

Under the protection of Clio : historical disciplines at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University

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Historical disciplines at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University

The History Department of the Faculty of Arts is directly linked with the establishment of Masaryk University. B. Navrátil, J. Glücklich and R. Urbánek were appointed professors of general and Czechoslovak history in 1920, and in the same year the history seminar was also established. In their work and that of their successors (J. Borovička, R. Holinka), a thirty-year tradition of historiography (excluding the enforced closure during the Nazi occupation) developed in Brno was associated with Jaroslav Goll. With the arrival of Josef Macůrek in Brno in 1935, the history seminar was bolstered by classes on the history of eastern and south-eastern nations, which developed rapidly in the four decades after the Second World War. As a result of the reorganization of the universities along Soviet lines, the original history seminar was closed in 1950, and after several years it was replaced by the Department of Czechoslovak and General History and the Department of the History of the Nations of the USSR and People's Democratic Regimes (called also the Department of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European History). During the rule of the Communist Party, the development of historical science was significantly influenced by the political-ideological interests of the regime. Despite this fact, the two history departments were able to train several generations of secondary school teachers and develop historical research which gained international recognition. A number of important historians of political, social, economic and cultural history were also educated and later educated here (J. Janák, J. Kudrna, J. Marek, J. Mezník, C. Nečas, J. Válka), whose work is continued by the lecturers at the Department of History today. Since the mid-1990s, the History Department has been covering all of the history disciplines under one roof, from Medieval history to contemporary history and from political and economic history to cultural history in its various forms (history of historiography, gender history, religious history, the history of multicultural societies). History courses offered to students cover all the levels of university study (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate), including a teacher's course for qualified secondary school teachers. Brno's university historians are among those who wrote the Moravian National History volumes, and a large number of them are also part of the editorial team of the multi-volume History of Brno City. The *Research Centre for the History of Central Europe: Sources, Countries, Culture*, operated successfully here between 2005 and 2011. Presently, there is strong cooperation between cultural-history researchers from Brno and Olomouc as part of the *Centre for Transdisciplinary Research of Cultural Phenomena in Central European History: Image, Communication, Behaviour*. The Department of History is the publisher of the journal *Studia historica brunensia* (since 1954 the successor to the Historical Series from the journal *Collection of Works from the Faculty of Arts of the Brno University*) and its members also work closely with *Matice moravská* on the publication of the journal *Časopis Matice moravské*.

The Department of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Archive Studies is a scientific-educational department with a long tradition and is one of the leading editing departments in the Czech Republic with links to international research. Its establishment dates back to the first half of the 20th century when Václav Hrubý, the former archivist in National Museum in Prague, was

appointed the chair of auxiliary historical sciences in 1925. The chair split from the history seminar to be an independent seminar of diplomatics and paleography. The discipline began to develop under the forty-year tenure of the second professor of Auxiliary Historical Sciences Jindřich Šebánek who established the tradition of Brno's Archival Science. One of the department's main tasks is to examine the diplomatics material from the era of the Přemyslids as part of the *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris regni Bohemiae* edition, the preparation of an edition of Sigismund of Luxemburg's charters and letters for the international project *Regesta Imperii*, the study of Early Modern diplomatics and administration (official sources on Moravian history from the 17–19th centuries), and the preparation of an edition of literary and epigraphic monuments. At the same time, qualified academics are trained for archival practice. The Department offers two study programmes Archival Studies and Auxiliary Historical Sciences in both Bachelor's and Master's degrees. It is also possible to choose the doctoral degree study programme in Auxiliary Historical Sciences. The practical training in Czech and foreign archives is a very important part of the study. There is a number of specialists from various memory institutions participating in study programmes.

Although the **Art History Seminar** was not established until 1927, its foundation goes back to the beginnings of the Faculty of Art. Its origin is linked to the legacy of the Vienna School of Art History, which was represented by its first director Eugen Dostál who studied under Max Dvořák. The Department of Art History was independent until the 1950s, after which it was incorporated into various art-science branches (musicology, aesthetics) and regularly changed its name. The department has been independent again since 1990, returning to its tradition as a distinctive 'Brno art-history school', which is interpreted as the interconnection of a 'school of seeing' and a 'school of knowledge'.

Departmental research traditionally focuses on Moravian art history within a wider Central European context, particularly Moravian-Austrian cultural connections. This research mainly takes place within the context of Early Modern Age studies represented by the *Centre for Early Modern Studies*. It is also involved in the *Centre of Early Medieval Studies: The West, Byzantium, Islam*, which is organized by Ivan Foletti, a medievalist specializing in the Mediterranean world of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Through his work in Brno, he has managed to establish a department with a strong international research profile. Another area of activity is represented by the *Centre of the History of the Image* (Ladislav Kesner) with a focus on visual studies and cognitive science (neuroscience), opening up possibilities for more general research on 'the science of the image' (Bildwissenschaft).

The Art History Seminar programmatically attempts to break free from the isolation of the university environment both through its academic and popularizing activities. Central to this is the journal *Opuscula historiae artium* and *Convivium: Exchanges and interactions in the arts of Medieval Europe, Byzantium, and the Mediterranean*. The Seminar is also active in public life through a series of exhibitions (and catalogues) which are organised in conjunction with other partners from local museums and galleries. This expansion of the academic profile of the department was encoded from the very start and it logically reflects the general definition of art history which is always searching for new ways into the practical aspects of the discipline – heritage conservation, museum and gallery work, and popularizing art history. It is through its research themes and methods, as well as being open to the outside world, that the Department of Art History shows how it is rooted in tradition and is simultaneously finding new paths and continually searching for the role and meaning of art history.

