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# Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft



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Specimen

# Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft

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Specimen

Alena A. Fidlerová

## The fate of the letter <g> in the history of Czech orthography\*

### ABSTRACT

The paper traces the long and complicated history of the grapheme <g> representing /j/ in Czech. It explores the origins of this usage in Medieval Latin, its medieval and Early Modern history and its end in the mid-19th century. It explains the reasons why other graphemes (especially <y> and <i>) competed with <g> in the same function, namely the Medieval Latin tradition and specific phonetic features of Czech [j] in different positions. It describes the rules for the distribution of these graphemes, both followed by the printers of 15th- to 19th-century Czech Bibles, and proposed by selected pre-1842 grammars and textbooks. To complete the picture, also the graphemes representing the rather rare phoneme /g/ (<g> or <ǵ>) and their influence on the plausibility of <g> representing /j/ are discussed. Finally, the reasons for the switch to the modern usage (<j>, formerly a sign for /i:/, standing for /j/, <g> for /g/ and <í> for /i:/) in 1842 are introduced and evaluated, together with the reasons for the failure of previous reform proposals. The aim is to show that a detailed analysis of a seemingly narrow problem may help to elucidate various aspects of the linguistic thinking of different epochs, as well as the role of changing cultural practices and foreign influences.

### 1. Introducti

The most interesting and enlightening aspects of the history of writing systems comprise those processes, during which an inherited, traditional way of writing struggles with diverse innovative proposals based on phonological considerations, socio-cultural fashion or foreign influences. Whichever of them gains the final victory, the struggle itself reveals quite a lot about the level of linguistic thinking of individual periods and about the relation of the society to (written) language.

The aim of the present paper is to explore the origins, history and end of the use of the letter <g> representing /j/ in the Czech writing system;<sup>1</sup> a fea-

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1) Unfortunately, it is not possible to follow in this paper in any greater detail the related develop-

ture which remained more or less controversial in the Czech writing system for several centuries. First, it mentions briefly the origins of this usage in Medieval Latin and their continuation in Old and Middle Czech and it sketches some essential phonetic features of [j] in Czech which influenced its way of writing. Then, it summarises both the recommendations given by selected pre-1842 Czech grammars and the findings scattered in the secondary literature on this subject, predominantly on the rules and explanations for the distribution of <g> / <y> / <i> representing /j/. Finally, the reasons for the switch to the modern usage (<j>) in 1842 are discussed.

## 2. Letter <g> in (Medieval) Latin and in Old and Middle Czech

In the Latin alphabet, <g> comes to existence quite late: only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE the letter <c> was modified by adding a vertical bar to the bottom of its curved stroke and a new sign for the voiced velar /g/ was created,<sup>2</sup> probably by the invention of a Greek freedman of Spurius Carvilius Ruga (Wallace 2011: 15). Latin made use also of /j/, a palatal semivowel and non-syllabic counterpart of the high vowel /i/,<sup>3</sup> for both of which the letter <i> was used, probably thanks to the Etruscan convention (Wallace 2011: 15).

However, quite early changes of pronunciation in Medieval Latin led to the situation when original [g] before front vowels started to be pronounced more or less as [j].<sup>4</sup> Thus, two different symbols were used for the same phoneme /j/ according to its position in the word, <i> and <g>, none of which was specific for this phoneme only.

Like the majority of European languages, the Czech language adopted and adapted for its purposes the writing system of Medieval Latin. As the Czech phonological system comprises more phonemes than the Latin one, quite a substantial adaptation of the Roman script was necessary to meet its requirements. As a consequence, several more or less standardised Czech writing systems were used successively during the Middle Ages: the so called primitive ortho-

ment of <j> from a positional variant of <i> to an independent letter (standing first for /i:/ and then for /j/ in Czech). A summary of this process in writing of the most important European languages with special regard to Latin and German can be found e.g. in Must (1965).

- 2) In the Very Old Latin period, the velar stops /k/, /g/ and labialised velar /k<sup>w</sup>/ were spelled <c>, <k> or <q>, depending on the following vowel (Wallace 2011: 11; McCullagh 2011: 85).
- 3) Although in Indo-European, and possibly in Early Latin too, /i/ and /j/ were allophones, by the Classical period they were separate phonemes (McCullagh 2011: 87).
- 4) "Älter noch als diese Entwicklung [d.h. Assimilierung] ist diejenige vom Okklusivlaut zu einer schwachen Spirans (Spirantisierung), velar (wohl im Bereich von g) vor den dunkeln Vokalen, palatal (im Bereich von j) vor den hellen Vokalen." (Stotz 1996: 139).

graphy, two types of digraphic orthography and the diacritic orthography.<sup>5</sup> After the invention of the printing press, a compromise between the two last mentioned systems prevailed, called today the Brethren orthography. During the National Revival period in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this system was gradually transformed and after several "corrections" the present-day (mostly phonemic) state was reached. However, unlike the present system (where the phoneme /j/ is represented mostly by <j> and the grapheme <g> represents primarily the phoneme /g/ pronounced [g] or in some positions [k]), all the past writing systems shared one common feature adopted from the Medieval Latin usage: the phoneme /j/ was represented mostly by the grapheme <g>, but in some cases also by <y>, <i> or <gi> (during the Middle Ages also by digraphs <yg>, <ig> or <gh>).<sup>6</sup> In this respect, Czech was far from alone in Europe: e.g. in Old High German, Old French or Old Saxon <g> representing [j] was often written before <e> and <i> and this usage continued partly also in Middle Low German and in some intervocalic positions also in Middle High German (Must 1965: 585, 586). The letter <j> was not absent from these older Czech writing systems, but was usually used to mark the vowel sound [i:].

However, this usage led to a considerable degree of uncertainty about the distribution of <g>, <y> and <i> as all of them could be pronounced [j] but had other functions too (<g> could represent also the phoneme /g/,<sup>7</sup> the other two /i/ and initially also /y/,<sup>8</sup> mark the palatalisation of previous consonant etc.). Although an attempt to reduce this ambiguity appeared during the Early Modern Period thanks to the proposition to use a diacritic (a superscript dot or later a hook, *háček*) on <g> to mark its pronunciation as [g], it was never universally adopted and till the so-called Harmonious Reform of 1842 the ambiguous usage of <g> persisted. But thanks to the fact that Czech orthography has been already since the Early Modern period relatively close to

5) For more details on the development of Czech orthography, see e.g. Cuřín (1985); Čornejová, Rychnovská and Zemanová (2010); Gebauer (1963: 11–16); Havránek (1980); Lutterer (1969); Pleskalová et al. (2007); Porák (1983); Sedláček (1993); Šlosar et al. (2009); Vintř (2005: 149–181).

6) For details see Porák (1983: 84–91).

7) The position of /g/ (or [g]) in Czech is rather problematic. After the change /g/ > /h/ in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 12<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, for a short period [g] was absent from Czech and returned only gradually via the assimilation in the sequence of voiceless plus voiced consonant (beginning during the 14<sup>th</sup> century) and subsequently in loanwords and foreign proper names (see e.g. Pleskalová 2003: 30, 41–42; however, forms using <k> instead of original <g> in loanwords also occurred in Old and Middle Czech and were even recommended by some grammarians). Vintř (1995: 34–35) characterises [g] in Czech as a positional variant of /k/ and a signal of foreignness in loanwords tending to phonologisation.

8) In most Czech dialects, /y/ merged with /i/ probably in the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Pleskalová 2003: 46).

the surface or shallow orthography type, i.e. the orthography with a low phoneme-grapheme ratio,<sup>9</sup> such an ambiguity started quite early to be perceived as disturbing and inappropriate.<sup>10</sup>

### 3 Phonetic properties of [j] in Czech

Even today, the classification of Czech /j/ is terminologically somehow inconsistent. Most often it is labelled as a (*palatal*) *glide* (Palková 1994: 76), but the terms (*palatal*) *approximant* or *semi-vowel* are also in use (see e.g. Pompino-Marschall 2009: 203–205; Krčmová 2017). Whichever term is used, its main characteristics is its protean character oscillating between vowels and consonants.<sup>11</sup> According to Komárek (1969: 108–109), Old Czech in its earliest stages (before the 14<sup>th</sup> century) probably lacked the spirant [j] sound and only semivowel [j] sound was used in all positions. But already in the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the spirant [j] came to existence in Czech, e.g. in the position before [i]. Today, the articulation of the syllable-initial [j] varies with the following (or sometimes also preceding) vowel: it is more open between low vowels (e.g. in *maják*), more closed before the high ones (e.g. in *píji*).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the phonetic character of Czech [j] at the beginning of a syllable (as in *jeden*) differs somehow from the syllable-final [j] (as in *tajný*) functioning as an off-glide in a falling diphthong (*aj*, *ej*, *oj*, *ij*, *uj*).<sup>13</sup> All this naturally raises the

9) “The phoneme-grapheme ratio is one of the more obvious points distinguishing the various orthographies that make use of the Latin alphabet. Those with a very high ratio are sometimes called ‘deep orthographies’, while those with a ratio closer to the ideal of 1 : 1 are called ‘shallow or surface orthographies’, where ‘depth’ means being further removed from the phonetic interpretation of strings of graphemes.” (Coulmas 2003: 101–102); “In a writing system which is orthographically shallow, graphemes represent phonemes; in a writing system which is orthographically deep, graphemes represent morphophonemes.” (Rogers 2005: 177).

10) However, there are some features of increased orthographic depth in Czech, but they are generally represented by using the same grapheme in differently pronounced allomorphs (“Orthographic depth is greater if different allomorphs of the same morpheme are written the same,” Rogers 2005: 275), not by using different graphemes for one phoneme in different positions.

11) E.g. Coulmas (2003: 92). Trask (1996: 87, 157, 382) gives the following characteristics of a glide: “A very brief phonetic vowel (sense 1 [a segment whose articulation involves no significant obstruction of the airstream]) which functions in some language as a phonological consonant (sense 2 [a segment which occupies a syllabic margin])”.

12) Krčmová (1994: 116). The same feature in English pronunciation is described in Davis (1998: 113–114), the complicated phonetic features of [j] in French are discussed by Jensen (1994).

13) Vachek (1933: 295) refers to them as spirant [j] and semivowel [j] respectively, Trávníček (1935: 135) as spirant [j] and non-syllabic [j]. The phonetic and phonological classification of tautosyllabic sequences of a vowel plus [j]/[i] in Czech differs both in the works of different authors and according to the origin of such groups. According to Krčmová (1994: 96; 2017) they are in all cases phonetically falling diphthongs, phonologically conventionally classified either as a combination of vowel plus /j/ (if they occur in some inflectional forms only, e.g. *kraj* – *kraje*, *dej* – *dají*), or as a diphthong (if they are a result of a nonstandard diphthongisa-

question, whether these phonetic differences could have been perceived, and consequently also taken into consideration by the authors of Early Modern Czech grammars.

### 4. <g> in the history of Czech orthography

#### 4.1 Usage

The orthographic usage during the Middle Ages and Early Modern period was generally quite varied. To simplify the situation, I decided to disregard the manuscript usage (differing considerably from printed books) and to use as an example only Early Modern printed books, among which Bibles enjoyed the highest level of orthographical and typographical care and were often considered exemplary.

The following table shows the usage in selected 15<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century printed Czech Bibles.<sup>14</sup> To make it more transparent, instead of full words only the relevant graphemes or grapheme groups are shown.<sup>15</sup>

tion [y:] > [ej]; however, also in these cases they are always spelled with the consonantal grapheme, e.g. *mýt* – *mejt*). As the final element is phonetically identical in both cases, I will not make this distinction and transcribe it always [j].

