic programme. “Ten years in the life of a faculty which plays a role in the education of students, in science, research, and internationalisation of the entire university, is still a relatively short space of time. Such young faculties, however, are

usually the ones that are the most dynamic, flexible, and most agile responding to the society’s demands. These are their advantages and strengths,” said Rector Jaroslav Miller during the ceremonial opening of the celebrations in the Archdiocesan Museum Olomouc.

According to its current dean, Jaroslav Vomáčka, FHS – as one of the two independent health sciences faculties in the Czech Republic – has proved its viability and stability in educational as well as scientific and research activities. “Our results have been a confirmation of the fact that we are an institution providing quality education in

Bachelor’s, Master’s, and doctoral study programmes. The interest in studying at our faculty is also unceasing; it rather has a tendency to be on the increase,” underlined Vomáčka.

The highlight of the celebrations was an international academic conference with lectures by renowned scientists from the United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Italy, and Latvia. Among them was an expert in biomechanics, Jim Richards, professor at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston. As a long-term collaborator with the faculty he participates in the education of Olomouc students, also enabling them to have study stays at his own workplace. “They use our lab to work on the research for their Master’s theses. They are doing an outstanding job, and I hope our cooperation in education, science, and research will continue,” said Richards.

The academic conference was preceded by an awards ceremony to honour personalities who were instrumental in the foundation and development of health sciences in Olomouc. (mav)



Students at the Faculty of Science competed for the Dean's Award

The student science competition called the Dean's Award at the UP Faculty of Science aroused great interest again. Eighty students entered the results of their work in the contest. They presented their works in mathematics and informatics, chemistry, physics, biology and ecology, Earth sciences and natural science didactics in front of expert juries, in the Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral categories.

Soňa Krajščovičová with her work "Targeting Protein Kinase Inhibitors: A Step-wise Approach for the Synthesis of Folic Acid Conjugates with CDK Inhibitors" became a triple champion, since she won in the doctoral category and became an overall winner of her section as well as the whole contest. "I am very honoured, but the victory does not belong only to me, but also to my supervisor, Associate Professor Miroslav Soural," added Krajščovičová.

Other overall winners were Tomáš Mikula in Mathematics and Informatics, Petr Obšil in Physics; Eliška Šormová in Biology and Ecology; Karel Drlík in Natural Science Didactics; Lucie Králová in the Earth Sciences; and Barbora Kočvarová in the

Poster section with her work "Spacetime Analysis of the Prize Map in 1993–2017".

"Students have to manifest a creative spirit in such scientific works, entering an adventure of experimentation with unclear results, but one could say this is how genuine science works. And we are sometimes rewarded with interesting results. Due to their young age, their imagination does

not have to be bound by long-established 'truths'. I also think it is important for students to get an opportunity to try a presentation of their scientific work on their home turf. It is one thing to acquire results; it is yet another to introduce them to the public. I'd love to thank all the students and their supervisors who attended the competition," said Dean Martin Kubala. (cho)



Sanatoria Klimkovice became a faculty workplace of the Faculty of Education

Thanks to a new memorandum on cooperation and several other contracts, Sanatoria Klimkovice became a new faculty workplace of the UP Faculty of Education (FE). The connection of the spa and the faculty will not only enable their joint training of students, but also their collaboration on

several research projects with the main aim to include special education into the Czech health system.

Although the Faculty of Education has been collaborating with Sanatoria Klimkovice for roughly two years, until now the activity comprised only pro-

fessional practice for the students. Both institutions will newly conduct joint research and cooperate in internal and external grants and projects, co-financed from European structural and investment funds as well as from other providers. They also intend to collaborate in experimental development, innovations, and scientific experiments. Particular focus will be placed on special education in logopaedics, typhlopaedics, surdopaedics, and somatopaedics. "Students need to become familiar with therapies they learn about in textbooks, and in Klimkovice they use a variety of modern therapies. The existing cooperation has been extended to include joint research," said Kateřina Vitásková from the FE Institute of Special Education Studies.

While in the past the spa specialised in practical medicine and procedures, there is growing demand today for rehabilitation and activities in special education. "The sanatoria in general lack experts from non-educational disciplines within special education, with a focus on diagnostics, intervention, and therapy," added Vitásková. (map)



International team led by Olomouc scientists reveals how Antabuse kills cancer

An international research team led by researchers at the Institute of Molecular and Translational Medicine (IMTM) of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry has first described the mechanism by which Antabuse, an inexpensive drug used in the treatment of alcoholism, kills cancer-forming cells. The breakthrough results of the molecular research, which were published in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature*, represent a promising outlook for cancer treatment.

text: Velena Mazochová
photo + illustration: IMTM Archive

The anti-tumour effects of disulfiram, known under its commercial name of Antabuse, have been explored by scientists for decades, but until now, they did not know how it actually worked on cancer cells. The answer has been given by the team led by Jiří Bártek, who together with his colleagues from Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA, have proven the drug's effects on cancer cells at the molecular level. The breakthrough work came out of epidemiological studies performed on Danish patients – specifically, alcoholics who were diagnosed with malignant tumours. It showed that patients who continued to take Antabuse after being diagnosed with cancer had a significantly smaller risk of death from cancer than patients who didn't take the drug.

The scientists combined laboratory, preclinical studies and epidemiological research and have shown that disulfiram (DSF) contributes to copper being metabolised into a copper complex which accumulates in tumorous cells. It binds to the important NPL4 protein, which is responsible for eliminating the unwanted proteins, resulting in the protein's immobilisation and subsequent loss of functionality – the cell floods with toxic “waste” and dies. “The cells begin to accumulate this waste and the result is that they are no longer able to survive. It is similar as to when the garbage men go on strike in the

city and the waste piles up. We are making possible such a strike,” explained one of the co-authors of the breakthrough study, Martin Mistrík.

“The functional NPL4 protein is an integral component of the important p97 molecular pathway. It helps cells cope with stress caused by the accumulation of damaged proteins. Cancer cells ordinarily display a huge overproduction of defective proteins. The loss in NPL4 function was then able to be used to ‘suppress’ the cancer cells,” explained Jiří Bártek, leader of the Genome Integrity Unit at the Danish Cancer Society in Copenhagen, and leading personality at IMTM.

A fully functional p97/NPL4 pathway is considered an attractive target for future treatments. “The defect in the p97 pathway, induced by disulfiram, or respectively its active metabolite, is a breakthrough discovery. The identification of the molecular target makes possible future personalisation of treatment with the highest likelihood of therapeutic response,” emphasised Marián Hajdúch, IMTM Director. In cooperation with the Department of Oncology at the University Hospital Olomouc, scientists at the IMTM are continuing further research on the effects of DSF in combination with copper in a partial clinical study, open to about 150 patients with metastatic breast cancer.

Breakthrough discovery: a key step on the path to cheap “non-profit” medicine?

The new discovery, the result of basic and preclinical research, has shown the strong anti-tumour activity of disulfiram on the cellular level. As to when it could be of use in the treatment of cancer patients, this is something that further clinical development, aimed on confirming its efficacy and safety on the human body, will decide. “Only clinical studies on samples of thousands of people will prove or disprove our findings,” emphasised another of the main authors of the lauded study, chemist and philosopher Boris Cvek of UP’s Olomouc University Social Health Institute (OUSHI).

Financially demanding and time-consuming clinical studies on new drugs are customarily paid for by pharmaceutical companies – and after going on the market, the drugs are protected by patents. According to Cvek, pharmaceutical companies will not be interested in such an investment when it comes to Antabuse. “Antabuse offers no return on investments, nor any profit. It’s been used for decades and all the patents have expired. If someone were to invest money into it, and later it was proven that it has therapeutic effects on cancer, anybody else could then manufacture and sell it,” explained Cvek. The unpatented drugs used in the treatment of other diseases are, according to him, “in a pickle”: “While research has shown that they can have significantly

positive effects on various other diseases, there is no money for testing them on people,” says the scientist, who has been promoting his hypothesis on the anti-tumour effects of Antabuse since 2007.

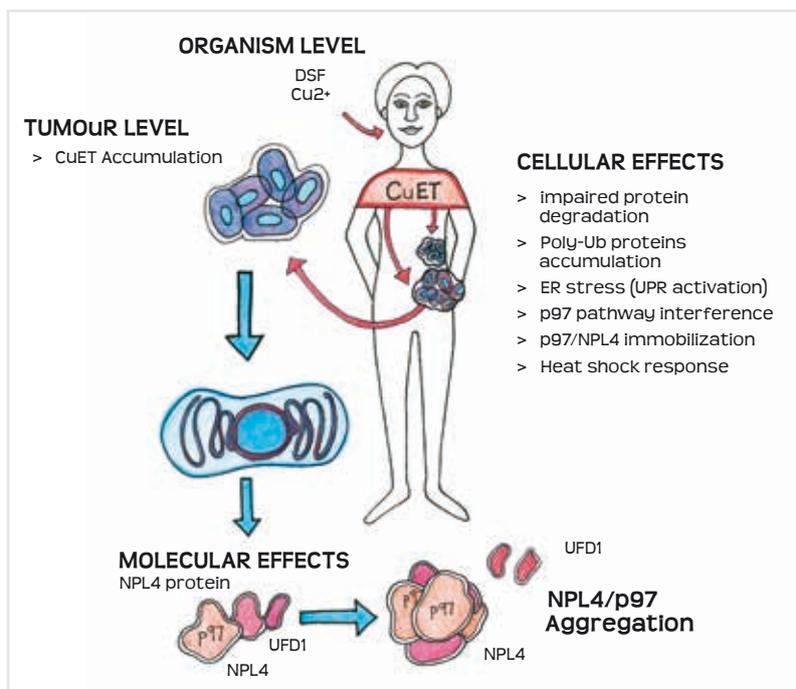
To bridge the gap between research and clinical treatment, he is now offering the concept of “non-profit” drugs as a pilot case within a project of the same name at OUSHI, under the leadership of Peter Tavel. The idea behind it is to find non-commercial possibilities for financing the clinical development of non-patentable drugs, with disulfiram in first place. “Verifying the positive side effects of several drugs in treating cancer is very much in the public interest. The financing should be carried out by public funds, and without private corporations profiting from it. A drug which would successfully pass such tests ought to remain cheap and available – and be a non-profit drug,” explained Cvek. The main partners of the project, according to him, ought to be primarily state and governmental agencies, domestic and international charity and health organisations, and the general public. “If it works, it might mean a new generation of cheap drugs, available not only here, but world-wide.”

Researchers in the project also want to dedicate themselves to systematic searching for the positive side effects on cancer patients who are using disulfiram as a treatment for alcoholism. Both Czech and international researchers will cooperate on the project.

At present, the only example of a non-profit drug is the non-patentable antibiotic paromomycin, whose clinical tests for use against the fatal disease visceral leishmaniasis (a/k/a kala-azar and Dumdum fever) have been financed by the World Health Organization, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and other non-profit organisations. “Because the goal of investment into such drugs is not about private gain but is in the public interest, it was possible to keep the price of paromomycin down to a few dollars. Antabuse may offer a similar opportunity,” Cvek believes.

The trail-blazing announcement published in Nature, point-by-point:

- the first description of the mechanism of the anti-tumour effect of disulfiram (Antabus, Antabuse)
- the first confirmation of epidemiological data proving its anti-tumour effects
- the identification, synthesis, and validation of the active metabolite (CuET) of disulfiram and copper
- a new method of detecting active substances in blood and tissues
- the discovery of possible biomarkers for monitoring cancer treatment





The state of the painting before restoration.



UV luminescence before restoration.



IR reflectography before restoration.



Testing removal of the layer of varnishes and retouching.



The process of the removal of the layer of varnishes and retouching.



The whole painting in the course of the removal of the layer of varnishes and retouching.

