

The Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Geonics
 Palacký University Olomouc, Faculty of Science
 journal homepage: www.geonika.cz/mgr.html
 doi: <https://doi.org/10.2478/mgr-2023-0016>

SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION

In memory of Stanislav Martinát (1976–2023)

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Abstract

On Sunday, August 13, 2023, Stanislav Martinát – a respected Czech geographer and member of the Editorial Board of Moravian Geographical Reports journal – died after a short serious illness at the age of 47. Despite his relatively young age, Stanislav Martinát was one of the most productive and the most cited Czech geographers. He is the author or co-author of over 100 peer-reviewed articles, of which more than 70 were published in journals indexed in the Web of Science database. This article is a collection of personal memories from people from different workplaces from several countries who had the opportunity to work with Stanislav (Standa) and to share a part of their life stage with him.

Keywords: Stanislav Martinát, In memoriam, Czech Republic

Article history: Received 15 September 2023, Accepted 25 September 2023, Published 30 September 2023

Legends never die

(A memory from Pavel Klapka)

Standa left us on August 13, which had been quite a shock for me, and memories of him and wisecracks he had used have come back to me virtually every day since. I met Standa in 1996, on the first day when we had started our university studies in geography. Well, not the very first day because Standa spent the first week rambling around pubs in the city of Brno, enjoying the student life. We immediately became close friends, we were roommates in college, I was his best man at their wedding with Ilona (a schoolfellow of ours as well), we shared an office at the Institute of Geonics, and I was happy to have him teaching at the department of geography, Palacký University Olomouc. Even

though after he had moved to Arizona and then to Wales and our personal meeting were rare, we always talked as if we had seen each other just the day before.

I will miss Standa greatly and still cannot believe that he is no longer with us. I will always remember him for several things. His sense of humour resembled something of the funniest mix of Monty Python and fictional Czech genius Jára Cimrman, but quite original – dry and absurd wit, which we used to call ‘Standa’s humour’, for some hard to get.

Standa was a positive person, Standa was an optimistic person, both these traits of his were so true and believable that he managed to hide even from his closest friends that he is battling very serious illness, always saying ‘I’m OK’, ‘It’s getting better’,

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‘When I get well, I’ll go to see you, mates, in Brno or Olomouc...’ Standa was a mild person hating and avoiding conflicts, always trying to settle both academic disputes and pub quarrels. Standa was a loving and devoted husband and father. Standa was always ready to give hand selflessly both in personal and academic life. For me, Standa was a true friend, one of the best in my life. And, with regard to what I know now about last months of his life, Standa was also a brave man!



Fig. 1: Standa and P. Klapka during a trip to Vienna in December 2010
Photo: P. Klapka

Ecce homo from coal mining region!

(A memory from Petr Klusáček)

I had the honour to work with Standa at the Institute of Geonics for more than 20 years. We both started as PhD students about the beginning of the third millennium to successfully work our way through the next intermediate stages (post-doc fellow, research assistant and research scientist) up to the highest possible position of senior scientists. Standa can be remembered from many different perspectives. I will personally remember him primarily as a regional patriot being proud of his origins in the coal mining region, and as an extremely communicative and hard-working mate endowed with a great optimism and life energy, with a broad knowledge of various disciplines.

In 2002, Standa and I started working on a research project dealing with the effects of the decline of coal mining on the environment in the Ostrava region. Standa, who came from this region with a long tradition of coal mining and heavy industries (he was born in Havířov city to the miner’s family), introduced me to many hidden beauties of this region, which was practically unknown to me at the time. For example, we had visited the Lower Vítkovice industrial complexes long before this site became the most visited regional monument that even sought to be listed among the UNESCO’s World Heritage Sites. Furthermore, I had an opportunity to admire the leaning Church of St. Peter of Alcantary (the last remnant of the old town of Karviná, which was destroyed by undermining) at a time when this church was quite unknown to the Czech public, as it became famous now thanks to the popular novel ‘The Leaning Church’ by Karin Lednická. Of course, Standa showed me also places little explored by tourists, such as the monumental architecture in the style of socialist realism in Poruba municipal district – not far from the headquarters of the Institute of Geonics in Ostrava. He also liked to admire a nice view of Lysá Hora mountain from the Institute’s headquarters. Standa was very fond of the Beskydy Mountains, since – as he pointed out – one part of his family came from these mountains to the city for work, and he often visited his parents’ cottage in the mountains.