14) Examples were selected from the chapters 1–5 of the Gospel of John. **BiblPraž** = Bible pražská 1488, *Incunabula* Urb-IX; **BiblKut2** = Bible kutnohorská bez znaku 1489, *Incunabula* Urb-XI; **BiblBen** = Bible benátská 1506, *Knihopis* K01097; **BiblSev1** = Bible Severýnova 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1529, *Knihopis* K01098; **BiblNor** = Bible norimberská 1540, *Knihopis* K01100; **BiblNet** = Bible Netolického (Melantrichova 1<sup>st</sup> ed.) 1549, *Knihopis* K01101; **BiblMel4** = Bible Melantrichova, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1570, *Knihopis* K01104; **BiblKral1** = Bible kralická 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1579–1594, *Knihopis* K01107; **BiblVel** = Bible Adama z Veveslavína 1613, *Knihopis* K01106; **BiblKral3** = Bible kralická 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1613, *Knihopis* K01110; **BiblVác1** = Bible svatováclavská 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1677–1715, *Knihopis* K01111; **BiblHal3** = Bible hallská 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1766, *Knihopis* K01116; **BiblVác3** = Bible svatováclavská, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1778–1780, *Knihopis* K01113; **BiblProch2** = *Biblj Česká, to gest, celé Swatě Pjsmo starého y nowého Zákona, podlé starého obecného Latinského od swatě Řjmské katolické Cýrkwe schwáleného výkladu, opět s obzvlásstnj pilnostj přehlednuté, ponaprawené, wyswětené a znouu ydané, léta Páně 1804. [...]* W Praze, nákladem cýs. král. normálnj sskoly.; **BiblBer** = *Biblia Sacra. To gest Biblj Swatá aneb wssecka Swatá Pjsma Starého y Nowého Zákona wnowě ydána. W Berljně Léta Páně MDCCCXIII (1813) Knihtiskařstwjm Kr. Fr. Erast Spathen.*; **BiblGyn** = *Biblia Sacra, To gest Biblj Swatá aneb wssecka Swatá Pjsma, Starého y Nowého Zákona, Se wssj pilnostj opět přehlednuta, ponaprawena a nowě ydána. W Gynsu 1840. Wytisštěná v Karla Reicharda.*

15) It must be noted here that in Czech grammars of the Early Modern period, no majuscule grapheme is mentioned corresponding to the minuscule grapheme <j>, because the phoneme /i:/ is never present word-initially in Czech. However, a majuscule counterpart of <i> is always listed in them the shape of which in the Gothic script (used normally for Czech) resembles today’s <J>. However, despite its shape and despite the fact that it represents more often the [j] than the [i] sound, I transliterate it in Czech texts and words always <I>, because I do not want to distort the conception held by the authors of the time. On the other hand, as the grammars of German of the same period usually list two majuscule graphemes <I> and <J> ,

Word	BibIPraž (1488)	BibIKut2 (1489)	BibIBen (1506)	BibISev1 (1529)	BibINor (1540)	BibINet (1549)	BibIMel4 (1570)	BibIKra1 (1594)
Jan	I	i / y	I	I	I	I	I	I
Jordánem	i	i	I	I	I	I	I	I
jáhny	i	i	i	I	I	I	I	—
Ježíš	g	g	G	G	G	G	G	G
Jeruzalémě	g	g	G	G	G	G	G	G
já(t), Já(t)	y / i / I	y / i / I	y / I	y / I	y / Y / I	y / Y / I	y / I	g / G
Nepřijali	y	y	y	g	y	y	y	g
Mojžieš / Mojžiš	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	g
prvnější / přednější	y	y	y	g	y	g	—	g
tvouj / tvůj	g / y	y / g	g	y	y	g	g	g
jej	gey	gey	gey	gey	gey	gey	gey	geg
najprvé / nejprvé	ay	ay	ay	ay	ay	ay	ay	ey
nazajtrie / nazajtrí / nazejtří	ay	ay	ay	ay	ay	ay	ay	—
nalévajtež / nalévejtež	—	—	—	—	ay	ay	ay	ey
daj / dej	ay	ay	ay	ag	ay	ay	ay	ey
povolaj / povolej / zavolej	ay	ay	ay	ag	ay	ay	ay	ey
hejbal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Galilee	g	g	G	G	G	G	G	Ě

As we can see, in some positions the spelling varies or changes in time, others are quite stable. Syllable-initial [j] followed by a front vowel was quite consistently spelled <g>. At first, there was some uncertainty as to how to spell the syllable-initial [j] before back vowels, but during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, <y> or <i> were in domestic words gradually replaced by <g> (*yá* – *gá*, *nepřiyal* – *nepřigal*). Some foreign proper names, on the other hand, remain exceptions to the general law (/j/ = <g>) during the whole period and are consistently written with <I> adopted via Latin (*Iordán*, *Ian*). Others

which may, but also may not differ in shape, but are perceived as distinct, in German examples I distinguish between them according to the sound they represent.

BibIVel (1613)	BibIKral3 (1613)	BibIVác1 (1677)	BibIHal3 (1766)	BibIVác3 (1778)	BibIProch2 (1804)	BibIBer (1813)	BibIGyn (1840)	Word
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	Jan
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	Jordánem
I	—	I	—	I	I	—	—	jáhny
G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	Ježíš
G	G	I	G	I	G	G	G	Jeruzalémě
g / I	g / G	g / G	g / G	g / G	g / G	g / G	g / G	já(t), Já(t)
g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	Nepřijali
g	g	g	g	y	g	g	g	Mojžieš / Mojžiš
g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	prvnější / přednější
g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	tvouj / tvůj
geg	geg	geg	geg	geg	geg	geg	geg	jej
ey	ey	ey	ey	ey	ey	eg	ey	najprvé / nejprvé
eg	—	ey	—	ey	—	—	—	nazajtrie / nazajtrí / nazejtří
eg	ey	ey	ey	ey	ey	eg	ey	nalévajtež / nalévejtež
eg	ey	ey	ey	ey	ey	eg	ey	daj / dej
eg	ey	ey	ey	ey	ey	eg	ey	povolaj / povolej / zavolej
—	—	ey	—	ey	—	—	—	hejbal
G	Ě	Ě	Ě	Ě	Ě	Ě	Ě	Galilee

(those where [j] is followed by a front vowel) take usually <G> (*Geruzalém*), but less consistently than appellatives. A similar process seems to take place also in syllable-final positions after a vowel (e.g. *twuoy* – *twüg*, *gey* – *geg*), but it is far less straightforward and does not lead to the same results in all words; even some (but not all) 19<sup>th</sup> century Bibles print *neyprvé*, *naléweytež*, or *dey*.<sup>16</sup> As can be presumed from the phonetic description above and as we

<sup>16</sup> In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the grapheme <y> was popular also in Germany, England, France and the Low Countries, and was often, though not exclusively, used as the sign for the second element of diphthongs (Must 1965: 590).

will see in the next chapter, these are the positions causing most uncertainty and were discussed by many Early Modern grammarians.

#### 4.2 Grammars and grammar-like treatises

Czech grammars<sup>17</sup> of the 15<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries can be (not only) with respect to /j/ divided into three groups: those which more or less describe the accepted usage (or summarise the opinions of important predecessors), those which try to find linguistic explanations and give suggestions for the rationalisation of usage<sup>18</sup> and those which propose more or less bold reforms. As usage becomes more uniform and the grammars more numerous in the course of the time (especially from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards), I will not mention all the works published and will predominantly deal with the second and third group.

As I have already indicated, the grammarians usually discuss in some detail the problematic cases of spelling [j] identified in the previous chapter. Foreign proper names spelled with <I> and syllable-initial <y> before back vowels are usually mentioned, but do not cause much disagreement. What caused Early Modern grammarians of Czech the greatest problem was the fact that on the one hand tautosyllabic [aj], [ej], [oj] etc. form only one syllable, and thus were perceived as falling diphthongs (i.e. combinations of two vowel sounds), but on the other hand their final element is from the perceptual point of view similar to [j] in other positions, and thus tended to be perceived as a consonant. Treatises discussing Latin could not help to solve this problem, because in Latin /j/ occurs almost exclusively word-initially before a vowel or medially between vowels (McCullagh 2011: 87). Moreover, some such cases seemed closer to vowels (especially those originating during the late 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries through sound changes from vowels or similar vowel-consonant groups),<sup>19</sup> the others to consonants (in many related words or inflectional forms, the syllable-initial and syllable-final position alternate, e.g. *kraj* – *kraje*). Thus, the natural outcome of this situations was the insecurity as to the answers to the following questions:

1. Is there just one syllable-final [j]/[i] sound, or are there two of them, [j] and [i]?
2. If there is only one sound, is it a vowel, or a consonant?
3. If there are two of them, according to which criterion should we distinguish between them?

<sup>17</sup> The ever growing proportion of them is accessible from *Vokabulář webový – Mluvnice, Knihopis Digital* or *Googlebooks*.

<sup>18</sup> About the rationalisation in Early Modern grammars of Czech see Koupil (2015: 193–198).

<sup>19</sup> There were two main changes affecting these groups: the diphthongisation [y:] > [ej], e.g. *mladý* > *mladej* (its first element was pronounced initially probably as a neutral vowel and spelled <e> or <a>, which brings this change nearer to the following one), and the related change [aj] > [ej] in tautosyllabic positions, e.g. *daj* > *dej*, *vajce* > *vejce*, but *vajec*). See e.g. Pleskalová (2003: 45, 48).

This insecurity could have been further strengthened by three factors. First, the affiliation of the letters <i> and <u> to vowels or to consonants was discussed already in Late Antiquity.<sup>20</sup> In Latin poetry, /i/ and /j/ could be occasionally interchanged for metrical purposes (McCullagh 2011: 87). Even after the appearance of <j>, it was regarded as a variant of <i> and each of them could denote both /i/ and /j/; the more or less strict differentiation between <i> with the vocalic value and <j> with the consonantal value took place in Romance languages and in German only in the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Must 1965: 589–590). Second, the authors of grammars could have perceived the phonetic differences between syllable-initial and syllable-final [j] mentioned above and could have taken it into consideration. And third, unlike some contemporary, phonetically more precise grammatical treatises,<sup>21</sup> Czech grammarians knew for quite a long time only two, distinct groups of letters/sounds, namely consonants and vowels, and did not admit for any “transitional” elements. Although some Early Modern Czech grammars do mention semivowels, they conceive of them always as of a subgroup of consonants and never include /j/ among them. Only for the mid–19<sup>th</sup> century philologists, this ceases to be a problem: for Pavel Josef Šafařík (1795–1861), /j/ is a “polohláska čili obojetnice” ([a half-sound or an ambiguous sound]), i.e. in fact the vowel /i/ acquiring the nature of a consonant (Šafařík 1845: 11).

##### 4.2.1 The Middle Ages<sup>22</sup>

In fact, only one text concerning the problems of Czech orthography was created during the Middle Ages. It is the anonymous Latin treatise *De orthographia Bohemica*, written probably at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and ascribed to the famous Czech religious reformer Jan Hus (ca. 1370–1415).<sup>23</sup> Generally, the author of the treatise advocates the 1 : 1 phoneme to grapheme ratio, which he wants to achieve by the use of diacritic signs, but he allows for several exceptions, mostly in those cases, where there is an exception already in Latin. One of them is the letter <g>, about which he remarks that its pronunciation is twofold in Latin: “circa G sciendum, quod habet iuxta Latinos

<sup>20</sup> E.g. in Priscian’s *Institutiones grammaticae* (Keil 1855: 13–14).

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Charles Butler in his *The English Grammar* (1634) treats <j>, <y> as vowels which can also function as consonants (Kumada 2010: 210).

<sup>22</sup> In the following chapters, I take into consideration only the explicit recommendations of the treatises or grammars, not their own spelling, as it is often inconsistent and may not be in accordance with the intention of the author. It is a well-known fact that the author could not always influence the spelling of his printed work (and he definitely could not influence the spelling of a manuscript copy of his treatise).

<sup>23</sup> For the first edition see Hus (1857), for the edition supplemented with a German translation and an important introduction see Schröpfer (1968), for the most recent edition and Czech translation see Nechutová et al. (1982: 56–69).

sonum duplicem, scilicet mollem et durum. mollem circa *e*, ut ibi *genus* et circa *i* ut in *gigno*. Sed durum circa *a* ut in *gaudium* / et circa *o* ut in *goliás* et circa *u* ut in *gustus*.” (Nechutová *et al.* 1982: 60). As the second phoneme mentioned occurs in Czech only in loanwords, he discusses the first variant only (i.e. /j/), recommending the use of <g> in all positions, but accepting also the fact that the Czech usage generally follows the Latin one in using <i> before back vowels (*Ian*, *Iakub*, *Iarek*, *Troian*, *Burian*, *pabian*) and at the end of a syllable after a vowel (e.g. *moi*, *twoi*, *loi*; see Nechutová *et al.* 1982: 60, 62). On the other hand, he does not allow for using <y> in any of these positions, which is in accordance with some other Hus’ works (see e.g. Hus 1963: 147) where he stresses the phonetic difference between /i/ and /y/ in Czech, rapidly disappearing from the pronunciation during his lifetime.

