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## SCIENTIFIC, RESEARCH, PUBLICATION AND PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES OF ARCHIVES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### Abstract

**Purpose:** *The paper contains a basic presentation of the scientific and publishing activities of archives in the Czech Republic. Even though archives in the Czech Republic represent important administrative authorities and with this in mind, they fulfill a whole range of duties and, even according to the Act on Archives, they are responsible for carrying out publishing and publication activities in the field of archives and the performance of file services, history of administration, auxiliary sciences of history and history. Archives in the Czech Republic are far from being mere offices, but also scientific institutions and bring significant and unforgettable results in this area. The purpose of this article is presentation of main scientific and publishing activities undertaken by archives in the Czech Republic.*

**Method/approach:** *The method used in the paper is a description and an explanation.*

**Results:** *The results of the paper is an overview of the main competencies and activities of the archives in the Czech Republic within their scientific, research, publication and publishing activities.*

**Conclusions/findings:** *Archives in the Czech Republic and their employees are the solvers or co-solvers of various projects, organizers or co-organizers of important scientific conferences and publishers or co-publishers of scientific periodicals and scientific publications. Archives in the Czech Republic are far from being mere administration offices, but also scientific institutions and bring significant and unforgettable results in this field.*

**Key words:** *Act on Archives and Records Management of the Czech Republic, National archive, state regional and district archives, specialized archives, the Prague City Archives, scientific, research and publishing activity*

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## ATTIVITÀ SCIENTIFICA, DI RICERCA, DI PUBBLICAZIONE ED EDITORIALE DEGLI ARCHIVI NELLA REPUBBLICA CECA

### **Astratto**

**Scopo:** *L'articolo contiene una presentazione di base delle attività scientifiche ed editoriali degli archivi nella Repubblica Ceca. Sebbene gli archivi nella Repubblica Ceca rappresentino importanti autorità amministrative, adempiono pertanto a tutta una serie di compiti e, anche secondo la legge sugli archivi, sono responsabili dell'esecuzione delle attività editoriali e di pubblicazione nel campo degli archivi e lo svolgimento di servizi di archiviazione, storia dell'amministrazione, scienze ausiliarie della storia e della storia. Gli archivi nella Repubblica Ceca non sono semplici uffici, ma anche istituzioni scientifiche e portano risultati significativi e indimenticabili in questo settore. Lo scopo di questo articolo è la presentazione delle principali attività scientifiche ed editoriali intraprese dagli archivi nella Repubblica Ceca.*

**Metodo/approccio:** *il metodo utilizzato nell'articolo è una descrizione e una spiegazione. Risultati: i risultati dell'articolo sono una panoramica delle principali competenze e attività degli archivi nella Repubblica Ceca nell'ambito delle loro attività scientifiche, di ricerca, di pubblicazione e di pubblicazione.*

**Conclusioni/risultati:** *gli archivi nella Repubblica Ceca e i loro dipendenti sono risolutori o co-risolutori di vari progetti, organizzatori o co-organizzatori di importanti convegni scientifici ed editori o coeditori di periodici e pubblicazioni scientifiche. Gli archivi nella Repubblica Ceca non sono semplici uffici amministrativi, ma anche istituzioni scientifiche e portano risultati significativi e indimenticabili in questo campo.*

**Parole chiave:** *legge sulla gestione degli archivi e dei documenti della Repubblica Ceca, archivio nazionale, archivi statali regionali e distrettuali, archivi specializzati, Archivio della Città di Praga, attività scientifica, di ricerca ed editoriale*

# ZNANSTVENA, RAZISKOVALNA, PUBLIKACIJSKA IN ZALOŽNIŠKA DEJAVNOST ARHIVOV NA ČEŠKEM

## Izvleček

**Namen:** Prispevek vsebuje osnovni prikaz znanstvene in publicistične dejavnosti arhivov na Češkem. Čeprav arhivi na Češkem predstavljajo pomembne upravne organe in s tem izpolnjujejo celo vrsto nalog, so tudi po zakonu o arhivih odgovorni za izvajanje založniške in publicistične dejavnosti na področju arhivov in izvajanje kartotečnih storitev, zgodovino upravnih aktivnosti, pomožnih zgodovinskih vede ter zgodovine kot take. Arhivi na Češkem še zdaleč niso zgolj pisarne, ampak tudi znanstvene ustanove in na tem področju prinašajo pomembne rezultate. Namen tega članka je predstaviti glavne znanstvene in publicistične dejavnosti, ki jih izvajajo arhivi na Češkem.

**Metoda/pristop:** V prispevku smo uporabili opisno in razlagalno metodo.

**Rezultati:** Rezultati prispevka so pregled glavnih pristojnosti in dejavnosti arhivov na Češkem v okviru njihove znanstvene, raziskovalne in založniške dejavnosti.