Standa was duly proud of his coal region and he was able to show visitors not just the beautiful places, but also to present and eruditely speak about places with serious problems, such as the oil lagoons in Ostrava (one of the hugest ecological burdens in the country) or socially excluded localities in Hrušov quarter. As part of one international project, he organised a field excursion to a socially excluded locality inhabited mainly by Roma minorities in Ostrava and I can still remember the shocked faces of some foreign participants when Standa – with his typical smile – prompted them to get off the bus and take a walk through the area. There was a sunny weather and many locals were enjoying the beautiful day in front of their houses on various pieces of furniture pulled right out on the street. After all, most of the participants enjoyed the walking tour very much!

In my opinion, a positive relationship to his native region has been reflected even in his relationship to Brno city, where he studied and then lived for several years. Sometimes Standa characterised it in a way critically as a “city with a bourgeois character with many cafés for intellectuals”. Perhaps also for that reason, he later moved with his family back to his “proletarian” coal region. They built their own house on the outskirts of Frýdek-Místek city, from where he was commuting daily through the mining landscape formed by the Paskov mines to work in Ostrava and also to lecture at the university in Karviná. Standa was not only an expert on his native region, but he also understood the people living there. This understanding was manifested, among other things, by that he was able to present results of his geographic research successfully not only to colleagues from other disciplines (e.g., mathematicians or mining engineers), but also to other people working at our Institute, including technicians, maintenance workers or cleaners.

Standa was a man with an extreme knowledge of various disciplines that had probably something to do with the fact that he studied history in addition to geography as part of the master’s degree. Although he did not continue his doctoral studies in history and devoted himself only to geography, his relationship to history never disappeared. During his business trips abroad, he was interested in places where historical events were written and where some iconic buildings were located, whether it was New York City or Istanbul. Even during his business trips it was evident how extremely communicative and literally brimming with life energy he was. While many other people were tired after full day of demanding meetings and discussions and they directed their steps to the quiet of their hotel rooms, Standa was thinking up other social activities in the evening. Many times I was quite tired

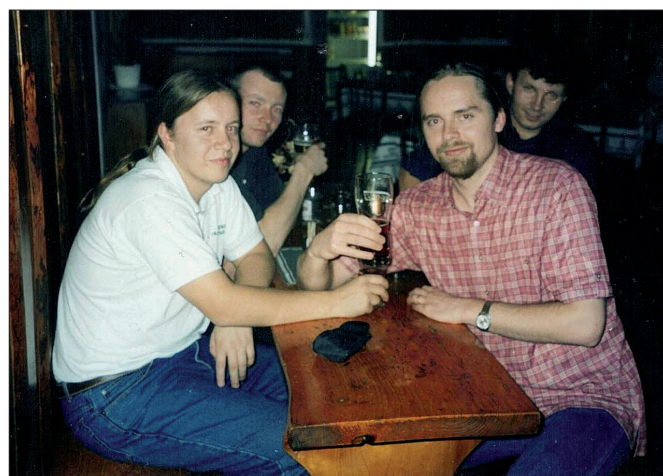


Fig. 2: Standa (in white polo-shirt) with mates from the Institute of Geonics at a trade union social event (bowling tournament) in Komorní Lhotka, November 2002
Photo: E. Kallabová

after a long day of meetings and preferred to relax alone reading or just watching sports on TV, but Standa convinced me that it is important to socialise and use the time for discussing new project proposals or shaping concepts for future common papers.

Standa was an extremely efficient and hardworking colleague. In relation to research projects, these qualities manifested in such a way that even as an ordinary member of the team he actively participated in the preparation of interim and final reports, which is among the activities being not very appreciated in the evaluations in today's academic world. His approach to research projects implementation can be described as above-standard professional. He devoted a lot of time and energy to implementation of results and sustainability of deliverables of applied research projects even after their completion. In the field of publishing, his diligence was evident in his willingness to take incredibly long and patient revisions of manuscripts. In the case of one of our recent papers, the manuscript had to be revised seven times. While most of the co-authors liked to give up (they didn't want to deal with new and further comments from referees which were sometimes irrelevant from the perspective of geography) and preferred to submit it to different journal, Standa convinced them that the manuscript should be continuously revised while there was still a chance. And finally, this geographical article was accepted and published in a prestigious sociological journal thanks to his diligence and correct scientific effort! Despite many successes in the field of grants and publications, Standa has remained modest and it was pleasant to work with him also because a scientific fame never entered his head.