Top-notch science and advanced technologies from UP save unique works of art

Venezia, the sixteenth century. The painter Francesco Bassano makes preparations for a new painting. He chooses a biblical motif – the construction of Noah’s Ark. In addition to quality canvas and brushes, he also needs high-quality painter’s oils. He mixes them himself. When satisfied, he starts painting. Cut to Olomouc, the Czech Republic, the twenty-first century. Scientists excelling in several disciplines, equipped with top-notch technology, analyse Francesco’s paints. Their goal is not only to confirm his authorship of the painting – but to discover much more. To find new methods and procedures that will help them improve the restoration and protection of such historical artworks. This is the purpose of the unparalleled project Arteca, launched at Palacký University.

The Arteca project, whose partners are the Czech National Heritage Institute and the Olomouc Museum of Art, brings together experts specialising in the theory of historic preservation at the Department of Art History at the UP Faculty of Arts and experts in physical-chemical research at the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) at the UP Faculty of Science. Their goal is to develop new scientific methods and procedures in the protection and restoration of cultural heritage items, which could be later applied in practice.

Thanks to Arteca, a 30-member team will be established at UP. “The development of new methods and techniques for research into cultural and artistic heritage in Europe has been marked with great progress, and we cannot fall behind in the Czech Republic,” said the leader of the research team, Jana Michalčáková from the Department of Art History. The potential of Arteca goes beyond scientific research – its results will be used in practice. Not only companies and institutions closely specialised in heritage protection, but also industries such as the construction industry will be able to use their methods.

Natural scientists together with historians

Arteca will form a more solid basis for the existing, long-term collaboration between the natural scientists from RCPTM and art historians, which has been rather a matter of relatively isolated tasks until now. “Our mission is to provide analyses of materials used in historic works, which will help art historians to put them into a certain context. This is how they will obtain vital information on the artwork itself, or findings

important for its restoration or reconstruction. There are a number of physical-chemical methods that could be used for exploration of those works,” said Karel Lemr from RCPTM. Since the artworks are historically very valuable, according to Lemr it is necessary to conduct the analyses in such a way that the work itself would not be damaged. In addition to convenient applications of existing methods, analytical chemists and optical scientists will also develop new procedures. For instance, they plan to use the multimodal monitoring of samples, which has been used until now rather for biological materials.

“We will develop methods that will bring together several analytical techniques, allowing us to acquire more complex information about the sample,” added Lemr, a chemist. The Arteca project, thanks to which RCPTM experts will obtain also a special mass spectrometer for analysis of solid samples, could become a platform for the establishment of a new research discipline at Palacký University.

“The RCPTM optical scientists will analyse the artworks by means of colour analysis and modern spectrometry, today used mainly in quantum and non-linear optics. Like the chemists, they expect to learn many a new thing,” said RCPTM Scientific Director, Ondřej Haderka.

New procedures and a new perspective

Thanks to the research methods based in the natural sciences, art historians will be enabled to become more deeply acquainted with the investigated works. According to Michalčáková, they will no longer study their content only, but also the material aspects. →

The title photograph features the restored painting Construction of Noah’s Ark, attributed to Francesco Bassano. The oil painting on canvas was made in the 1570s and is part of the collections of the Olomouc Archbishopric – Archdiocesan Museum Kroměříž. The illustrative pictures show several samples of works and techniques used by experts during restoration. The goal of the Arteca project is to develop new scientific methods and procedures in the restoration, renovation, and protection of such cultural gems as well as diverse historical objects.

They will clarify, for example, what material the studied artwork is made out of, what kinds of paint were available to the artist, and what was the origin of pigments used in the creation. “All these findings, with the use of state-of-the-art technologies, will reveal to us the artistic technical procedures of those times. We’ll also improve the maintenance of our historic sites and artworks thanks to the new findings,” added Michalčáková.

Paintings, churches, and palaces protected by scientists

The practical contribution in the case of the painter Bassano mentioned in the introduction would be that scientists should be able to discover new additional information. What will it be good for? To put it simply, to confirm or refute whether Francesco really could make this painting in that era. They are also capable of finding more information on previous restoration of the painting, if any. They will be able to compare their findings with analyses of artworks from other galleries and museums, and expand

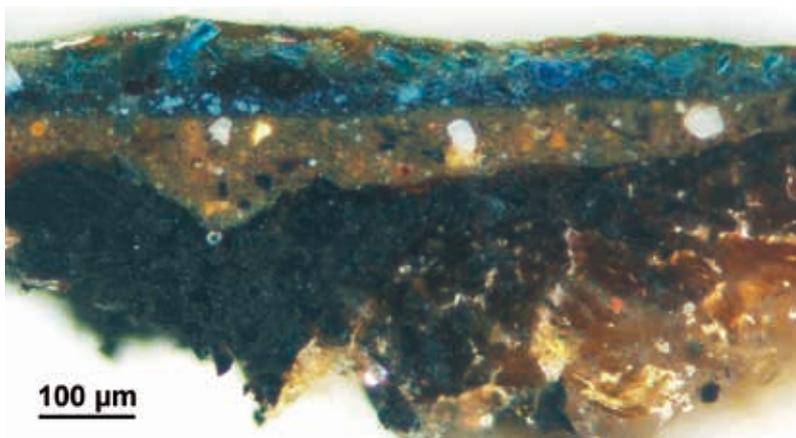
the knowledge about their authorship, previously not so complete. However, this is just one illustrative example with one painting. Scientists can do much more. Similar analyses will also be carried out on monuments, churches, and historical palaces, and the obtained findings will be used in practice during protection and renovation of these objects.

Unique multidisciplinary interconnection

The activities of the new scientific team will also be reflected in the academic environment. The changes in the specialisation of the Department of Art History have been announced by the department’s head, Jana Zapletalová. “In the next months, we will extend our curriculum with courses that will introduce the new possibilities consisting in the application of the natural sciences and research within art history. Foreign experts visit us every year, and their research activities will now include lectures for our students. We have been preparing a new doctoral study programme, Technol-

ogy for the Arts, which will be started in the academic year 2021/2022. The goal of this programme will be to raise a new generation of outstanding, multidisciplinary-oriented art historians with extension into the natural sciences,” explained Zapletalová.

“The interconnection of several disciplines and workplaces will give us a completely new perspective on the protection of cultural heritage. It is the first project of its kind in the Czech Republic when highly advanced chemical-physical analysis should help in our understanding of art. The project has been prepared for many years at the university. We are very pleased that Arteca was selected this year as one of the projects supported by the Operational Programme ‘Research, Development and Education’. We have received almost 2.4 million euro, which sheds some light on how prestigious this entire activity is,” said Dana Bilíková, UP Faculty of Arts Vice-Dean. According to Bilíková, this project is an unprecedented example of close collaboration between the humanities and the natural sciences.



A cross-section of the painting, capturing the black layer of undercoat with its specific charcoal content, a layer of azurite above, ochre foundation.



Arteca is a unique example of interconnecting the humanities and natural sciences. One team brings together experts from the Department of Art History at the UP Faculty of Arts together with chemists and physicists from RCPTM at the UP Faculty of Science.

portrait

text: Ivana Pustějovská
photo: Milada Hronová

Květoslava Princová

university teacher, co-founder
of the Department of Humanitarian
and Social Work



Květa and Jan Princ in the 1970s. “The most important thing for me was the consciousness that if something were to happen, there were a number of people who would help us, who would stand behind us. Since then, I understand just how important it is to stand up for somebody. Sure, sometimes you lose, but it’s still important.”

The same dream keeps recurring to her: she’s walking through the house, from room to room, everything is quite familiar, she opens the door, goes outside, and in the distance she sees a Baroque church.... It’s an odd, comforting dream. The house does not exist, she’s never lived in one like it. A person would expect her to dream about different houses, those in which during the prior regime she and her friends tried to create their own community, where they farmed, built, held plays: the houses which police invaded with their dogs and machine guns and drove a family with three children dressed only in their slippers out into the street, just before Christmas. But mainly about the house on the northern Bohemian border, a ruin bought for a few thousand, out of which they constructed a home, and into which the secret police threw tear gas grenades – and when that didn’t work, they simply blew it to smithereens. But Květoslava Princová has no such dreams. The dream with the open door for newcomers and with the church, suffused with the hope of light, probably describes her destiny, character, and work much more than nightmares of flying bricks, barking dogs, and endless interrogations.

“The first behind the drum...”

I have to count the numbers on my notepad twice, because looking at the result and the woman in front of me, it doesn’t add up: 2018 – 1968 = 50. That’s how many years it has been since the girl from the small Moravian town of Lipník nad Bečvou embarked on her university studies in Prague. It was just after August 1968, after the tanks of our “friends” entered Bohemian and Moravian cities. Květa entered the Prague University of Chemistry and Technology, but before she started studies, she was engaged in protests. “It determined my fate.

There were students who didn’t go to strikes, who stayed home and studied. My dad used to tell me, with a certain amount of irony and regret: You have to be the first one to march behind the drum.... That I have to be the first one, anywhere something is happening. It was a wonderful time, I can remember to this day who was performing what, how we slept in sleeping bags, how Prof Wichterle, the inventor of soft contact lenses, joined us, the students. Unfortunately, it ended quite tragically,” she remembers.

The die had been cast. She studied, but she also became acquainted with the Prague underground society – especially Dana and Jiří Němec. It was in their flat where she first found the prototype of her subsequent life. “Their doors were always open. Diverse people would meet there: anybody who wanted to could show up.” When she got married, she and her husband had to decide where to live. They found and bought a dilapidated house near the German border in Rychnov, in the derelict north Bohemian Děčín district. “In the beginning there were three of us, with Miluška Števíčová; later came the singer-songwriter Dáša Ptášková and guitarist Zdeněk ‘London’ Vokatý – there was always somebody else living with us.” Her description of living in a commune does not have a lot in common with what you see in films about wild hippie parties. “We had our rules, there were many such communes throughout the country and they differed according to their permanent dwellers. In our place, for example, people had to do a lot of work.”

A sense of belonging

She never had a need to live only for herself, and building a community, a kind of “parallel society”, seemed natural to her. “We were happy when people were there, the space was huge and abandoned, but with

Květoslava Princová (b. 1950)

A graduate of the Prague University of Chemistry and Technology in Macromolecular Chemistry, a signatory of Charter 77, awarded for being a participant in the resistance and opposition to communism, the former head of the office of the Olomouc mayor Milan Hořínek; since 1997 she has been working for the Olomouc Archdiocesan Caritas and Caritas Czech Republic in Prague. She contributed to the involvement of Caritas Czech Republic to the international network of humanitarian organisations and activities Caritas Europa and Caritas Internationalis. In 2003 she co-founded the teaching of humanitarian aid at Caritas College of Social Work in Olomouc and in 2007 also a Master’s programme in this subject at the UP Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology. In 2011 she received her Ph.D. in Applied Ethics. In terms of teaching, she deals with ethics in humanitarian aid and has elaborated this theme in several publications.

people there it was full and alive.” An island of free spirits did not sit well with the regime however, especially when the Princes were among the first to sign Charter 77. Years of repression followed: police checks, interrogations, moving, and endless beginnings. They finally settled in Moravia, not far from Olomouc.

When she thinks about how they managed to get through those years, she answers somewhat uncomfortably. “It’s hard to describe. In all that pressure put on us from the outside, we had a strong sense of togetherness. The most important thing for me was the consciousness that if something were to happen, there were a number of people who would help us, who would stand behind us. Since then, I understand just how important it is to stand up for somebody. Sure, sometimes you lose, but it’s still important.”

After the change in regimes, she went to work for the Olomouc Town Hall. She was chosen by the first post-November 1989 mayor, Milan Hořínek, who made use of her knowledge of languages as well. In the mid-1990s she was in charge of international relations. “Working for Milan Hořínek was wonderful, but when he left, the situation and atmosphere changed, and because I consider myself a political person, not a bureaucrat, I also left a little while after. And then the floods came,” she reminisces – about 1997, when the Morava River had a 1000-year flood. The Archdiocese

charity offered her work, and she started coordinating humanitarian relief. Once the Moravian catastrophe receded, Caritas Czech Republic began to develop projects on the international level. Květa Princová left for Prague and again built a community – a community of helpers.