**Sklepi/ugotovitve:** Arhivi na Češkem in njihovi zaposleni rešujejo različne projekte, so organizatorji ali soorganizatorji pomembnih znanstvenih konferenc ter založniki ali soizdajatelji strokovnih periodičnih publikacij in znanstvenih publikacij. Arhivi na Češkem še zdaleč niso le upravni uradi, temveč tudi znanstvene ustanove in na tem področju prinašajo pomembne rezultate.

**Ključne besede:** Zakon o arhivih in dokumentologiji republike Češke, nacionalni arhiv, državni regionalni in okrožni arhivi, specializirani arhivi, praški mestni arhiv, znanstvena, raziskovalna in publicistična dejavnost.

As a field of human activity focused on preserving archival materials, which form part of the national cultural heritage, archives perform not only administrative and informational functions but also scientific and cultural ones. This is also defined in the current archival legislation of the Czech Republic (Act No. 499/2004 Coll. on Archives and Records Management<sup>2</sup>). According to the law, scholarly tasks relating to archives and archival materials are also assigned to the Ministry of the Interior (i.e. the department of archival administration and file services), which is directly superior to all state archives in the Czech Republic and indirectly to other archives: according to the law, the Ministry organizes, among other things, research on sources on Czech history abroad and publishes archival publications of national importance (section 44, letters k, m). However, the National Archives in Prague has a specific position and tasks according to the law. It cooperates with other archives and develops relations with scientific, cultural, educational and other institutions to exchange experience in professional issues, scientific research and the cultural, educational, economic and ethnographic use of archives (section 46, subsection 2, letter f), carries out scientific and research activities in the field of archives, auxiliary historical sciences and related scientific disciplines (section 46, subsection 2, letter g), performs the task of a central scientific research workplace in the field of preventive care of archival materials, preservation and restoration of archival materials, preservation and access to new forms of information media, including documents in digital form. National Archive also acts as a professional methodological and training center in this area (section 46, subsection 2, letter h). It carries out publishing and publication activities in the field of archives and records management, history of administration, auxiliary historical sciences and history (section 46, subsection 2, letter j). The scientific activities of the National Archives are not limited to analogue documents. Still, the National Archives also carries out scientific and research activities in the field of the life cycle of documents in digital form (section 46, subsection 3, letter d). The tasks of the state regional archives are similarly defined (section 49, subsection 1, letters d,g), i.e. as scientific and research departments at the regional or district level and in the context of publishing and publication activities in the fields of archives and records management, history of administration, auxiliary historical

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2 See <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/translation/cs/2004-499?langid=1033>.

sciences and history. Scientific, research, publishing and publication activities in these fields are also mentioned in the Act in the case of specialized archives (section 52, letter j) and archives of local government units, i.e. mainly municipal archives (section 55, subsection 1, letter k), where the field of regional history, the history of towns and municipalities, historical local history and related fields are also specifically mentioned.

Archives in the Czech Republic fulfil all these defined tasks, although they are obliged to perform mainly tasks related to the reception, processing and access to archival materials, which constitute the majority of their activities. A number of archivists thus participate in domestic and non-institutional workshops, seminars and conferences in archiving and historiography, especially in the care of the physical condition of archival materials, IT archiving and other archival disciplines, and they also publish. As for the scientific and publishing activities of the archives themselves, these are mainly carried out 1) in the form of organizing or co-organizing conferences and workshops, 2) in the form of publishing scientific periodicals and scientific publications, and finally 3) in the form of solving or co-participating in scientific projects.

As already mentioned, specific scientific tasks are performed by the superior body of the state archives in the Czech Republic, the department of archival administration and file services of the Ministry of the Interior, which publishes various publications in the field of archives of national importance and in particular two periodicals (both since 1951): the quarterly *Archivní časopis* focused more on current issues and issues of archival theory, and the *Sborník archivních prací* (Collection of Archival Works), published semi-annually and featuring more comprehensive studies, primarily in the field of auxiliary historical sciences and the history of administration. The publication of this periodical will be taken over by the National Archives from 2024.