In conclusion, I have to say that, unfortunately, not just an excellent geographer, but above all a great person and friend has left us forever. Standa – your erudition, scientific enthusiasm and human smile will be greatly missed by all of us! Rest in peace.

Making friends, crossing borders, staying grounded

(A memory from Dan van der Horst)

I first met Stanislav Martinat, along with Bohumil Frantal on the platform of Brno bus station in 2010. Despite the contrasting hair styles, they worked like a great team; down to earth and welcoming but also well organised and focused. I was honoured to be invited and curious to see a new place and meet new people, but I had no idea it would be more than a one-off.

More than a dozen years later and Standa's smiling face is the first thing you see when you open my page on google scholar; he stands at the top of my list of co-authors. The algorithm is correct; it has been the longest and biggest academic collaboration in my career. But the numbers hide the process; Standa was not my co-author; mostly I was his. Or 'theirs' to be more precise, but with Standa acting as interlocutor. He often invited me to contribute to papers that were already drafted, or even papers that had already been accepted by journals subject to revisions. I helped to sharpen introductions and conclusions, to clarify some of the terminology and add more local context for the benefit of foreign readers like myself. But I never really had to touch the contents, question the analysis or make significant additions to the literature review; the work was always very solid and the logic crystal clear. Standa would have politely disagreed if I had said this, but in truth it felt as if my most valuable contribution was that of an English language editor.

It helped my own CV and citations of course. Most of the papers are in good international journals, including some where I had aspired to publish in but never managed before on my own. But mostly I did it because I really liked working with Standa and his Geonics colleagues, personally and academically. I learned a lot about the post-socialist transition and the huge disruptions it brought to rural communities, land use and the agricultural



*Fig. 3: At the westernmost point of the Czech Republic on the border with Germany, October 2016. From the left: S. Martinát, D. van der Horst, J. Kunc, Z. Szczyrba and B. Frantál)
Photo: B. Frantál*

sector. My research focuses on the (just) transition to a low carbon society but in the rural parts of post-socialist countries, this can be seen as yet another externally-driven systemic change, inflicted on the people and the landscape. Post-socialist brownfield sites bear witness to the disruptive and often destructive nature of this change, but also open up ('cheap') land for the capture of renewable energy from the wind and sun. Equally symbolic are the biogas plants; they are a permitted (and allegedly green) development which allowed agricultural businesses to keep growing maize for local non-human consumption after EU accession had led to the decimation of Czech cattle industry. The work of Standa and his colleagues provided novel, clear and thought-provoking evidence of the uneven geographical distribution of these disruptions; evidence which was very much under-reported in the international academic literature at the time. Their surveys often provided insights into how rural citizens struggled to make sense of (and make a living despite) these changes and how they reflected on the underlying justice questions; how are local communities affected, who actually benefits from these 'investments' and to what extent should policy schemes and development projects be changed to ensure more sustainable and locally fair outcomes; socially, environmentally and economically.

Working with Standa and his colleagues, I learned to recognise my own academic privileges (e.g. more generous UK salaries, ease of having to work and publish only in one language, easier to publish UK studies in international journals with many UK academics on the editorial board). But more importantly I grew to admire how this new generation of academics managed to grow and develop in a far more challenging landscape, with very few senior professors to provide relevant coaching and guidance (communism didn't exactly promote independent and critical social science), with state funding assessed strictly through natural science performance indicators and with new and harsh 'Publish in English or Perish' expectations. I appreciated their outward facing nature, balanced with an element of regional pride (as in the title of MGR). And I developed a lot of respect for the attitude embodied by Standa; why compete if you can collaborate; always aim for the sky, and when you succeed, don't make a fuss about it.

We collaborated in Czech and European projects, he gave great guest lectures to my students, and we caught up at various conferences and workshops across Europe. But my fondest memories are from travelling with Standa and his colleagues, across Czech regions and border lands in the heart of Europe, visiting energy projects and discussing politics, history and

academic life over hearty regional dishes in pubs that had been carefully selected after asking a good sample of locals where ‘dobře pivo’ was being served (I thought all Czech beer was good). He was a decade younger than I, always easy going, up-beat and engaging. I was very impressed by his achievements and proud to call him a colleague and friend. I thought the next collaboration would come just as easily and naturally as the previous one, and perhaps more so now that he had a permanent contract in Aberdeen, at the James Hutton Institute where I had done my PhD and where we had colleagues in common. I deeply regret not having made the most of our friendship and I will miss him for a long long time.