Aid as a profession and in the field

In 2002, the director of the Caritas College of Social Work in Olomouc, Martin Bednář, called upon her to create a joint programme aimed at humanitarian and social work. She did not hesitate. “It was approved in record time – on 15 August 2003 – I remember the date because it is the Feast of the Assumption, and our first amazing class entered in September.” As a co-founder she also helped the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology during the establishment of their Master’s programme in International Humanitarian and Social Work. At present her department operates as a specialisation, under the title International Community and Humanitarian Aid in the area of Charity and Social Work.

Humanitarian aid invokes romantic ideas of saving the world. Květa Princová has been on humanitarian missions, so she knows there’s nothing romantic about it. “I actually rob students of their ideals,” she says with a smile, and without hesitating answers the question: What kind of person should a humanitarian aid worker be? “They should be extremely humble

and they should never stop learning. One of my friends says that humanitarian aid is like navigating in the fog. Because it is important to know how to understand a situation, the context, to be careful, conscientious, responsible, and have great respect for the people with whom I come into contact,” she says, and harks back to the words of the missionary Father Krenický: “If I do not approach people with respect and only give them something, then I am making beggars out of them.”

She is proud of her students and immerses herself personally in each and every one of their travels. “We have a kind of symbol at Caritas – a statue of stories into which students lay a pebble as a symbol of the fate of one specific person that they have met on a mission. Whenever they lay a new stone, I’ve said that that is the stone that fell from my heart upon their return.”

This year, Květoslava Princová received the UP Commemorative Medal as thanks for establishing the necessary field. Now she has decided to retire. “My health no longer allows me to go with students into the field, so it’s time to leave the work to the younger generations,” she explains. But you would look for a full stop to her sentence in vain. Her personal mission has not ended. She still helps, is engaged, and teaches. Without prompting, she completes the sentence, bringing the interview to a happy close: “Listen, look, and do what is needed.”



Jan Sokol

philosopher, dissident, professor at Charles University

Right from the first, rather fleeting encounter with Květa during the previous regime, I was surprised at how she gave out a sort of special joy to those around her. In the difficult position of a Charter 77 signatory isolated in the countryside, she did not have many reasons to do so. I was reminded of that later, when she began her doctoral studies in Prague. I understood that it is not a reaction to some success or inner happiness; rather it is the joy which grows out of hard determination and from the certainty that a person has found their goal in life. That what they are doing really matters. I’d like to give her much belated thanks.



Marcela Krejčí

UN Youth Volunteer, ICT in Education, Ethiopia

Květa Princová is an inspiration for me and proof that a person can handle anything, that even bad things can make a person stronger when a person aims toward a goal they believe in. She was a source of support during my studies, she was open to my ideas, and at the same time, she was patient when I fumbled. I most appreciated her course Ethics in Humanitarian Aid, because it comes out of praxis, she removed our rose-tinted glasses and showed us the reality, which was also confirmed on my travels where I frequently came into contact with ethical issues and constant practical dilemmas. So in difficult times I would think about Květa: when I felt like giving up I would remember her and all the tough things she went through in life due to her trust in good and helping others, through all of that without ever losing her smile, and I would carry on.

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“An aid worker should be extremely humble and never stop learning. One of my friends says that humanitarian aid is like navigating in the fog. Because it is important to know how to understand a situation, the context, to be careful, conscientious, responsible, and have great respect for the people with whom I come into contact.”

success



2017 Dean's Awards at the Faculty of Medicine

Almost four dozen awards were granted by the dean of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry for outstanding publications and improvement of professional qualifications. During the ceremony held at the beginning of the proceedings of the faculty's Academic Board, Dean's Awards were presented to 14 academics and 19 students.

Certificates and financial awards totaling more than €30,000 were handed to this year's laureates by Dean Milan Kolář. "Your outstanding work significantly contributes to the prestige and high scientific standards of our faculty. The improvement

in standards has been also possible thanks to you," underlined the dean.

Eleven researchers from the Institute of Molecular and Translational Medicine, the Department of Microbiology, the Department of Dentistry and Oral Medicine, the Department of Hemato-Oncology, and the Department of Internal Medicine III were given awards for original scientific work and patents. The awarded works included publications on unique discoveries of the anti-tumour activity of Antabuse, or the defence mechanisms of bacteria against silver nanoparticles, published in *Nature* and *Nature Nanotechnology*. "Our aim is to se-

lect the truly best, most outstanding results which strengthen the reputation and the good name of our faculty. These are works often created in collaboration with international teams, which is a proof that the faculty is stepping up in quality and is able to succeed in the fiercest international competition," said Vice-Dean Tomáš Papajík.

Dean's Awards were also given in the categories of important monographs, patents, and scientific publications with high citation rates. Nineteen students, mostly doctoral ones, were awarded for best academic works. Dean Kolář also granted two awards for improved qualifications. (mav)

Dominik Záleský competes with the fastest runners in the world



Sprinter Dominik Záleský, a student at the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, is in great shape. His new personal best of 6.61 seconds on the 60-metre track entered the Czech athletic charts and also qualified for the 2018 World Indoor Championships, where he competed with best athletes in the world.

In Birmingham, where the championships took place at the beginning of March, he ended in 17th place after reaching the semi-finals, where he made it to the finish line in 6.67 seconds. It was not enough to qualify for the final; however he was not disappointed. "The mere fact I managed to qualify for such a big athletic meeting was amazing. Running with the best is why you do it, and I'm glad I'm even able to defeat some of them. Reaching the semi-finals was my goal, and it was fulfilled. I am happy I made it," said Záleský.

The present academic champion of the Czech Republic among sprinters has been the historically third-fastest Czech sprinter since January 2018; he rewrote the national records at the Czech indoor academic championship and again at the following meeting in Prague's Stromovka. "During the first race I felt my start was not as good as I hoped it to be, but I made a new personal best anyway: 6.67 seconds. I knew though that I had a chance to make the championships limit if I improved my start. And I succeeded. I could say the start was perfect. In the rest of the track, I gave my all to it, and now I'm truly happy," said Záleský, commenting on his January results.

The fastest Czech sprinter is František Ptáčník, who ran the 60-metre indoor in 6.58 seconds in 1987. Dominik Záleský was only three-hundredths of a second behind that.

Werner von Siemens Excellence Award for doctoral dissertation from RCPTM

The Werner von Siemens Excellence Award for the best doctoral dissertation is home in Olomouc. It was granted to Kateřina Holá from the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) and her tutor Radek Zbořil. His former student also received a special award for the best female doctoral dissertation.

“Kateřina is a natural-born scientist, and her talent is further magnified by her immense diligence and industriousness. Last but not least, she is a team player. As a doctoral student, she was capable of independent collaboration and publications with important scientists from the USA, Hong Kong, Greece, and Singapore, and she gained their great respect,” said Zbořil.

The young scientist focussed on the preparation and application of new carbon nanostructures especially in biomedicine. By linking her expertise in chemistry, physics, biology, and medicine, she managed to design and successfully realise the synthesis of carbon quantum dots, which can be used in optical imaging in medicinal diagnostics, marking cells, or anti-tumour therapy. There is also potential in the development of new LED diodes and photocatalysis. The development of new graphene derivatives was also made possible. Her works have been published in the most prestigious journals of material research, such as *Nature Communications*, *ACS Nano*, and *Advanced Materials*. (srd)



Polish President awarded Jiří Jirásek, Head of UP Department of Constitutional Law

The head of the Department of Constitutional Law at the UP Faculty of Law, Jiří Jirásek, was presented a highly esteemed Polish state award – the Golden Cross for Merit. Polish president Andrzej Duda awarded him the honour in recognition of his long-term contributions to strengthening Polish-Czech cooperation in science and the arts, bringing both nations closer together.

The award was given upon a proposal made by Nicolaus Copernicus Univer-

sity (NCU) in Toruń; it was instigated by the NCU Faculty of Law and Administration. “Our colleague Jiří Jirásek has greatly contributed to our closer collaboration. Thanks to him we have been able to constantly develop Polish and Czech relationships, not only in science. A genuine friendship between Poland and Czechia is being successfully built. Jiří has also been long active in making Polish law more visible in the Czech Republic,” said Zbigniew Witkowski, Dean of the Faculty of Law

and Administration, explaining the reasons for their proposal.

He pointed out the fact that the collaboration between Polish experts and Jirásek has lasted thirty years. “Jiří Jirásek helped to initiate the idea of Polish-Czech legal seminars which take place biannually. The proceedings from these seminars are highly appreciated in academic circles. The seminars feature experts from all Czech law faculties,” said Witkowski, prior to mentioning the further merits of Jirásek and his team. “They have participated in extensive research grants, taught at our faculty, and are members of editorial boards in Polish scholarly journals, including the most important ones focussing on constitutional law in Poland.”

Associate Professor Jirásek perceives the Polish state award as recognition of the work made by the entire team at the Department of Constitutional Law. “The entire department takes part in collaboration with Polish partners. It is, however, an acknowledgement for our faculty, too. Our management gives us plenty of space for developing Czech and Polish relations and supports such cooperation,” said Jirásek. He is only the third foreigner to receive the Golden Cross for Merit on a proposal by Nicolaus Copernicus University. (eha)



success



Olomouc second best in scientific activities among medical faculties

In the evaluation of science and research, the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry in Olomouc is among the most successful in the Czech Republic. It was confirmed by the evaluation of results by research organisations in 2016, where the Olomouc faculty placed second after the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague, which defended first place.

According to the results verified by the Czech government at the end of 2017, the Olomouc faculty received a total of 32,873 RIV (Result Information Register) points in 2016, thus surpassing other medical faculties in Brno, Prague, Pilsen, and Ostra-

va – just like in the previous three years. “This great achievement reflects upon the outstanding scientific quality of the faculty. I owe a big thank you to all the academic workers who contributed to this great result,” said Dean Milan Kolář.

The UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry had the best results in the category of points scored for publications in journals with impact factor. “It involves particularly those findings published in quality periodicals. These are journals ranked in the first decile, or quartile, in professional databases, according to the impact factor,” explained the dean.

State finances received for RIV points represent an important part of the overall budget for the faculty, amounting to more than 22 percent. The methodology of distributing finances acquired from this quarter is based on the performance of each department and scientific team according to their RIV points, paid in full. “The knowledge that the more one of our departments is successful, the more financial resources they will have at hand for their own development, is one of the prerequisites for the prosperity of the entire faculty as an important science-research institution,” Kolář pointed out. (mav)

Magnesia Litera Award arrives to the Faculty of Arts



The prestigious Czech literary award Magnesia Litera 2018 belongs to Palacký University, too. The best educational publication is a two-volume book *Paneláci* [Panel Estates], written by a team of authors, with Rostislav Švácha from the Department of Art History at the UP Faculty of Arts as one of its leaders.

The two-volume publication provides a detailed view of the history of Czech housing estates. Its editors, Lucie Skřivánková and Švácha and their team of authors, explore fifty housing estates built within fifty years from the perspective of architecture history, urbanism, sociology, historic preservation, and even historic demography. “Czech society has had a critical attitude to the panel housing estates since the 1980s, and our first task was to distinguish which estates are a success, and which less so,” explained architecture

historian Švácha. He claims that there are huge differences between individual housing estates. “The golden age of Czech public housing was the 1960s, when so-called ‘attractive housing estates’ were built,” he added.

A translation award also made its way to the Faculty of Arts. The best Magnesia Litera work of literature in translation was the humorous novel *Hřbitovní hlína* (*Cré na Cille*; in English, *The Dirty Dust* and *Graveyard Clay*) by Máirtín Ó Cadhain. It was translated from Irish into Czech by Radvan Markus, an external lecturer at the Department of English and American Studies. “*Cré na Cille* is considered the best Irish-written novel of the twentieth century, and it was no piece of cake,” said Markus. He was awarded for a precise translation which had to incorporate dialect and many colloquial vulgarisms.

New derivatives protect skin from harmful radiation

A new series of substances that can protect human skin from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation, were developed by scientists from the Olomouc workplace of the Institute of Experimental Botany (IEB) of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, a part of the Centre of the Region Haná for Biotechnological and Agricultural Research (CRH), in collaboration with colleagues at the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. The promising substances could find their use in cosmetics and medicine.