It is just the National Archives that has a special status among state archives in the Czech Republic, and its scientific activities (and similarly the activities of, for example, the State Regional Archive in Prague) are also defined by Act No. 130/2002 Coll. on the Support of Science, Research and Development, and Government Resolution No. 729/2009 Coll., which establishes the national policy on research, development and innovation. In addition, the National Archives' scientific activities fol-

low the traditions of its predecessors, which can be traced back to the 18th century. In 2009, the National Archives was included in the list of research organizations of the Czech Republic under Act No. 130/2002 Coll., and in 2017, in connection with a legislative change, it defended this position again; this registration means that the National Archives has demonstrated that it meets the defining characteristics for research and knowledge dissemination set out in the regulations of the European Union. As a research organization, the National Archive submits data on its outputs and results to the so-called Results Information Register (RIV),<sup>3</sup> which is part of the Research Development and Innovation Information System (IS VaVaI) operated by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. In this context, the National Archives can apply for special-purpose or institutional support for various projects. The advisory body to the Director of the National Archives is the Scientific Board, composed of internal and external experts, whose task is to participate in the short- and long-term conception of the National Archives' scientific activities, to provide all-round support and evaluation of its ongoing research projects and to discuss and comment on further planned research projects. In doing so, the National Archives cooperates with other departments, including institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

The scientific activities of the archives are reported in the archives' annual reports. Thus, in its annual report for 2022, the National Archives reported the publication of several books (including single-topic issues of its journal *Paginae historiae*) and, in particular, the rich publishing activity of its staff in the form of monographs or contributions to them and numerous journal studies in various periodicals.<sup>4</sup> In addition, he has organized or co-organized various seminars and conferences in the Czech Republic and abroad (in 2022, he participated in a conference „Archiv: Verhandelt. Das Schicksal des archivalischen Erbes nach dem Zerfall der Habsburgermonarchie“ held in Vienna on 11 and 12 October 2022). The archive staff presented their papers at a number of domestic and foreign conferences, whether they were devoted to historical issues, archiving, digitization or issues of the archival theory, and they worked on both internal projects and participated in scientific projects of other institutions – with the Institute for Studies

3 See <https://www.isvavai.cz/riv>.

4 See [https://www.nacr.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/VZ\\_2022\\_NA.pdf](https://www.nacr.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/VZ_2022_NA.pdf).

totalitarian regimes, the National Museum or with the institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (the Institute of History, the Institute for Contemporary History, the Institute for Czech Literature or the Institute of Ethnology). Participation in international projects (e.g. ICARUS) is also an important part of the National Archives' activities (for example, in April 2015, the National Archives organized a meeting of ICARUS in Prague on the topic "Archival Cooperation and Community Building in the Digital Age"<sup>5</sup>). Among the important scientific publications of the National Archives are, in particular, editions of the reports of the papal nuncios (Černušák, 2013; Černušák, 2017; Pazderová, 2016, 2023) or a critical facsimile edition of the Archive of the Bohemian Crown (*Archiv české koruny I.–VI/1, 1981–2020*), and in the past, long-prepared editions of the 1651 register of serfs according to their confession (*Soupis poddaných podle víry*) or the 1654 and 1748 countrywide tax registry (cadastre) (*Berní rula 1–34, 1949–2017; Tereziánský katastr český 1–3, 1964–1970*). However, the staff of the National Archives also publish other editions of sources (Vojáček et al., 2009–2022), important publications on modern history (Kokošková et al., 2005; Kokošková et al., 2019; Kokošková et al., 2022) or on other topics (Paulus and Steinová, 2022). The scientific activities of the National Archives were recently presented by its former director Eva Drašarová in the article *Zwischen Skylla und Charybdis? Das Nationalarchiv in Prag als Verwaltungsbehörde und als wissenschaftliche Einrichtung* (Drašarová, 2022).

The State Regional Archives in Prague (which also concentrates the State District Archives subordinate to it) has also been included in the list of research organizations maintained by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic since 2018. Its research activities focus primarily on issues of security, protection, management and selection of documents of public originators, including related methodologies, as well as on the safe handling of the information content of archival materials, including the protection of personal data, or on the digitization and long-term preservation of security copies of archival materials. In the field of archives and auxiliary historical sciences, the State Regional Archive in Prague develops complex professional editorial activities, publishes a number of professional publications and prepares inventories of historical documents. The State Regional

5 See <https://documents.icar-us.eu/documents/2015/01/programme-icar-us-meeting-15.pdf>.

Archives in Prague plays an important role in the field of regional research through the publication of professional archival periodicals (9 in total), the organization of scientific conferences, as well as the preparation of lectures and exhibitions aimed at the transfer of acquired knowledge. Also, in this case, data on outputs are transmitted to the Register of Information on Outputs (e.g. Sovák and Králová 2021; Čtvrtník, 2023), and an overview of publications and conferences, the publishing activities of archivists and their participation in conferences, and internal and other projects can be found in the archive's annual report.

The Moravian Provincial Archives in Brno is another state regional archive that is included in the above-mentioned List of research organizations, maintained by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. The fact that other state regional archives and their subordinate state district archives are not included in the List of research organizations does not mean that they do not carry out professional and scientific activities. They also publish a number of publications and periodicals, especially at the regional level, especially in the field of auxiliary sciences of history and history, and their staff develop a rich publication activity. All state archives also report these results in their annual reports.