Although *De orthographia Bohemica* represents an early and very interesting contribution to the debate, it is difficult to evaluate correctly its importance for the following centuries, because there are only two medieval manuscripts extant (both of them incomplete anonymous copies) and the first printed edition based on one of them occurred only in 1857. Thus, it is doubtful if it could have influenced the debate about Czech orthography including the Harmonious Reform of 1842.

#### 4.2.2 The 16<sup>th</sup> century

As in the medieval period, also the first Czech grammars of the 16<sup>th</sup> century are convinced that despite the variation in texts, the basic letter for /j/ is <g>. However, the already mentioned cases (/j/ + back vowel and especially syllable-final /j/) continue to be controversial and probably prevented Czech orthography from adopting the simple rule /j/ = <g>.

The first Czech grammar, the so called *Náměšťská mluvnice* [Grammar of Náměšť] first printed in 1533<sup>24</sup> gives in its first section on orthography, written by Beneš Optát (end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century – ca. 1559) with the help of Petr Gzel (died ca. 1564), a simple answer substantiated phonetically and synchronically: if the [j] sound follows after a vowel, they are pronounced together as one syllable and so they form a diphthong. Thus, a vowel letter should be used, namely <y> (e.g. *ay*, *gey*, *boy*, *hoy*, *foyt*, *múy*; Optát, Gzel, Philomates 1533: Aivr). The choice of <y> instead of <i> is quite surprising and can be explained by the scribal tradition only,<sup>25</sup> as later on (Biv) they point out that there is a phonetic difference between /i/ and /y/. The authors also observe that both <i> and <y> are often used word-initially before back vowels instead of <g> (e.g. *Ian*, *Iakub*, *yazyk*, *yátry*, *yakož*), but in this stage they

24) For the phototypical edition with a German introduction see Optát, Gzel, Philomates 1974.

25) Compare also the above mentioned discussion about the popularity of <y> in other European languages in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (Must 1965).

do not formulate any opinions concerning this usage, just stress that these combinations of letters should never be pronounced as diphthongs (Optát, Gzel, Philomates 1533: Biv). However, some two years later Beneš Optát in another version of this text, published under a different title together with an elementary mathematical textbook, specifies that first, <y> in above mentioned diphthongs should be pronounced differently from <y> standing alone (“mildly”), and second that before any vowel, <g> should be always used (e.g. *bige*, *myge*, *boguge*; Optát 1535: Eiiiir).

However, Jan Blahoslav (1523–1571), an important Czech grammarian and Bible translator of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, who made a copy of the entire text of *Náměšťská mluvnice* and accompanied it with his own comments (finished 1571, but preserved in a single manuscript copy written around 1670), does not fully agree with Optát and Gzel. According to him, <g> should be used in all positions (e.g. *mjrněgssj*, *bogúg*, *ritěřúg*, *bog*, *kog*, *hag*, *gazyk*, *gasnost*, *gak*, *gakož*, *na něg*, *múg*, *twúg*, *hnúg*, *kúg*) except in the diphthong [ej] originating from [y:] or from [aj] (Blahoslav 1991: 24, 40, 47–48, 50).<sup>26</sup> He is well aware of the fact that the [j] sound is quite similar to [i] (but not [y]) and even claims that the spelling *Ian*, *Iakub* indicates that the vowel can “change into the consonant” (“vocalis in naturam consonantis transit”, Blahoslav 1991: 47–48). Anyway, these observations do not prevent him from recommending *ey* for the above mentioned diphthong, probably not to differ too much from his predecessors and from the general usage (clearly, similarly as the authors of *Náměšťská mluvnice* also he considers <y> here not to be an independent grapheme, but a part of a digraph having its own pronunciation as a whole).

At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a similar solution to the “diphthong problem” was put forward very rudimentarily by a little known Czech grammarian and lexicographer Matouš Philonomus Benešovský (ca. 1550 – ca. 1595). In his brief etymological vocabulary of Czech with a short introductory orthographic information (published in 1587),<sup>27</sup> he claims that there are only three diphthongs in Czech, namely those spelled *ay*, *au* and *ey*. Other syllable-final combinations, *og* and *ug*, do not form a diphthong, because in other inflectional forms of the word they become constituent parts of different syllables (e.g. *Bog boge* / *Bogi* / *Lúg loge logi*), and consequently should be written with

26) It should be noted that there is also a short passage where the preserved copy of the grammar mentions another, simpler rule based on combinatorics: it is “almost common” (“téměř jest obyčejné”) to write <ey> but <ěg>. It gives several examples which do not conform fully neither to the previously mentioned nor to this rule (Blahoslav 1991: 50). I assume that this was probably meant as a simplified rule for scribes or typesetters and that the manuscript could have been corrupted here by the scribe, either by inserting his own examples or by spelling mistakes.

27) Benešovský (1587). I worked with the edition Benešovský (2003).

<g> Still, he tolerates the usage of word-initial <i> or <y>, e.g. *Ian*, *Yak* (Benešovský 2003: 80, in the original edition B2r).

#### 4.2.3 The 17<sup>th</sup> century

At the very beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the “diphthong rule” proposed by Matouš Philonomus Benešovský was partly adopted and elaborated on and partly called into question by his follower, a learned teacher, writer and the last non-Catholic Early Modern Czech grammarian, Vavřinec Benedikt z Nudožer (1555–1615). In his Latin grammar of Czech published in 1603 (edited in z Nudožer 1999), he claims clearly that no sequence of a vowel plus [j] within one syllable should be considered a diphthong, if other inflectional forms or related words exist, where these two elements belong to different syllables (“Sed *g* hic scribendum esse flexio vocum ostendit, ut: *złoděg*, genit. *złoděge*, *woleg*, a tertia *wolagj*, *deg* a *dagj*.”). Thus, only the diphthongised forms of [y:] (e.g. from *strýc*, *dobrý*), the interjection *ay* (*ey*) and the superlative prefix *ney-* (from *nay-*) can be regarded diphthongs and thus can hypothetically make use of <y> instead of <g>. However, in the first case mentioned it is not clear whether he is in favour of writing the diphthongised forms at all (in fact, he mentions them only in the connection with spoken language: “E vocalibus longis quasdam Bohemi sono diphthongo pronunciant. *y* sonant aliquando tanquam *ey* ut in *strýc*, *dobrý*.”), and in the other two cases the use of <g> would be in fact preferable, as the pronunciation of the final part of the diphthong does not differ from [j] (z Nudožer 1603: 2rv). On the other hand, he tolerates (but does not recommend) <I> in foreign personal names (*Ian*, *Iakob* standing in fact for *Gan*, *Gakob*, 4r).

For the greatest part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Jesuit grammarians took the reins. First of them was Joannes Drachovius (Jan Drachovský, 1577–1644), whose Latin grammar of Czech was published posthumously in 1660 (edited in Koupil 2012). As for the diphthongs, he mentions two groups of them: visible (“aperte”, “proprie”: *ay*, *au*, *ey*, *oy*, *uy*) and hidden (“occulte”, “improprie”: *ě*, *ů*, *ý*, the last of which can be written in adjective endings instead of *ey*: *hrozný* for *hrozney*). Anyway, he does not specify whether all such combinations should be counted as diphthongs and does not give any explicit recommendations or formulate rules, he just records the (inconsistent) usage (Drachovius 1660: 19, 152, 154).

His follower Georgius Constantius (Jiří Konstanc, 1607–1673), whose Czech-Latin grammar *Brus jazyka českého* ([The Grindstone of the Czech Language]) was published in 1667, is usually more self-confident in formulating rules, but in case of [j], even he is at a loss. Apart from the syllable-initial <I> in foreign proper names (which he does not object) and <y> (which he seems to consider rather archaic except in the personal pronoun *yá* and in the position between vowels in foreign proper names, the examples of which are,

rather surprisingly, spelled *Kaja*, *Troja*), he discusses the syllable-final [j]. He notes that the usage tends to <y> in these positions although the sound does not differ from [j] (Constantius 1667: 11–12, 14–15, 284). Unlike his predecessors, he identifies as a special problematic case the adjectives in comparative: on the one hand, they should be written with <y>, because, as he assumes (not quite correctly, but this does not matter here), they are formed by adding the suffix *-ší* (written *-ssj*)<sup>28</sup> to the masculine singular nominative of the positive degree, ending with the diphthong *-ey* (e.g. *bjley* – *bjleyssj*), and on the other hand, they should be written with <g>, because adverbs can be formed from them ending with *-gi*, which shows that not a diphthong, but a vowel plus consonant occur here (e.g. *prudčegssj* – *prudčegi*). Thus, in the end he explicitly allows both ways of writing not only here, but also in verb imperatives (*sslapey* – *sslapeg*; Constantius 1667: 55–56, 125–126, 147–148).

The only outstanding non-Jesuit Czech grammarian of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Václav Jan Rosa (ca. 1630–1680), provides in his grammar of 1672<sup>29</sup> quite an interesting and detailed discussion on this topic. First, he adds another aspect to the diphthong discussion, namely the position in the word: according to him, corresponding diphthongs (*ay*, *ey*, *oy*, *uy*) are not too common in Czech and occur almost exclusively in monosyllables or at the end of a word (and even there less frequently than others claim, e.g. not in imperatives *hay*, *hoy*, because of the present forms *hagjm*, *hogjm*, where a consonant undoubtedly appears). If these combinations ever occur medially, they are in fact not diphthongs but (two) syllables, as the vowel letter <y> used instead of the consonant letter <g> shows<sup>30</sup> (e.g. *dustoyný*, *pokoyný* instead of *dustogný*, *pokogný*). The only exception is [ej] alternating with [y:] which also occurs medially (e.g. *wyweyssený* – *wywýssený*; Rosa 1672: 402, 426). In accordance with this and with his general approach to orthography as a significant evidence for pronunciation, he takes seriously the usage allowing vowel letters instead of <g> also syllable-initially<sup>31</sup> and claims that in any position they indicate the possibility to be pronounced as vowels (i.e. to make the word one syllable longer, e.g. to pronounce *Iěžjss* either [je:-ži:š] or [i-e:-ži:š]) when required, especially in quantitative poetry. Thus, he comes to the conclusion that in fact almost anywhere where <i> or <y> occurs, also <g> can be

28) In fact, the superlative suffix is *-ejší*, not just *-ší*, and is added to the stem, not to the stem plus masculine singular nominative ending.

29) Edition Rosa (1983), English translation Rosa (1991).

30) “si quando in medio inveniantur, tunc non sunt diphthongi, sed syllabae. Et tunc *y* / loco consonantis *g* / ponitur.” (Rosa 1672: 402). In fact, he asserts here that the example words can be four-syllable ([po-ko-i-ny:]) which does not represent normal Czech pronunciation, but is in accordance with the analogical possibility mentioned above for Latin.

31) Although he is fully aware of its origin from Latin pronunciation of <g> in different positions (Rosa 1672: 418).

used and the other way round (Rosa 1672: 402–405, 420) except of in intervocalic position where <g> is obligatory to avoid confusion (e.g. *wsseligak*, Rosa 1672: 420).

Importantly for the future development, Rosa is probably the first one to expressly mention also the possibility to use minuscule <j> (according to him a variant of <i> in a syllable-initial position where it denotes a consonant) for [j], e.g. *jakož*, although he is not in favour of it (Rosa, 1672: 420–421). As his grammar served as a model for many of his 18<sup>th</sup>-century successors, it can represent one of the roots of today's usage.

#### 4.2.4 The first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century

The anonymous author of the Latin treatise *Alphabetum Boëmicum* (1718), devoted exclusively to the discussion of Czech orthography, perceives the use of the vowel letter <y> for the consonant [j] as one of particularly urgent problems, and consequently he mentions it already in the preface (*Alphabetum* 1718: 5). Unlike the 17<sup>th</sup> century authors, usually quite tolerant to the variation in usage, this author argues emphatically against using <y> for [j], and, what is more important, claims that the same sound occurs in all the so far discussed positions inclusive the “diphthongs” advocated by his predecessors. Accordingly, it is unacceptable to use the vowel letter <y> for the consonant sound and the only acceptable letter is <g>. There is no reason to follow even the received usage when it is not rational (“Quod non secundum exempla, nisi rationi innitiantur, procedendum sit.”; *Alphabetum* 1718: 46). To support his argument, he refers to some authoritative works using <g> more often than others, namely Rosa (which, as we have seen, is not completely precise, as in general Rosa is ready to allow any usage), and selected 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century printed books (*Alphabetum* 1718: 43–54). To another argument advocating <y> in the sequence [jj] (e.g. *neygasnëgssj*), he objects that as it is not unusual to write double <g> in Latin (e.g. *agglomerare*, *aggratiare*), there is no reason to avoid it in Czech. Only in foreign proper names (*Ian*, *Iakub*, *Iozeff*) it is acceptable to use <I> because of their origin, but first, this usage should not be extended to any domestic words, and second, as some proper names have been already Czechised and are written with <g> (*GEžjss*, *Gere-miáss*, *Geruzalem*, *Gerycho*), the others could follow their example.

