

Jan Vilém Pexider (1874–1914)

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Preface

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PREFACE

This publication is devoted to the life and work of Jan Vilém Pexider, a Czech mathematician, whose name is associated with a certain type of functional equation. Today, almost hundred years since Pexider's death, *Pexider's equation* occurs rather frequently in contemporary mathematics. A Czech written monograph on Pexider's life and work has been published in 1997.¹ This volume represents an English version of the monograph.

The first chapter provides a detailed description of Pexider's destinies, the second is devoted to Pexider's mathematical publications, and the third deals with his contributions to insurance mathematics. Pexider's equation is the topic of the fourth chapter, followed by a brief report on the attempt to find the occurrences of Pexider's name in the review journals *Mathematical Reviews* and *Zentralblatt für Mathematik* (the *MathSciNet* and *ZMath* databases).

Enclosed is a list of Pexider's publications, including the reactions of contemporary review journals and the German encyclopedia of mathematics. Illustrations and copies of archival materials and documents can be found in the appendix.

I thank to Prof. RNDr. Tomáš Cipra, DrSc., Prof. RNDr. Ivan Netuka, DrSc., Prof. RNDr. Štefan Schwabik, DrSc., and Doc. RNDr. Jiří Veselý, CSc., for preparing their contributions from 1997 and translating them to English. I am grateful to RNDr. Antonín Slavík, Ph.D., who has translated the remaining parts of this monograph and participated in the final editing. I am also indebted to Doc. RNDr. Jiří Jarník, CSc., for proofreading the manuscript and many helpful suggestions, and to Ing. Arch. Monika Kirby and Doc. RNDr. Martina Bečvářová, Ph.D., for their help in preparing the illustrations.

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¹ J. Bečvář (ed.): *Jan Vilém Pexider (1874–1914)*, History of Mathematics, vol. 5, Prometheus, Prague, 1997, 109 pages. When compared to the Czech version, we have omitted Pexider's three brief critical papers published in the journal *Přehled* in 1905, the report on the experiment with the name Pexider has been substantially shortened, and the information related to the Czech edition has been reduced.

We also note that a detailed description of Pexider's dispute with Eduard Weyr has been published in the Czech written monograph J. Bečvář et al.: *Eduard Weyr (1852–1903)*, History of Mathematics, vol. 2, Prometheus, Prague, 1995, 196 pages and 24 illustrations.

The monograph is based on materials from the following institutions: Archive of Charles University in Prague, Czech Technical University Archive, Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Archives of the Museum of Czech Literature, Prague City Archives, Archive of the Psychiatric Asylum in Prague Kateřinky, State Central Archive in Prague (now the National Archives of the Czech Republic), State Regional Archive in Plzeň, State Regional Archive in Třeboň, State Regional Archive in Zámorsk, State Regional Archive in Litoměřice, District Office of Prague 1, Library of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of the Charles University in Prague, Library of the Mathematical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, National Library of the Czech Republic etc. I thank the employees of these archives and libraries for supporting my effort when searching for archival documents and literature.

I also thank everyone who contributed to the Czech version of this monograph more than ten years ago, namely to E. Fuchs, K. Hrubčík, D. Kott, M. Lichá, M. Němcová-Bečvářová, M. Pexiederová and A. Šolcová.

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