Researchers focused on kinetin-based substances and examined their effects on human skin cells. The study was published in the *European Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*.

“For the first time, we have found that cytokinins and their derivatives can protect skin cells from the harmful effects of both types of ultraviolet radiation (UVB and UVA). It is also important to find that our substances support the natural defence of skin cells,” said the first author of the paper, Martin Hönig from CRH, who conducts the research within his doctoral thesis at the UP Faculty of Science.

The team has been making various changes in the kinetin molecule and has been monitoring the impact of the structure change on molecule biological activity. Various derivatives were then tested on human skin cells *in vitro*, i.e. under laboratory conditions. “We first confirmed that the substances are not phototoxic, that they do not become dangerous under UV radiation. We have subsequently shown that they even contribute to protecting skin cells by modulating their natural defences,” said the project coordinator, Lucie Plíhalová.

Caenorhabditis elegans, a soil nematode serving as a model organism for the study of stress and ageing, was exposed to the action of new derivatives. “We have found that our substances protect the nematode from the oxidation stress that we artificially initiated. Not only the cells in the tissue culture but also the whole organism is thus protected against stress,” added Plíhalová. According to her, a foreign cosmetic company is now testing the derivatives for further use in the cosmetic industry. (srd)



Medal for Petra Šobáňová, Vice-Dean at the Faculty of Education



Petra Šobáňová, Vice-Dean for Development and External Relations at the UP Faculty of Education, received the Palacký University Commemorative Medal for her conception of the unique study programme Museum and Gallery Education. The award was handed to her by the faculty's dean, Libuše Ludíková.

“I appreciate the award very much. It belongs not only to me, but also my colleagues who participated in the establishment of the programme and supported its development at our faculty,” said Šobáňová. The honour was also supported by Vlastislav Ouroda, Deputy Minister for Cultural Heritage, who highlighted the contribution of this study programme to the development of Czech museum education. In his letter sent to the faculty dean, he acknowledged the help of Šobáňová in preparations for entering the new profession “culture educator” in the Czech Catalogue of Profes-

sions in Public Service and Administration. The study programme Museum and Gallery Education is still the only one of its kind in the Czech education system.

“When you start new things, you usually face hardships. Although education in culture, especially in the field of museums and galleries, has a long-standing tradition in the Czech Republic and is fully comparable with what they have abroad, it took us thirty years to make legal changes concerning the status of this profession. I am pleased that it was our professional and educational activities that facilitated the development of museum and gallery education in the Czech Republic, and I believe our faculty will further develop this discipline. Cultural heritage is what shapes our identity, bears our society's memory, and indicates useful historical parallels and the permanent values of human community,” added Šobáňová. (map)

Na tělo [Up Close] – a documentary on photographer Jindřich Štreit

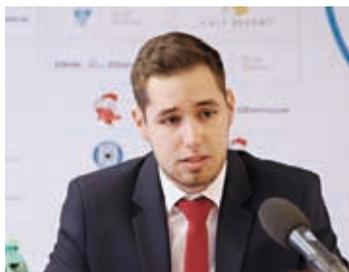


Up Close. This is what director Libuše Rudinská titled her feature-length documentary film on photographer Jindřich Štreit. The film captures three years in the life of this artist and UP alumnus. “The three years were very hectic ones. Personally, I much appreciate that the film also captures my relationship with my wife Agnes, which is so important for me,” said Jindřich Štreit. And he also likes Libuše Rudinská’s perspective. “There’s not one exhibition opening in the film. During that time I had the feeling I was living from opening to opening. Of course the film also captures my work and its themes. But in the end, I have the feeling that my photographic work in the film is not what is crucial. It’s more like my own personal confession, and that is where this film differs from previous ones on me. This one is really up close,” said Štreit. (ipu)

University for sport

This is the title of a newly-launched project which develops cooperation between UP and sporting clubs in Olomouc. The project offers for example study stays, interesting lectures with people from the sporting world, coaches and experts, and mutual exchange of sporting facilities.

It was the idea of Michal Zbraněk (pictured), a student at the Faculty of Physical Culture. “I was inspired by Great Britain, where similar cooperation between universities and football clubs exists,” he explained. UP supported the project in the auspices of the contest “University to the Town”. The project was also supported by the City of Olomouc, and it included the SK Sigma Olomouc football team, as well as the VK UP Olomouc volleyball club, the HC Olomouc hockey club, the DHK Zora Olomouc basketball club, and Golf Resort Olomouc. “We entered the cooperation with the motto ‘The best for the best’ and its aim is to connect the knowledge potential of UP with the many years of experience of its sporting clubs. It’s a way to increase competitiveness and benefit the entire region,” said UP FPC Dean Michal Šafář. (tf)



Course in Contemporary Chemistry aroused huge interest



Heart surgeon Jan Pirk, mathematician and benefactor Karel Janeček, art historian Jan Royt, and psychiatrist Cyril Höschl were the guests of this year’s 13th annual course in Contemporary Chemistry, led by Czech Mind winner Pavel Hobza at the UP Faculty of Science. Lectures which this time touched more upon today’s pressing society problems than on chemistry aroused great interest in the members of the academic community and the public alike.

“I said that the 13th year ought to be different, unique. I tried to meet the demands of students and invite guests who could contribute to finding answers to those questions which we pose most often today. At the same time, I wanted to fulfil the main role of the lecture cycle – to bring leading scientists to Olomouc. Students again realised that science is a beautiful adventure,” said Hobza, the main organiser and moderator of the lecture course. (srd)

Deans of five UP faculties took their inaugural oaths

During the inauguration ceremonies at Olomouc's Archbishop's Palace, the deans named for the next four years were Libuše Ludíková at the Faculty of Education,



Zdeněk Pechal at the Faculty of Arts, Martin Kubala at the Faculty of Science, and Michal Šafář at the Faculty of Physical Culture. They each took office at the beginning of February. Jaroslav Vomáčka, Dean of the Faculty of Healthcare Sciences since March of last year, also accepted his dean's insignia from the hands of Rector Jaroslav Miller. (mav)

New exhibition reveals the code of life

Searching for the Code of Life. This is the name of the new exhibition area at Fort Science, which the popular science centre has prepared in cooperation with the Olomouc branch of the Institute of Experimental Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences (IEB), part of the Centre of the Haná Region for Biotechnological and Agricultural Research. The installation acquaints visitors with research in plant genetics and makes use of the latest findings in crop breeding and providing enough foodstuffs for mankind.

Visitors can better understand the process of cell division and passing on hereditary information. "Thanks to the microscope, they can see individual phases of the process with their own eyes, and then follow what's happening on the LCD screen," said Alena Vláčilová, coordinator of the biology section. According to plant geneticist Jaroslav



Doležel of the IEB, the exhibition area will continue to expand: "In the future we want to show how we make use of chromosomes in facilitating reading of the genetic information. Scientific findings on genetic information are developing so incredibly quickly that what one had to learn in school is now obsolete. Our exhibition is thus intended for both children and adults." (mv)

UPoint celebrated its third anniversary

During its three years, the UP shop and information centre has been visited by thousands of people who have had the opportunity to view exhibitions, join interesting lectures by UP personalities, or simply sit and have a nice cup of coffee. Many visitors have come and still come for a specific purpose – to buy something from the university's unique brand of clothing, accessories, mugs, stationery, and even beer. UPoint is also innovatively inviting those who want to save the environment. "We are happy to have joined the project DOLEJ SI [FILL 'ER UP!], which falls under the auspices of the student initiative Sustainable Palacký. From our very start, we have been offering free tap water, and we intend to continue that," said UPoint director, Anna Jílková. (ipu)



UniON – the University sets forth into the region

Not to be a closed world, open only for academics and students, but on the contrary – to set forth into the region, far beyond the boundaries of the university gates, to help solve problems, explain novelties, introduce interesting personalities, and discuss hot issues – all of this and more is involved in the latest volunteering activity of Palacký University – its Civic University.

The project is called UniON, and UP students and teachers are meant to travel into the wider Olomouc region, without being paid, and organise various educational presentations and thematical courses by invitation.

One of the main authors and initiators of the idea is Rector Jaroslav Miller. “According to the Czech University Law, universities are assigned the role of institutions that are supposed to influence not only their students, but also the broader public. This is why Palacký University, free of charge

and through the volunteering of its teachers and students, offers its potential and expertise to interested parties.”

The UniON is conceived as a pilot project and Palacký University believes it will inspire other universities. According to Vice-Rector Petr Bilík, at this stage it is necessary to verify interest in individual themes and formats, while in the coming winter term the project could run at full throttle: “The logo, title, and expertise are now available to all universities. We will gladly share and consult everything that is needed so that the educational mission of the project could be used with maximum efficiency.”

As Vice-Rector Jiří Lach (pictured right, with Petr Bilík) reminds, the duty of the university is to strive for contact with the non-university environment. “If we believe that education has no borders, then we have to leave the classrooms and our tradi-

tional forms of presentation, and meet people from various parts of the Czech Republic and various social and age groups.”

The key themes will include the issues of legal and financial literacy, debt counselling, critical evaluation of information, the issue of historic and contemporary Czech statehood and nationality, medical prevention, and basic orientation in crisis situations. The volunteers, however, will be open to all kinds of incentives and will gladly prepare a programme “tailored” according to what is deemed urgent or relevant by the interested parties. “We expect municipalities, secondary schools, seniors clubs, and various interest associations to be interested in the project. We have abundant experience in education of all kinds of target groups; however the UniON project has higher ambitions, and I trust in its success,” says Palacký University Rector Jaroslav Miller.



The author of the logo for the initiative UniON is graphic artist Radim Měšíc. The pun, using an English expression, expresses the desire for mutual “union”, as well as readiness for action (“ON”) in terms of this new challenge for Czech universities.

text: Ivana Pustějovská
photos: Gabriela Knýblová

interview

A portrait of Tomáš Lebeda, a man with dark hair and a slight beard, wearing a dark blue jacket and a striped scarf. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

Tomáš Lebeda: Referendums are my nightmare

He doesn't like sweeping condemnations of politicians, and phrases such as "they're all the same" and "corruption is everywhere". "I often meet with politicians, and there are a number of them that I wouldn't share a glass of wine with. But I also know that there are enough decent people among them, people I respect, and who often have the misfortune of being lumped together unfairly with the rest. I think that politics is one of the least rewarding professions," he says, and he knows what he is talking about. He studies, analyses, and explains politics, and he also lectures on politics and political theory. And that is why it is worth a listen and worth thinking about, when he says that the Czech Republic has never experienced true democracy. Tomáš Lebeda, political scientist and head of the Department of Political Science and European Studies at the UP Faculty of Arts.

— We're half-way through the year 2018 – how would you rate it, as a political scientist?

The start of the year was quite intense in terms of politics. The Czech Republic held the second direct presidential election in its history, and it was the first in which the president had to defend his mandate. In my opinion, it was not a very happy experience, because we are all witnesses as to how the president created precedents which I for one don't think should have been created.

— Such as?

Such as that he didn't take part in any primaries prior to the first round and that he had separate PR in the media friendly to him, that he did not take part in the debate with other candidates in the first round, and that he distanced himself from his own campaign, because that campaign evidently did take place and it was a dirty one. So a formula was created for running a presidential campaign, and not a very good one. He also whipped up a quite big dose of populism, with the result that the society was divided again, even more than it had been before. I think that having direct presidential elections is not beneficial to politics in this country.

— People speak of a threat to democracy, a change of course. Do you believe that that would threaten us?

Yes, I do. There are parties here which do not only not respect the Constitution of the Czech Republic, but are basically openly speaking of changing it. I'm talking about first SPD (the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party), and a bit less vocally, but basically for some time the Communist Party has also been talking about this, and last but not least ANO (Action for Dissatisfied Citizens Party) has also not been reticent about mentioning a number of changes to the Constitution. When you read the ANO documents, its platform in this direction is rather sobering. For example the book by its leader, Czech Prime Minis-

ter Andrej Babiš – *O čem sním, když náhodou spím* [What I Dream About, When by Chance I Sleep], a book distributed for free – would be a constitutional massacre. If the chapter dedicated to constitutional reforms would actually be carried out, then we would cease to be a democracy. That vision is extremely dangerous. Although he's said that it is a long-term vision, that's not the point. I'm imputing that the book was not written by Andrej Babiš, but by a number of people, patched together from the most diverse sources. Perhaps they are not even aware of how dangerous the compilation they've proposed really is in the area of constitutional changes.

