

Summary

“TOMORROW A CZECH JOURNAL FOR LITERARY HISTORY MUST BE ESTABLISHED...”
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JAROSLAV VLČEK
AND JAN JAKUBEC, 1898–1899

The correspondence between Jaroslav Vlček and Jan Jakubec in 1898–1899 is a unique and hitherto neglected source regarding the history of Czech literary historiography. At the very end of the 18th century there were increased attempts to establish literary history as a discipline separate from the philological sciences. An important step in this process was the institutionalization of the field, which meant above all the establishment of an independent university department and scholarly journal. Jaroslav Vlček completed his habilitation in the history of Czech literature in the Czech part of Charles-Ferdinand University, while in late 1898 and early 1899, Jan Jakubec spent a semester at the universities in Vienna and Berlin. In their letters from this period it is possible to follow in detail their efforts to emancipate the field to which they had devoted their lives. Jakubec’s international experience brought new critical impulses to their work and inspired him to write a programmatic essay, *Organizujeme práci na prospěch novočeské literatury* (*Let Us Organize Work for the Benefit of New Czech Literature*), in which Jakubec introduced the project of research-based literary scholarship including the establishment of a scholarly journal. *Obzor literární a umělecký* (*Literary and Artistic Purview*) was prepared by both literary historians as a tribunal for their field that would function as the *Český časopis historický* (*Czech Historical Journal*) did for history. However, due to pressure from the publisher, it became instead more of an arts-critical review. Their scholarly ambitions could only be fulfilled in the journal *Listy filologické* (*Philological Pages*), which Vlček co-edited, but philology clearly dominated in that publication. Literary history asserted itself there only gradually and with great difficulty.

Translated by Lisa A. Peschel