

# Preface to Special Issue in Honour of Jiří Kříž

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This issue honours the memory of Jiří Kříž (1943–2024), a world-renowned palaeontologist, stratigrapher, and a pivotal figure in Czech nature conservation. Jiří Kříž was a distinguished scientist specializing in Paleozoic bivalves. His fundamental work on their classification, evolution, and biostratigraphy established him as a global authority, earning him international acclaim and respect. His stratigraphical research was instrumental in establishing several international stratotypes – or “golden spikes” – which serve as global reference points for the boundaries of geological periods. He spent his entire career at the Czech Geological Survey conducting work across palaeontology, stratigraphy, and interdisciplinary studies. His expertise extended beyond the Czech Republic, with his research taking him to various parts of the world, including Europe, Africa, and North America. Beyond his core research, he proposed for protection most of Prague’s now internationally recognized and significant geological profiles and palaeontological localities. Jiří Kříž’s profound legacy includes over two hundred and fifty scientific and popular articles and books that have substantially enriched the fields of geology, palaeontology, and natural conservation.

We are pleased to introduce this issue containing seventeen scientific contributions from authors around the world. The introduction of the issue is dedicated to the person of Jiří Kříž. It contains personal memories of his students (Polechová *et al.*) and colleagues (Hughes, Schönlaub), and list of his key scientific contributions.

The first scientific part is devoted to bivalves, a group highly regarded by Jiří Kříž. Elicki (2025) described new Ordovician fossils, including bivalves from Jordan. The evolutionarily important Early Ordovician bivalves from Montagne Noire are revised by Polechová (2025), while Amler & Friedel (2025) address the early evolution of parallelodontid Arcoidea.

The second part is devoted to the stratigraphy of the Silurian period, covering various topics. The first paper describes Upper Silurian conodonts from Sardinia of Corrigan *et al.* (2025). This is followed by a discussion of the Homeric stratigraphy of the May Hill and Gorsley inliers of England by Ray *et al.* (2025). Tanrikulu & Loydell (2025) deal with integrated bio- and chemostratigraphy in the Ordovician and Silurian of Türkiye, which precedes the biostratigraphy study in the Xiushan area in southwestern China (Wang *et al.* 2025). Cichon-Pupienis *et al.* (2025) demonstrate facies evolution during the Ludfordian on the shelf of Baltica, while Saparin *et al.* (2025) present Early Rhuddanian graptolites from South China. It is followed by an application of integrated stratigraphy in Lower Silurian carbonate facies from Želvyš *et al.* (2025).

The last part deals with the palaeoecology of various fossil groups. The first paper is from Tonarová *et al.* (2025) about the response of the jawed polychaete fauna to the glaciation in the Ludfordian. Maletz & Gutiérrez-Marco (2025) describe the Ordovician benthic graptolite *Ptilograptus*, while Ferretti *et al.* (2025) explore unique fossil preservation in ferruginous deposits in Italy. Vodička *et al.* (2025) present the third chitinozoan egg-laying strategy. Mergl & Frýda (2025) demonstrate Late Silurian brachiopods as indicators of environmental changes. Manda & Turek (2025) describe a colour pattern in Paleozoic orthoceratoid cephalopods (this particular paper is still undergoing the editorial process). The last contribution of Kříž *et al.* (2025) addresses the palaeoecology of a volcanically influenced Silurian sea floor in the Prague Basin. The story of this last contribution began in 1977 with the collaboration of Jiří Kříž and Lesley Cherns and continued with some interruptions up to the present day.

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