

English edition

The Czech Historical Institute in Rome

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The Institute of History, the Czech Academy of Sciences (Historický ústav Akademie věd České republiky, www.hiu.cas.cz), is one of the Academy's seven-teen institutes involved in research in the humanities and social disciplines. The Institute of History carries out basic research in the field of Czech (Bohemian, Moravian, Silesian), Czechoslovak and general history from the early Middle Ages almost to the present day. It occupies a leading position among the European and other facilities focusing on the Bohemian issues and cooperates with an extensive network of local and foreign institutions of both university and non-university types in solving globally significant topics. It continues in the almost centennial tradition of academic facilities, and the foundation of its legal predecessor – the Czechoslovak State Historical Institute of Publishing – dates to as early as 1920.

The Institute's departments specializing in the Middle Ages, early modern times and the 19th and 20th centuries and in historical geography, biographic research and bibliography produce fundamental monographic and synthetic treatises, atlases, editions of historical sources and works of encyclopaedic nature and national significance (such as *Akademická encyklopedie českých dějin* [The Academic Encyclopaedia of Czech/Bohemian History] and *Biografický slovník českých zemí* [The Biographic Dictionary of the Czech Lands]) as well as bibliographic registers of publications covering the entire sphere of historical sciences. The Institute also publishes a crucial periodical in the field, *Český časopis historický – The Czech Historical Review*, and a revue of historical Slavonic studies, *Slovanský přehled – Slavonic Review. Journal for the History of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe*. Its editorial activity further includes several specialized magazines devoted to historical sub-disciplines – *Mediævalia Historica Bohemica* (for medieval research), *Folia Historica Bohemica* (for the history of the early modern times), *Moderní dějiny* (Modern History; for exploring the 19th and 20th centuries) and *Historická geografie – Historical Geography*.

In accordance with developments in world historiography, the Institute of History lays strong emphasis on international comparative research and on the contexts linked with the transformations of Euro-American civilization, which both increase the requirements on explorations in archives and libraries abroad. The most recent opportunity to present the Institute's results on a global scope came with the XXII International Congress of Historical Sciences (Jinan, China, August 2015). The Institute organized a round table discussion there on the subject “European Reformation as a Model for Revolutions and Crises for Today's World” and, in cooperation with the Australian Historical Association, the specialized session “Frontiers, Massacres and Resettlement of Populations”.

The Institute of History carries out research both in its Prague headquarters and in the Brno and České Budějovice branches. A special position belongs to its foreign facility – the Czech Historical Institute in Rome, which is a member of the International Union of Institutes of Archaeology, History and Art History in Rome.

Front-page photograph:

View of the Pontifical College Nepomucenum, the seat of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome (photo: Jaroslav Novotný)

Both the Czech and the international public justly became aware of one of the foreign facilities specializing in the humanities, which have been achieving outstanding results highly respected by the scientific milieu throughout five continents. It is the Institute of Egyptology at Charles University in Prague, which has fundamentally expanded our knowledge of classical civilizations and earned worldwide renown due to its discoveries in Nubia and on the pyramid fields at Abusir. It was established in 1958 and, despite all the peripeteia and financial troubles, it was lucky enough to develop continuously for many decades.

The fortune of the second foreign institute, this time based in Rome and designed to explore history from the Middle Ages to the present, did not follow such a favourable line. Although its roots reach as far back as the 19th century and there were leading Bohemian and Moravian scientists involved in its origination and future existence, its development experienced several forcible interruptions. This base of Czech historians working in the Eternal City had to rise like a phoenix from the ashes repeatedly – after the First World War, the Nazi occupation and the fall of the Communist regime. The given rebirths were inevitable, since Rome is not just the magic centre of European civilization, but also a place boasting the densest network of scientific institutions in humanities worldwide. Having a respectable research base there has long been a prestigious matter not only from the point of scholarly but also national representation.



František Palacký (1798–1876), founder of modern Czech historiography and the first Czech scholar working in the Vatican (The Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences (MÚA), Prague, collection “Královská česká společnost nauk” [Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences], Photograph, sign. XI/217/5)



Bedřich Doudík (1815–1890), Moravian historiographer and researcher in Roman archives (The Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences (MÚA), Prague, Photographic collection of Bohumil Vavroušek, No. 3051)



Antonín Gindely (1829-1892), director of the Archives of the Bohemian Kingdom and founder of the Czech Historical Expedition in Rome
(The Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences (MÚA), Prague, Photographic collection of Bohumil Vavroušek, No. 3456)

Aims at Connecting Czech Historical Sciences with Europe

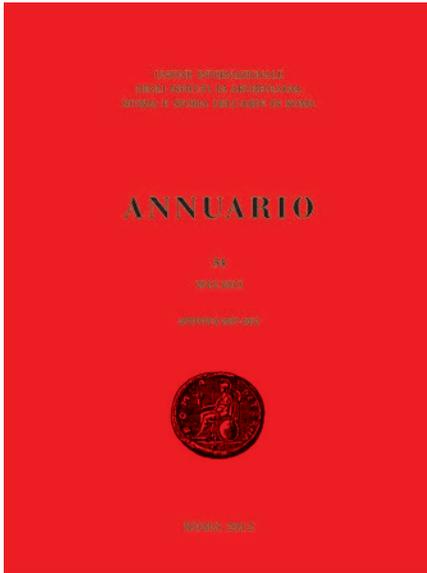
The direction of modern Czech historiography and its links to Europe were from the beginning determined by a rare intellectual encounter of two extraordinary personalities, Josef Dobrovský and František Palacký. Dobrovský (1753–1829), the founder of the critical ponderings on the cultural past of the Czech lands, consistently realized that scientifically conceived history cannot solely serve the local needs, and thus cannot solely start with local sources. He therefore left for Sweden and Russia in 1792 in order to prospect for the Bohemica manuscripts seized during the Thirty Years' War, and planned to undertake an exploratory journey to Italy two years later. Unfavourable circumstances, however, only allowed him to reach Florence, while visiting Rome fell to his younger protégé, František Palacký (1798–1876). When the latter set out on these steps in 1837, he had both the social background and the solid self-confidence of a man successfully laying the foundations of the Czech humanities behind him. He resolved to complete a historiographic task of a European calibre: to write an authoritative history of his own nation – the method, contents and form of which would in no respect fall behind the greatest works of the contemporary historiography. This, nevertheless, also required carrying out critical research of sources in many European countries.