Although Pavel Doležal (1700–1778), another important grammarian of this period of Slovak origin, mentions in his Latin grammar of Czech of 1746 in accordance with the tradition four diphthongs *ay*, *ey*, *oy* and *uy*, he at the same time remarks that they sound identically with *ag*, *eg*, *og* and *ug*<sup>32</sup> and in

<sup>32)</sup> He is also the first to notice that the consonant [j] occurs also in the pronunciation of sound sequences originally comprising a palatalised labial, today pronounced [bje], [pje], [vje], [fje], [mne]/[mje] and traditionally (and also today) written *bě*, *pě*, *vě*, *fě*, *mě/mně*, where the hook

the following text he in fact allows for one of them only: *ey* originating from *ag* or *y*. In other cases he explicitly forbids writing <y> (Doležal 1746: 3–4, 6–8). He is aware of the traditional <I> or <Y> at the beginning of some foreign words, mostly proper names, but he remarks that all of them could be also written with <G> (*Ian*, *Yan* or *Gan*). So far the treatment is more or less traditional. Nevertheless, like Rosa also Doležal mentions minuscule <j> and states that it should never be written for [j] except in foreign words. He gives not only the notorious examples of personal names like *Ian*,<sup>33</sup> but also words *Iojada*, *Halelujah*, i.e. words where the minuscule <j> occurs medially (Doležal 1746: 2, 4). Thus, despite his negative attitude to <j>, this mention could be one of the first hints for its career as a consonant grapheme in Czech.

#### 4.2.5 The National Revival period: first reform proposals and their opponents

##### *The turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century*

The National Revival period was heralded by an increased activity of orthography reformers of different sorts. Among these, also the well-known Viennese Czech language teacher and grammarian Johannes Wenzel Pohl (Jan Václav Pól, 1740–1790) can be ascribed, although most of his Prague contemporaries did not think particularly highly of him. His German written grammar of Czech (in fact an adaptation of Rosa's work) was published repeatedly in various versions and under diverse titles, but his ever bolder proposals for orthography reform found its full articulation only in his treatises devoted exclusively to Czech orthography, published simultaneously in not completely identical Czech and German versions in 1786. In the more precise Czech version (the German one should have served also as a textbook, and consequently, it does not go into detail and allows more orthographical variation), he of all the putative diphthongs allows only for *ey* (in the superlative prefix *ney-*, interjection *hey*, *heysa* and from *y*), but from his explanation it is clear that what he really has in mind is not a diphthong, but the possibility mentioned already by his model Rosa and meant to serve exclusively the needs of poets, namely to extend the word by one syllable and pronounce e.g. *heybám* [he-i-ba:m] instead of *hegbám* [hej-ba:m], where <g> stands for a consonant. Anyway, he strongly favours the second way of writing as corresponding to the normal Czech pronunciation (Pohl 1786b: 8–9).

was normally interpreted as an abbreviation for <i> representing the first part of a hidden diphthong (Doležal 1746: 9).

<sup>33)</sup> See Chapter 4.1 for the discussion on the majuscule grapheme <I> and its minuscule counterparts.

A detailed Latin discussion on the problems of Czech orthography was provided by Josef Rozentháler (1735–1804) in 1779 (the strongly abbreviated and less definite Czech version appeared in 1781) in his treatise dedicated to the teachers of the Prague Normal School.<sup>34</sup> The author explicitly acknowledges that his work is a compilation from Baroque grammars, especially from Nudožerský, Rosa, Constantius, Steyer, Jandit and *Alphabetum Bohemicum*, but in case of [j] he definitely prefers the opinion of *Alphabetum* to others. Also he considers the problem of [j] so important that he mentions it already in the introduction (Rozentháler 1779: A3r). According to him, it is always a consonant and should be written accordingly, i.e. <g>. To this he provides a detailed discussion (Rozentháler 1779: 29–30, 67–77). Although his work was reviewed unfavourably by the leading scholar of the time Josef Dobrovský (1779: 300–307),<sup>35</sup> it was probably not totally insignificant. Despite the fact that Rozentháler does not consider himself innovator and in most cases follows the usage, in case of [j] he deviates from it and advocates <g> in all positions.<sup>36</sup> He rejects the use of <j> and syllable-final <y> as referring to (unspecified) archaic pronunciation and the use of syllable-initial <y> as generating pseudo-diphthongs. Although his proposal was not accepted, his book may have contributed to the reform thinking not only by his identification of [j] in all positions as a consonant, but also thanks to the fact that he repeatedly (though disapprovingly) mentions also the minuscule <j> in his examples (also in domestic Czech words, e.g. *jakož*, *jelen*), markedly more often than his predecessors.

The turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed an increased production of Czech grammars written mostly in German (less often in Czech) and intended for German native speakers or for Czech native speakers who attended German-language schools and consequently were more proficient in this language than in their mother tongue. The explanations given in these textbooks were strongly influenced by this fact and often compared Czech writing system to the German one. In this way, isolated Czech words written with <j> started to occur more and more often in print, albeit usually only as pronunciation examples.

<sup>34</sup>) Normal School was a paradigmatic school established within the school reform of Maria Theresa in each of the Habsburg Hereditary Lands in order to set standards for other schools. The first one was opened in 1771 in Vienna, Prague followed in 1775. The Prague Normal School had also its own printing office to supply the schools in Bohemia with Czech textbooks (Šafránek 1913: 139–140).

<sup>35</sup>) In the Czech version, Rozentháler has probably modified his text according to Dobrovský's opinions, as he sometimes explicitly refers to them (e.g. Rozentháler 1781: 17).

<sup>36</sup>) In the Czech version he in accordance with Dobrovský allows for <I> at the beginning of foreign proper names (Rozentháler 1781: 17).

According to the Czech grammar of Aegidius Chládek (1743–1806), the Premonstratensian and university teacher of pastoral theology taught in Czech, consonant <j> is not a Czech letter and when occurring in loanwords, it should be in fact replaced with <g>, e.g. *Geroboam*, though the general usage prefers *Ieroboám* (Chládek 1795: 5). Anyway, when talking about <g>, he says that in Czech words it is normally pronounced “gako j” ([like j], meant probably in German), thus moving implicitly in the direction of the later reform. Moreover, he is convinced that in ancient times <y> or <j> were used for [j] (*yá*, *jasný* instead of *gá*, *gasný*), which he does not recommend, but which can also be used as an argument for reform, as the primaevial usage started to be highly valued especially during the National Revival, as we shall see below (Chládek 1795: 7). As for diphthongs, there are only two of them, namely *ay* and *ey*, *ay* occurring exclusively in the interjection *ay!* corresponding to Latin *ecce* (i.e. in other words it should be written *ag*, like *Lokag*, *Dunag*). *Ey* occurs only in the superlative prefix *ney-*, when alternating with <ý>, either in the contemporary usage (*weyklad* – *wýklad*) or earlier (*beyk*, *teyl*), and in certain loanwords from German (*Heytman*, *žeydljk*) and several others (e.g. *leyno*, *streyc*). However, there is no rule to recognise the words belonging to the last group and the reader is asked to consult a dictionary. Other combinations of a vowel plus [j] do not represent a diphthong and should be written accordingly (*zlodég*, *oleg*, *neypěkněgssj*, *bog*, *wogna*; Chládek 1795: 10).

Similarly as Chládek, also František Martin Pelcl (1734–1801), the first professor of the Czech language and literature at Prague University, points out in his grammar written in German that Czech <g> sounds like <j> in German (in *Jammer*, *jeder*, *Jugend*). He agrees with him also in the presupposition that this is not the original state (“Das g ist an die Stelle des i oder y getreten, denn die Alten schrieben *ia*, *yako*; jetzt *gá*, *gako*.”) but he differs in the identification of the original graphemes, namely <y> and <i>, not <j> as in Chládek. As for diphthongs, only the one written *ey* (and originating from *ý* or *ay*) exists, although there used to be more of them, namely the already mentioned *ay*, *oy* and *uy*. The last two were later transformed into a combination of a vowel plus consonant and became *og* and *ug* respectively (*hýbati* > *heybati*, *naywětsj* > *neywětsj*, *wolay* > *woley*, *boy* > *bog*, *miluy* > *milug*; Pelcl 1795: 5, 8).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup>) In the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of his grammar Pelcl says explicitly that there is a difference not only in orthography, but also in pronunciation: “73. Die Böhmen haben eigentlich nur zwey Diphthonge oder Doppellaute, nämlich au und ey; wie in hauba, nohau, rukau, heybám, neywjc, woley. Die Alten hatten noch drey andere, nämlich: ay, oy, uy. Aber diese sind schon längst in ey, in og, und in ug übergegangen; also spricht und schreibt man jetzt: neywětsj, woley, für naywětsj, wolay; bog für boy, milug für miluy.” (Tomsa 1798: 9).

Another grammarian of this time, Karel Hynek Thám (1763–1816), published in German several grammatical and orthographical treatises under diverse titles. Among them, the 1801 edition treats the /j/ problem most thoroughly. It not only exemplifies the pronunciation of <g> using <j> (“[...] *garo* n. der Frühling, wie *jaro*, *gest*, er ist, wie *jest*, *geden*, einer, wie *jeden*, *bog* n. der Kampf, wie *boj*, *bogugi*, ich streite, kämpfe, wie *bojuji*, [...]”), but it also claims that this way of writing was quite usual in Old Czech (“die Alten gebrauchten es manchmal vor den Selbstlautern statt des *g*, als: *já*, *jako*, *jelen*”; Thám 1801: 5–6). Moreover, the author asserts that in words like “[...] *deym* m. der Rauch, *degm*, *hnũy* m. der Mist, *hnũg*, *weyce* n. das Ey, *wegce*, *mejdlo* n. die Seife, *megdlo*, [...]” the same sound is pronounced as in the pre-vocalic position, banishing implicitly these so called diphthongs from the Czech language. However, he does not seem to be much concerned about the grapheme used in these positions and seems to respect the usage<sup>38</sup> (Thám 1801: 12).

Pelcl’s successor at Prague University, Jan Nejedlý (1776–1834), proposed a Salomonic solution. He does not seem to distinguish clearly between <i> and <g> (/i/ and /j/) — both of them he calls *Jod*. Although this sound always forms a diphthong when occurring post-vocalically, phonetically it is undistinguishable from the consonant [j].<sup>39</sup> Consequently, when describing the pronunciation, he provides German examples with <j> (pre-vocalic and after <i>, *ja*, *Jahr*, *Jugend*, *ij*) or <i> (post-vocalic, *ai*, *oi*, *ui*). Although he mentions some orthographic rules (recommending <y> in usual positions, i.e. in the interjection *ay*, in *ney*- and when alternating with *y* and *ay*), his opinion seems to be that they follow from the tradition only and basically both <y> and <g> can be used in post-vocalic positions, <g> being the progressive choice (Nejedlý 1809: 5, 7, 8).

In the same year, 1809, the most influential grammar of the early National Revival period was published, namely the grammar of Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829; the second, revised and enlarged edition appeared in 1819, Dobrovský 1809, 1819). Although it launched the fiercest orthography quarrel of the time, the quarrel whether <y> or <i> should be used after <c>, <z> and <s>,<sup>40</sup> in the case of [j] its author does not desire any change. He does not say much about it, only that the normal grapheme for it is <g> which is pronounced like <j> in German. His response to the diphthong problem is also

<sup>38</sup> He criticises only the <y> plus vowel combination as “veraltet und unüblich” (Thám 1801: 12).

<sup>39</sup> “Das *g* ist ein *Jod*, und lautet wie das deutsche *j* in *ja*, *Jahr*, *Jugend* [...] Nach den Selbstlauten *a*, *o*, *u*, *y* ist das *g* eben so viel wie *i* oder *y*, und macht mit dem vorhergehenden Selbstlaut einen Dopellaut.” (Nejedlý 1809: 8).