A citizen of the world, full of geography in his biography

(A memory from Oleg Golubchikov)

The loss of Stanislav (Standa) is hard to believe. He was just always so full of life, full of activities, and full of optimism. His optimism was inspiring and reassuring, even in hard times. Even talking of his own illness, at the peak of it in June, he wrote to me: “I think that the situation will improve, I’m sure about that”. On the 11th of August, two days before the end of his life, his message was still stoic: “I’m good (with ups and downs).” Who knew this would be the last I heard from him.

I first met Standa in 2013, on the introduction of Dan van der Horst. But it was five years later, when he started his fellowship at our School at Cardiff University, that we got to know each other better and became friends. Standa had an easy-going and open character. I will always remember him with a smile on his face and wearing his characteristic shorts and t-shirt (irrespective of the weather or season). Standa was a supportive and trustworthy colleague, always happy to allow himself to advise others and develop ideas together. This is despite him having a very busy academic life and being prolific in writing and publishing.

It was much educative to talk to and spend time with Standa. His knowledge on energy transitions, post-industrial landscape, and Eastern Europe was comprehensive yet detailed and precise, with a plenty of examples to learn from. Native of Ostrava, an old-industrial city in Czech Silesia, on the border with Polish Silesia, he was a voice of the periphery, not a “capital city guy”. He was keen to explore the geographical varieties in their complexity, as they are, not being blinded by centrality. He had acute interest in peripheral areas, many of which have experienced neglect and abandonment. Many of his publications map such derelict areas, brownfields, and landscapes of decline. But they also actively seek ways to put such areas on trajectories for regeneration and sustainable development. I also learnt much from him about the Czech Republic (Standa insisted it was Prague-centric and historically incorrect to call the country “Czechia”).

Even as Standa moved his job to Aston University and then to the James Hutton Institute, he and his family continued to live in Cardiff. He did not want to disrupt the school studies of his beloved and clever sons, Vojtech and Tadeas. His wife Iлона also had a job in Cardiff, teaching English for foreign students. We met them regularly as families in Cardiff over these few years – which was always memorable and warm events. Standa had a beautiful and intelligent family.

Standa loved his motherland and kept his Czech academic affiliations. And yet he was a citizen of the world, full of geography in his biography. He chose to do his PhD in Slovakia and loved Bratislava, combining his research there with his work at the Institute of Geonics in Brno. He had many research projects and colleagues across Eastern Europe. He always had fond memories of spending time in Arizona in the US in 2016. Wales has become his last home. This is where he died so untimely and tragically. Standa will always be greatly missed.

A great personality and visionary in sustainable land use and brownfield redevelopment

(A memory from Stephan Bartke)

Stanislav Martinát, a remarkable figure in the realm of sustainable land use and brownfield redevelopment, has left an indelible mark on our field and the hearts of those who had the privilege of working alongside him. Standa's passion, dedication, and his remarkable ability to bridge geographical and professional divides have not only advanced our understanding of sustainable land management but also enriched the lives of colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

I had the honor of collaborating closely with Standa on several projects and publications, experiences that I will forever cherish. Our journey together was particularly shaped by our work on the FP7 project TIMBRE from 2011 to 2014. Standa was the perfect team player, always open to suggestions and tirelessly working to improve our outcomes, ensuring the thoughtful application of methods both in the geographic methodological and in the Eastern Central European context.

In the realm of sustainable land use, particularly in brownfield redevelopment, Standa was a trailblazer. He possessed a unique ability to identify, map, and trace the potential for success and the barriers to brownfield development. His work in the TIMBRE project stands as a testament to his commitment to user-oriented solutions in this critical field. From 2014 to 2017, Standa and Petr Klusacek played pivotal roles in the H2020 INSPIRATION project, where they were instrumental in developing the INSPIRATION Strategic Research Agenda. This agenda, based on the input of over 500 European stakeholders, including funders, scientists, policymakers, and public administrators, owes much of its success to Standa's dedication and expertise, especially in the context of brownfield reuse.