Palacký's private explorations in the sources of the then still closed Vatican Secret Archives and his resulting 1838 treatise *Literarische Reise nach Italien im Jahre 1837 zur Aufsuchung von Quellen der böhmischen und mährischen Geschichte* [A 1837 Literary Journey to Italy, Meant to Trace Sources on Bohemian and Moravian History] became the cornerstones of the almost bicentennial presence of Czech historians on the Apeninne Peninsula. And although the founding father of modern Czech historiography largely focused on papal documents related to late-medieval history of the Czech lands, he resolved to approach his travel on a much wider scope, visiting archives and libraries in Venice, Padua, Florence, Milan and other Italian cities. He clearly was not interested in exhausting a single collection or elaborating on a single type of sources but, instead, in mapping out the potential documentary wealth of the country which had played such a unique role in the cultural and religious history of medieval and early modern Europe.

The Moravian historiographer and Benedictine monk based in the Rajhrad monastery, Beda Dudík (1815–1890), assumed a similar method during his Italian journeying between 1852 and 1853. The output of his intensive research was the 1885 two-volume *Iter Romanum* [The Roman Journey], employed with utmost gratitude by professionals to this day. The plethora of sources available in the countless Italian and Vatican institutions, archives and collections made Dudík utter his today already classical statement that a scholar can never accomplish everything he or she would wish in the local archives and libraries for no time and money could facilitate that. The scepticism as to the possibilities of individual and, simultaneously, all-encompassing research foreshadowed the necessity of future adaptable research programmes and focusing on long-term collective research as early as after the mid-19th century.

A crucial role in this sense belonged to the third founding personality engaged in the above-mentioned events, Antonín Gindely (1829–1892). The scholar and

Annuario 54 (2012-2013), yearbook of the International Union of Institutes of Archaeology, History and History of Art in Rome



organizer, whose research steered the Czech horizon from the Middle Ages to early modern times, worked in Rome in 1882 and plainly admitted that nowhere else had he found equally rich sources of historical knowledge. His experiences, acquired during his wanderings through European archives, helped him forge a fundamental change in viewing research in Italy and turn the attention of the Czech milieu from mere interest travels undertaken by individuals towards systematic, team and at the same time long-term and, later, consistent research. Gindely the first director of the Bohemian National Archives in Prague from 1877 made the main core of its publication activities the monumental edition *Sněmy české od léta 1526 až po naši dobu – Die böhmischen Landtagsverhandlungen und Landtagsbeschlüsse vom Jahre 1526 an bis auf die Neuzeit* [Sources on the History of the Assemblies of the Bohemian Kingdom since 1526], which would have been impossible without the joint effort of experts leaning against a firm institutional background. From the initial publication of documents of Bohemian provenance, the edition was gradually expanded by sources copied from other European archives – as it, after all, corresponded with Gindely's idea about the close link between Czech and European history on the threshold of the Thirty Years' War and during its course.

The Czech Historical Expedition

Foreign research received a strong impulse with the events concentrating in Rome in the last quarter of the 19th century. Although the first institutions spanning a wider historical (albeit mainly archaeological and art-historical) scope had existed in the city long before, the first period of establishing foreign institutions exclusively or predominantly focusing on history only began in 1881 when Pope

Leo XIII opened the Vatican Secret Archives to scholars. Theodor von Sickel initiated the foundation of the *Austrian Institute of History* (1881); later, in 1888, there followed two German institutes (the Lutheran Prussian and the Catholic Institute of Görres Society), the Hungarian institute (1894), the American (1894) and British (1901) academies and the Netherlandish (1904) and Spanish (1910) institutes. Strong research and institutional grounding in Rome became a Euro-American issue elevating science to the sphere of national and state prestige, which was twice as true in the case of the mutually competing Central-European nations. Apart from Austrian-Germans and Hungarians occupying a privileged position in the dualist Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the Galician Poles and, naturally, Czechs aspired to dignified representation.

Czech politicians soon realized this, too, and brought up the subject at the Assembly of the Bohemian Kingdom in Prague. In January 1886, František Kytka as the deputy of the National (Old-Bohemian) Party proposed to guarantee Czech research in Rome from the institutional point and, with the support of the leading politician František Ladislav Rieger and the law historian Jaromír Čelakovský, the Assembly passed a fundamental resolution on 8 January 1887. It ruled that the budget of the Bohemian Kingdom would finance the **Czech Historical Expedition** (empowered to carry out research of sources in Rome and Venice) and ordered the establishment of the **Historical Advisory Board** responsible for, among other things, coordinating the research and publication activities of Czech historians sent out to Italy and the Vatican. The fact that members of the board of ten were prominent Czech and German historians from the Czech lands (largely professors of the two Prague universities) and that the Board's chairman was Václav Vladivoj Tomek (1818–1905), followed after his death by Jaroslav Goll (1846–1929), testified to how significant the research was to the Czech political and scientific scene.

While some of the most competent Czech historians and editors (such as Josef Šusta /1874–1945/ and Vlastimil Kybal /1880–1958/) could work on general subjects from the position of regular members of the Austrian Institute of History, others were leaving for Rome as members of the Czech Historical Expedition, i.e. grantees sent out to collect sources on Czech history and quite generously supported from the budget of the Bohemian Kingdom. The latter were then becoming mere irregular members of the Austrian Institute, allowed to exploit its vast specialized libraries. However, scholars from the Czech lands could simultaneously rely on a developing professional background based on two pillars – one being the Archives of the Kingdom of Bohemia in Prague (collecting thousands of copies of documentation from the Roman archives) and the other the Czech Historical Expedition in Rome. This is how the foundations of an independent Czech facility in the Eternal City were prepared already several decades prior to the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Gindely's initial idea that the basic research of Bohemica in Rome could be completed by five scholars in two or three years was as unreal as his overly-optimistic hope that the edition of the Assemblies of the Bohemian Kingdom for the period 1526–1792 would be over and done with during 12 to 15 years by publishing one extensive volume annually. There was, however, also the changed situation

in the Czech community of historians which the Expedition's founders originally did not consider: four years after Gindely's death, ambitious students of Professor Jaroslav Goll, who were equipped with much better methodical schooling than their predecessors, came to the fore and totally dismantled the hitherto edition methods in 1896.

