

## **Abstract**

The phenomenon of introducing public lighting in Czech cities is mainly associated with the increase in population in regionally important centres of industry, trade, craft, or administration. Unlike classical historiographical monographs, this work aims to investigate how the introduction of public lighting took place, who was involved in it, and what was at stake. Through the analysis of literary sources, particularly newspaper articles (both national and local) and archival records, the thesis seeks to highlight the attributes of light not only as a purely practical urban element, but also as a carrier of symbolic levels of security and progress. It is shown that light played an important role as a maintainer of security and prevented criminal behaviour by its presence. It is further revealed that light was a manifestation of civilization, education, and progress. Having public lighting on the streets was therefore not only a practical but also a symbolic issue. It was also reflected in the electoral programs of local political parties. It was not, however, the municipalities that incurred considerable costs in upgrading the lighting infrastructure (setting up gas plants, power stations, laying pipes); it was private entities that entered into contracts with municipalities for decades. However, it soon became apparent that this was a very profitable venture, which the towns tried to recover from the private parties under municipal socialism.