Standa's contributions extended beyond the professional realm. He was a true ambassador for his homeland, the Czech Republic, and his warmth and hospitality were evident during our visits to Brno and Standa's home town Ostrava. These gatherings not only fostered intellectual exchange but also provided a glimpse into the rich culture and hospitality of the South Moravian and Moravian-Silesian regions.

While we celebrate Standa's professional achievements, we also remember the person behind the researcher—the devoted husband and loving father of two sons. Our thoughts are with his family during this difficult time as they navigate this profound loss. Standa's passing leaves a void in our professional and personal lives, but his legacy will continue to inspire us to push the boundaries of sustainable land use and brownfield redevelopment. Let us remember him not only for his academic contributions but also for the warmth and friendship he shared with all of us.

In Standa's memory, let us continue the work he was so passionate about, striving to make sustainable land management a reality for our shared future. With heartfelt condolences and warm remembrance.

A wanderer who brought knowledge and goodness

(A memory from Robert Krzysztofik)

Shortly before Standa left us, he wrote to me – “I have some ailments, but they will end soon. Even if it takes a little longer, I will still meet students online in October.” I replied to him that “everything is OK”. “For students, a lecturer like You will always be the best. Regardless of the form in which he gives lectures. They always aroused admiration and recognition”. In both cases, they resulted from Standa's great knowledge, but also from sympathy and kindness for other people. Everyone who knew Standa, even

briefly or only temporarily, felt it. Standa was full of this human kindness. He gave it to everyone around us. Everyone... Even those who didn't realise it.

Shortly before Standa left, we also arranged to see interesting brownfields in Sosnowiec. In winter, maybe in spring. I have planned a walk for this occasion... I would like to write that since I am in this place now, I will no longer be able to show it to him. However, I know that it is different... It is impossible to be in this place without thinking about Standa, his passion, knowledge and this sincere desire to see this place.

We learned a lot from him, and especially local communities learned a lot from Standa. He passed on knowledge and also goodness to others. I know that Standa will remain with us forever. Among us researchers, he was and will be a great man, a good colleague and an excellent scientist.

P.S. On September 19, 2023, the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice honored the memory of Dr. Stanislav Martinat, professor at the University of Silesia, with a minute of silence.

Creative friend with eternal optimism

A memory from Marián Kulla

I was introduced to Standa at a scientific conference by professor Spišiak, my colleague and Standa's dissertation supervisor. I still remember his words „Majo, this is my very smart PhD student from Moravia“. Our first conversation was not long, but it was long enough for me to find out Standa is a right guy.

After this meeting, our communication began to intensify, leading to scientific collaboration. The very first scientific output was the study presented at the conference in Lithuania. I have to admit that working with Standa was amazing. He was very creative, hardworking, and reliable. We decided to develop our scientific cooperation in the form of a joint project on the development of biogas energy in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In the summer of 2017, I visited him in Karvina for this purpose. There, together with Petr Dvořák, we prepared a draft of the project, and Standa gave us a perfect excursion around the town and its surroundings affected by coal mining. Subsequently, we met in the spring of 2018 in the South Moravian village of Bořetice already while solving the project. It was once again confirmed to me how creative and skilled Standa was in his field. In addition to work, these meetings gave us the opportunity to share matters from our personal or family life. This is how I got to know Standa even more as a great colleague, friend, and also



Fig. 4: Standa and B. Frantal on a trip to Niagara Falls, April, 2014
Photo: B. Greer-Wootten

husband and father. The time spent with him was very pleasant. We had good time until late night and we agreed that he would visit us in Košice.

Subsequently, in connection with Standa's new place of work in Cardiff, Wales, we met in person only once at a conference. We replaced personal meetings with intensive e-mail communication or video calls. Together with other colleagues, we managed to produce several valuable scientific publications, for which I am very grateful to Standa. During our entire cooperation, he radiated good mood, optimism and peculiar humour.

The news of Standa's death shocked and hurt me. I knew about his health problems, but until the last moment his messages seemed incredibly optimistic. In them, he repeated words like: "Majo, don't worry it will be fine" or "I feel much better now". Unfortunately, the reality was different. In the person of Standa, I lost an excellent co-worker, colleague, but above all a good friend. Unfortunately, we will not be able to realise our plans to sit down for a beer in the Košice Hlavná Street. Rest in peace my friend.

