

CONSTRUCTING SLAVIC PRAGUE: THE “GREEN
MOUNTAIN MANUSCRIPT” AND PUBLIC SPACE IN
DISCOURSE

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This article focuses on the nineteenth century and contemporary narratives of Prague as well as the transformation of the city’s public space. The author proceeds on the assumption that the “Green Mountain Manuscript”, as a central text in Czech culture, sketched a mental map of Bohemian-Slavic space whose center was represented by Vyšehrad and an image of Prague closely identified with Vyšehrad. This mental map was also the context for the staging and media representation of Václav Hanka’s funeral. In this way the meaning of Prague became associated with Vyšehrad, marking an important step in the iconographic transformation of Prague’s public space. The funerals of Hanka and Božena Němcová led namely to the foundation of the “Svatobor” association, which initiated the transformation of Prague’s public space, hitherto characterized by a nationally ambivalent iconography, into a Bohemian-Slavic space. This transformation manifested itself in the monuments to

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.