— What is the greatest threat in Babiš's vision?

He proposes eliminating the upper house of Parliament – the Senate – and reducing the number of representatives in the lower house by one-half. The ranked-choice voting system would be changed to a simple majority system, and regional governments would be dissolved. A similar treatment would befall town councils, which – according to a statement by Andrej Babiš in the *Lidové noviny* newspaper – are unnecessary. Only the mayor would remain, chosen by popular vote. This would result in the liquidation of democracy on both the community and district levels. Only a quite limited sort of democracy would remain on the national level, and it would result in a huge centralisation of power. Important issues would be decided by referendums – which, by the way, are my nightmare. Sure, we can find parallels in Western Europe for every step proposed in the book. But you cannot find a single democracy in which all of these things, or even the majority of them, would work altogether. And therein lies the danger.

— Do you think that Czech society is aware of the price of democracy?

I'm afraid that we do not appreciate democracy, and do not even understand it very well. Our contemporary awareness of what democracy should look like has not changed much since 1990, and that's sad. Few citizens have a good idea of how democracy should work, what tools we have at our disposal, what we can and should desire from our elected representatives. Instead they have expectations which are often unrealistic and rather led by anger toward how some of their earlier conceptions from the past did not come about. That frustration from their unfulfilled expectations is ascribed to democracy. But that is not the case. We have never yet experienced true democracy here. What we have had is a process of democratic transformations, followed by consolidation. The process, in my opinion, has stopped. I have been noticing rather reverse tendencies, and it seems to me that as a society, we are not creating strong enough pressure on the political elite in order to better democracy. On the contrary, it seems to me that

Tomáš Lebeda (b. 1976)

Associate Professor of Political Science and Head of the Department of Political Science and European Studies at the UP Faculty of Arts. He graduated from Jan Evangelista Purkyně University and Charles University. He received his doctorate and habilitation from Charles University. He specialises in elections, electoral systems, and electoral behaviour. He is also interested in the influence of constitutionally-defined institutional mechanisms on the political process and the broader fields of comparative empirical analytical political science. He has published essays in Czech and foreign peer-reviewed impact journals and books. He completed a study stay at the London School of Economics and Political Science and an internship at the British House of Commons.

authoritarian tendencies are growing and strengthening, attitudes that democracy is no longer the optimal system of government and that it would be much better if someone with a firm hand governed this country, someone who would put things in “order”.

— How would it be possible to change the political culture in this country?

There's only one way – which is long and slow – and that is systematic strengthening of civic consciousness, political literacy, and democratic conviction. There are a number of forms which could be used, for example civic education. I'm not talking about only teaching children in school, but across all the age groups in society. Here this kind of method has an uncomfortable connotation, because we still recall our political education from the era of the communist regime.

— Do we have a place to go for inspiration?

For example the Germans implemented civic education after WWII. They have a system of political foundations which are established by political parties and which look after them. They even have a federal centre for political education and they pour huge sums into this area. Thanks to that, they have actually managed to make Germans into democrats. It's not the result of some kind of brainwashing. Germans grasp these principles and understand them. And such people are then much more likely to defend democracy, and they are less inclined to fall prey to populism. There is one more thing which can be seen in the German example. In the former federal lands, where systematic political education did not take place and they have decades of communism behind them, the people there are much more inclined to populism. This is happening even despite the fact that the federal government has invested big money there. And so this is why I think it's a shame that in the 1990s, people here underestimated civic and democratic education. The feeling prevailed that people would understand it on their own. And they did. Each to his or her own. Unfortunately, not in favour of democracy.

— You said that referendums are your nightmare. Why?

Referendums are often defined as one of the most quality forms of democratic participation. From the professional point of view, this is nonsense. Modern democracy is trying to find consensual solutions, trying so that the fewest number of people in society have the feeling that political decisions are going against them. Especially in the “consociational” democracies – like for example Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Austria – these are countries where they have always attempted to apply such solutions, in which the widest range of political parties were involved. In other words –



these types of governments are looking for solutions which would be acceptable for the broadest cross-section of society.

But the problem with referendums is that they go in exactly the opposite direction. They are radically divisive: You're either for or against: a winner or a loser. Nothing in between, no consensus. When people support a referendum, then they always see themselves on the side of the winners, and only rarely count on the fact that they might end among the 49 percent of losers. I wonder if they would support referendums, if they truly realised that they could bring about a very radical solution, and that they could very easily become one of the defeated, or be defeated for a very long time.

— A number of European countries however do make use of referendums. So where is the danger there, according to you?

In the majority of countries which use or have used mass referendums, the ideals have not been fulfilled which connect the majority of people – that is, a larger proportion of citizens taking part in the political decision-making process. Take a look at the current French Fifth Republic, for example, i.e. France since 1958. President Charles de Gaulle drafted a number of referendums, which however were never used in order that more people would take part in political decision-making. He used them to strengthen his position at the expense of parliament. On the other hand, de Gaulle had such class that in 1969 he stepped down after the announcement of the negative result of a referendum, because he evaluated it as him having lost the people's support. By the way, that was a referendum about transforming the Senate.

When we look at pre-WWII Germany and the referendums which Adolf Hitler drafted, which had massive voter turnout and huge support, a tingle runs up and down our spines. Germany well understood why after WWII it banned referendums on the federal level. We know that through the use of political propaganda, society can be fairly easily and effectively manipulated. In such circum-

stances, referendums are an extremely dangerous tool. Democracy can easily be destroyed via the use of referendums. And then there is no way back.

— Supporters of referendums usually use Switzerland as an example to follow....

That's right, there referendums have been used for a long time and they are actually used for what they were primarily intended. But Switzerland differs from the Czech Republic at the outset in several essential items: it has hundreds of years of continual democracy under which the people have been politically socialised. They know the system well, they understand it. In addition, their referendums are accompanied by impartial information campaigns. The government prepares materials for all citizens – arguments for and against – on the basis of which they can decide with erudition. I don't believe it would be like that here. And despite everything I've just said – they are democrats, who know how to work with information, who are used to thinking things over before voting – it was Switzerland which due to referendums gave women the vote only in 1972, and entered the UN only at the end of the 20th century. So even that country committed a number of things which never would have been possible in countries with standard representative democracies. Now just imagine if you put such a system into place in a country with an emerging democracy and into a society which is very weakly convinced that democracy is the best method of governance. It's a recipe for catastrophe.

— In terms of the development of Czech politics and changes in the political culture in the near future, are you an optimist?

In recent years I have not been too optimistic, I haven't had many reasons to be. I don't like to make predictions, but I also don't have too many reasons to think that Czech politics will improve qualitatively. It certainly doesn't look that way. But I would be very pleased to be proven wrong.

Bacterial resistance to silver nanoparticles can be overcome

For scientists and doctors, silver nanoparticles are a great hope in the fight against bacterial infections. They are already used today, for example in local antibiotic therapy and prevention of developing bacterial infections; they have been proven to have antibacterial effects in combination with existing antibiotics. A new and very important finding on this issue has been made in the research of scientists from the Regional Centre of Advanced technologies and Materials (RCPTM), the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, and the Centre of the Region Haná for Biotechnological and Agricultural Research, dealing with bacterial resistance to nanosilver. The revolutionary discovery was published in January on the cover page of the journal *Nature Nanotechnology*.

The antibacterial properties of silver have been known for centuries. The ancient Romans used silver vessels and put silver coins into milk to keep it fresh for a longer period of time. Scientists from Olomouc have been studying the biological effects of noble metal nanoparticles for twenty years. The details of their effects on diverse bacteria, including highly resistant

phyla, were reported in 2006 in the American Chemical Society's *Journal of Physical Chemistry B*. The work sparked intense academic interest via citations and started a boom in the study and applications of nanosilver. The increasing use of silver nanoparticles in commercial products prompted the team at Olomouc to consider the possible emergence of bacterial resist-

ance induced by repeated exposure to nanosilver, which could weaken or eliminate its antibacterial activity. Bacteria have already developed resistance to several antibiotics, reducing their medical usefulness. After five years of study, the team discovered that bacteria can indeed develop resistance to nanosilver, but it can be easily overcome.

Bacteria shield themselves with the protein flagellin

“It is well known that silver nanoparticles lose their antimicrobial activity if they come together to form larger particles known as aggregates. We have discovered that flagellar bacteria can exploit this Achilles’ heel: upon repeated exposure to nanosilver, they start producing the protein flagellin from their flagella. This protein first reduces the repulsive forces between the nanoparticles and then acts like glue, causing the nanoparticles to stick to one another and lose their antibacterial properties,” said Aleš Panáček from RCPTM, the first author of the work, identifying it as a unique resistance mechanism.

The finding that the mechanism of resistance differs significantly from regular mechanisms of antibiotic resistance, when bacteria undergo a change in genetic information, was a piece of good news because such a weapon can be countered. It was not too difficult, therefore, to find a helper that would not let bacteria protect themselves

with flagellin. “Resistance can be easily overcome by adding substances that suppress the formation and release of flagellin. Suitable substances are found in pomegranate extracts, among other things. If such extracts are applied together with silver nanoparticles, the bacteria do not produce flagellin and therefore lose their resistance to silver nanoparticles,” explained Libor Kvítek from RCPTM, who has pioneered nanosilver research in Olomouc.

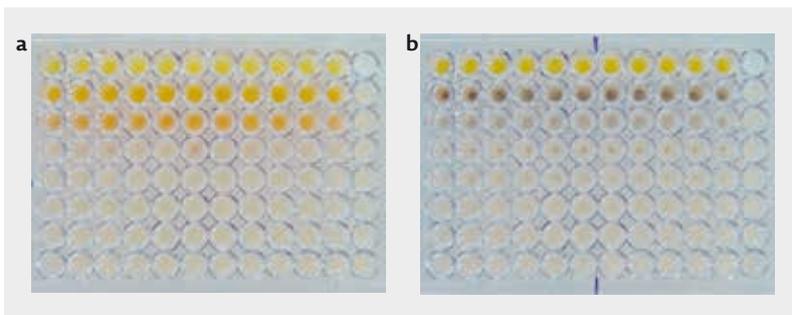
Chance to address the global antibiotics crisis

The mechanism was confirmed in flagellar bacteria, which are clinically very significant. They often cause nosocomial (hospital acquired) infections. These are associated with very high mortality, since the bacteria are so resistant that doctors can barely find an effective cure. The research will, however, involve other types of bacteria as well – such as staphylococci – which also become highly resistant. “The resistance of bacteria against antibiotics is one

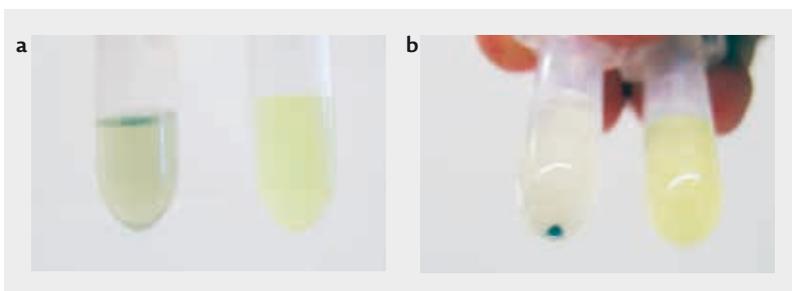
of the most important issues in medicine today, and I am sure its urgency will only increase. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people die because antibiotics are losing their effectiveness against bacteria that have developed antibiotic resistance as a result of genetic changes. The bacterial resistance has become so significant that we sometimes have at disposal only one or two antibiotics that can be applied,” pointed out Milan Kolář, the head of the Department of Microbiology at the UP Faculty of Medicine and a leading specialist in the study and treatment of bacterial infections. He agrees that silver nanoparticles offer an opportunity how to deal with this crisis. “They are undoubtedly an important tool in the prevention of development of bacterial infections as well as in local treatment. We also know that silver nanoparticles are effective against multi-resistant bacteria, and are able to almost magically restore antibiotics’ activity after they lose efficiency,” said Kolář.

