

50 years of *FOLIA PARASITOLOGICA*

As a director of the Institute of Parasitology, which is the publisher of *Folia Parasitologica*, I was asked to write an editorial to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this international parasitological journal. On one hand, it is a great honour for me, as previous Acting Editor, to have the opportunity to briefly overview half a century of history of “our” journal. On the other hand, it is quite difficult for me to write something that is not boring and does not repeat previously presented data, especially when I consider the fact that some of my colleagues, who have worked at the Institute for decades, know much more about the history of this journal than I do.

The journal *Folia Parasitologica* was established in 1954, as *Československá parasitologie* (Czechoslovak Parasitology in English), to publish, in Czech, papers on various aspects of parasitological research. In 1966, the journal was renamed and papers in English and other international languages (German, Russian, etc.) appeared. In the following years (1967–1989), the journal became a medium for presentation of the original results of mainly Czechoslovak parasitologists, with some contributions from foreign specialists, in particular from the socialist countries (former USSR, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc.)

I have to say that due to the political situation and strong omnipresent influence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on all aspects of life in this country at that time, including science, some general presentations had to reflect the ideology of that period. For example, we can read in an article commemorating 40 years of the development of parasitological research in Czechoslovakia: “This year we shall commemorate the glorious path which the Czechoslovak socialist society, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, has followed since the liberation of this country by the Soviet Army from the fascist occupation The Czechoslovak workers’ class, guided by the Communist party after taking over the power of state, was aware of the necessity of science and its importance as a basis of successful development of socialism in this country ...” (FP 32: 97–100, 1985). However, scientific papers were not influenced politically.

Despite these ideological excesses, which were undoubtedly the exception rather than the rule, it is obvious from reading papers published in volumes up until 1989 that a vast majority of contributions presented in *Folia* were of good scientific quality, with several articles of international impact. This is valid especially for papers of the most prominent Czechoslovak parasitologists, who gained international reputations, mostly followers of Prof. Otto Jírovec, the founder of modern Czechoslovak parasitology.

In order to remember the key persons who have helped to maintain *Folia*, a brief survey of the editors is presented at the end of this text. Notwithstanding the period and contribution of each of the persons listed below, all must be acknowledged for their enormous effort and the time dedicated to the preparation of one of the oldest and most traditional parasitological journals in Europe.

Democratic changes in the former Czechoslovakia after November 1989’s “velvet revolution” also had a considerable impact on the journal. Dr. Jiří Lom, who took over the directorship of the Institute of Parasitology at the beginning of 1990, also became the Editor-in-Chief of *Folia*. Based on his long-term experience as a member of editorial boards of numerous international journals and extraordinarily wide knowledge of protistology and other fields of parasitology, revolutionary changes have been introduced since June 1990.

The Editorial Board was substantially changed by the replacement of leaders of research institutions in communist countries with renowned specialists in parasitology, who were able to and interested in actually helping the journal, by reviewing papers, and submitting valuable contributions. A much more rigorous editorial policy, including reviewing of contributions by specialists in respective fields, was reflected in a dramatic increase of the rejection rate. The proportion of authors from developed countries has considerably increased, reaching up to about 70–80%. The quality of printing and reproduction of half-tone illustrations and line drawings has also been significantly improved, which has made it possible to reproduce in adequate quality electron micrographs. The format of the journal has changed as well and large-size plates with illustrations and figures are now published. The anniversary of the journal is also reflected by the change of its layout since the first issue of the 50th volume.

In June 1990, I was appointed Acting Editor of *Folia*. This duty represented hundreds of hours spent on reading, and editing manuscripts submitted to the editorial office, correcting proofs, writing uncountable number of letters and e-mail messages, and doing many other activities necessary for maintaining a scientific journal. Although this job was sometimes hard, I consider this period to represent one of the most important and effective investments in my scientific carrier. In collaboration with Dr. J. Lom and the late editorial assistant Magdaléna Holubová, I learnt a great deal about many aspects of scientific and organisation work. This job also gave me the opportunity to get to know numerous parasitologists at the international level, some of whom then became friends.