Large Editions

Max Dvořák (1874–1921), Kamil Krofta (1876–1945), Jan Bedřich Novák (1872–1933) and other young Czech scholars trained in Rome and Vienna forged much more extensive heuristics, much deeper historical criticism of the published sources and the elaboration of detailed comments on every written document. They preferred individual work on particular editions (although conceived in a team spirit in the several-volume whole) and pursued a different type of publications than those produced by the previous generation. They eagerly indulged in the new edition of sources on the 14th-century Bohemian history, entitled *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia* [Vatican Sources on Bohemian History], and, in the early 20th century, submitted three volumes to the professional public, which were indeed of prime European class.

It simultaneously seemed desirable to follow on from Gindely's research of the early modern times and the post-White Mountain (i. e. post-1620) re-Catholicization. The task was assumed by the somewhat older archive keeper of the Archives of the Bohemian Kingdom, Hynek Kollmann (1864–1938) who frequented Rome from 1890 and succeeded in exploring, with unprecedented thoroughness, the previously almost untouched archives of the Congregation de Propaganda fide, a central institution aimed at promoting Catholicism in non-Catholic countries. This resulted in yet another edition, *Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda fide res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia* [Sources on Bohemian History from the Activities of the Sacred Congregation for Promoting Faith]. It was of a very high scientific quality but its individual volumes were coming out slowly, with long lapses of time between each, and only fragmentarily (three volumes, in part from Kollmann's inheritance, came out between 1923 and 1954).

The twenty-five-year activity of the Czech Historical Expedition was exceptionally important. It introduced many Czech scholars to the Vatican, Roman and other Italian milieu and provided them with wide access to the local collections of sources. The strong group of positivist historians which was arriving at that time thus gained detailed insight into this subject and, from the point of contents, formulated a rather self-contained editorial programme which later became a task for the 20th and, in part, also the 21st century.

The Czechoslovak Historical Institute, or the Czechoslovak Academy in Rome?

In the 1920s and 1930s, the **Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome**, designed to become one of the symbols of the independent Czechoslovak state abroad, followed on from the experiences of the Czech Expedition. And while the

Expedition's mission was rather unambiguous, i.e. to collect sources on Czech and Bohemian history and therefore also demonstrate the cultural equivalence of the Czechs with the Austrian Germans, the new institution had to seek its identity in accord with the cultural and political interests of Czechoslovakia. Leading Czech historians tried to make the planned and, from 1921, gradually developed institute serve Czechoslovak science and, albeit sometimes under official pressure, the Czechoslovak government policy in Italy.

This was in the beginning considerably prompted by a coincidence of personal circumstances, when three former Czech scholars and editors specializing in the Vatican and Roman sources came to play significant roles in both domestic and foreign policy. Vlastimil Kybal became the Czechoslovak envoy in Italy and Kamil Krofta the envoy at the Holy See, and Josef Šusta, who chaired the Prague **Committee of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome** ("Roman Committee") during the entire interwar period, was temporarily a minister of school and national education. It was mainly thanks to them that the Czechoslovak Historical Institute provisionally opened in 1923. The three historians – along with the archive keepers Bedřich Jenšovský (1889–1942) and Karel Stloukal (1887–1957), both closely familiar with the Roman affairs – shaped the idea about what the new institution in Rome should be. The publication activity of Vlastimil Kybal, Karel Stloukal and later also Zdeněk Kristen (1902–1967) gradually helped bring this issue to the awareness of a wider cultural public.

The optimistic visions of the new state reflected themselves in the idea that Czechoslovakia would not do with a mere historical institute and that it should copy the model of the European powers by establishing a complex academy. Such a facility should foster not only history, but also archaeology, art history, classical philology, Roman law, philosophy, aesthetics and other disciplines and simultaneously provide space for the activities of Czech and Slovak fine artists. And there was more: the state, according to Kybal's idea from late 1921, should even establish a large Slavonic institution in cooperation with the Polish and South-Slavonic states. The latter, however, had already completely defied any real possibilities since relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland were at freezing point after the brief war for the Cieszyn/Těšín (Teschen) region, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, moreover disunited with Italy, displayed no effective interest in having any scientific representation in Rome. The idea of the Czechoslovak Academy nevertheless remained alive in the interwar period, although it was increasingly running up against insurmountable obstacles.

The Interwar Editorial and Research Activities

The efforts aimed at representing Czechoslovak science meant re-visiting the research programme in order to integrate it with concern to the domestic affairs in Czechoslovakia as well as wider international cooperation. Even the most consistent Czechoslovakists knew that the core of the Institute's research and publication activities had to remain the editions formerly launched and heuristically developed by the Czech Expedition – i.e. the editions on the history of the late Middle Ages and early modern times (*Monumenta Vaticana* and *Acta*

Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda fide). It was, however, at the same time clear that apart from the sources on the history of the 14th and 15th centuries and the post-White Mountain era, the insufficiently elaborated early modern times were coming to the fore, especially concerning the *Nunciatures* and collecting materials for the crucial edition *The Bohemian Assemblies*. Whilst the *Assemblies* were more or less moribund during the interwar period and discontinued after the Second World War, the issue of the reports of the papal nuncios experienced significant progress.

The latter was thanks to two versant Roman scholars who at the same time came to occupy prominent positions within the Czech historical community. Between 1923 and 1924, Josef Šusta, the chairman of the “Roman committee”, and mainly Karel Stloukal, the very agile grantee of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome who later replaced Šusta as a professor of general history at the Prague Faculty of Philosophy and Arts at Charles University, arrived at a remarkable agreement with the German scholars from the Prussian Historical Institute and the Görres Society. The Germans predominantly pursued the nunciature at the archbishop’s and elector’s seat in Cologne and were losing interest in elaborating on the very significant but, from the point of heuristics, extremely demanding nunciature at the imperial court.