The long-standing overuse of antibiotics

A cell culture plate containing a sensitive phylum of the bacterium *E. coli* and stable silver particles (a) and a plate containing a resistant *E. coli* phylus and non-stable aggregated silver particles (the dark clot) (b).

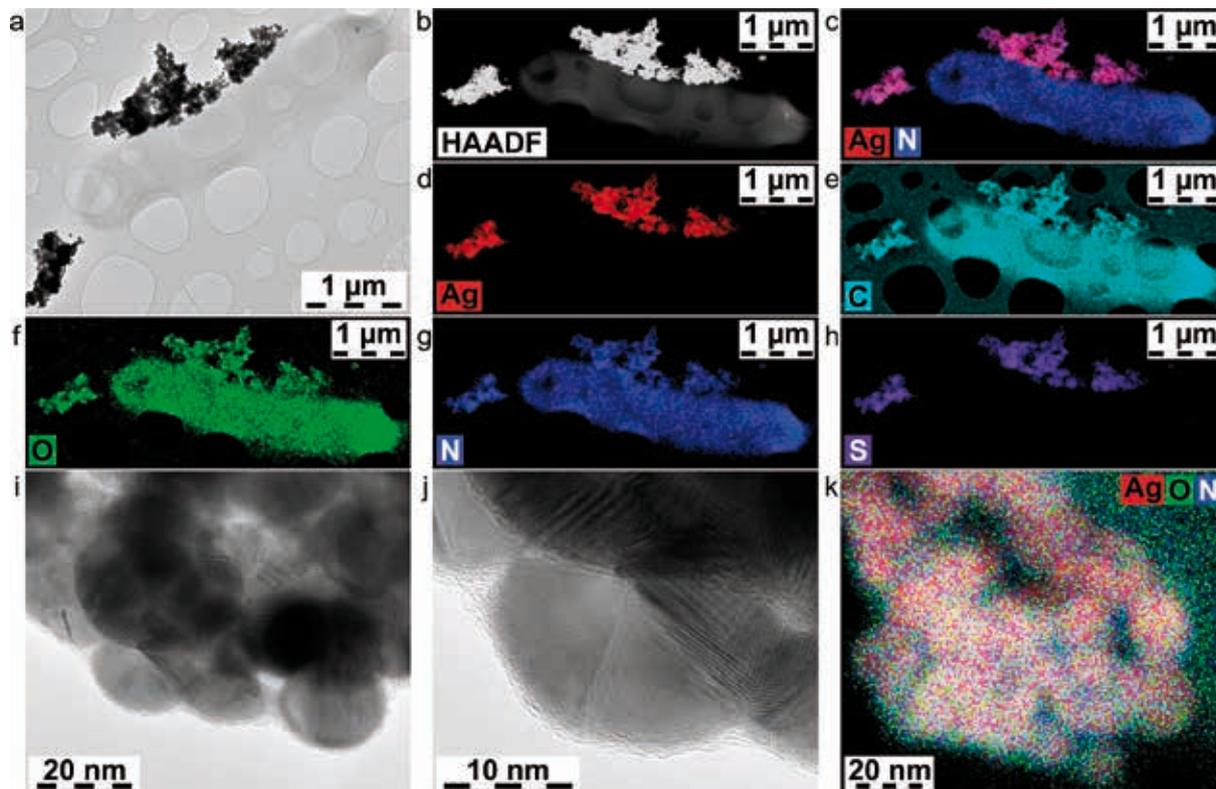


The comparison of aggregation of non-stable silver nanoparticles and formation of silver coagulum under the effect of flagellin – the Eppendorf tube on the left in the picture (a) and (b), with stable silver nanoparticles in dispersion – the Eppendorf tube on the right in the pictures (a) and (b).



The growth of resistant *E. coli* bacteria and the formation of aggregated silver nanoparticles in soil extract agar.





ics during the second half of the last century has caused increasing levels of bacterial antibiotic resistance and thus the imminent inability to treat bacterial infections. Experts are concerned that antibiotics will completely lose their effectiveness within twenty or thirty years. So all the more motivated are Olomouc scientists. Among other places, they look for domestic and foreign partners in order to be able to advance the research to the stage of testing on animal models. However, the journey to the use of silver nanoparticles in low, non-toxic concentrations together with antibiotics, is still very long; optimistic estimation is fifteen to twenty years. Silver nanoparticles are presently used in local antibiotic therapy, mainly in the form of ointments, for example on burns and varicose ulcers. They are also present in a number of cosmetic products.

Strong anchoring of silver nanoparticles

Another option how to overcome the bacterial resistance to nanosilver is to use strong chemical bonds to anchor silver nanoparticles to materials such as plastics, metals, and textiles. The team from Olomouc has

therefore developed a technology protected by European and American patents. It is not uncommon that silver nanoparticles are added on the surface of medical and textile materials and tools. “This kind of antimicrobial surface treatment prevents the formation of bacterial films, and several companies in Europe have shown interest in its use. We think this is the way forward, because the tight binding of silver nanoparticles prevents their aggregation, and hence also the occurrence of flagellin-based bacterial resistance, while simultaneously preventing the nanoparticles from being released into the body or the environment,” said Radek Zbořil, RCPTM Director and a corresponding author of the work published in *Nature Nanotechnology*.

The scientists from Olomouc have reported several other important results in recent years, describing, among other things, the high activity of silver nanoparticles against yeasts. The January study in *Nature Nanotechnology* was the first paper written exclusively by Czech authors that has been published in this, the world’s most prestigious journal on nanotechnologies.

“The resistance of bacteria against antibiotics is one of the most important issues in medicine today, and I am sure its urgency will only increase.”

Milan Kolář

Silver nanoparticles up to an average size of 100 nanometres show antimicrobial activity. Only such particles are able to prevent the growth of bacterial colonies, even in small concentrations. In addition, they are efficient against many bacteria resistant to antibiotics. With increasing average size, the antimicrobial effect of silver nanoparticles decreases.

text: Ivana Pustějovská
photo: Milada Hronová

endowment fund

Give Opportunity: Support young talent

Palacký University has started a big donation campaign for its Endowment Fund. By means of its motto “Give Opportunity”, the university is turning to its alumni and sponsors to support its talented students, young academics, and scientists. It’s the first campaign of its type in the Czech Republic. The UP Endowment Fund was inspired by universities abroad, where similar models of supporting university projects are the norm.

The Fund was founded in 2015 and its aim is to support international scientific, academic, research, and artistic activities of UP students. At the same time, it teaches young academics, scientists, and artists to popularise their activities and communicate their message to others. During its existence, the fund has divided more than 75 000 euros among students which it has received from its general partner, Česká spořitelna – Czech Savings Bank. “Thanks to the Fund, talented students can fulfil their academic dreams. In addition to getting the experience of managing their own projects, they can also travel to prestigious scientific and academic workplaces all over the world, and introduce their academic models there. The support is based on trust, it is effective and non-bu-

reaucratic,” said Palacký University Rector Jaroslav Miller.

Students can also get contributions toward airfare, accommodation at foreign universities or academic and scientific centres, for materials necessary to their research, books, etc. The contribution, up to 7800 euros maximum, is for one year. Persons receiving support are decided upon by the Fund’s Board of Directors. The main criteria are what results the project will bring, and the motivation of students to carry out research and/or create something. “Students from all eight UP faculties have been supported, and that includes 23 student study stays abroad, in countries such as the USA, France, Sweden, Germany and China,” the campaign’s coordinator Dita Palaščíková added.

The goal of the campaign “Give Opportunity” is not only to acquaint the public with the fund’s activities, but also to collect over 50 000 euros for 15 student projects per year. To date, they have been mainly financed by the fund’s main sponsor – Česká spořitelna. “I’m proud that we’re the UP Endowment Fund’s general partner, and that in this way we can take part in the sup-

port of talented students and young scientists and academics. Education, in my opinion, is something that our society should push further, and in doing so support not only the future of Olomouc but also the entire Czech Republic in world-wide competition,” said Pavel Jörka, Director of the Česká spořitelna corporate centre in Olomouc. A number of famous alumni have already decided to support the Fund. Their names are inscribed on the Donors plaque at UPoint – the university information centre and shop on Olomouc’s Upper Square.

One of them is the UP alumnus, neonatologist, and senator, Lumír Kantor. “What could be closer to me, professionally, than to support students, the younger generation, and future leaders – not only in medicine – in order that they don’t lose their motivation, enthusiasm, and drive into projects that they believe in and make sense? I’m a supporter of the activities of the UP Endowment Fund, and I hope the numbers of our donors club will only increase.”

You can support the campaign “Give Opportunity” via the UP Endowment Fund website by clicking on the icon “Chci darovat příležitost”.



“Every donor gets a confirmation of their gift, which is tax-deductible. We also offer donators various benefits, according to the size of their donations. We are grateful for every donation. We even have students contributing five euros at a time to the fund. It’s not so much about the size of the donations. What is important is making society aware of it; and especially, that anyone can give opportunity to someone.”

Dita Palaščíková

Three of the supported students in front of the Donors plaque. From left to right: Vladimír Skalický (Faculty of Science), Barbora Pařízková (Faculty of Science), and Luděk Plachký (Faculty of Law)

The BALUO Application Centre: Attracting crowds for the uniqueness of its equipment and its comprehensive services

A swimming team, a regional football academy, and the skier Jan Hudec, who trained for the Winter Olympics here. This is but a tiny list of the individuals, teams, and organisations who have made use of the services offered by the BALUO Application Centre of the UP Faculty of Physical Culture. People come there for its modern technology, such as the camera system in the swimming pools; or the geolocation system in the Testing Hall, which makes possible valuable data gathering for their training.

This geolocation system, which is able to determine the position of players on the court down to a centimetre, is unique in Czechia, and offers huge potential for innovations. “Together with the Sewio company, we have a grant to develop software for analysing the measured data, which we then evaluate for individual sports in order to reach maximum precision according to the specifics of a given sport. During our joint research, we also developed equipment with which we’ll be able to measure

data outdoors, and last but not least, the application will also display heart rate. We’re testing the system in cooperation with Brno ice hockey players, where we see great potential regarding benefits in the efficacy of training,” said David Prycl, who is responsible for transfer technology at BALUO.

Recently the centre has begun cooperation with the Latvian company EchoSport, and is testing its software for depicting real time data on the movement of players for various indoor sports, providing coaches with instant feedback.

BALUO does not offer only modern technology, but also more or less comprehensive services, including refreshments, and accommodation at the dormitories in the Neředin campus. For example, one innovation is its Medical Zone. “We’ve created conditions for the creation of a non-state medical facility, which would provide services in the area of sports medicine. This means that clients from sporting clubs and associations can have the opportunity to

undergo comprehensive stress and medical diagnostics here with us, and in the end they will get a certificate of sports eligibility. At the same time, we are carrying out scientific research activities in the area of sports and physical education medicine,” said Martin Sigmund, the centre’s director, adding that the zone will also include a physiotherapy unit.

Recreational athletes can also visit the BALUO Application Centre. Either as research participants, when they take part in an annual registration and diagnostic measuring, or within organised courses, of which there are many on offer – from swimming to trampoline and gymnastics, to the most diverse exercises in motion studies and at the fitness centre. And BALUO is now preparing for example a high-tech functional training zone. At present, two thousand clients make use of its services. Other interested parties will find all the necessary information at the site www.acbaluo.cz.