<sup>40</sup> The change itself was called the Analogical Reform and provoked the so-called iotist-ypsilonist controversy, described e.g. in Lisický (1898).

not really satisfactory: on the one hand he claims that a vowel plus [j] form always a diphthong, but on the other hand he does not draw any conclusion from it regarding the spelling. On the contrary, he allows, without any further explanation, for both <y> (presumably in most [aj] and corresponding [ej] groups, his example being “*layno*, alt für *leyno*; *day*, *wolay*, etc. bey den Slowaken für *dey*, *woley*”) and <g> (other positions, including, quite surprisingly, also one examples which should in fact belong to the previous group, namely “*tagný* (*tegný*)”; Dobrovský 1809: 1–2, 4). Actually, he seems to intentionally disregard this problem, not unexpectedly, if we consider his previous contemptuous comments on it.<sup>41</sup> Thus, although Dobrovský’s grammar was extremely influential during many following decades and played an authoritative role in solving many orthographic and linguistic questions of the day, it could not help to solve the perceived difficulty with spelling [j].

#### *The first reform proposal — František Jan Tomsa*

The most interesting figure of the early National Revival period was František Jan Tomsa (1751–1814), who since 1777 occupied the position of a corrector and translator and since 1785 of an economic director of the Prague Normal School printing office, being responsible for the publication of textbooks and translations of books for children. He published a grammar of Czech and also a large number of tiny booklets in Czech and German concerning Czech grammar and orthography, often anonymously and at his own expense, of which not all are probably extant.<sup>42</sup>

His grammar of 1782 is from our point of view quite traditional: especially in its orthoepic part it simply describes the usage including four diphthongs *ay*, *ey*, *oy*, *uy*, <y> before back vowels etc. (Tomsa 1782: 2, 4–5). It seems that his aim here is to describe thoroughly the grapheme-phoneme correspondences in Czech texts of different ages including medieval manuscripts or incunables without any assessment.<sup>43</sup> The only progressive feature of this part is the description of pronunciation of <g> using Czech examples with <j>.<sup>44</sup> However, he does give recommendations, though still quite traditional, in the next, orthographic part of the book. As they are almost identical with his short orthographic treatise published two years later, I will treat these two texts to-

<sup>41</sup> In his review of Rožentál’s *Opella* (see above), where he also already briefly formulated his phonetic assessment of the vowel plus [j] groups (Dobrovský 1779: 301).

<sup>42</sup> I worked with Tomsa (1782, 1784, 1793, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1805, 1812).

<sup>43</sup> Compare e.g. his description of the marking of vocalic length which mentions also the long abandoned practice of duplication: “In alten Büchern findet man *aa*, ja oft nur a für á, z. B. *pamaatka* für *památká*, *das Andenken*, *překazka* für *překázka*, *das Hinderniß*.” (Tomsa 1782: 4).

<sup>44</sup> “25. Das *g* lautet wie das deutsche *j*, z. B. *gá* wie *já*, *ich*, *ged* wie *jed*, *das Gift*, *ginde* wie *jinde*, *anderswo*, *giskra* wie *jiskra*, *der Funke*.” (Tomsa 1782: 7).

gether. According to them, <g> should be generally used except of in selected foreign words (*Iohannes, Iosef*, but also *majoránka*) and of course it should not occur in diphthongs, among which he ranks the interjection *ay*, the superlative prefix *ney-*, cases where *ey* alternates with *ý*, and, unlike Nejedlý but similarly as Chládek, foreign words (*ceycha, heytman, kreycar, meyto, reythar* and some words containing *oy* and *uy*). Similarly as Chládek, he also enumerates several words where the diphthong *ey* occurs without giving any explanation for it (*deychawičnost, ey!, leyno, meydlo, seypka, seyr, streyc, teyden, teyl, teyrati, weyr, žeydljk*), all of which should in fact belong to the previously listed groups, mostly to the *ý > ey* group, and are probably mentioned separately because their etymology or older form was not clear any more either to him, or to his anticipated readers. On the other hand, he disapproves of <y> in syllable-initial position (*yá*) and is not sure whether in the negative present form of the verb *to be* the diphthong *ey* appears or not (*neysem – negsem*; Tomsa 1782: 16, 18–19; Tomsa 1784: 7–9).

Later on, Tomsa gradually developed a complex proposal for the reform of Czech orthography. Already in 1793,<sup>45</sup> he tentatively proposed some innovations: in would be possible to use <í> for [i:] instead of <j>. As we have seen, already in his previous works he allowed for intervocalic <j> in some foreign words; he repeats it here and after it the most important sentence comes: “Také w českých slowjch by se mohlo, kdyby zwyk byl, na počátku syllaby j mjsto g psát, k. p. já mjsto gá, jelen mjsto gelen.” [Also in Czech words, if the custom allowed, j could be written syllable-initially instead of g, e.g. já instead of gá, jelen instead of gelen.] (Tomsa 1793: 5, 7). At the first glance, this looks like the first explicit proposal of what fifty years later was implemented as the Harmonious Reform, but the situation is more complicated: at this stage, Tomsa seems to be convinced that all the syllable-final [j]s form a diphthong with the previous vowel, and thus he, after enumerating the cases mentioned already in 1782 and 1784, adds another proposal: “Mohloby se wssak, kdyby zwyk byl, wždy ay, ey, oy, uy, mjsto ag, eg, og, ug psát.” [If the custom allowed, ay, ey, oy, uy could be written overall instead of ag, eg, og ug.] (Tomsa 1793: 10). Thus, in this system two graphemes would be used, <j> syllable-initially and <y> syllable-finally, which is in perfect accordance with the phonetic difference between these two positions, but which does not get rid of all ambiguity, as <y> is also used for [i] in other positions.

Tomsa’s reform endeavour strengthened towards the turn of the century. In his booklet of 1800, he repeats all what was said previously (but still in the

<sup>45</sup> Průcha (1963: 61) claims that this proposal is included already in the 1788 edition of *Vwedenj k České Dobropjsebnosti* but I was not able to locate any copy of this edition (*Knihopis* does not mention it).

form of tentative proposals) and adds to them a new, quite revolutionary idea: in all diphthongs except *ey* alternating with *ý*, <i> should be written. His motivation for this change is the aim to increase the similarity of Czech orthography with the writing systems of other Slavic languages (considered still dialects of one Slavic language): “Podobněgi gest slowenské řeči česky psát ai, ái, ei, ey, ěi, ii, íi, oi, ui, ůi, yi, než ag, ág, eg, ěg, ig, jg, og, ug, ůg, yg, k. p. krai, stái, dei od dám, měi od mám, twrdossiíný, měsíyce Řína, koi od kogjm, kui od kugi, stúi od stogjm, kyimi.” [It would be closer to the Slavic language to write in Czech ai, ái, ei, ey, ěi, ii, íi, oi, ui, ůi, yi, instead of ag, ág, eg, ěg, ig, jg, og, ug, ůg, yg, e.g. krai, stái, dei from dám, měi from mám, twrdossiíný, měsíyce Řína, koi from kogjm, kui from kugi, stúi from stogjm, kyimi.] (Tomsa 1800: 9). As we will see later, this way of writing was considered primaeval and authentic also by some other Czech philologists of the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see below) not only for diphthongs, but for any [j].

But this was still not all. In 1801, Tomsa’s reform proposal reached its final stage: he does not tentatively suggest, he simply states that the syllable-initial [j] is without exception spelled <j> an the syllable-final <i> or <y>, according to the rules described previously (Tomsa 1801: 9, 14). Thus, <g> was for the first time almost banned from Czech orthography, as words containing /g/ are quite rare.

The next version of 1802 gives already in the preface an explicit explanation of the purpose of Tomsa’s reform: the goal is the convergence of writing systems of the Slavic languages spoken in the Habsburg Empire, which he considers the first, easiest move to the convergence of the languages themselves: “Fast jede Provinz hat ihren besondern Dialekt, der Sache ist nicht so leicht abzuhelfen; aber in der Orthographie könnte mehr Uibereinstimmung sein, und dies würde den Provinzen, und folglich dem State nicht wenig Nutzen bringen.” (Tomsa 1802: 3). The usage of <g> for /j/ particularly hinders this mutual comprehension, as the Czech phoneme corresponding to /g/ in most Slavic languages is /h/, not /j/ (Tomsa 1802: 9). Similar arguments are to be used for the Harmonious Reform of 1842. But Tomsa gives also other reasons here, also anticipating the argumentation of the Harmonious Reform: first, he tries to show that <g> was not the original grapheme for /j/ in Czech and he quotes examples from selected ancient manuscripts (Tomsa 1802: 7–9). Consequently, he points out to the usage in Upper and Lower Sorbian, in Cyrillic script and to some contemporary works which allegedly already used such orthography in some cases (Tomsa 1802: 14–16). Apparently, the most important argument among them is the Cyrillic way of writing, as it is clear from some of the passages that Tomsa regards Cyrillic as the most appropriate script for Slavic languages (Tomsa 1802: 5, 12, 14). It may be also one of the reasons for his distribution of <i> and <j>: the first one corresponds to the

Cyrillic <и>, the second one is proposed for syllable-initial positions where Cyrillic script has only one grapheme for the whole syllable, namely <е>, <ѣ>, <ю>, <я> etc. This, but also the already mentioned phonetic difference, may have led Tomša to define individual diphthongs purely positionally, without any morphological or historical considerations.<sup>46</sup>

At the turn of the century, Tomša used his reformed orthography in his translations and other books intended mostly for children and published by the Normal School printing office.<sup>47</sup> But although he never returned to the traditional orthography in next editions of his orthography booklets (Tomša 1805: 61; Tomša 1812: 17–19) and even summoned some new arguments for the reform, in the textbooks and books for children he was soon forced to give up his ambitious plans. One of the reasons may have been the fact that his proposals were not approved of by the greatest philological authority of the time, Josef Dobrovský, who (as we will see also later) was by that time opposed to all attempts to make changes in the traditional Brethren orthography. As for /j/, already in his review of Rozentál's *Opella* Dobrovský called the usage accidental (“willkürlich”) and the subject itself trivial (“geringfügig”). According to him, everybody can simply write it how he or she wants, and thus the majority simply sticks to the general usage.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, it is not surprising that when Tomša came up with his own reform proposals, he met with the same negative reaction. Dobrovský's unfavourable opinion was articulated in print within the review of Tomša's edition of a Czech prayer book where he used his new orthography. Dobrovský criticises both the language of the book as idiosyncratic and too complicated for an ordinary man, and its orthography, of which he at the first place mentions /j/ spelled <j> or <i>. Here, Dobrovský accuses Tomša of “dictatorial tone”, idiosyncrasy, frequent changes of opinion and an attempt to rob the Czech nation of its traditional orthography, motivated solely by his thirst for glory.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> It is further demonstrated in the final version of his proposal (Tomša 1812: 18–19), where he gives examples for writing different inflectional forms of the same word: “In den Doppellauten *ai, ái, ei, éi, oi, ui, üi*, übergeht, wenn die Wörter so verlängert werden, daß hinter das *i* ein Vokal zu stehen kömmt, das *i* in *j*. Z. B. *krai, kraje*, der Rand, 2. der Kreis eines Landes, 3. das flache Land; *rái, ráje*, das Paradis; [...] Es übergeht aber wieder *j* in *i*, wenn es mit dem vorhergehenden Vokal einen Doppellauter machen soll. Z. B. *říjen, říina*, der Monath Oktober; *ujec, uice*, der Mutter Bruder.”

<sup>47</sup> E.g. in the chrestomathy he edited in 1805 and in some schoolbooks (Šembera 1869: 256).

<sup>48</sup> “Jeder wähle, was ihm besser gefällt. [...] Alles ist, wie gesagt, willkürlich, und man thut immer das, was üblich und gewöhnlich ist.” (Dobrovský 1779: 305–306).

