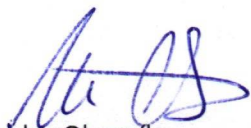


Supervisor's review of Jan Michálek

Jan Michálek entered my lab in 2013 and started to work on a promising project, sequencing the genomes of chromerid algae, particularly on the annotation of their nuclear genomes and reconstructions of plastid-related metabolic pathways. He was supposed to analyze fatty acid biosynthesis and non-mevalonate isoprenoid biosynthesis in chromerids (published in eLife and Biomolecules) and substantially participate in the reconstruction of proposed models of respiratory chains in *Chromera* and *Vitrella* (Molecular Biology and Evolution). Jan perfectly fitted into the team, thanks to his bioinformatic, mostly molecular phylogenetic expertise and ability to work in a wet lab at the same time. Jan is a quiet and team-stabilizing person who always helps others and does not complain. Unfortunately, it is associated with the lack of ability to express displeasure and fear, which in the end appeared to be important. At the end of 2015, at the time, when Jan had two strong publications (eLife and Mol. Biol. Evol.) and was working on the last one, he decided to terminate his Ph.D. and start to work as a technician in the group of professor Vojtěch Novotný at the Institute of Entomology. I have to avow that it was one of the two biggest shocks in my scientific and teaching career, and I still do not fully understand this turn. But it was his decision, and I could not do anything with it.

Since we had already invested a lot of time and money into the analysis of fatty acid biosynthesis in chromerids, I slowly pushed on Jan to finish his third paper. It has taken time because he did not work in my lab anymore. Still, in the end, we submitted and published a detailed analysis of *de novo* fatty acid synthesis and modifications such as elongations and desaturations in chromerids. I convinced Jan to write the thesis and bring the work to the defense. From my point of view, it is a real miracle or classical fairy tale with three severed heads of the dragon, which will hopefully be heading for a good end today.

In the end, it is not as bad as it looks like because all participants have learned a lot from the story. I learned that I should be more sensitive to invisible or hardly recognizable symptoms of coming psychic collapse. Jan learned that it is more than satisfactory to finish things one has started even though it can be painful. And we both learned that pain and dissatisfaction can motivate our work to open and empathic communication and cooperation. Thanks, God, for such lectures!



Miroslav Oborník

Laboratory of Evolutionary Protistology
Institute of Parasitology, BC AVČR
Faculty of Science, JU
České Budějovice

In Lipí, November 15th 2020