



PERSONALIA

KAREL ŽLÁBEK'S LIFE AND WORK IN THE LIGHT OF DOCUMENTS FROM PRAGUE ARCHIVES On the occasion of his 20th death anniversary

ČECH P.

Department of Anatomy, 3rd Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, Prague

Prof. MUDr. RNDr. Karel Žlábek, DrSc., the postwar head and builder of the departments of anatomy (1945–1962) as well as histology and embryology (1945–1953) at the Faculty of Medicine in Brno, continued working here until his retirement (1970) and eventually died here twenty years ago (May 22, 1983). In Prague, on the other hand, Žlábek's had spent 24 years of his youth (1921–1945). Two sets of documents from Prague archives may illustrate some stages of both his life periods: a collection of personal documents from the Archives of Charles University which refers to Žlábek's work in the Prague Department of Anatomy, including an undated personal register of the Prague Faculty of Medicine, documents of the procedures of his demonstratorship (1925–1926), habilitation

(1932–1933) as well as delegation of a stand-in for the chief to him (1939). In six letters from Brno (1947–1952), filed in the Archives of the Academy of Sciences, *Prof. Žlábek* modestly addresses *Prof. František Karel Studnička* in Prague in order to ask for a consultation or for his bibliography, to thank for Studnička's offprints, to offer information concerning a scientific journal, or to send a copy of his own textbook.

The career of the eminent anatomist, *Prof. MUDr. RNDr. Karel Žlábek, DrSc.*, a native of southern Bohemia (born January 8, 1902 in Hrdlořezy near Suchdol nad Lučnicí), climaxed at the Faculty of Medicine in Brno: here he resumed working in the field of anatomy after the postwar reopening of Czech universities (1945); here he built and headed the Department of Anatomy with the admirable anatomical museum (1945–1962) as well as the Department of Histology and Embryology (1945–1953); here he continued working until his retirement (1970); here he has gone through nearly the whole second half of his life up to his death twenty years ago (May 22, 1983).

Prague, on the other hand, had been the scene of his youth; *Žlábek* spent there 24 years (1921–1945) as a student of the Faculty of Medicine (1921–1927) and the Faculty of Natural Sciences (1927–1932), in the Department of Anatomy successively under *Prof. Janošík* (1925–1926), *Prof. Weigner* (1926–1937), and *Prof. Borovanský* (1937–1939) as a demonstrator (1925–1927), a lecturer (1927–1932), a senior lecturer (1933–1939), a stand-in for the chief of the section of topographical and surgical anatomy (1939), and eventually, after the closing down of Czech universities by the Nazis, as a prosector (until 1945).

Some stages of both his life periods may be illustrated by two sets of documents from Prague archives: a collection of *Žlábek's* personal documents from the Archives of Charles University, and six letters to *Prof. František Karel Studnička*, pertaining to the collections of the Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

The collection of *Žlábek's* personal documents, which has been filed in the Archives of Charles University, refers to his work in the Prague Department of Anatomy, including an undated personal register of the Prague Faculty of Medicine, documents of *Žlábek's* demonstratorship procedure (1925–1926), documents of the history of *Žlábek's* habilitation (1932–1933), and documents of *Prof. Borovanský's* endeavour to delegate a stand-in for the chief of the section of topographical and surgical anatomy to the senior lecturer *Žlábek* (1939).