<sup>49</sup> “Man sehe die von ihm herausgegebene Abhandlung über die czechische Rechtschreibung Prag 1802, wo er in einem ziemlich dictarorischen Tone die czechische Nation eines Missbrauches beschuldigt, und ihr Verfahren desswegen sehr ungeschickt nennt, dass sie — seit mehr als 200 Jahren! — anders schreibt als er, obgleich H. T. selbst noch im Jahre 1791 in seinem vollständigen Wörterbuche der böhmisch-deutsch- und lateinischen Sprache, und in seiner Anleitung

Further on, he expresses his satisfaction that so far Tomša did not find any successors. On the other hand, regarding the argumentation of the Harmonious Reform it is interesting that Dobrovský claims here that Tomša's proposals were not new, but based on an attempt to revive the original, long forgotten way of writing<sup>50</sup> (Dobrovský 1803: 694–695).

But there were probably also other, more dangerous obstacles to Tomša's efforts. Approximately thirty years later Jan Nejedlý in his pamphlet, aimed in fact against another, Dobrovský's orthographical reform proposal, tries to persuade the reader that they were prohibited by the government<sup>51</sup> (Nejedlý 1828: 12). However, as his is the only testimony known so far, we cannot be sure if it was reliable. Some of his contemporaries even suggested that it may have been Jan Nejedlý himself who brought about the ban of Tomša's reform by informing on its alleged subversive effects. In any case, his arguments against orthographical changes listed in this pamphlet are of such nature that they could have been considered very serious by the authorities: he suggests that such proposals were inspired by Russian Cyrillic and aim at amalgamating Czech with this language (Nejedlý 1828: 16–17, 19). Such intentions would of course have been seen as highly politically dangerous by the Austrian government of the time and may have led to the political persecution of their authors.

Despite these hindrances, Tomša's ideas were not completely forgotten and some patriots used this orthography during the 1830s, e.g. Jan K. Dvořáček, the learned Moravian lawyer living in Wien, who followed the suggestion of Čelakovský (Čenský 1875: 251). Their traces can be found also in the grammar of Norbert Vaněk and Josef Franta; although they generally stick to <g>, in post-vocalic positions they allow <g>, <y> or <i> mentioning the last one first (*ai, ei, oi, ui*), thus suggesting it as the first choice (Vaněk, Franta 1838: 6, 29).

### The 1810s–1830s

During this time, quite a lot of grammars appeared but many of them (especially those printed in the 1810s) add little new to the discussion. They usually

zur böhmischen Orthographie: Naucenj, gak se má dobre cesky psat. Prag 1793 einer ganz andern Meinung war, und, wie billig, dafür hielt, dass man der so verjährtten Gewohnheit der Nation allerdings folgen müsse. [...] Unbegreiflich ist es dem Rec., wie H. Tomša in der Rolle eines Sonderlings einigen Ruhm suchen, und noch unbegreiflicher, wie er dieser kleinlichen Ruhmsucht selbst den Zweck seines Buches opfern konnte.” (Dobrovský 1803: 694–695).

<sup>50</sup> “Zum Glück findet zwar derselbe in dieser nach den Schriftstellern der ältesten Zeiten gemodelten, und nun von ihm wieder aufgewärmten Schreibart, die er seinen Landesleuten so gern aufdringen wollte, bisher noch keine Nachahmer [...]” (Dobrovský 1803: 695).

<sup>51</sup> “So hat Fr. Tomša etwa vor 30 Jahren ähnliche orthographische Neuerungen jedoch ohne Erfolg, in der böhmischen Sprache vornehmen wollen; es ward ihm sogar von der hohen Lander regierung eingestellt!”

only explain the pronunciation of <g> by pointing out to German pronunciation of <j>, enumerate the cases where <y> should be used instead of <g> in post-vocalic position basically according to Chládek or early Tomsa with only minor differences and mostly also mention the spelling <I> at the beginning of proper names (see e.g. Pařízek 1812: 13, 23–25; Šmitt 1816: 175; Fryčaj 1820: 87–88). Some of them also add a possibility to use <j> medially in selected loanwords, e.g. *adjutant* (Burian 1839: 12). Only a minority of grammarians of this time demonstrated in their works that they were not happy with the apparent lack of well-founded rules for the distribution of these graphemes and attempted at their (partial) rationalisation. Worth mentioning are also those who do not propose any changes, but provide some interesting reflections concerning either the historical development of spelling or the phonetic nature of /j/.

One of the last mentioned was František Novotný z Luže (1768–1826), the parish priest in the village of Luštěnice, poet, philologist and historian. His 1818 treatise aims at the historical explanation of the contemporary orthographic usage based on examples from Old Czech texts. Its conclusions are as follows: The Old Czech usage was extensively variable but the original grapheme for [j] was <i> especially in the following positions: in imperatives (*dati* – *dagi* > *dai* > *dei*, *dey*, *deg*; *milui*, *slibui*), in the superlative prefix (*nai-krassie* > *naykrassie*, *naykrazssy*, *neykrašssj*) and in other words where original [aj] changes into [ej] (*tainice* > *taynice*, *teynice*), in genitive and dative singular of feminines (*swei*, *zemskei* > *swey*, *zemskey*), in [oj] > [u:j] (*moi*, *tvoi* > *moy*, *twoy* > *mug*, *twug* > *mûg*, *twûg*), word-initially before a consonant (*imam*, *imieti* > *gmam*, *gmieti*) and before back vowels (*iako*, *ia* > *yako*, *ya* > *gako*, *gá*). Although he also allows for the usage of <g> in Old Czech, he says that it was usually “softened” by following <i> (*gidu*, *idu*, *gdu*, *giedu*, *iedu*, *gedu*) and he generally interprets the usage as developing from <i> via <y> to <g> in all positions including the post-vocalic ones (*tegnice*, *pokog*, *wogsko*, *ctnyegssj*) (Novotný 1818: 5–7, 10, 15).<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, in the synchronic part he does not seem to advocate any reform, he just notes the usage including <y> in diphthongs (*ay*, *ey* < *ai*, *ei*, but also *oleg* – *olege*; Novotný 1818: 44, 65).

A very clear and logical rule for writing [j] is provided by the grammar of the teacher and musician Jan Nepomuk Filčík (1785–1837). It is very simple: some post-vocalic [j]s form a diphthong, but only those which are not and cannot be (i.e. in different inflectional forms) followed by a vowel. That means that nouns, verb imperatives and comparative suffixes of adjectives and ad-

<sup>52</sup> As we will see below, these conclusions are not completely in accordance with the results of current research. However, it is important to note that the author claims to have consulted not only original medieval manuscripts but also Early Modern and contemporary editions, which even according to him were not always reliable and mirrored the opinions of their editors.

verbs should be without exception spelled <g> (*obyčeg*, *zprawug se*, *přigemněgssj*). This rule, based on the idea of the phonological unity of a morpheme, could have been a plausible compromise, as it aims at increasing the regularity of usage without bringing about too extensive changes. On the other hand, Filčík is well aware that he does not strictly follow the accepted usage and so he does not forget to stress in the very title of his book that it was approved of by the censorship. However, he is also aware of much bolder reform ideas proposed earlier, as he also stresses that <j> should be never used for [j] except in proper names (*Iozue*) where it is acceptable (Filčík 1823: 64, 77–78).

In this approach, Filčík was partly followed by the priest, teacher and grammarian Josef Liboslav Ziegler (1782–1846) twenty years later. Also Ziegler explains his orthographical rules morphologically: if a [j] is or can be followed by a vowel, it should be spelled <g>. However, he makes this rule a little more complicated than Filčík by applying it more specifically to imperatives of the verbs ending in *-ati*: according to him, they should be in accordance with the tradition written with *ey* (*dáti* – *dey*, *wolati* – *woley*),<sup>53</sup> because [ej] of these imperatives is, unlike in other imperatives, never followed by a vowel, as it in such cases alternates with [aj] (*dohlžeg* – *dohlžegj*, but *dey* – *dagj*; Ziegler 1842: 25–26).

Further simplification was proposed by the priest, writer and Moravian patriot Vincenc Pavel Žák (1797–1867). He recommends to write <g> everywhere, even in diphthongs, because after the initial vowel, the sound of [j] is in fact pronounced here (Žák 1842: 5). In the later edition of his grammar, published already after the Harmonious Reform and thus already using <j>, he adds the reason why despite of this these combinations can be called diphthongs: although [j] is pronounced after the vowel, its sound does not differ substantially from the [i] sound (Žák 1846: 5).<sup>54</sup>

From the linguistic point of view, the textbook published anonymously by František Ladislav Čelakovský (1799–1852) in 1840 is worth mentioning. Even though the author does not aim at any orthography reform and only describes the usage, he provides also an insightful phonetic observation about the “finest” consonant /j/ and its closeness to vowels. He calls it a “transition” between consonants and vowels and claims in accordance with Dobrovský that in any case (i.e. irrespective whether it is spelled <g> or <y>) it forms a diphthong when occurring in a post-vocalic position.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> This special group of imperatives Filčík does not explicitly mention, neither in his rules, nor in examples.

<sup>54</sup> “In den andern klingt zuerst a, e, i, o, u, ů, y dann das j; da aber sein Klang am Ende der Sylbe kaum anders ist als der des Vokals i, y, so rechnet man aj, ej, ij etc. gewöhnlich auch zu den Doppellauten [...]”.

<sup>55</sup> “Přechod od samohlásek k sauhláskám činj neygemněgssj sauhláska ze wssech, totiž g, kterážto

## 4.2.6 The spelling of /g/

Most of the above mentioned grammars treat at least briefly also the related problem, namely the spelling of /g/. Although (or because) this phoneme occurs rather rarely in Czech, the habit to use the same grapheme to denote both /g/ and /j/ was generally perceived as inappropriate. Consequently, already the first grammar of Czech, *Náměšťská mluvnice* of 1533, recommended to use a diacritic (a hook) above <g> representing /g/ to avoid ambiguity (Optát, Gzel, Philomates 1533: Bir; more emphatically repeated in Optát 1535: Biiirv, Ciiir). Although such usage was adopted only by some printers (probably because of technical reasons — obtaining a special letter with a diacritic because of just a few words may have seemed uneconomic to them) and was usually limited to editions of special importance (<ǧ> was used e.g. in most of the Bibles, see the table above), the grammarians mostly continued to repeat this recommendation until the Harmonious Reform of 1842. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, potential technical difficulties are taken into account by Constantius, who recommends to use <ǧ> for /g/ “if the printing office has this letter” (“když se w Ympressy nachází”; Constantius 1667: 16). Jan Blahoslav even claims that this used to be an ancient custom, dating back to the time before the invention of printing and forgotten by the typesetters (Blahoslav 1991: 45, 47). Rosa mentions <ǧ> as one of the letters used for the foreign sound [g] in proper names, the other possibilities being to write them just with <g> or with <k> as the sound is quite similar (e.g. *Galileg, Marĝareta – Kalileg, Markareta*; Rosa 1672: 2, 418–419). The last mentioned possibility is taken even more seriously by the author of *Alphabetum*: as [g] does not occur in domestic words, it is a foreign sound and can be either substituted by [k] (written accordingly, i.e. <k>), or foreign words including it can be avoided altogether and replaced with domestic equivalents (*Alphabetum* 1718: 52). However, the authors of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries usually regard the grapheme <ǧ> as standard for /g/, either together with <k> as another option (Doležal 1746: 2, 7–8), or, more often, exclusively (Pohl 1786b: 12; Chládek 1795: 7, 12; Plecl 1795: 2; Thám 1801: 4; Nejedlý 1809: 8; Dobrovský 1809: 2; Pařízek 1812: 34; Šmitt 1816: 181; Novotný 1818: 47, 51; Fryčaj 1820: 65; Filcík 1823: 78–79).

Only a minority of authors disagree, basically for two reasons: either because it seems an unnecessary complication to them, or because of rational and systematic reasons. The first opinion is represented by some works of František Jan Tomsa, who in his 1784 treatise deems using <ǧ> simply superfluous

z počátku slow za změkčený dech se považuge, na konci slabik ale ke tvořenj dwoghlásek slaužj.” [The finest consonant of all is g, which represents the transition between vowels and consonants, because whereas at the beginning of words it is considered the softened breath, at the end of syllables it serves to produce diphthongs.] (Čelakovský 1840: 12–13).

(Tomsa 1784: 11). The second was first formulated by Vavřinec Benedikt z Nudožer who explains that the diacritic hook is not appropriate here because in the Czech writing system it generally means the “softening” of the sound (as in the case of <š>, <č>, <ž> etc.)<sup>56</sup> which makes the correct pronunciation of /g/ obscure (z Nudožer 1603: 6v–7r). In this he is followed by Rozentháler, who is absolutely of the same opinion and proposes to write <k> instead (Rozentháler 1779: 29–30, 38; Rozentháler 1781: 38).