Crossing borders of the impossible, building robust bridges

(A memory from Miroslava Ondráčková and Bryn Greer-Wootten)

It is difficult to know where to start. Standa was always there, always able to provide help and assistance, regardless of the task. He had a presence of mind that was instrumental on many many occasions. For the Moravian Geographical Reports, he held the somewhat ceremonial title of "Business Manager", although it is likely that he cared little for either business or management. But as ever he did his job very well and undoubtedly a good part of the rise to prominence of MGR is due to his efforts on our behalf.

Of the myriad examples that could come to mind as remembrances of his inscrutable presence, two stand out. The first is when he and Bohumil Frantal were on their way to the AAG conference in Tampa, and they visited us in Toronto. By chance, some good friends had family with a fruit farm in the Niagara peninsula and we spent a very pleasant day visiting them. To witness Standa's joy and exuberance among all the apple and pear trees is never to be forgotten, even after the wonders of Niagara Falls!

The second instance covered several visits to brownfields, one in particular in Ostrava stirred his soul – "Why should people have to live so close to such a degraded environment?" In fact, the relations between humans and their environments were at the core of his concerns and made him the exemplary geographer that he was.

Finally, as some tribute to his recent sojourn in Wales with Ilona and their two great boys, let us ask Dylan Thomas for some words of condolence – Standa himself could well have said them: "Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rave at close of day; Rage, rage against the dying of the light." You will always be with us, Standa.

That will have to be enough

(A memory from Mike Pasqualetti)

Standa was one of the kindest men I have ever known. If he had just that one trait, it would have been more than enough to sustain a solid friendship. Yet, there was more, much more to him. He was a consummate professional, a respected and well-published scientist, a loving husband to Ilona, and the father to two wonderful sons, Vojta and Tad.

I treasure memories of being in his company several times over the years. In 2012, in Brno, Czech Republic, we visited a magnificent house designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe known as Villa



Fig. 5: Standa at the Apache trail, Arizona, April 2013
Photo: B. Frantál

Tugendhat. It had been added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2001 and was the central “character” of “The Glass Room”, a novel set during World War II. Knowing my interest, Standa joined with me on a tour of the Villa when I was in Brno for a conference. Understandably, the tour was in Czech. Standa kindly translated for me without prompting. Later during that same visit, Standa and I joined others on a field excursion to lignite mines near Most city and wind turbines on the border with Germany.

Not long afterward, we were together again at the AAG conference in Los Angeles. After paper sessions finished, I took him and our mutual friend Bohumil Frantál to the Griffith Observatory overlooking the city. It was a notably clear day. Later on that same trip, he and Bohumil visited me in Arizona. I showed them the vast desert urban landscape in and near Phoenix. He remarked that he wasn’t in Brno anymore!

Little did I know at the time that a few years later we were to be together again, this time for a more sustained period. He was a visiting Fulbright Scholar in the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning at Arizona State University where I continue on the faculty. It was my turn to serve as host (minus the need to offer translating services). It was a pleasure, especially because this time he brought his entire family.

Years went by, but we always maintained a correspondence as he accepted various academic positions in the UK. Today, Ilona holds several responsible positions including teaching English in Cardiff, Wales. The boys continue benefit from the international experiences Standa and Ilona always supported. Vojta has just started at the University of Bristol and Tad is entering sixth form college. And life goes on.

But it goes on without Standa. Although I will never forget the times I spent with him, I made a common mistake: I always expected there would be many more opportunities. Instead, I will have to be satisfied with the memory of how he graced my life and all the others who knew him. That will have to be enough.

‘Remembrance is a form of meeting’

(A memory from Justyna Chodkowska-Miszczuk)

I met Stanislav (Standa) Martinat several years ago. First, our research paths crossed in the context of the publication of my article in the Special Issue *Moravian Geographical Reports* on

energy geographies. Later, we had the opportunity to work together on a project concerning the operation of biogas plants in a local structure (comparative studies in Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia). While doing research together in the Czech Republic, I came to know Standa as a smiling, open, and passionate man. He was characterised by an extraordinary confidence in others, impeccable manners (so rare nowadays), and modesty. The local business people and decision-makers we interviewed were exceptionally friendly towards him. He knew how to win people over, regardless of their background, age, social status, or whether they held a prominent public position. He showed me Ostrava and Karvina from slightly different perspectives, not as typical tourist destinations, but choosing personalised, individualised paths, and local contexts connected with history, tradition and local cuisine, like an eminent Geographer.