The BALUO Application Centre is a science and technology park aimed at research, technology, innovative entrepreneurship, and vocational training in the area of physical activity, prevention of lifestyle diseases, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Its construction was made possible by a grant from the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade within the auspices of the Operational Programme “Enterprise and Innovation”. The UP Faculty of Physical Culture centre was opened in 2016.

alumni

text: Eva Hrudníková
photos: PS archives



Pavel Sladký: Lawyer in the service of the state

Work duties brought Pavel Sladký to many countries. Only one continent has been elusive to him in terms of work assignments – Australia. “I’ve travelled to many countries around the world, but I have never seen two nations that are as close to each other as the Czechs and Slovaks,” says Pavel Sladký, an alumnus of the Palacký University Faculty of Law and a great Olomouc patriot. He knows very well what he’s talking about. For fourteen years, he has been employed in Czech diplomacy; for the last two years at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Slovakia’s capital, Bratislava.

“If Brno and its Villa Tugendhat is a symbol of the division of Czechoslovakia, then Olomouc and Palacký University have the opportunity to become a symbol of closer collaboration between the Czechs and Slovaks.”

He wanted to be a lawyer ever since he was a child. There was however no lawyer in his family, and in those times, law could not be studied in Olomouc, where he is from. “It was during my gymnasium studies, in the beginning of the 1990s, when the Faculty of Law was re-established. One year before my graduation exami-

nation, I attended a preparatory course which confirmed my belief that law would be the right choice for me.” He fondly remembers the family-like atmosphere at the young faculty, where all students in the year’s class knew each other. Then he briskly starts naming personalities who had a great influence on him. →

“For example, our teacher of Legal History, Professor Eduard Vlček, or Associate Professor Jiří Bílý, those were splendid teachers. I should not forget Associate Professor Damián Němec who lectured on Religious Law. I think this should be a compulsory course, as it was in our era,” says Sladký, offering advice for today’s students. “Do not underestimate the legal basics – Roman law, legal history, legal theory. These are key subjects for the study of law and the execution of legal practice. Legal code keeps evolving, so it is necessary to know the fundamental norms, their history, and interpretation.”

When he recalls the academicians, he lingers on one name. “Public International Law was taught by Professor Vladislav David. It was he who drew me to this legal discipline. He was also the second reader of my Master’s thesis. A very strict reader! And that’s how it should be.” Later they wrote two textbooks together on public international law.

After graduating in 2002, Pavel Sladký enrolled in post-graduate studies in international law at Charles University, at the same time working at the Olomouc town hall as a lawyer specialising in administrative law. He also managed to lecture at his alma mater for one semester. And then 2004 came, the year the Czech Republic was admitted to the EU. He succeeded in an open job competition and entered the “service of the state”. And has remained there until today.

First, he worked as a lawyer at the International Law Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, then he was a legal counsellor at the permanent

Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN in New York, a consul at the Czech embassy in Vienna, and the head of the Office of Deputy Minister at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His résumé also contains a Czech first: he became the first Czech observer according to the Antarctic Treaty. He spent over a month on an icebreaker near the South Pole to supervise the fulfilment of rules and obligations under the treaty.

From July 2016 to April 2018 he worked as Deputy Ambassador in Slovakia and the head of the political division at the embassy in Bratislava. After the demise of the Czech ambassador Livia Klausová and until the new ambassador assumes office, Pavel Sladký is temporarily in charge of the embassy. In his opinion the relationship between the two countries, twenty-five years after the federation broke apart, are very good. “The high frequency of visits of the highest representatives is an evidence of our splendid relations today,” he observes.

Although his missions take him to various places all around the world, or perhaps for this very reason, he feels home at only one place – in the region of Čuhácko, south of Olomouc. “I love to come back home. I lived here for twenty-five years. And Olomouc is a city of unrivalled beauty. During my study of international law I also realised that Olomouc itself is a lively textbook on this legal discipline.”

He is ready to provide examples from the city’s history. “In the eighteenth century, under the Prussian siege, the city managed to negotiate that the Holy Trinity Column would be spared from artillery fire. The protection of historical monuments in war con-

flicts, however, was not included in international law until the twentieth century,” he states, making the comparison. Another curiosity is the Punctuation of Olmütz in 1850, an attempt for Austrian hegemony in the German Confederation, whereas in contemporary international organisations, states are equal. “Also the military cemetery in Olomouc-Černovír is historically illustrative, with war victims from many nationalities and religious creeds. War victims are buried according to different international rules today. Then there is the case of the Mausoleum of Yugoslav Soldiers in Olomouc, which demonstrates how difficult may be the matter of succession concerning one state’s real estate abroad. Or another case in international law: the landing of Americans on the Moon. In the early 1970s – in the era of repressive Normalisation after the Russian occupation – Olomouc citizens unveiled a monument to the Americans’ “one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind”.

Pavel Sladký’s patriotism is also expressed by his hobbies. He is interested in regional cartography and history. A blue-white towel of the football club Sigma Olomouc is hanging in his bathroom.

He stays in close touch with his alma mater. He has been trying to promote the Czech historian František Palacký in Slovakia, as he studied in Trenčín and lived in Pressburg, today’s Bratislava. “If Brno and its Villa Tugendhat is a symbol of the division of Czechoslovakia, then Olomouc and Palacký University have the opportunity to become a symbol of closer collaboration between the Czechs and Slovaks,” adds Pavel Sladký.

Pavel Sladký (b. 1978)

After graduation from Slavonic Gymnasium in Olomouc, he graduated from the Palacký University Faculty of Law. He obtained his degrees JUDr. and Ph.D. at Charles University in Prague. As an expert on public international law, he has been employed by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2004. Since July 2016 he has been Czech Deputy Ambassador in Slovakia.





Seven years in Shanghai: From martial arts to Olomouc

For martial arts enthusiasts, there is perhaps no greater idol than Jackie Chan. He became the hero of Kateřina Krumpálová, too. She lived for seven years in China, where she studied traditional martial arts, obtained a doctoral degree, and even got married. By coincidence, she found a permanent job at Palacký University, at the International Relations Office at the Faculty of Physical Culture.

“I found it interesting, the possibility of studying Chinese martial arts at a university. I wanted to practise and at the same time learn more about Chinese culture, and I thought this would be a faster way, rather than attending sinology or Chinese classes. Although at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, where I received a Bachelor’s degree, I succeeded in a student competition for study in Taiwan, I decided to write a personal letter to all Chinese universities I found and wait for their answer. Two of them actually replied, and so I chose Shanghai,” says Kateřina Krumpálová, reminiscing on the outset of her seven-year period in China.

Uneasy beginnings

The first days in her new place of work were not easy, especially because of orientation in her new environment and communication, since her basics in Chinese were not sufficient, and the local people were not so good in English. Soon enough, however, practising became their common language. “Step by step we learnt from them, they learnt from us, and communication was somehow established. That training made me learn Chinese faster than from language courses, because you can hear certain things repeated many times,” claims Kateřina who, in addition to the study of Chinese and the history of local martial arts, also practised tai-chi, modern wushu, health qigong, and later even Chinese wrestling.

The theme of her dissertation, defended in 2017, was tai-chi and its promotion in Western Europe. “It wasn’t easy. First I had to change my tutor, then we spent two years looking for the best theme, not able to find common ground. One of the problems was that people in China perceive Europe as one entity.

“I found it interesting, the possibility of studying Chinese martial arts at a university. I wanted to practise and at the same time learn more about Chinese culture, and I thought this would be a faster way, rather than attending sinology or Chinese classes.”





Kateřina Krumpálová
(b. 1987)

Graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages in Commercial Practice from the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, with a Master's degree and Ph.D. in traditional Chinese sports from the Shanghai University of Sport. Today an employee and lecturer at the UP Faculty of Physical Culture. She has been practising Chinese martial arts since she was thirteen, presently she is the coach of Czech Tai-Chi Team and a referee.

At most they are able to distinguish between Western and Eastern Europe, but they don't see the differences between individual countries. I had to somehow narrow and adjust the proposed theme 'Development of Promotion and Current Promotion of Tai-Chi in Western Europe' in order to be able to write it at all. The collaboration with my tutor was rather frustrating," she admits.

In jail

All the study challenges were balanced by some of her positive experiences with ordinary life in a Chinese city. "Life does not stop here at 8 or 9 pm – Shanghai lives nonstop. When you decide to go out at 2 am and have some food or take a walk, the streets are lively, with open restaurants and shops. What I also found interesting was how in the parks there are various groups of people keen on their activities, and no one is considered crazy for what they do. On the contrary, people are very sociable, and if they're interested in what you're doing, they want to try it with you. That would be unimaginable in the Czech Republic," says Krumpálová.

Censorship is not as bad as it is often being described in Czech media, and that on the Internet can be circumvented. She felt

safe in the streets of Shanghai, not afraid to walk at night alone. Due to her negligence, however, she had an experience with a Chinese jail. Her visa expired, so she ended in detention and was interrogated. "I was really scared. My friends told me it was a big problem, that I might even be deported from the country. In the end, I paid a €250 fine. Nevertheless, being locked up was not a pleasant thing," she says, recalling one of her worst experiences.

Marriage half-way across the world

One of the pleasant ones was her wedding. During her studies she started dating her current husband, a Chinese champion in judo. "My parents weren't too happy," she admits. "While in Chinese villages a number of traditional customs are held, people in the cities adopt many Western influences. And what they like to do is emotional dramas. When I stood with my father on the stage and waited for instructions, the host approached us and told my father to look at me for the last time, because I will be handed over to my husband in a while. I did not want my father to burst into tears, so I interpreted his words differently."

The spouses see each other several times

a year. He works and trains in Shanghai, whereas she took a job at the Faculty of Physical Culture. And her journey to Olomouc began in Shanghai, in fact. When a delegation from the Olomouc faculty recently visited the local university, she became their guide around the campus and the city. The former vice-dean and current vice-rector for international relations, Martin Kudláček, offered her a job in Olomouc after her graduation. And he kept his word. Kateřina is in the charge of developing relations with Chinese schools, teaching tai-chi courses for students, employees, and the public, and promoting martial arts and Chinese culture.

She likes being in Olomouc, even though she does not feel at home yet – missing her family, friends, favourite places. However, she has been strengthening her bonds in Czechia after seven years in China, and among other things, she was made the coach of the Czech Tai-Chi Team this year, and she plans to open her own academy in Chinese martial arts. She has a message to those who are interested in study or work stays in China: "It'll definitely be worth it. You have to know though what you want to achieve, without expecting that someone will lead you by the hand."



On a Fulbright in New York

“Such a long and demanding stay forces you to get to know yourself. You re-evaluate your present activities, social contacts, and also organise your priorities in life. Being a Fulbright scholar is truly a life-changing experience, which has been proven to me by meeting many Fulbrighters,” says Marie Meixnerová, a doctoral student at the Department of Art Education at the Faculty of Education. Thanks to her Fulbright scholarship, she had a nine-month stay at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York.

Marie Meixnerová is a graduate of the UP Faculty of Arts and is also an up-and-coming internet and conceptual artist. Now she is known to all and sundry as a curator, but she also has a reputation as a programmer at the PAF Olomouc Festival of Animated Films and Contemporary Art. So it is no surprise that she got to New York, the place to be when it comes to art and culture. It was there that she understood the value of higher education in society, and learned the differences between the American and the Czech university systems.

“At Columbia University I realised the quality and value of Czech higher education. I appreciated the capabilities and quality of Czech students and Czech teachers whom I know personally. A number of them are making use of the progressive and very effective methods which are being discovered only now in America,” she says. When she thinks about the main difference between top American universities like Columbia and Czech universities, she sees the main disparity as one of motivation and approach.