Unfortunately, these recommendations or prescriptions of grammarians were largely ignored by the printers. As a consequence, there was a group of words which could cause difficulties to unexperienced readers because <g> should be pronounced [g] in them instead of the usual [j]. This fact probably contributed to the gradually growing dissatisfaction with the Brethren orthography. All the more that many words in question were Biblical proper names, the incorrect pronunciation of which may have been especially unpleasant for educated authors of Czech grammars, many of whom were also priests.

## 4.2.7 The pre-reform situation (summary)

During the whole Early Modern period and the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the most disputed point among the grammarians (who do not just describe the traditional usage) seems to have been how to formulate the rules for identifying positions, where [j] should be spelled <y> instead of the most common <g>. As problematic they invariably identify post-vocalic positions, but when going into further detail they often disagree. The divergence of opinions results basically from two factors: First, some of them distinguish between phonetic and phonological diphthongs, whereas others stress the phonetic criterion only. Consequently, they do not agree concerning the number and distribution of diphthongs. Second, some authors consider it important to spell consonants with consonant letters (i.e. not to use <g> in what they identify as diphthongs), others do not and prefer to stick to the tradition. Anyway, at the end of this period quite a broad agreement was reached according to the distribution of these two graphemes. Also regarding /g/ the agreement seems to have been reached during this time. Thus, for an unbiased observer the situation does not seem to call for an urgent reform: the orthography of /j/ and /g/ prescribed by the majority of grammars seemed quite unambiguous and not too complicated. At least theoretically, /g/ should have been spelled <ǧ> in all positions, whereas <g> should have denoted always /j/. There were cer-

<sup>56</sup> However, his interpretation is not in accordance with the original intention of the treatise *De orthographia Bohemica* proposing the diacritic orthography for Czech: here, the diacritic dot above the consonants was not ment to mean palatalisation, but simply to indicate that the pronunciation of a letter differs from that in Latin (“si non ponitur punctus rotundus super litera aliqua ex iam dictis, tunc debet pronunciari more latinorum. Sed si ponitur punctus desuper tunc ad ydioma Boemicum debet flecti”, Nechutová et al. 1982: 58).

tain positions where a [j] sound was demanded to be spelled <y>, but these positions were not too numerous and the rules were relatively clear and simple (in any case, less complicated than the rules for distinguishing between <i> and <y> for /i/). That means that the sole alleged chaotic nature of the spelling of /j/ could not have been the motivation for a reform.

On the other hand, already at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century proposals occur to simplify the usage, harmonise it with the pronunciation and spell [j] in virtually all positions with <g>. This option was not accepted, partly probably because of the unwillingness of the printers to use <ǧ> letters for /g/ (and the alleged unsystematic nature of this letter), partly because it was later declined by Dobrovský. Still, it was available and if it were not for other reasons, it could also have represented quite an elegant and easy solution to the situation.

Anyway, starting already in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, also some hints for the possibility to use <j> for /j/ can be traced, first in loanwords. Later on, as the grammars explicitly intended for German speaking readers became more numerous, examples of German pronunciation using this letter crept in, suggesting implicitly this possibility. This option, supplemented by the related idea to distinguish between pre- and post-vocalic [j] using the related graphemes <j> and <i>, was further developed at the turn of the century by Tomsa and justified also by the convergence of Czech orthography with the writing systems of other Slavic and European languages. However unsuccessful his reform proposals were, they sowed the seed and complied with the growing self-assurance of younger authors and their desire to accompany symbolically the (perceived) new beginning of the Czech literature with a new, better orthography.

The failure of this first reform wave (apart from Tomsa I count here also the preceding proposals of Jan Václav Pohl, which undoubtedly influenced the reaction to Tomsa, although they concerned other graphemes) was at least partially brought about by the attitude of the greatest philological authority of the time, Josef Dobrovský. His negative reaction to them was not caused by the poor quality of Tomsa's proposal; at this stage, he strictly rejected any attempts to change the traditional orthography,<sup>57</sup> valuing more its stability which enabled the readers to read easily even the books 300 hundred years old (Dobrovský 1780: 111–112). His stubbornness in this respect was provoked already by his dislike for the orthographic and lexical innovations of Pohl and his adherents, especially Maximilián Václav Šimek.<sup>58</sup> Although the orthographic part of their reforms was motivated by rational and systematic considerations (and some of their proposals were adopted later on), such changes

<sup>57</sup> See also Berger (2004), Vintr (2004).

<sup>58</sup> For further details see e.g. Newerklá (1999, 2004).

seemed at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century too far-reaching for a society still struggling to reach full literacy in the native tongue and brought about the danger to make the past written tradition inaccessible for future readers. This, together with Pohl's generally low reputation among Czech scholars outside Vienna, doomed his ideas to failure. And such atmosphere proved quite unfriendly also to the reform proposals of Tomsa and, possibly together with the disfavour of the authorities, prevented their acceptance.

Thus, as we have seen, although it was perfectly possible to preserve the traditional way of writing and although this option was vigorously supported by Dobrovský, two different reform possibilities were more or less tentatively brought forward in the grammars of the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, basically representing two linguistic positions. The first of them stresses the fact that the post-vocalic [j] is pronounced slightly differently than the pre- or intervocalic [j] and proposes to reflect this difference in writing and mark them <i> and <j> respectively. The second, on the contrary, stresses the phonetic similarity of these sounds and wants them to be written with the same grapheme, traditional <g>. Let us see which solution was finally chosen and why.

#### 4.3 The Harmonious Reform of 1842

##### 4.3.1 The heralds

By describing the orthographic rules of selected grammars and textbooks I did not exhaust all the reform ideas — some writers or scholars preferred to discuss possible solutions in private correspondence or simply to use the modified orthography in their publications without formulating its rules explicitly.

Although the situation after the failure of Tomsa's reform proposals seemed relatively stable, quite a lot of prominent users were not satisfied with the traditional Brethren orthography and sought its reform. With respect to [j], it is evident that their efforts became more prominent at the beginning of the 1830s. What is still unclear is who belonged among the advocates and who among the opponents of the change, as contemporary testimonies are often quite contradictory. In 1829, Karel Alois Vinařický (1803–1869) asked his friends in a series of private letters to evaluate his "orthographic experiment" to use <j> for [j] and <i> for [i:] and received contradictory answers (Tešnar 2003: 29). Václav Hanka (1791–1861) claimed in the mid-1840s that in the mid-1830s during the publication of Josef Jungmann's *Slovník česko-německý* [Czech-German Dictionary], there were efforts to carry out this orthographic change (Hanka 1847: 9), but they were opposed and marred by three outstanding figures, Vinařický, Čelakovský and Palacký (Palacký 1871: 213).<sup>59</sup> František Palacký (1798–1876) himself, however, calls this claim mere

<sup>59</sup> According to Palacký's polemic answer. However, Palacký refers here to the manuscript version

fabrication and strictly denies it, claiming instead that there indeed was a discussion of 14 outstanding figures of the time on this topic in 1835, but it did not concern the spelling of the dictionary, but of the maps of Bohemia. Anyway, according to him there was a vote with the following results: most of the men present voted for the change, including Jan Svatopluk Presl, Pavel Josef Šafařík, František Palacký, Karel Alois Vinařický and Josef Jungmann, only two voted against, Josef Krasoslav Chmelenský and František Ladislav Čelakovský.<sup>60</sup>

In any case, diverse printed books appeared using <j> during the 1830s and early 1840s; Šafařík in his 1842 proposal enumerates works by Tomša, Hanka, Čelakovský, Palacký, Purkyně, Šembera, Staněk and Jablonský (Šafařík 1843: 6). František Palacký himself writes in 1872 that he, with the approval of two prominent associations for the study and cultivation of the Czech language, as early as in 1840 started to apply the new orthography in his editions of Old Czech legal documents, where he actually combined two different writing systems: one, the ordinary one, for the paratexts, and the other, using <j> for [j], in the editions themselves (Palacký 1872: 10). This approach was used also in the first volume of the series of editions of Old Czech literary texts, the work of the Czech humanist writer Viktorin Kornel ze Všehrd *Knihy dewatery o práwiech a súdiech i o dskách země české* [Nine Books about the Law, Court and Registers of the Czech Lands] (manuscript, finished 1499) published in 1841 (Kornel ze Všehrd 1841). Also here, the new orthography did not appear in the introductions to the edition written by Hanka and Palacký, but only in the edited text itself.<sup>61</sup> This approach reflects one of the arguments formulated already by some earlier grammarians and used slightly later by Šafařík in his official justification of the change, namely the notion that the “amended” orthography was in fact not new, but original, authentic and uncorrupted and thanks to that well suited for the Old (and, according to the period opinion, also linguistically uncorrupted) Czech texts<sup>62</sup> — disregarding the fact that e.g. the original manuscript of Všehrd’s work<sup>63</sup> corresponds in this respect more or less to the Brethren usage, not to the reformed one.

of Hanka’s text (which I was not able to locate), the printed version of which does not mention anybody by name.

- 60) Unfortunately, I was not able to locate these maps to find out which orthography did they really use; Palacký fails to mention it.
- 61) According to Palacký, Hanka’s accusation that his original introduction has been removed because it used <j> was not true. He, on the contrary, claims that the substitution was caused by the low quality of Hanka’s introduction only (Palacký 1871: 214).
- 62) And not only Czech, but Slavic generally — already Dobrovský used it in his transcriptions of Cyrillic texts (Šafařík 1843: 5).
- 63) Today in the National Library of the Czech Republic (Národní knihovna České republiky), F VI 122. See also its photocopy on <http://www.manuscriptorium.com>.

All in all, despite the fact that the grammars do not generally reflect it, the orthographic reform banning the letter <g> almost completely from Czech orthography appears to have been well premeditated and tested during the 1830s. In fact, it seems quite surprising that it took so long to proclaim it publicly. Thus, although all the textbooks on the history of the Czech language say that the letter <g> denoting [j] was from Czech orthography ultimately removed thanks to the so called Harmonious Reform officially proposed by Pavel Josef Šafařík in 1842,<sup>64</sup> it is clear that it was just the climax of a very long preparatory phase.

#### 4.3.2 The reform

But how exactly was Pavel Josef Šafařík’s reform proposal formulated and which argumentation did it use? The author starts his considerations with the claim that the main imperfection of present Czech orthography is the fact, that to spell a single sound (/j/) it uses three different graphemes, <g>, <y> and <I>. Consequently, he declares the spelling <y> in *ney-* and imperatives of the verbs in *-ati* mistaken, as these groups are no diphthongs, and the spelling of proper names with <I> is proclaimed equally unnecessary and irregular.<sup>65</sup>

However, so far there would be no reason why not to keep traditional <g> in all positions. Thus, he proceeds to other, related inconsistencies: <j> for /i:/, indicating length by prolongation rather than by a diacritic like other vowels, and also <ĝ> for /g/, where the hook does not signal palatalisation as in other cases. All this he calls “nemotorní zmatkové” [clumsy mess] and “křiklavý neřád” [blatant iniquity], which violate the rational (systematic and phonological) foundations of Czech orthography. Following the above mentioned usage in the editions of Old Czech texts, he claims that this flaw was absent from “old Czech orthography” and appeared later during the Middle Ages inadvertently, under the influence of the Medieval Latin pronunciation. Moreover, the proposed change could increase the similarity of Czech, Latin and German orthography, which would make learning to read and write these languages easier for Czech pupils. Bringing Czech orthography closer to

64) In his lecture *Slowo o českém prawopisu* read in the Czech-Philological Section of the Royal Czech Society of Sciences on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1842; printed as Šafařík (1843).

65) It is interesting that according to him, the usage to spell proper names with <I> spread in his lifetime from foreign names such as *Iosef* to many other toponyms, first names and surnames, including those derived from Czech apelatives spelled with <g> (e.g. *gabloň - Jablonský*). If he was right (the examples of contemporary grammars bear no testimony of it), it would be contrary to the Early Modern tendency to replace gradually this initial <I> with <G> in more common names and would indicate a tendency to functional specialisation of the <I> grapheme as an indicator that a certain word belongs to the class of proper names (Šafařík 1843: 4).

that of other Slavic and generally of European languages should invite more foreigners to read Czech books.