The origins of the **Department of Archaeology and Museology** go back to the years 1930 and 1931 when its first long-term professor, Emanuel Šimek, was appointed to the chair of pre-history and protohistory at Masaryk University and an independent department was established. After the enforced closure during the Second World War, the department managed to expand

successfully even during the communist period, when from the 1950s there was a change in direction from the original theoretical focus of the first professor to intensive field research. The department quickly established a prominent position among Central European archaeological institutions. It acquired this privileged status mainly because of its long-term focus on basic field research which contributed with new and original discoveries to Czech and European science, as well as on the development of modern research methods and their implementation in practice. It is unique in Czech archaeology for having combined several permanent scientific expeditions equipped with a complex of buildings and laboratories (Těšetice, Pohansko u Břeclavi, Rokštejn), which have experienced research workers, including several dozen PhD students, and the latest instrumentation focusing on the digital documentation of moveable and unmoveable archaeological monuments, and material analysis and geophysical prospection. Although the core of the department is made up of the scientific-research bases at significant archaeological sites in the Czech Republic, the Department of Archaeology and Museology is also expanding abroad. International activity is currently focused on the East Mediterranean in Crete and in France (the Celtic oppidum of Bibracte). The long-term objective of the Department of Archaeology and Museology is the development of new methods and implementing them in teaching and practical scientific work. The geophysical survey and field documentation teams, the traceological laboratories, and the analytical-experimental centre provide for the needs of the discipline in terms of the prospection and identification of archaeological and memorial objects, through to the collection of archaeological and environmental data and the documentation of the excavation phase of research, to a comprehensive analysis of the material findings, involving expert assessment, microscopy of technological tracks and traceology, material analyses by an XRF spectrometer, 3D morphometric analysis and experimental verification of the results. The Department of Archaeology and Museology is one of the most important innovators and leaders in modern research in the Czech Republic.

The discipline of **museology** became consolidated into the Brno University in the 1960s and its academic teaching is, therefore, amongst the oldest in the world. At that time, it was an external department (in the mid-1970s it was integrated into the Department of Prehistory) run by the Moravian Museum and the Faculty of Arts. Two central figures operated here – Zbyněk Zbyslav Stránský and Jan Jelínek – who strived to improve the professionalism and overall quality of Czechoslovak museum studies. They quickly created a specific concept for the requirements of the new department, from which emerged a curriculum designed mainly for museum employees. In the following period, both of them alongside the other representatives of the Brno museological school managed to greatly influence the discipline both nationally and internationally. One result of these activities was the extensive publishing work based on Stránský's concept of museology (the findings were also published in his own journal *Muzeologické sešity/Museological Papers*), his active participation at the top level of international museum organizations (ICOM) and the organization of the International Summer School of Museology. Following the turbulent changes after 1989, the Department of Museology now focuses on several main areas including education, scientific research and publication, with an emphasis on the local impact on students and the (specialist) public, as well as strengthening international cooperation. It offers a Bachelor's and Master's course in a daily as well as distance format, and also rigorous management (PhDr.). The curriculum reflects the need for students' theoretical-practical preparation for their future work in museums and other cultural and memory institutions. At the Master's level, special attention is paid to museum exhibiting and museum education. The teaching, practical work and study trips of the students realised in close collaboration with museums (in particular the Technical Museum in Brno, the Brno City Museum, the Moravian Museum and the Museum of the Brno Region) and other institutions from which external lecturers are recruited. In its other activities (conferences, lectures, projects), the Brno department

cooperates with other professional organizations (the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries, the Czech National Committee of the International Council of Museums), methodological centres in museum studies and academic museological departments.

The Department of European Ethnology is one of two university ethnology departments in the Czech Republic. Its institutional origins (as the Seminar for Ethnography and Ethnology) go back to the academic year of 1945/46 and they are linked to Professor Antonín Václavík. From the start, Professor Václavík focused the teaching and research on the traditional culture of the rural sections of society in Central Europe, while there was also a move towards broader comparative concepts within larger cultural areas (with a particular focus on Slavonic material). During the second half of the 20th century, the department underwent several waves of reorganization. In the 1950s and the 1970s it lost its independence due to the political situation and it was incorporated into the Department of History. After the death of Professor Václavík in 1959, his pupils under the guidance of Professor Richard Jeřábek (e.g. Dušan Holý and Václav Frolec) took over the department's educational and research work (regional monograph projects, contemporary research, lexicographical works). In 1991, the department became independent once more under its present title of the Department of European Ethnology. Today, with its new generation of teachers, it is one of the most established centres in its field, and its educational and research activities and projects have contributed towards the character of ethnology in the Czech Republic and Central Europe. With their thematic focus, the department's teaching and research projects reflect current trends in European ethnology as a discipline which has a broad understanding of culture and society from their historic forms through their gradual changes and transformations up to their current character, which makes ethnology a strategic link between the historical and social sciences.