In August 1998, Dr. Vladimír Bukva, a renowned acarologist working on demodecids, replaced me as Acting Editor. In 2002, he was appointed Editor-in-Chief and Dr. Lom became one of three Assistant Editors, responsible for protistology. Dr. František Moravec, a leading expert in the taxonomy and biology of fish nematodes, and the most fruitful contributor to *Folia*, is in charge of papers dealing with helminth parasites. Papers on parasitic arthropods and vector-pathogen interactions are dealt with by Prof. Libor Grubhoffer, director of the Institute from 1994–2002.

All the changes made after 1990 were aimed at improving the quality of the journal, attracting contributors to publish high-quality papers with wide impact to parasitologists. The impact factor (IF) of *Folia*, after a short period when it decreased, started to go up in the mid 1990's, with the highest IF (0.977) in 1996. Such an IF placed *Folia* in the top ten parasitological journals. Nevertheless, the value of the IF has somewhat decreased during the last two years. This represents a challenge for the Editors, to find new ways to stimulate authors to submit manuscripts with interesting and attractive results for a wide scientific community, to our journal. *Folia* has focused primarily on papers dealing with the biodiversity of parasites, their taxonomy, life cycles and ecology, with the most representative part devoted to fish parasites. However, the scope of the journal is much wider and its current quality of reproduction is comparable with that of the best parasitological journals.

Publishing a scientific journal is a very difficult task, which requires adequate financial and personal conditions and support. It is even more difficult in the case when the publisher is a non-commercial institution with

limited resources and experience in marketing. In addition, it is extremely difficult to maintain “classical” periodicals in the period of explosive development of information technology, with the preferred use of the internet as a source of information. To successfully compete with on-line published databases and journals, printed periodicals have to offer top quality graphics and a reasonably short publication time.

The Editors of *Folia* and members of its Board of Advisers are leading specialists in different fields of parasitology. Therefore, I have no doubts that they will do their best not only to maintain the journal for next generation, but will also aim to improve its quality and the impact of papers published. Abstracts of papers published during the last 5 years can be found on the web page of the Institute and full versions of the newest issues will be available on-line this year to provide an easy-to-find, quick information source for recently published articles.

On behalf of the directorship of the Institute of Parasitology, and as a person who has dedicated an important part of his life to this journal, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Board of Advisers and, in particular, to the Editors, for their important, never-ending and unprofitable job. I believe this journal will continue to represent a mirror of the quality of parasitological research not only in the Czech Republic but also elsewhere in the world. I wish *Folia* to serve also in the future as a medium which helps the scientific community to share knowledge of parasites, their biology and intimate relationships with their hosts, because parasitism represents, in my opinion, one of the most fascinating phenomena in nature.

Tomáš Scholz

Československá parasitologie (1954–1965) and *Folia Parasitologica* (since 1966) have over the years been supported by many Czech and international parasitologists, whose activity as members of the Editorial Boards, the reviewers of manuscripts, manuscript submissions and support has been greatly appreciated.

The following Czech parasitologists, however, should be mentioned and thanked, as editors, for their dedicated service over the years.

Otto Jírovec (Editor-in-Chief, 1954–1965)

Bohumil Ryšavý (Assistant Editor, 1954–1962)

Bohumír Rosický (Assistant Editor, 1960–1965; Editor-in-Chief, 1966–1985)

Jaroslav Šlais (Assistant Editor, 1963–1970)

Milan Daniel (Assistant Editor, 1971–1973)

Vladimír Černý (Assistant Editor, 1974–1985)

Jan Prokopič (Editor-in-Chief, 1986–1990)

František Moravec (Assistant Editor, 1986–1988 and since 2002)

Karel Kudrna (Assistant Editor, 1989–1990)

Jiří Lom (Editor-in-Chief, 1991–2001; Assistant Editor, since 2002)

Tomáš Scholz (Assistant Editor, 1991–1992 and 1994–1998)

Vladimír Bukva (Assistant Editor, 1993 and 1999–2001; Editor-in-Chief, since 2002)

Libor Grubhoffer (Assistant Editor, since 2002)