

English

Vincenc Prasek

(born 9th April 1843 in Milostovice u Opavy – died 31st December 1912 in Napajedla)

- a classical philologist and Slavist; Silesian historian, awakener and journalist; published in the field of regional history and Czech language.

Vincenc Prasek is undoubtedly one of the most important figures of Northern Moravia and Silesia of his time. And yet, no attempt has been made to create his overall and detailed biography over the last few decades.

Vincenc Prasek first studied at German grammar school between 1855 – 1863, then he graduated at universities in Wien and Wroclaw in the field of classical and Slavic languages. In 1868 he was appointed at a new Czech grammar school in Olomouc where he immediately launched the stenography lessons; in 1870 – 1871 he was a teacher in Chrudim and Tábor in Bohemia. Afterwards he returned to Olomouc where he was chosen a member of the first committee of the *Educational Foundation* (Matice školská); participated in “language perfecting” by his articles and reviews in magazine *Komenský*, especially by his work called “*Brus příspěvěčkem ke skladbě srovnávací* (1874)”; he founded the *Opava Foundation* (Matice opavská) where he criticized its programme, tried to persuade the committee to publish the national-geographic documents and to build the Czech grammar school in Opava. In this time Prasek emphasized the need for more Czech secondary schools in Moravia and in Silesia and as an acting secretary of the *Olomouc Foundation* (Matice olomoucká) he helped to found industrial continuative school and became its first administrator. He also founded the first Czech museum in Moravia – today’s *National-geographic museum* in Olomouc (Vlastivědné muzeum).

At this time he was chosen a director of a private grammar school in Opava and as the newly founded Czech grammar school was being attacked by the German nationalistic politicians and their magazines, Prasek tried to win at least one impartial magazine, official *Troppauer Zeitung*; he also began to publish national-geographical articles there, called Contributions to the History of Opava and Silesia

(*Beiträge zur Geschichte Troppaus und Schlesiens*) – these contributions together with his many articles in *Troppauer Zeitung* and the almanac of Czech grammar school became the preparatory studies for Prasek's most voluminous work – four-part *Nation and geography of Silesia* (*Vlastivěda slezská*, 1888 – 1894).

Prasek wished the *Opava Foundation* (*Matice opavská*) returned to its original educational task; as its chairman he helped to restore publishing of *Opava Foundation Bulletin* (*Věstník Matice opavské*). The second edition of the bulletin was published in 1892 and a magazine called *Silesian Collection* (*Slezský sborník*) is still published.

After his return to Olomouc, he was appointed a high commissioner of the industrial continuative school and a chairman of educational committee of this institution as well as of the mercantile continuative school. In 1902 he founded a magazine *Rural archive, a magazine for common and cultural history of the peasant class mainly in Moravia and Silesia* (*Selský archiv, časopis pro obecné a kulturní dějiny selského stavu hlavně moravského a slezského*) and was its editor until 1902, when the publishing of the magazine was ended. At the end of his life he worked hard on his unfinished topographical dictionary of Moravia, including Opava region.

This dissertation is, due to the long lasting tradition of research and rich literature to the topic, mostly a structured compilation of the already known facts or their enlarged interpretation. The biography has several parts, one of them is dealing with the family background and Vincenc Prasek's working experience, which is followed by his public (mainly the federative) activities and it is followed by his literal activity in the broad sense of the word.

A chapter describing Prasek's personality during his life and after his death is included at the end of this work. Historiographical moments that were suggested in the introductory analysis of "sources of knowledge" are here developed and implanted to the contexts.

The most important shift in the understanding of Prasek's life, compared with the previous researchers, was reached mainly due to the broad excerption of periodical funds of *Central library of Silesian regional museum* in Opava, *Scientific library in Olomouc*, library of the *Municipal archive* in Ostrava, *Moravian regional library* in Brno and the *National library* in Prague. The dozens of volumes and thousands of

period publications were examined and thus the original register by Viktor Ficek from 1961 was extended three times (approximately 3600 bibliographical items to the approx. 1100 in 1961). The content of such newly gained material enabled the author to enrich several events, which are known from other sources, of the Prasek's own opinion as a direct participant.

(Translated by Jitka Vlčková)