“Real teachers are those who can arouse greater interest in their students on the

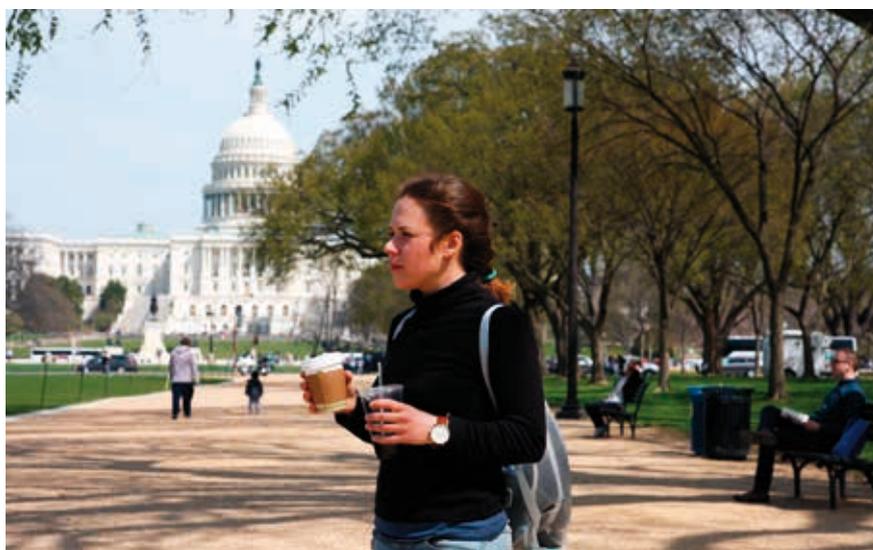
given problem; they can help them understand more clearly as to why they need the given knowledge, and formulate how they will use it specifically in work and personal life. A motivated student and a motivated teacher are communicating vessels having a mutual effect on how much time and energy those involved are able to invest in studies and teaching,” she concludes. In her case, one can easily see that when one combines effort and motivation, opportunity also arises.

ScreenSaverGallery; or, World-Wide WEBxhibition

At Columbia, Marie was also able to prepare a big international exhibition project, which she titled “Unleashing Screensaver”. It’s being shown simultaneously in New York under the auspices of one of the most prestigious American universities, and via the virtual ScreenSaverGallery, literally around the world.

“The curators invited me as an artist to an exhibition dedicated to the legacy of Maxine Green, one of the most important modern philosophers on education, and so I began to think how I could bring some





Marie Meixnerová (b. 1986)

Graduated in English, Film Studies, and Communication Studies from Palacký University. She is now continuing her doctoral studies at the Department of Art Education in the Intermedia atelier. Her research and curating activities have long been concentrating on communication and interpretation strategies of Internet art, with an emphasis on contemporary Czech and world net art and its impacts. She is also a film programmer for the PAF Olomouc Festival of Animated Films and an up-and-coming Internet and conceptual artist. In 2016 her exhibition project of Olomouc conceptual art was supported by the UP Endowment Fund.

of her theories to life in a meaningful way. I initiated a project aimed at the topic of aesthetic education,” she explained.

How does the project look in real life? “Each of the participating groups of students from various countries led by the contacted teachers produced a work which is mediated via an Internet stream in the screensaver. These were mainly videos, texts, collections of sounds, slideshow photography, livestreams, or direct digital works of art, net art, etc. In time, all sixty works were displayed in the virtual Screen-SaverGallery.”

New York minutes

This is not the first time Marie Meixnerová has been in New York. However this first longer stay showed her a different dimension to the city, including cons as well as pros, such as the possibility to travel to its outlying districts and thanks to her laptop write her dissertation anywhere – Coney Island, for instance.

“Is New York the centre of modern world culture? I have my doubts. Of course there are a lot of galleries and museums there with original and important art works, and something interesting is always going on. I had presentations in Brooklyn, at a Creative Technologies colloquium at Columbia, and I had a look at the studios at The Cooper Union,” she said. She says that various databases and on-line versions of publications are freely available to students and employees at Columbia University. They can take part as audience members at conferences, public debates, and presentations on the most diverse themes for free or at a discount. They also have free admission to the majority of museums in New York City. And they can work with state-of-the-art technologies, which Meixnerová also got to try out. “A digital embroidery machine, laser cutter, 3D printer – to name but a few. I even tried programming computer games, constructing virtual reality, and building 3D models.”

Meixnerová says that it’s impossible to fully prepare for such a stay. “What did surprise me was that in several areas, we’re more advanced in Czechia either technologically or philosophically.” Now she knows what inspiration to take back with her from the USA. When she finishes her doctorate, she wants to be significantly engaged in questions of sustainability and politics. “If I picked up any significantly positive trait when I was in America, it would be the effort to strengthen social and neighbourly relations and caring about the community to an extent which is missing in Czechia, and which is necessary for society. On the other hand, regarding sustainability and thinking about its wider consequences, which I loosely translate as respect for oneself, one’s ancestors, future descendants, and people parallel to us, the USA is way behind the times, and the majority of the population serve as the perfect deterrent example. Thanks to this terrifying American experience, I started to be really interested in these themes.”



photo:
Gabriela Knýblová

Mohammad Mehdi Gholamian is from Iran, a student of European Union Studies in Salzburg. He came to the UP Faculty of Law in September 2017 as an Erasmus+ student and at the same time to fulfil his requirements for receiving a double degree.

داستان زندگی من در شهر اولموتز خیلی جالب است. من محمد مهدی غلامیان هستم، ایرانی هستم و نزدیک به شش سال است که در کشور اتریش زندگی می‌کنم و در مقطع کارشناسی ارشد در رشته‌های مطالعات اتحادیه اروپا در دانشگاه سالزبورگ و حقوق بین‌الملل در دانشگاه پالاتزکی شهر اولموتز بطور همزمان مشغول به تحصیل می‌باشم. سال گذشته از طرف دانشگاه سالزبورگ و برای یک پروژه‌ی درسی به همراه دی‌گر هم‌کلاسی‌ها یک سفر یک هفته‌ای به شهر اولموتز داشتم که آن اولین سفر من به این شهر بود.

این سفر برای من تجربه‌ی فوق‌العاده‌ای بود. شهر بسیار زیبا به همراه مردمی مهمان‌نواز و خونگرم و اساتیدی بسیار مجرب و مهربان بود. هنگامی که به اتریش برگشتم، ایده‌ی تحصیل همزمان در دو رشته‌ی متفاوت و اراسموس شدن در دانشگاه اولموتز به ذهنم رسید، که اقدامات لازم را انجام دادم و در نهایت با موافقت دو دانشگاه، موفق به حضور در این شهر بعنوان دانشجوی اراسموس شدم.

از دلایلی دیگر انتخاب من، نزدیکی جمهوری چک به اتریش بود. از این بابت که هر هفته جهت کار و همچنین تعدادی از واحدهای درسی که در سالزبورگ داشتم، باید به این شهر می‌آمدم. برنامه‌ی روزانه من در اولموتز معمولاً به این صورت می‌باشد که ساعاتی را مشغول مطالعه هستم، زمانی را به ورزش اختصاص می‌دهم که شامل بازی فوتبال در سالن با دوستان دانشجویی و ورزش اختصاصی خودم که هنرهای رزمی است می‌باشد و همچنین آشپزی و تمرین موسیقی در این برنامه جای دارند.

در انتها باید به این موضوع اشاره کنم که با توجه به تجربه‌ی بسیار خوب و بی‌نظیری که در این شهر و کشور چک داشتم، زندگی و تحصیل در این کشور زیبا را به همه توصیه می‌کنم.

The first time I had the opportunity to get to know Olomouc was about a year ago, when I came here for a week-long stay within my double degree programme. Even in such a short time, the city and the university made such a great impression on me that I suddenly had many reasons to return. And now I have been here for the entire academic year.

The most significant difference between the university in Salzburg and the Olomouc Faculty of Law is the teachers' approach. While in Austria I was just a face in the crowd, here the teachers all know me and call me by name. I wasn't used to that. I was pleasantly surprised by their personal approach. They are very willing and helpful.

And Czechs? I was surprised at how many Czechs speak English. And if by chance they don't, they still try to help me in any way they can. Olomouc is also perfect for me in that it isn't far from Salzburg. I regularly go back and forth for study requirements and for work.

And in addition to studies in Olomouc, I also try to enjoy my hobbies. I love cooking for friends, sports, and music. For me, Olomouc is a town of many opportunities, with a great university and friendly, helpful people. In short, the perfect choice for my Erasmus+ stay.

Host to a musical genius

Leopold Antonín Count Podstatský Baron of Prusinovice (1717–1776)

“I’m letting you and all of Salzburg know how miraculously our fate took us to Olomouc, and how extraordinary it was that His Excellency Count Podstatský, on his own impetus, accepted us with a child who could have contracted smallpox. I will not write with what good heart, with what kindness, and in such luxury we were accommodated: I merely wish to pose the question, how many other people would have taken an entire family with a child in such a state, and what is more, out of pure love for one’s neighbour, into their own home? – This act of mercy by His Excellency Count Podstatský will be greatly honoured in the history of the life of our young one, which I will one day publish; for here begins in no uncertain way, the first year of his new life.”

The Mozarts in Olomouc

Such was the praise for the Olomouc Capitular Dean, Leopold Antonín Count Podstatský, Baron of Prusinovice, from

Leopold Mozart in a letter dated 10 November 1767, addressed to the houseman of the Mozarts’ family home in Salzburg, Lorenz Hagenauer, describing the events surrounding the Mozarts’ flight from Vienna to Olomouc during a smallpox epidemic. Leopold Mozart, his wife Anna Marie Walburga, and their two “miraculous children” – sixteen-year-old pianist Maria Anna Walburga (Nannerl) and the musical virtuoso and brilliant composer Wolfgang Amadeus, at that time aged but eleven, arrived in Olomouc on 26 October 1767 and remained here until 23 December 1767.

After a night spent in the public house At the Black Eagle in the Hauenschild Palace on the Lower Square, where the first signs of smallpox were discovered on Wolfgang, Leopold Mozart turned to Dean Podstatský, whom he knew from Salzburg, with a request for help: “After church I went to see His Excellency Count Podstatský, who accepted me with much grace, and when I told him that my boy had taken ill and that I was afraid he might have contracted smallpox, he told me that he would take us in to his own home, since he was not afraid of smallpox in the least. He called for his major-domo, telling him to prepare two rooms, and immediately also sent for his doctor, to go look us up at the Black Eagle.” Dean Podstatský hosted the Mozart family in his residence (now after renovations, the Archdiocese Museum on St Wenceslas Square) and called for his own doctor, Dr Joseph Wolff, MD. Wolfgang’s sister Nannerl contracted smallpox as well; luckily both children had only a slight case of the dangerous infection. During his convalescence, Wolfgang composed his 6th Symphony in F-Major and an unperformed aria for Nepomucena, the nine-year-old daughter of Dr Wolff. (Papa Mozart’s intended

“history of our young one” unfortunately was never written.)

Domiciliary, Canon, and Rector

The parents of the Mozart family’s benefactor, the Imperial Chamberlain and Advisor, František Valerius Count Podstatský, Baron of Prusinovice and Marie Terezie née Countess of Lichtenstein-Castelcorn, were married in the chapel in the Tovačov château on 3 June 1715. Their first male heir was born in Vienna on 21 April 1717. Unlike his younger brother – Alois Arnošt Count Podstatský of Lichtenstein-Castelcorn, Baron of Prusinovice, a diplomat and later Governor of Styria – Leopold Antonín set out from childhood on the spiritual path – his first ordination (tonzura) was granted on 18 July 1727, when he was only ten years old.

A year later Leopold Antonín Count Podstatský, Baron of Prusinovice, became an Olomouc non-resident canon – a domicellus; after studies in Rome, he received his doctorate in both kinds of law in 1738. He was ordained as a priest on 24 December 1741 in Salzburg; on 11 April 1748 he became the resident Canon of Olomouc and due to his legal training became the right-hand man of three consecutive Olomouc bishops.

On 3 July 1764, Podstatský was elected Dean of the Olomouc Chapter and in 1772 he was awarded a high state honour – the Commander’s Cross of the Order of St Stephen. He was an aficionado of Italian musical theatre, was interested in electricity, he collected maps and works of art, and kept for company in his residence “two parrots in wire houses”. In 1776 he was elected Rector of Olomouc University, however he held the office only for a short time as he died on 24 March of that year. He is buried in the crypt of the Olomouc cathedral.

The Olomouc capitular Dean, Leopold Antonín Count Podstatský, Baron of Prusinovice (1717–1776); in the background, a view of Salzburg.

The photograph depicts a copy of an anonymous oil painting from the mid-18th century in the collection of the château in Telč, painted by Franz Ampichl at the end of the 19th century.

The Olomouc Archbishopric, photo: Olomouc Museum of Art, Markéta Ondrušková.





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