Hanka (1863) and Josef Jungmann (1878, foundation stone laid in 1873) erected using the association’s funds.

In terms of methodology, this article is based on cultural semiotics, connecting it to other recent studies of the public sphere. With reference to New Historicism the article relativizes the distinction between “high cultural” and “trivial” texts, showing how a “cultural text” also determined contemporary commemorative practices.

**CELEBRATING SLAVIC PRAGUE: FESTIVALS AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT, 1891-1912**

Claire E. Nolte

In the course of the nineteenth century, Prague was transformed from a provincial German city into a modern Czech metropolis. As the population of the city grew, an influx of Czech-speaking peasants changed its ethnic makeup. In 1861, the first Czech mayor of the city was elected, beginning an era of Czech domination of city government that lasted until the end of the monarchy. The Czech mayors of Prague undertook to remake their city into a modern metropolis with a distinctly Czech character. In addition to modernization projects like ghetto clearance, these leaders imprinted a Czech identity on the public space with new representational buildings and other projects. In the years leading up to World War I, the city hosted grand festivals that attracted international attention and enhanced its reputation as a modern urban center. Three events exemplify this process: the 1891 Jubilee Exhibition, the first great triumph for Czech Prague; the 1895 Ethnographic Exhibition, a celebration of national identity; and the 1912 gymnastic festival of the Slavic Sokol movement, one of the largest celebrations up until that time in the city. Reports from foreign visitors to the 1912 festival praising Prague as the modern capital of the Czech nation show how the identity of the city had been transformed on the eve of World War I.

**ANDRÉ BRETON AND THE MAGICAL CAPITAL: AN AGONY IN SIX FITS**

Derek Sayer

While few would nowadays dispute Prague's claim to be “the second city of surrealism” after Paris, the popular notion that there is an intrinsic affinity between the Bohemian capital and the surrealist worldview – as first asserted by André Breton in 1935 – is far more problematic. This article debunks the myth of “surrealist Prague,” arguing that the coming together of former Czech poetists and French surrealists in the mid-1930s owed far more to the unique political circumstances of the time than to anything in the city’s genius loci. If there is anything that makes Prague a fitting object of a surrealist sensibility it is the city’s modern history, not its mythologized “magical” past.