The following years were full of joint professional activities. Finalising the empirical analyses carried out, we worked on joint articles and further projects, often expanding our team. He always remained optimistic, even when our hard work was not always met with enthusiasm. He was a man curious about people and the world. He saw the synergy in the collaboration and joint action of many people and, therefore, different perspectives. I remember how we met at the AAG conference in New Orleans, where I had a presentation during a session he co-organised. Apart from his amazement that I had arrived in the evening the day before I spoke (the session started at 8 a.m.), I remember how passionately he talked about the places he had visited and those yet to come. He was absorbing the world and inspiring people.

Just a few months ago, we were discussing joint scientific activities, including more on-site query research, this time in Poland. In the spring, he wrote to say that he was very sorry but that he had to cancel his visit to Poland for health reasons. At the same time, he kept assuring me that everything was going well, that he was already feeling better, and that everything would be fine. Back at the beginning of August, we were still working out the details of how we would continue to work together. I wrote Standa my last e-mail on 16 August. As it later turned out, it was after he had already died. This tragic news reached me later. To say that it was a shock and disbelief is like saying nothing at all.

We were not given the chance to meet, as we had planned, to carry out the research in Poland, but I am convinced, following the words of Khalil Gibran: ‘Remembrance is a form of meeting’, that there are countless more encounters ahead of us.

The show must go on

(A memory from Bohumil Frantál)

The news of Standa's death came as a shock to most people. For the last few weeks, I have somehow suspected that his health condition and prospects for recovery will not be as optimistic as he presented to his friends and colleagues. However, even I did not expect the end to come so soon. Back in May, we were talking about how it would be great to see the AAG conference in Hawaii next year. Unfortunately, we're not going to go anywhere together anymore.

I haven't spent as much time traveling with anyone (including my wife) as I have with Standa. Together we have been to more than 20 different countries. When some interesting conference came up or there was a need to participate in a project meeting, Standa could be counted on to go. I always looked forward to trips with him. You could talk to him not only about work issues, but about everything – from geography, politics, through history, contemporary culture to music and sports. We were often forced to solve various private matters and problems while travelling that we discussed together. Standa was one of the most relaxed, communicative and non-confrontational people I have met in my

life. Despite the fact that we had different views on many things, it probably never happened that we argued or that he really annoyed me with something (hopefully he would say the same about me).

Standa had a knack for finding common ground, sanding down edges, and brought calm and optimism to problem solving. When we flew to the United States for the AAG conference in April 2010, we took our wives with us to visit Washington D.C. and New York City. At that time, Standa already had two small sons, whom they left at home for their grandmother to take care of them. The eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland then paralysed air traffic and changed the plans of many people around the world. When we wanted to rebook our cancelled flight (it was not possible to deal with it via the Internet or by phone at the time, we had to go personally to JFK airport, which was already full of people from cancelled flights), they offered us the first free flight in a month. That was a shock. We had to deal with accommodation, money and other things. Of course, Standa's wife, who was worried about their small boys, suffered the worst. At that time, Standa calmed the situation with his typical "it will be fine... it will be done somehow". In the end, everything turned out better than expected and we enjoyed a few extra days in warm spring New York. Only Standa was a little unhappy that on the flight back in the business class (where he got a seat as a replacement for our cancelled flight) instead of the obligatory "chicken or pasta" they served him shrimps with white wine (although he loved traveling and foreign countries, in terms of food, he was not a big gourmand and was most satisfied with traditional Czech „svíčková“ or German bratwurst).

Standa was the first person I shared an office with when I joined the Institute of Geonics in 2002. He introduced me to the secrets of the Institute's functioning at that time, showed me how to safely surf the internet and other important things. We never dreamed that we would spend next 20 years at this workplace. But it was a time of easy going and chill. We did not deal with the Impact Factors and H-indexes, and at that time not even mortgages. We were carefree "young researchers".

At that time, we spent a lot of time in the Institute's archive at Veslařská Street, where we (with Petr Klusáček and Pavel Klapka) revised and digitalised (i.e. transcribed into an Excel spreadsheet) the complete library collection of Geonics (over 30,000 books!). We loved going there. It was a quiet place and you could find a lot of historical treasures in the form of old atlases and memorabilia from the time of the original Geographical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Moreover, associate professor Jan Lacina had a detached workplace there, who was the source of countless stories, a wonderful storyteller and a companion for a bottle of wine or schnapps.