Thus, the reasons given by Šafařík in his authoritative text were basically threefold: rationalistic-systematic (groundless inconsistencies of usage), comparatist (situation in other relevant languages) and historic (<g> is not an original grapheme for /j/). Neither of them was completely new. It is debatable which of them was the most important for Šafařík himself — we can be sure that he combined them to persuade different groups of potential opponents. What is surprising is that nobody complained about the fact that the Harmonious Reform makes Czech orthography more similar to German (on the contrary, it was presented as an advantage of the reform), especially if we bear in mind the fact that at the same time some Czech intellectuals wanted to banish (and only a few years later actually banished) <w> from Czech orthography under the pretext that it is a “German letter” (Palacký 1846: 794; Hanka 1847: 3, 9).

However, from the today’s point of view, the historical argument is the most interesting, because it is most questionable. At the same time, this argument was probably quite authoritative for the contemporaries, as the reformed orthography was first used in prestigious editions of old texts. For these reasons I would like to comment on it in more detail.

To evaluate the historical argument, it is important to know which Czech manuscripts were considered the oldest in Šafařík’s time. In his Old Czech grammar, Šafařík himself names as the oldest Czech literary text the translation of *Evangelium sv. Jana* [Gospel of John], glosses in the dictionary *Mater verborum*, and parts of *Rukopis královédvorský* [Manuscript of Dvůr Králové] and *Libušin soud* [The Trial of Libussa] (Šafařík 1845: 7), all of which are today believed to be fakes fabricated at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, allegedly originating from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. He also prints samples of the last two in their original orthography featuring <i> instead of <g> for /j/ (Šafařík 1845: 8–9).<sup>66</sup>

Contrary to it, recent research in the history of Czech orthography shows that <g> signifying /j/ was used from the very beginning, together with <i>, <y> and <I> (Pleskalová 1999: 170; the author studied the oldest Czech words, glosses, names etc. dating from the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries). It is true that the oldest genuine Czech poetic text, the so called *Ostrovská píseň* [The Ostrov Song] written between 1260 and 1290, spells /j/ only with <i>,<sup>67</sup> but it could not have affected the opinions of Early Modern Czech grammarians, as it was only discovered at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (first published by

<sup>66</sup> See e.g. also the first, transliterated edition of *Rukopis královédvorský* (Hanka 1819), where /j/ is consistently represented by <i>.

<sup>67</sup> See the photocopy with transliteration in Pátková (2008: 164).

Adolf Patera in 1872; see Škarka 1949: 94). Also the above mentioned treatise *De orthographia Bohemica* ascribed to Jan Hus was first published only in 1857, well after the reform. Other oldest Czech manuscript texts (some of which were known to Šafařík), dating back to the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, e.g. the fragments of legends in verse or *Kunhutina modlitba* [Kunhuta’s Prayer], spell /j/ with <g>, <y>, <i> or <yg>.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, they cannot represent the firm foundation for Šafařík’s claim. Thus, it is quite probable, that he based this argument partly on the opinions of some of his predecessors (Chládek, Tomsa), partly on the orthography of fakes “discovered” in 1817 and 1818.<sup>69</sup> Interesting is, that similar argumentation was used also by Václav Hanka, the alleged “finder” and, according to today’s conviction, one of the fabricators of these fakes; also he based his claims that spelling /j/ with <g> is a newer, mistaken usage imitating foreign models on the examples taken from these faked manuscripts (Hanka 1847: 5). Thus, this argument shows quite well the self-confirming nature of the National Revival culture: The forgers expressed their concept of Old Czech and its writing system in the counterfeits, and subsequently they and their contemporaries used these manuscripts as an argument to validate their original theses.

#### 4.3.3 Reactions

František Palacký testifies in his later autobiographic text that Šafařík’s reform action was far from individual. In fact, it was not only anticipated by the already mentioned publications, but was also discussed in advance with another major figure of the Czech National Revival, Josef Jungmann (1773–1847; Palacký 1872: 10). Under these conditions it is not surprising that the proposal was accepted by the audience, all the main cultural institutions of the time and the relevant (i.e. educated) part of the general public. Four years later Palacký testifies that it was “oblíbená” [popular], because it only eliminated previous orthographic inconsistency, and did not meet with any real opposition (Palacký 1846: 799). Antonín Fährnich (1802–1852; 1848: 6–7, 15) calls it “rozumná a užitečná” [reasonable and useful], because it removed the ambiguity in the pronunciation of <g> and thus also potential mistakes in the pronunciation of foreign names by the Czechs and of Czech words by the Germans and Russians. Jaroslav Pospíšil (1812–1889)<sup>70</sup> welcomes it as a facilitation both of writing and reading and of written contacts with the Poles and Southern Slavs. However, some public figures opposed it — mostly elderly people like Jan Jeník z Bratřic (1756–1845), but including, surprisingly, also some former proponents of the change at the beginning of 1830s, like Tomáš Burian (1802–

<sup>68</sup> See the transliterations and photocopies in Cejnar (1964) or Patera (1882).

<sup>69</sup> See Dobiáš (2010).

<sup>70</sup> See his correspondence with Burian edited in Čenský (1875: 114).

1874), the Czech teacher at the military academy in Wiener Neustadt.<sup>71</sup> Unlike the previous reform of Czech orthography (the so-called Analogical Reform proposed by Dobrovský in 1809), this one did not provoke any passionate public debate, probably also thanks to the intervention of Šafařík himself, who asked his contemporaries not to write polemic newspaper articles, regardless whether for or against it.<sup>72</sup> It was readily adopted into the academic instruction both at the university of Prague (Jan Pravoslav Koubek, since 1842) and Olomouc (Alois Vojtěch Šembera, since 1843) and, somehow unexpectedly, it also quickly took root in the literature.<sup>73</sup>

Probably the only one who wrote passionately against this reform was Juraj Palkovič (1769–1850), the Czech language teacher at the Protestant secondary school in Prešuprk (today Bratislava) and publisher of the journal *Tatranka*.<sup>74</sup> In his editorial of the 1843 issue, he spoke out against it, calling it useless, confusing and causing public nuisance, especially among the common people and in elementary schools (Palkovič 1843: 4). The main reason for this change he saw in the effort to be “European”, especially to bring Czech closer to Croatian and Polish. According to him, it was unnecessary and excessive, as we can see from the comparison with English or French which value their traditional orthography more than novelties. He claimed that each writing system was autonomous and the relation between certain graphemes and phonemes was purely arbitrary (which he once more demonstrated on the example of the French writing system), and thus spelling /j/ with <j> was not any better than with <g>. As a man well acquainted with printing he also criticised the shape of new graphemes (particularly of <í>, the accent of which is often not distinct enough, especially if the character is small or worn with use; Palkovič 1843: 5–7). In fact, his main argument was quite similar to that articulated earlier by Dobrovský: any orthographic change makes the access to older written production problematic and, moreover, in the time of transition people are forced to learn two writing systems instead of one. But in the changed cultural and social situation such argumentation lost its persuasiveness. In his struggle, Palkovič was abandoned even by his former pupils and was not likely to find other supporters.

<sup>71</sup> See his correspondence with Pospíšil and Dvořáček in Čenský (1875: 114, 128, 134, 135, 252).

<sup>72</sup> See the personal testimony of Pospíšil in his letter to Burian in Čenský (1875: 132).

<sup>73</sup> See the letters of Pospíšil to Burian dating from 1842–1845 and edited in Čenský (1875: 134–135, 138, 148).

<sup>74</sup> This attitude of Palkovič, by then already an old man, was anything but a surprise. During his life he fiercely opposed any changes in the language and fought bitterly also against the previous, Analogical Reform of Czech orthography. See e.g. his letter to Ján Kollár beseeching him to return to the “classical” Brethren orthography, published in Palkovič (1841: 62–73).

## Conclusion

In this paper I tried to follow the long and complicated debate about the grapheme <g> designating /j/ in Czech. Although it seemingly concerns only a very narrow problem, it reveals many interesting aspects of the linguistic thinking of different epochs, of changing cultural fashions and diverse foreign influences. Linguistic aspects of the discussion have already been stressed in the preceding chapters and it would be superfluous to repeat them here. Thus, in closing I would like to mention some aspects of the problem setting it in a wider cultural context.

First important point is the change of major cultural influences. From the very beginning, the spelling of /j/ in Czech was for a very long period of time influenced by the usage in Medieval Latin. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the influence of German became more and more prominent. Although the reformers themselves usually did not mention it and spoke about ancient Czech manuscripts or other Slavic languages instead, the fact that most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century grammars used German as the metalanguage and referential language for explaining pronunciation cannot be overlooked. In the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also the increased study of other Slavic languages played an important role, although it was more common that these languages adopted selected features of Czech orthography than the other way round (see e.g. Šlosar *et al.* 2009: 70, 88, 112). In any case, the gradual decline of Latin as the language of learned communication and its replacement by German, which in Central Europe took place as late as at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, together with a (mistaken) historical justification and an increased bias for the one-to-one correlation between sound and sign held by 19<sup>th</sup> century philologists were the reasons leading to the Harmonious Reform of 1842 which ended the career of <g> as a sign for /j/ in Czech.

Worth mentioning is also the fact that the above discussed orthographic reform proposals were closely related to and facilitated by a major typographic change which took place during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and involved the switch from Gothic script to Roman letters. One of the first promoters of this change was František Jan Tomsa, whom we already met as the first advocate of the use of <j> (see e.g. Šembera 1869: 256). His typographic reform was in the end more successful than the orthographic one — after some initial difficulties, Roman letters gradually spread through Czech printed (and later also manuscript) production, first only in the books intended for elite readers and later on generally (see e.g. Hanka 1847: 6; Voit 2006: 59–60). It is beyond doubt that this related change markedly facilitated the orthographic reforms: Printed books intended for broad, uneducated public simply for some time (several decades, in fact) kept both older script and older orthography and in

this way prevented a great portion of possible confusion and complaints. Both of these changes also caused and enabled the appearance of two new graphemes in Czech: one of them was the subject of the reform (<í>), but the other one was just a side effect, namely <I> distinct from <J>. Unlike earlier, when it was extremely rare for the majuscule corresponding to <j> to be used (as [i:] does not appear word-initially in Czech, it was theoretically needed only when whole words were printed in capital letters), now it became important to distinguish between majuscule <I> and <J>, which was considerably easier to be implemented in Roman letters.

Concerning the argumentation of the advocates and opponents of the reforms, it is interesting that very similar arguments against orthographic changes stressing the value of orthographical stability were put forward at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dobrovský, successful) and in the 1840s (Palkovič, unsuccessful). This fact can be interpreted, among others, from the broader historical perspective and from the perspective of the history of reading. The argumentation of Dobrovský or Palkovič shows that these men were not only experts in older Czech literature (this would not be enough to understand their argumentation), but that they lived still in the older cultural paradigm in which the so called intensive reading<sup>75</sup> was common. During the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, in the course of their lives people were used to encounter only a small number of books, not rarely more than one hundred years old, and read them over and over again. The younger generation, on the contrary, adopted the progressive relation to books and reading emerging in Europe at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and characterised as extensive reading, i.e. reading many books, usually freshly printed novelties, most of them only once.<sup>76</sup> In other words, the older generation valued the continuity with the tradition most, because without it they could not imagine the future and in its name they rejected everything they deemed unnecessary. The younger generation, on the other hand, understood the current cultural development as a sort of new beginning, allowing and even requiring intellectuals to set any older imperfections right, regardless the consequences.<sup>77</sup> And it seems highly probable that this changed general attitude to the tradition was the final

<sup>75</sup> About the transition from intensive to extensive reading see e.g. Lyons (2010: 119–136).

<sup>76</sup> As Václav Hanka puts it: “My ostatní čtenářové, nejsouce arci v starých písemnostech [...] tolik jako p. p. zvyklí, ale více v přítomném živém světě obcující [...]” [We other readers, not as much as N. N. [meant František Palacký] in old papers versed, but rather residing in the present living world [...]] (Hanka 1847: 10).

<sup>77</sup> It can be illustrated by the text by Václav Hanka concerning further orthographic reforms, where he claims that the current time (mid–19<sup>th</sup> century) is the best time for such a venture, as the number of Czech writers and the extent of the new Czech literature are still quite small (Hanka 1847: 4). Dobrovský or even Palacký would never consent to this; for them, only one Czech literature existed comprising all the texts since the Middle Ages.

decisive reason why the later orthography reformers were more successful than their predecessors.

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