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Twenty volumes of Brno Studies in English and Professor Josef Vachek

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TWENTY VOLUMES OF BRNO STUDIES IN ENGLISH AND PROFESSOR JOSEF VACHEK



The publication of the twentieth volume of *Brno Studies in English* is an event that should not perhaps pass quite unnoticed and it would be sheer ingratitude not to recall the name of Professor Josef Vachek on this occasion. The first volume of *BSE* appeared at a time when English studies were not exactly in the good books of the authorities. Nevertheless, thanks to the initiative of Professor Vachek and the support of the Editorial Board of the Brno Faculty of Arts (Faculty of Philosophy, as the literal translation of the official name runs), the first volume of *BSE* appeared in 1959.

The idea of founding a series devoted to English studies had been suggested to Professor Vachek by the existence of the series *Prague Studies in English*. In its turn *BSE* served as a model for two other series now published by the Brno Faculty

of Arts: *Brünner Beiträge zur Germanistik und Nordistik* and *Etudes Romanes de Brno*.

In principle, *BSE* is open only to present and former members of the Brno Department of English and American Studies. Exceptionally, invitations have been extended to scholars closely linked with the Department in regard to the departmental research programmes, and on special occasions even to other scholars. One such occasion was the preparation of the homage volume in honour of Professor Vachek's sixtieth birthday (*BSE* 8), another that of the homage volume in honour of the sixtieth birthday of Docent Josef Hladký (*BSE* 19). The Vachek homage volume was truly international in character. In addition to contributions by Czechs and Slovaks, it contained contributions by Marian Adamus, Olga Akhmanova, Rolf Berndt, E. J. Dobson, D. B. Fry, M. A. K. Halliday, Klaus Hansen, Boris Ilyish, Gustav Kirchner, W. R. Lee, Simeon Potter, Margaret Schlauch and C. L. Wrenn, a veritable galaxy of scholars indeed. The Hladký homage volume brought contributions from the English Departments of the Czech and the Slovak Faculties of Art (Prague, Brno and Olomouc; and Bratislava and Prešov).

Habent sua fata libelli. This is well instanced by the Vachek homage volume. In this connection, special mention should be made of two contributions published in it: those of Professor Gustav Kirchner and Dr Svatopluk Štech. The two scholars showed their esteem towards Professor Vachek by writing their papers under circumstances requiring the utmost self-denial and courage. In spite of rapidly failing health they spared no pains in working at the papers against time. They succeeded in submitting them, but did not live to

see their publication. Dr Stech's contribution to the Vachek homage volume is also the photograph of Professor Vachek facing the title page. It was taken in the researchers' reading room in the Brno University Library in the early sixties.

As the volume also contained contributions by scholars who stayed abroad as émigrés after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, it was blacklisted in the days of 'normalization' and the copies of it that were still in print were ordered to be shredded. Thanks to the bravery of Dr Libor Stukavec, Chief Librarian of the Brno Faculty of Arts, and two of his collaborators, Mrs Iva Mandelíková and Mrs Marie Skarková, this order was not complied with. When after some years the book was taken off the blacklist, they were able to continue its distribution. It is now out of print.

Professor Vachek himself has contributed a number of studies to *BSE*. They are the following:

- (1) 1959. Two chapters on written English. *BSE* 1. 7-38.
- (2) 1961. *Some less familiar features of the analytical trend in English*. *BSE* 3. 9-78.
- (3) 1964. *On peripheral phonemes of Modern English*. *BSE* 4. 7 to 109.
- (4) 1981. Jan Firbas – a sexagenarian? *BSE* 14. 11-3.
- (5) 1989. The graphemes <y> and <h> in English and Czech. *BSE* 18. 11-9.
- (6) 1991. On spoken directives for building up written utterances. *BSE* 19. 143-7.
- (7) 1993. Present-day <w>, its form and function in present-day English. *BSE* 20. 11-5.

The titles of items (2) and (3) have been italicized, for the contributions are monographic in character.

The following items published by *BSE* concern the work of Professor Vachek. Items (2 and 4) are by Josef Illadký; the others are by Jan Firbas.

- (1) 1981. Professor Josef Vachek sexagenarian. *BSE* 8. 9-20.
- (2) 1981. Bibliography of Professor Josef Vachek's works. *BSE* 8. 205-15.
- (3) 1979. Professor Josef Vachek septuagenarian. *BSE* 13. 9-21.
- (4) 1979. Bibliography of Professor Josef Vachek's works 1968 to 1978. *BSE* 13. 23-8.
- (5) 1989. Professor Josef Vachek – founder of the linguistics section of the English Department of Masaryk University. *BSE* 18. 109-11.
- (6) 1991. Professor Josef Vachek – an honorary doctor of Masaryk University. *BSE* 19. 189-90.
- (7) 1993. Twenty volumes of *Brno Studies in English* and Professor Josef Vachek. *BSE* 20. 117-8.

The appearance of the twentieth volume of *BSE* almost coincides with Professor Vachek's eighty-fifth birthday (1 March 1994). The members of the Department of English and American Studies of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, join all the colleagues who congratulate Professor Vachek on his achievements in the fields of English, Czech and general linguistics, express their gratitude to him and extend to him their heartfelt wishes for all his further work and for him personally.

Jan Firbas