The Czech side as well as the German one realized that a first-rate elaborating on the nunciature at the imperial court from the era of the Rudolf II’s reign and the post-White Mountain period would benefit from mutual cooperation and a division of tasks. It is because the centre of Central-European events during the critical period, at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, was in the Czech lands, the given subject was quite foreign to the German editors and the Czech-written literature remained inaccessible to them, and the pertaining selective German approach (either underrating or totally omitting the Czech realia) was utterly inconvenient to the Czech scholars. The Czech-German agreement about taking over the Prague and Viennese nunciature from between 1592 and 1628 was a great success of Czech scientific diplomacy and offered a chance to increase the prestige of Czech historiography in Europe. The planned publication of several dozens of volumes of the new edition *Epistulae et acta nuntiorum apostolicorum apud imperatorem* [Epistles and Acts of the Apostolic Nuncios at the Imperial Court] became a great challenge for the Czech scholars specializing in the history of the pre- and post-White Mountain period although, unfortunately, only its small part has been realized so far.

A lingering and troublesome issue which the members of the Committee of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome and the scholarship holders authorized by it tried to resolve was the representation of Slovakia in the Roman research. Slovak professional historiography was still budding at that time and thus it was not easy to find Slovak scholars capable of competently processing the sources on Slovak and, in a wider sense, Hungarian, history in Rome. Although there was Alexander Húščava (1906–1969), the future founder of Slovak research in the field of auxiliary historical sciences, who sojourned in the Roman institute during the early 1930s for some time, and although he was not alone, interest in exploring and publishing the sources on Slovak history was less than insufficient. The given

lack moreover could not be fixed enough by the work of Czech exhibitioners for they viewed the Hungarian issue as well as Hungarian-written historiography as rather remote.

A Czech – Václav Chaloupecký, professor of history at Comenius University in Bratislava – even represented Slovakia on the Prague “Roman Committee” of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute. It was an objectively legitimate decision, but a Czech and a supporter of Czechoslovakism occupying this position could hardly meet the Slovak ideas about a formally Czech and Slovak foreign facility. The given circumstances at least allowed for designing a sketchy agenda of working on the medieval religious history of Slovakia and collecting sources for the edition *Monumenta Vaticana diocesis Strigoniensis, Nitriensis nec non Agriensis* [The Vatican Sources on the History of the Esztergom, Nitra and Győr Dioceses], which should also become a counterpart of the Czech *Monumenta*. The assumed extent of one or two volumes nonetheless indicated that it would be a rather modest, Slovak-oriented complement of the larger Czech edition.

This plan, sadly, never came to life either, like so many other well-intended but, from the point of organization and personnel, unmanaged proposals. Research in the Roman Institute was assumed to encompass the history of Czech (and Slovak) and Italian relations in the 19th and 20th centuries, to focus on the topical history of the Czechoslovak legions in Italy during the First World War and so on. The ideological agenda of the historical institute or academy in Rome was generous and the facility welcomed many grantees, some of whom published weighty studies discussing not only earlier Bohemian history but also issues linked with related disciplines. However, the tangible results in the form of critical editions of the Vatican and Italian sources published during the two decades of the first Czechoslovak Republic were eventually only little more prolific than the outcomes of the almost equally long existence of the Czech Expedition.

Although scholars commissioned with these tasks – as well as pursuing other, individually selected subjects – were regularly arriving in Rome, the publication of the next volumes of the *Monumenta Vaticana* edition even slowed down. While three massive volumes of the *Monumenta* came out between 1903 and 1907, the results of the interwar activity remained hidden in unpublished copies, and two more volumes of this significant medievalist edition saw the light only as late as between 1944 and 1954.

The work on publishing sources produced by the papal nuncios was considerably intense (and helped by salaried Italian copyists working on selected texts) but the partial publication outcomes were mainly the merit of the editorial activities of the State Historical Institute of Publishing, the legal predecessor of the Institute of History at the Czech Academy of Sciences. The five books from between 1932 and 1946 represented a mere fragment of the planned thirty-volume edition. There were, however, the important treatises on the Church history of the Middle Ages and early modern times which came out on the basis of this research and significantly enriched the knowledge of earlier Bohemian history. On the other hand, the launched works on the acts of the Congregation de Propaganda fide stagnated without any hope of future resumption. Other proposals remained unrealized and forgotten as well, among others, that of taking over the imperial nunciature from

between 1572 and 1585 from the German (or, at that time, Prussian) Historical Institute and of filling the gap between the *Monumenta* and the *Nunciature*, i.e. the period of the 16th century, by a several-volume edition entitled *Analecta saeculi XVI. res gestas Bohemicas et Slovenicas illustrantia* [Collection of Sources on the 16th-Century Czech and Slovak History].

Organizational Problems of the Roman Institute and Its Repeated Abolishment

The main reason why the plans of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome eventually failed was the forceful interruption of its activity following the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939 and its subsequent liquidation between 1941 and 1942. The Nazi occupation policy in the Czech lands also affected the properties abroad, and the main target was the precious library of the Roman Institute. It was seized as war booty by the Großdeutsches Reich, which authorized the German Institute of Archaeology in Rome to execute this despicable act. Later, the German armies transferred it to Germany during their withdrawal from Italy, but at least part of it returned to the Roman Czechoslovak Institute after the war via restitution.

The years after the Second World War, however, were not too favourable for active science, either, although Czech historians headed by Karel Stloukal tried to revive the Roman Institute's activity even during the post-war decline. The February 1948 communist putsch then meant yet another catastrophe since incorporating Czechoslovakia into the Soviet block for forty decades almost froze any regular scientific contacts with the "capitalist West" and, at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, resulted in dissolution of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome.

Yet, the unfavourable developments in international relations cannot serve as the only explanation of all the above-mentioned failures. Problems also followed from the domestic affairs in the inter-war Czechoslovakia. The editorial works were, to a certain extent, undermined by the departure of the most experienced editors and experts in the Vatican and Italian collections of sources – Josef Šusta, Kamil Krofta and Vlastimil Kybal – to the political sphere right at the beginning of 1920s. On the other hand, these very outstanding professionals became the most influential supporters of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome. The basic reason for the Institute's poor success undoubtedly lay in the clash of the hopeful ideas with the real movements of the state administration.

The Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome continued with the earlier system of running this research from Prague through an expert committee. The Historical Committee at the Czech Historical Expedition, playing the role of an advisory body of the Bohemian province government, was replaced by the **Committee of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome** in the inter-war period, with Josef Šusta as its highly competent chairman. The committee consisted of professors from Czechoslovak universities and archive keepers and the Ministry of School and National Education, designed to serve as the Institute's superior administrative authority, appointed it in March 1923. And while the background of the former Expedition was the Archives of the Kingdom of Bohemia, this time

it was the newly established State Historical Institute of Publishing in Prague and, simultaneously, the Archives. The Roman institution was supported in its activity by the state through the Ministry of School and National Education, the Bohemian and Moravian lands through their provincial committees, and Slovakia via local committees (“župy”). Already this extremely complicated structure of bodies, diversely superior from the administrative, economic and professional points, became a serious obstacle hindering a clearly pronounced character of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome as a normally operating institution. Yet another palaver came with the decision-making of the ministerial officials concerning the administration and management system of a foreign institution or academy, in fact even its publication activity.

The worst thing was that the Prague officialdoms never resolved to validate the statute of the existing Institute and kept postponing this crucial decision by pleading its expected transformation into the Czechoslovak Academy in Rome. This constituted an immensely troublesome legal situation for the Institute, which had not only lacked a clear directive for organizing its internal structure as well as external relations for two decades, but also had no appointed director or authorized representative. Its management under these circumstances followed utterly odd ways, being the responsibility of alternating scholarship holders (called “managing members”) who were at any given moment sent out to Rome. Although some of them were experienced professionals, such a fluctuation of temporarily authorized individuals could not forestall constant improvisations, organizational chaos and, eventually, the weak position of this Czechoslovak institution among other Roman institutes and academies.

International Isolation Resulting from a Lack of Generosity

The legal and administrative feebleness of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome tragically affected its entire fate. While the Hungarian government purchased the splendid Baroque Falconieri palace to house its historical institute in 1927 and Romania completed the construction of a monumental Neo-Renaissance building for its own Roman academy in 1933 (at the expense of the Romanian National Bank), the Czechoslovak government never took the plunge to take a similarly generous step. The situation was even more unfortunate in view of the fact that Czechoslovakia was donated a landed estate in a beautiful valley, Valle Giulia, near Villa Borghese, by the City of Rome in July 1923 – a plot which was gradually becoming inhabited by an array of foreign institutes and academies. Needless to say, the donation was conditioned by erecting the Czechoslovak Academy there in five years.

The five-year term was not any strict and the Roman administration three times complied with a request for its prolongation. The professor of architecture active at the Czech Technical University in Prague, Antonín Mendl, even executed the designs of the modern construction and Czech historians, especially Bedřich Jenšovský and Vlastimil Kybal, vainly pleaded for realization of the ambitious plan. After all, many other European states were building their own institutions or academies at that time – Romania (with its academy established in 1922), Sweden

(1925), Poland (1927) and Belgium (1939), let alone the exquisite Hertziana library, specializing in the history of Italian art (1920). Only the Czech project remained on paper, the Czechoslovak Historical Institute migrated though unsuitable residential places due to lack of finances, and the unbuilt land eventually returned to the property of the City of Rome.

The Czechoslovak and – considering the understandable passivity on the Slovak side – mainly Czech state thus lost the unique chance to establish a centre of historical sciences and the humanities abroad and did not in the least return to it during the post-war period. After all, even the flat purchased for the Institute's needs eventually passed to the Czechoslovak embassy in Rome. While there appeared four other – Swiss (1947), Finnish (1954), Danish (1956) and Norwegian (1959) – institutes in the first post-war period, the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome, liquidated by the German occupation power during the war, merely scraped along despite the efforts of Karel Stloukal and several other historians and finally ceased to exist after February 1948.

Although the Czechs ranked among the first European nations having their own institutional representation in the Eternal City, the International Union of Institutes of Archaeology, History and Art History in Rome (*Unione Internazionale degli Istituti di Archeologia, Storia e Storia dell'Arte in Roma*), founded in 1946, already pursued its activities without a Czech presence.

František Šmahel, medievalist and hussitologist of global renown, chairman of the Committee of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome

(The Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences (MÚA), Prague, Photographic collection)



The Origination of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome

If we can say today with satisfaction that the Czech Historical Institute in Rome has again become a fully-fledged member of the above-mentioned association in 1998, it is thanks to those who stood at the inception of the re-established institution. The plan to restore the Czech research base in Rome could come back to life only as late as in the early 1990s. It was in the era of informal initiatives and spontaneous return to the disrupted roots of Czech intellectual development, when the engaged creative personalities were capable of employing both the good and bad experiences of the past generations and at the same time were inclined to follow other than bureaucratic ways of solving problems.

The initiative came from a group of historians from the Czech Academy of Sciences along with their colleagues from the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts at Charles University in Prague and the State Central (today National) Archives. The Committee of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome (and, in fact, the long-time Historical Advisory Board as well) served as a model for appointing the **Committee of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome**. Chairing it fell to the historian of medieval philosophy, Vilém Herold (1933–2012), a researcher based in the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences and, at that time, a member of the Academy's Presidium responsible for its institutes of the humanities and social sciences. The Committee, composed of representatives of the three initiating and several other institutions, issued the Institute's statute, thus outright solving all of its elementary structural problems.

From the point of organizational structure, the Czech Historical Institute in Rome was (certainly also due to the authority of its contemporary director, František Šmahel /*1934/) affiliated to the Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences. It thus became an integral part of the Prague institution, while the Academy of Sciences largely took over the financial support of its operation (with an initial partial contribution of the Prague Faculty of Philosophy and Arts at Charles University). The mutual institutional bond was clearly determined from the very beginning: the Prague committee of the Roman institute received the right to run it professionally and to propose experts as candidates for its directorship. On the other hand, only the Academic Board as the supreme executive body of the Academy of Sciences could appoint its director and committee. The given provision determined a rather simple process of nominating the Institute's two main authorities (its committee and director), and thus keep their appointment in the hands of the scientific institution and prevent any interventions of the bureaucratic machinery. In this way, the most serious administrative complication of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome came to a smooth end during the origination of the Czech Historical Institute at the turn of 1993 and 1994.

