

THE FELIBRIGE MOVEMENT AND THE OCCITAN
“RENAISSANCE” IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

A History of Certain Aspects of French-Czech Connections Around 1900

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This contribution is devoted to the Felibrige, a regional movement which was founded in the Provence region of France in 1854 and which sought to establish Occitan as a literary language and, closely linked to the former aim, cultural autonomy within France of the regions where Occitan was spoken. Its members, first and foremost its most prominent figure, Frédéric Mistral, who was later awarded the Nobel Prize,

forged close links to numerous language-based regional and national movements throughout Europe. East Central Europe played a considerable part in this framework. This region also housed several “small” languages, their exponents working towards their standardization and seeking to enhance their social prestige. Especially intense were contacts between Mistral and Czech authors and translators. Both sides hoped to receive from this exchange important impulses that would bring their aims in the realm of language and cultural politics nearer to fruition. Taking recourse to ego documents from Czech and French archives, this contribution traces the history of these contacts and connections. Thus, it offers new perspectives on “small” languages and their speakers in the late 19th century.