Specialized archives occupy a specific position in the archival network and are usually also included in the List of Research Organizations, usually with their founders (Institute of the History and Archive of Charles University, National Museum Archives, Archive of the National Gallery in Prague, National Technical Museum Archive, Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature) or independently (Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences). They also have a rich publishing activity (either the whole institution or individual staff members), organize various conferences and deal with scientific projects. Among the archives with significant scientific activities is the Prague City Archives, which publishes many publications, organizes major international conferences on urban history and develops rich international contacts.

Both state regional and specialized archives also provide information about their scientific activities in their annual reports, and the yearbook of the Czech Archival Society also provides an overview of the most important publications and periodicals published by the archives each year (last time ČAS v roce 2022, 2023).



## CONCLUSION

The range of scientific activities of all types of archives in the Czech Republic is considerable and it is beyond the scope of this contribution to cover it in its entirety. However, it should be emphasized that even though archives in the Czech Republic represent important administrative authorities and fulfill a whole range of duties with this in mind, and some of them are not included in the list of scientific institutions, even according to the Act on Archives they are responsible for performing publishing and publishing activities in the field archival and file service performance, history of administration, auxiliary sciences of history and history. Archives fulfill these tasks abundantly – be it state archives, starting with the National Archive through state regional and state district archives, as well as specialized archives, which are often part of important scientific institutions (universities, Academy of Sciences). Archives in the Czech Republic and their employees are the solvers or co-solvers of various projects, organizers or co-organizers of important scientific conferences and publishers or co-publishers of scientific periodicals and scientific publications. Archives in the Czech Republic are far from being mere administration offices, but also scientific institutions and bring significant and unforgettable results in this field.

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## SUMMARY

*Archival science, as a field of human activity focused on the care of archives, forming part of the national cultural heritage, performs scientific and cultural*

*functions in addition to administrative and informational functions. This is also enshrined in the valid archive legislation of the Czech Republic (Act No. 499/2004 Coll. on archiving and file service), where numerous scientific tasks are defined, especially for the National Archives, but also for state regional archives. Archives fulfill all these defined tasks, even though they are obliged to fulfill mainly the tasks related to the reception, processing and making available of archival materials, which also make up the majority of their activity. A special place belongs to the National Archives, which is included in the List of research organizations of the Czech Republic and is governed by other laws regarding scientific activity. Other archives also publish a number of publications and periodicals, especially in the field of auxiliary sciences of history and history, and their staff develop a rich publishing activity. In this respect, so-called specialized archives, which often form part of important scientific institutions, occupy a specific position. Prague City Archives is also among the archives with significant scientific activity. Archives in the Czech Republic and their employees are the solvers or co-solvers of various projects, organizers or co-organizers of important scientific conferences and publishers or co-publishers of scientific periodicals and scientific publications. Archives in the Czech Republic are far from being mere offices, but also scientific institutions and bring significant and unforgettable results in this field.*

## **SOUHRN**

*Archivnictví jakožto obor lidské činnosti zaměřený na péči o archiválie, tvořící součást národního kulturního dědictví, plní kromě funkcí správních a informačních také funkce vědecké a kulturní. Tak je to zakotveno i v platné archivní legislativě České republiky (zákon č. 499/2004 Sb. o archivnictví a spisové službě), kde jsou vymezeny četné vědecké úkoly zejména Národnímu archivu, ale i státním oblastním archivům. Všechny tyto vymezené úkoly archivy naplňují, přestože jsou povinny plnit především úkoly týkající se přejímání, zpracování a zpřístupňování archiválií, které také tvoří převážnou část jejich činnosti. Zvláštní místo patří Národnímu archivu, který je zařazen do seznamu výzkumných organizací České republiky a řídí se i dalšími zákony týkajícími se vědecké činnosti. Rovněž další archivy vydávají řadu publikací a periodik, a to zejména v oboru pomoc-*

*ných věd historických a historie, a jejich pracovníci vyvíjejí bohatou publikační činnost. Specifické postavení zaujímají v tomto ohledu především tzv. specializované archivy, které často tvoří součást významných vědeckých institucí. Mezi archivy s významnou vědeckou činností patří také Archiv hlavního města Prahy. Archivy v České republice a jejich zaměstnanci jsou řešiteli či spoluřešiteli různých projektů, pořadateli či spolupořadateli významných vědeckých konferencí a vydavateli či spoluvydavateli vědeckých periodik a vědeckých publikací. Archivy v České republice tak zdaleka nejsou pouhými úřady, ale i vědeckými institucemi a přinášejí v této oblasti významné a nepominutelné výsledky.*

***Typology: 1.04 Professional article***