It would be quite foolish to intend establishing the Czech Academy in Rome and erecting a grandiose new building under the new circumstances – and not only with concern to the lack of finances but also because the donated land in Valle Giulia had already long been lost. In addition, the spacious apartment at Via Crescenzo, purchased for the needs of the Institute by the Czechoslovak government in 1926, was at that time used by the Czech embassy at the Holy See. Its ambassador,

František X. Halas, provided compensation for it in the form of mediating contacts with the administration of the Pontifical College Nepomucenum in Rome, namely its chancellor (rector) Karel Vrána, and helped arrange the rental of part of the third floor of the monumental college facility for the Institute's needs. Thanks to all the above-mentioned facts, the Czech Historical Institute in Rome could launch its activity on 1 January 1994 at Via Concordia No. 1, in spaces which are indeed modest but, from the point of function, far more suitable than the former five-room flat at Via Crescenzio.

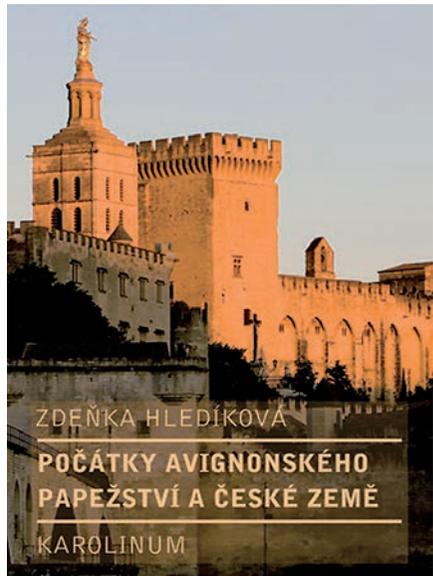
Under the first director, Zdeňka Hledíková (*1938), it was possible to begin developing the Institute basically from scratch since the Czechoslovak Historical Institute had left absolutely no tangible property behind (even the former library was scattered) and its only inheritance was the collected – both positive and negative – experience.

The Czech Historical Institute in Rome became the only Czech academic facility in the field of the humanities abroad, a certain counterpart of the renowned and far better equipped Czech Institute of Egyptology at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts at Charles University. However, the financial support provided has never sufficed to keep a regular staff in Rome, and the Institute is therefore managed by its director and in conceptual and control issues by the Committee of the Czech Historical Institute from Prague, while the director regularly visits Rome in order



Zdeňka Hledíková, professor of auxiliary historical sciences, expert in medieval Church history and the first director of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome (1994-2008)

(photo: Jiří Mikulec)

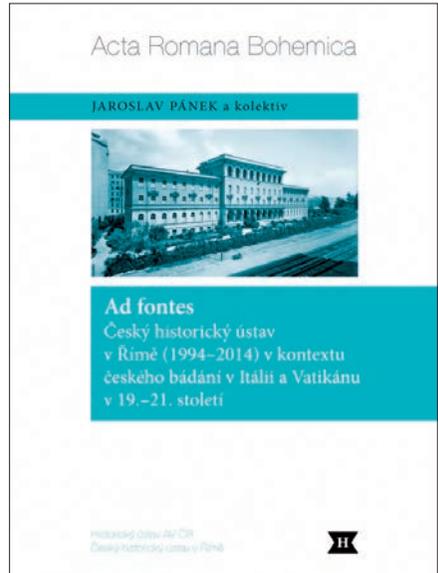


The 2013 monograph by Zdeňka Hledíková, discussing the relation between the Avignon papacy and the Czech lands in the first half of the 14th century



Jaroslav Pánek, professor of history, specializing in the period of the early modern times, and director of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome

(photo: The Academic Bulletin [*Akademický bulletin*])



Acta Romana Bohemica, new edition of publications introducing Czech public to the research results of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome

to take care of the matters which cannot be handled at distance. A year-round service is the responsibility of the director's Czech assistant residing in Rome on a permanent basis.

The rented rooms, the constantly developing library as well as other services of the Institute are available throughout the year to two types of grantees. They are mainly historians involved in long-term editorial or monographic assignments of the Institute, and professionals in the field of history and related disciplines who – having provided a well-grounded application and after having been selected by the Prague Committee of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome – arrive to explore the Vatican and Roman archives, libraries and museums. This is the basic infrastructure necessary for the Institute's activity.

The Research and Editorial Programme of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome

The renewed activities of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome not only consist of mediating and arranging contacts between the Czech and Italian environment (from 1998, also via regular membership in the International Union of Roman Institutes) but mainly following its own research schedule. The latter was from the beginning focused on further publication of the basic editions of sources on Czech (Bohemian, Moravian and Silesian) history. Some earlier editions (Bohemian

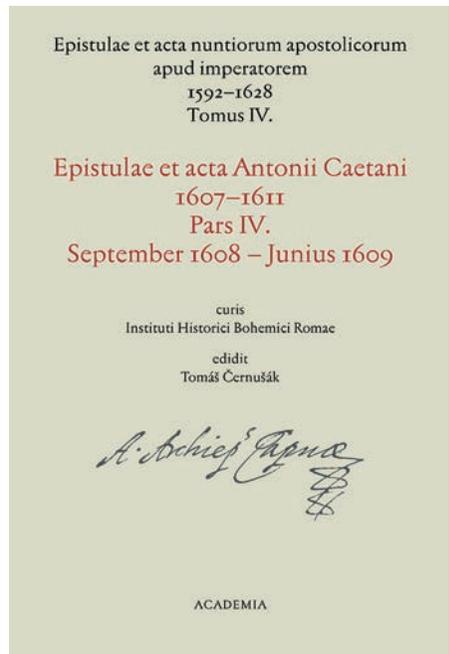
Tomáš Černušák,
senior researcher
of the Moravian Archives
in Brno and editor
of the nunciature
correspondence



Assemblies, Propaganda fide) proved to be lacking any perspective and the main attention turned to two crucial publishing undertakings – *Monumenta Vaticana* and *Epistulae et acta nuntiorum apostolicorum apud imperatorem*. And while important treatises on medieval sources are already available (especially the 2003 extensive volume of the Vatican sources on Bohemian history between 1305 and 1342, compiled by Zdeňka Hledíková), the new volumes of the *Nunciatures* are being simultaneously prepared by several editors, with the first one having been published recently, in 2013, by the care of Tomáš Černušák. Thanks to Jiří Padevět, the director of the Academia Publishing House, this edition of European significance became part of the publishing plan of this most prominent scientific publishing house in the Czech lands, and with such brilliant graphic design that it clearly surpassed its German and Austrian counterparts.

