

Curriculum vitae

I was born April 6, 1931 in Hradec Králové, Czech Republic. My interest in entomology started at my very tender age and was supported unconditionally by my father MUDr. Oldřich Smetana. His support lasted until I left the country for Canada (see below). He was a bibliophile and after discovering my entomological tendencies, he immediately turned his interest to entomological literature and bought for me several classical works, such as Reitter's *Fauna Germanica*, Ganglbauer's *Käfer von Mitteleuropa*, etc. He also taught me about the importance of published data and how to handle bibliographic records, a knowledge that I used constantly during my career. My first collecting attempts started in the summer of 1941 and I still remember my excitement when in an improvised pitfall trap with a piece of meat, set in our garden in Kukleny (a suburb of Hradec Králové at that time), I had a specimen of *Carabus granulatus*. This event might actually be a reason why I originally turned my attention to carabids, until I saw the light and switched to staphylinids. I also fondly remember my fairly long trip on skis in January 1944 to a forest near Těchlovice with several nests of *Formica rufa*. A large bag of the interior of one nest, containing many myrmecophiles, including *Quedius brevis*, was brought home and processed in our living room to desperate protests of my mother, who saw the ants running around.

After finishing the primary and lower secondary school I attended eight grades of the classical gymnasium (= high school) in the same city. After graduation in 1950 I undertook my studies at the Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, and obtained my M.D. in 1956.

I joined the staff of the Institute of Parasitology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague, continued my studies and obtained my CSc in biology degree in 1959, after successfully defending my thesis on the taxonomy and bionomics of the parasitic order Anoplura of Czechoslovakia. I kept my appointment as a research scientist at the Institute of Parasitology. I continued to study the parasitic order Anoplura, and later I joined the virological unit of the Institute and was involved in the research of the transmission and circulation of tick- and mosquito-borne viruses (ARBO viruses) in natural foci. During my parasitological/virological activities, resulting in a number of publications, I simultaneously worked and published in insect systematics. In the following years I undertook countless collecting excursions in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, many in Bohemia with Jan Roubal, who became my mentor and was a frequent guest in our house in Kukleny. From him I learned a lot about collecting beetles and their identification. My second mentor became Dr. V. Balthasar, who in early fifties held the position of an assistant at the department of biology of the Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové and later became the director of the Natural History Museum in Hradec Králové. Many of the excursions in Slovakia were done with Ivan Löbl, some quite memorable, like the experience of unbelievable masses of beetles in a huge deposit of flood debris at Hron river near Kamenny Most in southern Slovakia. My father accompanied me on many collecting trips in Slovakia, particularly on those to Remetské Hámre in Vihorlat in eastern Slovakia, Kavan and Lekeš were also there. The general collecting there at that time was one of the best I ever experienced. The foreign trips of the earlier times included Albania (1958) during the Parasitological Expedition to that country, Bulgaria (1958), Austria (1960 and 1965, with Löbl and my father), Romania (1962, with my father), Hungary (1964, with Löbl and Jelínek), Great Britain (1964 and 1966, with Steel), and Germany (1966, with Lohse and G. Benick).

In 1967 I was awarded a National Research Council of Canada postdoctoral fellowship in

entomology at the Entomology Research Institute in Ottawa. During the two years tenure of this fellowship I completed a large monograph “Revision of the tribe Quediini of America north of Mexico”, which was published later in 1971 in Ottawa. During that time I did extensive collecting in almost all provinces of Canada (except Newfoundland and the Maritimes), and in many states of western United States (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana), and in the east in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

After returning to Czechoslovakia in the fall of 1969 I joined in 1970 the staff of the Department of Entomology of the National Museum in Prague as a research scientist. My responsibilities there were primarily concerned with the systematics, bionomics and zoogeography of the coleopterous groups Staphylinoidea and Adephaga. I was a member of the first entomological expedition of the National Museum to Iran in 1970.

In 1971 I returned to Canada. I was appointed as a research scientist at the Entomology Research Institute in Ottawa with responsibilities for aquatic Coleoptera (particularly the family Hydrophilidae) and the family Staphylinidae. In addition to the research in the taxonomy, phylogeny and zoogeography of these groups of beetles, I also participated in the National Identification Service providing identifications in all aquatic and several nonaquatic families of beetles. Upon request, I provided consultations and expertise in specific taxonomic and related problems and cooperated with numerous scientists in my field all over the world. I served for about 15 years as the Curator of the Coleoptera part of the Canadian National Collection of Insects. I retired from service in 1999, but continued and still continue to pursue my scientific program (see below) at the same institution.

Since 1980 I became quite interested in the staphylinid fauna (particularly of the subtribes Quediina and Staphylinina) of southeastern Asia, particularly of China. In pursuing these projects, I worked in Japan (1980, together with Löbl, and 1991), in the Nepal Himalaya (1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, together with Löbl, and in 1985), in northern Borneo (1987, 1988, together with Löbl), in Taiwan (1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995) and in mainland China (1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2005). Many papers by myself and other researchers were published based on material collected, including large monographs of the staphylinid subtribe Quediina of the Himalaya (1988) and of Taiwan (1995) and a series of papers on various Chinese members of the subtribes Quediina and Staphylinina (the first series has now 47, the second 26 parts)

I am one of the two Editors of eight volumes of the Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera, published from 2003 to 2013.

I am the author or joint author of about 370 publications, many of which are large taxonomic monographs of certain groups of beetles.

I am a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society of London and a member of Czech Entomological Society, Asociación Europea de Coleopterología, Coleopterological Society of Japan, and Wiener Coleopterologen Verein.

I am trying to keep myself physically fit, I am still playing volleyball on regular basis (together with my three sons and two grandchildren we can put together a complete “Smetana team”), I do

a lot of biking, and I am still enjoying to drive high performance cars.

Dr. Aleš Smetana
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Biodiversity (Entomology)
K. W. Neatby Bldg.
960 Carling Avenue
OTTAWA, Ontario K1A 0C6, Canada

July 16, 2014