Selecting the examples of Alexander Nevsky and Wenceslas, the author attempts to evaluate the scope of the comparative history of the development of national memories in application to a Russian and a Czech national patron. At the centre is the question how the image of the two holy princes changed in Russian and Czech cultural memories across the centuries, to what extent those radical changes may be interpreted as expressions of how collective identities changed, too, and what similarities and differences may be perceived. Whereas the parallels point towards structural analogies of the respective collective (dynastic, ecclesiastic or national) identity discourses, the differences suggest that if one compares the Czech and the Russian recollecting communities, there are significant time shifts between certain phases and sometimes different directions the quest for sense has taken.

In the course of the 19th century, the adoration of the Saints, Cyril and Methodius, grew among Slavic peoples. More and more, it became linked up with national demands and finally lead to the so-called Cyrillo-Methodic idea which aimed at a rapprochment between the Catholic and Orthodox denominations. Velehrad, where St. Methodius is said to be buried, evolved into a Moravian centre of this idea as well as Czech catholicism in general. Beginning with the late 19th century, a circle around Antonín Cyril Stojan, who later became archbishop of Olomouc, sought to counteract endeavours to politically exploit Velehrad and the Cyrillo-Methodic idea, and instead to devote greater attention to religious questions such as the relationship with the Orthodox world. Starting in 1907, several Union Congresses took place which were devoted to just this goal. It is important to note that the Catholic reform movement “Jednota”, which had been revived after the first World War, was a con-