The ideal task of the Institute became to develop “scientific research of weighty issues in the fields of (mainly Bohemian/Czech) history, history of art and music and archaeology, as well as subjects pertaining to philology, philosophy and law, departing from studies and other documented sources in the full time span of historical development”. This wide framework, indicated by the 1995 statute, formally followed on from the erstwhile ideas linked with the Czechoslovak Academy in Rome, but the activity of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome was in fact not as extensive either during the inter-war period or after 1993. The Institute has indeed hosted grantees specializing in archaeology, art history and history of sciences, but the core of its research remains the work in archives and libraries,

Černušák’s edition of documents of European significance, mapping out the activity of the Prague nunciature between 1608 and 1609 and produced by the Academia Publishing House in 2013



Eva Chodějovská, researcher
from the Institute of History,
Czech Academy of Sciences,
and executive editor
of the publications released
by the Czech Historical
Institute in Rome



aimed at further developing the traditional editions simultaneously with solving new issues, mainly those from the Church, economic and political history spanning the period from the 14th to the 20th centuries.

The schedule of the Institute is narrower than the ideal formulation of its long-term goals but corresponds to the real potential and primary mission of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome as a facility specializing in Bohemica. Both the funding and the capacity of the grantees do not allow for participating in extensive projects in such disciplines as classical archaeology, comparative art history and Roman law, which the larger and more generously donated foreign academies and institutes in Rome can afford. They nonetheless suffice to finance participation in comparative research in historical cartography and iconography, i.e. fields in which the Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences, has a very strong background. On the other hand, there is the substantially larger scope of the researched sources, today being far from limited only to the collections of the Vatican Secret Archives, the Vatican Apostolic Library and several other historical libraries. The variety now encompasses the central Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus, providing for continuous research of Jesuit documents, the collections of the Italian State Archives, which had served as a basis for a monograph on the history of the 17th-century papal finance and banking, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic, where a monograph on Czechoslovak and Italian relations during the Second World War is compiled, the Archives of the Vatican Secretariat of State, where the Institute explores the relations of the papacy to the Czech lands, and many other archives and libraries.

This research, albeit adhering to elementary editorial tasks, gradually expanded from the former focus on the late Middle Ages and early modern times to the fundamental part of Bohemian/Czech, Central-European and Italian history from the 14th to the 20th centuries. From this respect, too, the Czech Historical Institute is close to other foreign institutes and academies in Rome shifting the essential segment of their research to modern and contemporary history, but it simultaneously retains its complex character in the sense of elaborating on history from the Middle Ages to the present.

Publication Activity

If the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome could be reproached for an unclear concept of its activity, caused by bureaucratic reasons, and the scarcity of its publishing output, this certainly cannot be said about the Czech Historical Institute during recent years. The basic Nunciature edition has lived to see its revival and there is hopefully a prospect of publishing even more volumes soon. It is especially important that this hope is stemming from the distinct participation of highly qualified experts of the middle and younger generations. The same holds for research of the economic, politic and cultural history of the Baroque era, Jesuit written documents and diverse sources on the history of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The former Czechoslovak Institute managed to publish merely two thin unbound issues of *Bollettino* throughout its entire existence. However, the new

edition of the bi-annual *Bollettino dell'Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma* [Bulletin of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome], bringing analytic results of research and an extensive review column serving the needs of foreign scholarship public, already numbers nine volumes to date. It is most gratifying that the executive editor of the periodical is a young scholar from the Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Eva Chodějovská, who belongs to the generation educated at Italian universities.

The Czechoslovak Institute vainly desired for decades to launch a printed edition, which would bring monographs linked with its activity. The Czech Institute, on the contrary, now already publishes two book series. The newly established monographic edition *Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma* [Library of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome] has been producing one volume a year since 2012. The previous ones were treatises on 16th-century Czech-Italian cultural relations, the 17th-century papal minting and the Church history of the late Middle Ages, while works discussing the influence of the Italian pedagogical reformer, Maria Montessori, on Czech education and Czechoslovak-Italian diplomatic relations during the Second World War are in preparation. The edition *Acta Romana Bohemica* [Czech Writings Based on Research in Rome], launched in 2014, has so far provided an evaluation of the Czech Institute's twenty-year activity in the context of research from between the 19th and 21st centuries, as well as the results of exploring the manuscripts on the Bohemian and Czech issues in three Roman historical libraries.

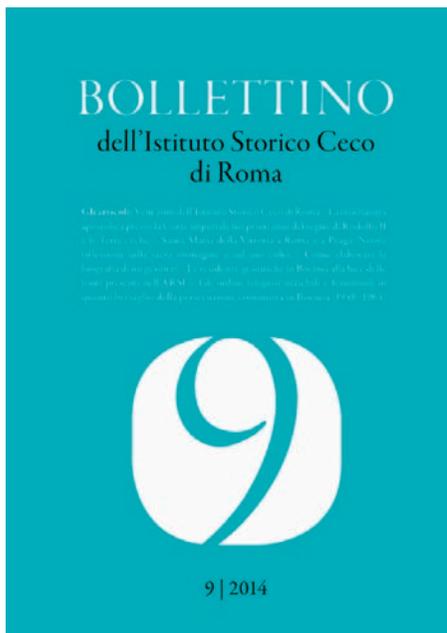
The experts and grantees of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome, however, do not limit their activities to publications aimed at local and foreign historians. They are well aware that researching in Rome is an ideal opportunity to fill a serious gap in the knowledge of Church and religious history as an integral part of the complex interpretation of the history of the Czech lands. This is why Zdeňka Hledíková and Jaroslav Šebek already produced significant partial syntheses devoted to the relation between the papacy and the Czech lands in the 14th and between the 19th and 21st centuries. Moreover, the first attempt at a complex synthesis of this subject – a book on the more-than-millennial history of the relations between the papacy and the Czech lands, edited by Tomáš Černušák – is ready for print.