Standa was a geographer of agriculture. Not that he would choose it himself. It was directly assigned to him, as was the custom at that time in our Institute (it needed to be done and no one was doing it). Standa took up the field conscientiously and over the years found his research "niches" in it, in which he came up with original research and results (at first he dealt with the problems of agriculture in the mountainous and disadvantaged areas, later he focused on the spatial aspects of the development of biogas plants). But he is probably most famous in the field of brownfields research, where he is often ranked among the world's most influential authors (see Lin et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2021).

As part of the project "Geography of small Moravian towns", we traveled quite a lot back then and created stories that are still remembered today. Trips to the towns of Telč or Nové Město na Moravě have become legendary. In Nové Město, Standa also came up with the idea of renewing of publishing the journal "Zprávy Geografického ústavu ČSAV" (Reports of the Geographical



Fig. 6: Standa with his wife Ilona at Coney Island, New York City, April, 2010

Photo: B. Frantál

Institute) in a form of DIY zine, and he assumed the position of "chairman" (Martinát, 2005). The so-called 'Seria Nuova' of Reports has become a cult zine for many thanks to its snappy essays on the border between serious science, geographical satire and anti-alcohol humor. It is sad fact that four of the "young geographers" who published in this zine are no longer with us (apart from Standa, also Dan Seidenglanz, Jakub Novák and Jana Temelová).

Standa had been heading „to the West“ since his studies and saw the potential in collaboration with Anglo-Saxon geography. He was constantly looking for funding opportunities for various projects, foreign internships, he registered at all kinds of research platforms and social networks, and actively approached potential partners. As part of his ECOP (Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme) project "Improvement of professional skills and abilities of geographers of the Institute of Geonics", in 2010 he managed to invite several personalities of world geography to lecture in Brno, including Dan van der Horst, Gordon Walker, Damian Maye, Michael C. Hall, Maarten Wolsink, Mike Pasqualetti and Keith Halfacree. These lectures became the basis of the book "New Rural Spaces..." (Frantál & Martinát, 2013) and were the beginning of a fruitful collaboration with many of those mentioned, which continues to the present day.

Standa adapted very well to the Czech science evaluation system, when only journal articles began to be counted and "rewarded". Expressed in the ice-hockey terminology, he was a very productive player – in terms of both goals and assists. Although he was extremely publicationally efficient in the context of Czech geography (also thanks to his cooperation with many colleagues from abroad), he did not use the so-called „kafemlejnek“ (coffee grinder) system in a targeted manner and did not reduce himself to shooting down as many easy birds as possible with little effort. On the contrary, he always tried to publish in the most prestigious journals, which often cost him a lot of time and effort in revising and adapting texts. I believe that he would soon succeed even in the Nature, which he attempted with some papers.

Standa was extremely hard-working and he launched offensives on many fronts simultaneously. This did not only apply to research projects and publishing, but also to other activities. It was certainly also a consequence of the system of (under)funding of science and research in the Czech Republic, which forces scientists to obtain projects from various sources and forces many to have work commitments in several places at the same time. Standa was one of the few who never refused an offer to join a new project (mostly he just didn't join, but led the project himself as a principal investigator), he came up with ideas for papers, innovated the subjects he taught, supervised students, did

not refuse to review articles and evaluate project proposals for grant agencies here and abroad. Nor can I forget his work and support for MGR journal. At the same time, it never happened that he slacked off on the task he accepted. This hard work, often associated with time pressure and stress, may unfortunately have eventually contributed to his illness (who knows?).

In the person of Standa, we are losing not only an excellent scientist and teacher, but especially a loving and devoted husband and father, friend and comrade with indomitable optimism, modesty and a sense of humor.

It won't be easy to continue without you, Standa. But as you would say: "It will be done somehow... it will work". The show must go on.

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Please cite this article as:

Frantál, B., Bartke, S., Chodkowska-Miszczuk, J., Golubchikov, O., Greer-Wootten, B., Klapka, P., Klusáček, P., Krzysztofik, R., Kulla, M., Ondráčková, M., Pasqualetti, M. J., & Van der Horst, D. (2023). In memory of Stanislav Martinát (1976–2023). *Moravian Geographical Reports*, 31(3), 174–181. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mgr-2023-0016>