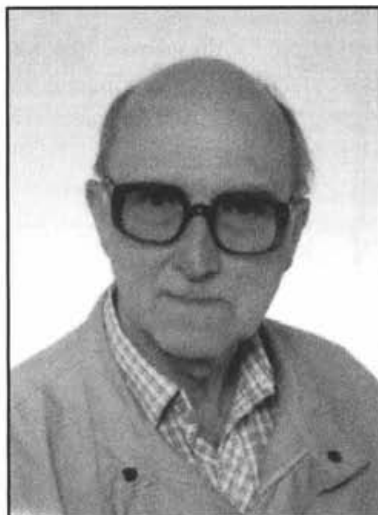


To the 70th birthday of RNDr. Mirko Svrček, CSc.

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It is not easy to commemorate important jubilee of an almost universal floristic and taxonomic mycologist, whose life and scientific work have been described in details in former commemorative articles (Kubička J., Čes. Mykol. 29: 219-228, 1975; Pouzar Z. et Urban Z., Čes. Mykol. 39: 243-249, 1985; Šebek S., Preslia 57: 378-379, 1985, and others) in a way that does not repeat what has already been written and at the same time not creating the impression that an insufficient enumeration of dates might mean our lack of respect for Mirko Svrček. For that reason, we will mention only his day of birth, the 11th of October 1925 in Prague, where he graduated at the Faculty of Science, Charles University,



in 1949, defended his thesis in 1964 and consequently obtained the scientific degree of "candidate of biological sciences". In 1946 he joined the staff of the Department of Botany in the National Museum in Prague, where he has regularly been working since, though he officially retired in the autumn of 1992.

The elder of the authors of this article, Z. Urban, remembers an arranged, but never realized a meeting with Dr. Svrček in the sombre times of the Nazi occupation in 1944. At that time, both secondary school students, fond of nature, knew about their common interest in fungi although they lived in different towns (Prague and Pardubice). After all, Svrček published his first articles about *Volvariella* and *Entoloma rhodopolium* as early as 1942 and 1943 in Časopis českých houbařů (Journal of Czech mycologists) and in the same time Urban published his first articles on rust fungi in the Pardubice region in Věda Přírodní (Natural Science). In that time, both of the initially universal botanists were more interested in fungi and that was not merely fortuitous, as mainly Svrček was influenced by two serious mycologists – the amateurs Ing. Stanislav Havlena and Václav Vacek, the latter working on discomycetes at that time.

However, Dr. Svrček was not only a botanist but he was interested also in different groups of fungi, including lichens. This was probably also due to the fact that he worked in an institute involved in collecting products of nature (in his case fungi), in their exact identification and further study. For that reason

his publication work has since the beginning included articles about new finds in Czechoslovakia and new species of Basidiomycetes. To his larger works belong the monography on the subfamily Tomentelloideae (Thelephoraceae) published in 1960 and that on the orders Hymenogastrales, Hysterangiales and Melanogastrales for the first volume of Flora ČSR, Gasteromycetes (1958). It seems like it were the large collections of lichens in the National Museum that first drew Dr. Svrček's attention to these dual organisms, now systematically classified as fungi. This is proved by his contribution on lichens of the Vltava and the Central Bohemia region (1956). In the same time, he was interested in coloured and through their shape and life interesting Myxomycetes that he obtained from different substrates cultivated in damp chambers. Many Pyrenomycetes, mainly those growing on animal excrements, were equally obtained by cultivation in damp chambers. Other Pyrenomycetes and their conidial states, for instance those growing on herbs and wood were also in the centre of Dr. Svrček's interest and information on remarkable findings was published in *Česká mykologie* (Czech Mycology), mainly in the series on new finds of fungi in Czechoslovakia.

This large interest in almost all groups of fungi was certainly stimulated by his profession but from the beginning probably also by his understandable fascination by the incredible variability of apparently uniform organisms, the diversity of which becomes clear only through microscopical study of structures and through discovering fungi in the most diverse ecotopes. This fascination then became the motivating power of his floristic and taxonomic work, but at the same time the necessary condition for his ecologically oriented mycological research on nature reserves, national parks and protected landscape areas. Nowadays, similar projects are carried out by teams of mycologists. Dr. Svrček is probably our last mycologist who, from the beginning of his field work, has registered and taxonomically and ecologically evaluated the maximal quantity of Basidiomycetes and Ascomycetes from different substrates, ecotopes and plant communities. The list of Dr. Svrček's papers would be long, so let us mention only some localities and regions as an illustration: the Klíčava River Valley in the Protected Landscape Area of Křivoklátsko, the Milešovka Mountain and its surroundings in the Landscape Protected Area of České středohoří, the region of Třeboň and the Novohradské hory Mountains in the South-Bohemian Biosphere Reserve, the Valley of Seven Sources in the High Tatra Mountains, the Low Tatras National Park, etc. Of the running projects let us mention the systematical mycological research in the Krkonoše Mountains National Park carried out since 1986, the first results being published in *Česká mykologie* in 1990, and his several years' collaboration with the Prague Centre of Nature Protection in the mycological research of Prague Nature Reserves, which, unfortunately, was stopped in 1994. Partial results of his research on macromycetes there were nevertheless published in 1985.