The Mission of the Foreign Facility

The activities of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome do not only mean its integration in one of the European metropolises. Czech historians would certainly wish to have scientific bases in more European centres (especially Vienna, Berlin and Paris, as well as Moscow and elsewhere), similarly as German scholars work in their large historical institutes from Rome, London and Paris to Warsaw, Moscow, Washington D.C. and Tokyo. Given the limited financial possibilities, however, Rome occupies not only a substitutional but also an exclusive position – on the one hand, because it concentrates an extraordinary mass of irreplaceable sources and, on the other hand, due to the unique density of European and North-American institutions focusing on the humanities.

That is to say, the research activities of Czech historians and other humanistic scholars in Rome do not merely mean opening access to yet unknown sources. The city is, in addition, an exceptionally interesting contact point, which brings forward new issues allowing for the incorporation of the humanities and Czech culture in general into the wider context of Euro-American civilization. It is a foundation for entering extensive comparative projects, which provide for verifying the scientific potential of Czech topics and for the implementation of the best ones into the overall framework of international research and thinking about Europe. If Czech and Bohemian history and culture are to become respectable constituents of the European context, then the communication via Rome serves as a very good base in this respect.

In the framework of the International Union of Institutes of Archaeology, History and Art History in Rome, the Czech Historical Institute is among the smallest and, financially, most modest ones (the same as the Slovak Historical Institute in Rome, established in 2014). However, today its publication outputs certainly do not rank it among any of the scientifically passive Roman facilities. The financial support provided to this foreign branch of the Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences, allows for opening a door to the world to both the contemporary and future generations of Czech historians and other humanistic scholars.



Bollettino dell'Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma, a journal published by the Czech Historical Institute in Rome (Vol. 9, 2014)



Papežové moderního věku [The Modern-Times Popes], a synthetic monograph by Jaroslav Šebek, pursuing relations with the papacy from the 19th to the early 21st centuries (2014)

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The International Union of Institutes of Archaeology, History and Art History in Rome, (*Unione Internazionale degli Istituti di Archeologia, Storia e Storia dell'Arte in Roma*), represents a globally unique concentration of research institutes pursuing the humanities. It was established soon after the Second World War, in 1946, in order to help rescue or at least restore the eroded research infrastructure in the Eternal City and, simultaneously, to promote scientific and cultural cooperation among the nations of Euro-American civilization and the rebirth of their mutual trust through the means available to the humanistic disciplines. As soon as it stabilized during the 1950s and 1960s, the Union turned into a coordination and information centre of research in humanities in the most culturally and artistically exposed place of European ancient, medieval and, in part, also modern history. During the post-1989 era, five countries previously concealed behind the Iron Curtain joined its activities via their own institutions. These are today the states of the Visegrád Four (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) and Romania, the latter being traditionally inclined towards cooperating with the Romance countries.

Apart from its one specific member, the International Union of Classical Archaeology (AIAC), the *Unione Internazionale* associates ten highly prestigious Italian institutions (including the oldest academy of sciences in the world, the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*), two Vatican institutes (of classical and Christian archaeology) and other institutes or complex academies of eighteen states of Europe and North America. This elite club roofs the scientific facilities of the following countries: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America, and, from late 2014, also Slovakia.

The member institutes explore the excavations and architectonic and artistic monuments in Italy, send out their scholars to the exuberant Italian and Vatican archives and libraries, organize a plethora of lectures and conferences and publish special editions, monographs and prestigious magazines. Leading among them are four German facilities (two of history and one of archaeology, and the *Hertziana* art-historical library), two French and two Spanish institutes and, of course, the large British and American academies. Smaller institutions, however, have also been achieving remarkable results, as exemplified by Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. Research in Rome as a whole significantly enhances the European humanities and broadens the knowledge of our shared cultural heritage.

The Czech Historical Institute in Rome (*Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma*), established in late 1993, was admitted to Unione Internazionale in 1998, but its roots reach back much further. It follows in the steps of the Czech Historical Expedition (1887–1914) and the Czechoslovak Historical Institute in Rome (1923–1939, 1945–1948). Being the only foreign facility involved in the third scientific field of the Czech Academy of Sciences, it can fully rely on the Academy's financial support. It may indeed rank among the smallest and, from the point of personnel, most modest institutions in Rome, but it is rather enterprising in its research and publication activities. The effective use of scholarship posts (including free lodging and infrastructure) provided by the Institute's Committee to scholars from the individual institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences as well as universities and archives, and the cooperation with Czech and foreign facilities have recently allowed for continuous publication of several editions. These were *Bollettino dell'Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma* (the Institute's flagship magazine), *Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma* (an Italian monographic edition), *Acta Romana Bohemica* (a Czech monographic edition supplemented by English and Italian summaries), *Epistulae et acta nuntiorum apostolicorum apud imperatorem* (an edition of immensely valuable reports on the Central-European situation during the 16th and 17th centuries, provided by the papal nuncios) and *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia* (an edition of sources on Bohemian history from the 14th to the 15th centuries). In addition, there are many other printed publications, which considerably expand our knowledge not only in the sphere of Church and religious history, but also on the history of culture, politics and even economics. Contemporary Czech historiography would today be almost unimaginable without the consistent contributions from the research carried out in Rome.

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The Czech Historical Institute in Rome | Jaroslav Pánek

Published by the Center of Administration and Operation CAS, v. v. i.,
for the Historical Institute CAS, v. v. i., Prosecká 809/76, 190 00 Praha 9 – Prosek.
Layout: Jakub Krč; Type: Serifa. Technical editor: Monika Chomiaková.
Editor in charge: Petra Královcová. First edition, 2015. Edition number 11908.
Print **SERIFA**®, s. r. o., Jinonická 80, 158 00 Praha 5.

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