When stressing the universality of the mycological personality of Dr. Svrček, we should in no case forget the field in which he has become a world-wide known and respected mycologist, the taxonomy of the rich group of Discomycetes. Very early, under the influence of the already mentioned Václav Vacek, he learned the method of searching, collecting and identifying small cup fungi on both dead and living parts of different plant substrates and he published the first part of the Study on Czech Ascomycetes (in total six parts) in *Česká mykologie* as soon as 1947. In the meantime, he published a large monography on Czech species of the subfamily Lachneoideae, family Pezizaceae in 1948, and later we can find one or more taxonomic and floristic papers on Discomycetes in every volume of *Česká mykologie*. Among the later papers published in the years 1974 – 1992, the series on New or less known Discomycetes is worthy mentioning.

Dr. Svrček's early interest in fungi, and especially in Discomycetes, was probably motivated by the fact that he was living in the country where J. Velenovský had published *České houby* (Czech fungi) in the years 1920 – 1922, *Monographia Discomycetum Bohemiae* in 1934 and two other large works on his latest findings in 1939 and 1947. Already the first mentioned paper caused astonishment abroad, mixed with doubts about the incredible quantity of newly described species and genera of fungi in Bohemia. For that reason, Dr. Svrček considered it absolutely indispensable to review Velenovský's taxa of the Czech Discomycetes and published revision of *Orbilina* in 1954, *Peziza* in 1976, operculate Discomycetes in 1979 and inoperculate Discomycetes in 1985. This meticulous work, as well as his long-year experience and notes on ecology, gathered during his collection activities, enabled him to compile the Catalogue of operculate Discomycetes (Pezizales) of Czechoslovakia (1981) including short ecological notes and a classification of all species according to their ecotopes. A similar catalogue of inoperculate Discomycetes is now being prepared by him. In this short commemoration of Dr. Svrček's anniversary, we will not go into details of his work for the Czechoslovak Scientific Society for Mycology, his being an honorary member of it and member of its committee or his long-year activities (since 1957) as chief editor of *Česká mykologie*. We mention only shortly Dr. Svrček's work during excursions, mycological meetings and conferences organized by the Czechoslovak Scientific Society for Mycology. He is also chairman of the Division of Micromycetes that has organized several seminars during the past years and published three volumes of proceedings.

One of the important activities of Dr. Svrček has always been his help to young mycologists and students of mycology. Many years after he had graduated from University he returned back to the place where he had started his scientific career as an opponent to dissertations and theses. In the National Museum he provides valuable consultations to students and postgraduate students not only from Prague University, but also from the Universities of České Budějovice, Brno

and Bratislava. The basic manual for students on excursions, but also for a larger public interested in the matter, is the Key for identification of nonvascular plants compiled by a team of specialists and edited by Dr. Svrček.

As has been mentioned earlier, Dr. Svrček, although retired, comes regularly to the National Museum to continue his work on Czech and Slovak Discomycetes. These fungi, as well as gilled fungi, were objects of a number of papers he published in the past years in international journals as *Sydowia* or *Zeitschrift für Pilzkunde*. Large papers on Discomycetes were published together with H. Engel in the series *Beiträge zur Pilzflora der NW Oberfranken* (since 1983). In 1987, he spent four weeks in Finland, where he had been invited to by the University of Turku. This time was also used for studying herbaria at the University of Helsinki and for a short stay at Kevo biological station, situated as far as within the polar circle. In 1992, he was invited by English mycologists to take part in the 11th Congress of European Mycologists in Kew, where he read a paper on Czechoslovak Discomycetes. Since 1981, he has regularly took part in excursions organized by the Group of Mycology of the House of Culture in Plzeň in order to study the mycoflora of Western Bohemia, and mainly of its numerous nature reserves. In 1994, he was one of the leaders of the excursion organized at the occasion of a visit of two leading world mycologists, Prof. D. L. Hawksworth and Prof. O. E. Eriksson.

In this brief retrospective of Dr. Svrček's important life jubilee, we have tried to present him as a mycologist interested in collecting and the laboratory study of many groups of fungi during his entire professional life. Dr. Svrček's universality, together with his kindness and modesty, have made him an pleasant and popular companion on all botanical and mycological excursions. He has become a well-known personality also among mycologists grouped around the *Časopis českých a slovenských houbařů* (*Journal of Czech and Slovak Mycologists*) and in the Czech Mycological Society. For that reason, he was elected honorary member of this Society in 1989 with the right to carry the distinction of the Golden Cantharellus.

In the beginning, the elder of the authors of this paper mentioned the remote beginnings of his contacts with Dr. Svrček. These contacts were developed only after the Liberation in 1945 during common studies, common excursions and in the Czechoslovak Scientific Society for Mycology founded at that time. The welding link of their relation was their common enthusiasm for mycological research and their mutual respect and consideration based on the friendly characters of both partners. The mentioned characters helped their friendship to deepen in favour of both of them and of mycology as well. Therefore, thanks for the common moments full of comprehension. All of us who know Dr. Svrček wish him further joyful years with the fungi!

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