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## Pan-Slavism in Alphonse Mucha's *Slav Epic*

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### Abstract:

Alphonse Mucha devoted his later years to creating artworks for Slavic cultural awareness and causes, particularly a twenty-piece collection of paintings entitled *The Slav Epic*. This article traces the influences of Pan-Slavic writers on Mucha's later works, and details the significance of the images chosen for the Epic, connecting the artist to the movement.

## Pan-Slavism in Alphonse Mucha's *Slav Epic* by Erin Dusza

### Introduction

In 1910, at the height of his fame as an Art Nouveau poster designer, Alphonse Mucha (1860–1939) left Paris to return to his Czech homeland and devote the rest of his career to making works that would celebrate and, he hoped, unify his country. Moravian born, Mucha never assimilated into French culture, in spite of the success he found in Paris at the *fin de siècle*.<sup>[1]</sup> He was not a member of any French artistic group (though he had many artist friends), and always referred to himself as a proud Czech.<sup>[2]</sup> In a further display of his patriotism, Mucha would refer to his artistic style not as Art Nouveau, but as uniquely “Slavonic.”<sup>[3]</sup> Having grown up during the height of the Pan-Slavism movement aimed at elevating Slavic culture and inspiring the Czech Revival, Mucha's repatriation was motivated by a nationalist impulse and by his desire to reaffirm his own identity and that of his Czech homeland.<sup>[4]</sup>

Ironically, it was a commission from the Austrian government, the very power from which the Czechs wanted to liberate themselves, that provided the initial impetus for Mucha's move to Prague in 1910. In 1899, he was charged with designing various displays for Austria's presence at the 1900 Paris Exposition, specifically inside the pavilion for the newly annexed territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This commission reawakened Mucha's interest in the Pan-Slavism of his youth, and in the culture and history of other Slavic countries.<sup>[5]</sup> He described this eventful moment in a letter:

It was midnight, and there I was all alone in my studio in the rue du Val-de-Grâce among my pictures, posters and panels. I became very excited. I saw my work adorning the salons of the highest society or flattering people of the great world with smiling and ennobled portraits. I saw the books full of legendary scenes, floral garlands and drawings glorifying the beauty and tenderness of women. This was what my time, my precious time, was being spent on, when my nation was left to quench its thirst on ditch water. And in my spirit I saw myself sinfully misappropriating what belonged to my people. It was midnight and, as I stood there looking at all these things, I swore a solemn promise that the remainder of my life would be filled exclusively with work for the nation.<sup>[6]</sup>

Mucha made the decision to gradually distance himself from commercial work in order to create works that held importance for him and his country.<sup>[7]</sup> Before he did so, he created a design guide and published *Documents Décoratifs* in 1902, followed by *Figures Décoratives* in 1905, to answer the demand for his decorative designs.<sup>[8]</sup> He then traveled to America to gather funds for his patriotic works by painting portraits and designing clothing.<sup>[9]</sup> In the summer of 1909, Mucha was asked to return to Prague by the Czech architect Osvald Polívka to paint murals inside the newly constructed Obecní Dům (Municipal Building).<sup>[10]</sup> This commission presented him with the opportunity to begin to carry out the promise he made to himself some ten years earlier.

Mucha's main focus after returning to Prague was the patriotic *Slav Epic*, a series of large-scale canvases, heavily influenced by the Pan-Slavic writings of the age, which he would complete between 1912 and 1928. He intended this series to educate the Slavic people in the hopes of inspiring them in the common cause of independence.<sup>[11]</sup> While working on the *Slav Epic*, Mucha also created nationalist posters and murals, and even designed the currency and postage stamps for the new state of Czechoslovakia, formed in 1918. Through all of these works, he hoped "to build and strengthen in our country the feeling of national consciousness."<sup>[12]</sup>

The majority of the art historical literature on Mucha's career focuses on the commercial poster art of his Parisian days; the later part of his career, which was devoted to the pictorial expression of Czech causes, is largely overlooked.<sup>[13]</sup> The most comprehensive guide to Mucha's complete oeuvre is *Alphonse Mucha, The Spirit of Art Nouveau*, however, it does not fully explore the influence of Pan-Slavism on Mucha's later works.<sup>[14]</sup> Similarly, even though the ideas that inspired the subject matter of Mucha's works came from leading scholars of the Pan-Slavic movement, neither Mucha the artist nor his patriotic Czech work is mentioned in books on Pan-Slavism or Czech nationalism, such as Hans Kohn's *Pan-Slavism* (1953), Hugh LeCain Agnew's *Origins of the Czech National Renaissance* (1993), and Miroslav Hroch's *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (2000). Yet, Mucha played a unique and important role in the Pan-Slavic movement by giving visual form to the ideas of Pan-Slavist philosophers, historians, and writers. This article comes at a time when the Czechs are trying to find a permanent home for the *Slav Epic*, which today is temporarily housed in the Prague National Gallery's Veletržní Palace.<sup>[15]</sup> It will analyze how Pan-Slavic ideology informed Mucha's art in the post-Parisian years. The goal is to establish not only the art historical but also the historical significance of these works in the context of Czech nationalism and Pan-Slavism.

### **Pan-Slavism**

Before they acquired national identities after World War I, most eastern and central European nations had for centuries been the subjects of imperial regimes, whether Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, or German. In the nineteenth century, scholars exploring the concept of national culture and identity called for the people of central and eastern Europe to identify themselves as one unified culture, the "Slavs." Pan-Slavism began as a cultural movement among the Austrian Slavs around 1848 and then spread to Russia and the rest of eastern Europe.<sup>[16]</sup> Pan-Slavism led to a wealth of patriotic literature, music, and art, but its ultimate goal was to turn the cultural movement into a political, separatist movement that would free the Slavic lands under Germanic rule.<sup>[17]</sup>

The Pan-Slavic movement was inspired by the ideas of the early-Romantic German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 – 1803), who saw cultural divisions, for all nationalities, as being naturally formed and language as the identifying and unifying trait of a culture.<sup>[18]</sup> Herder argued that national identity could not be forged by political leadership, but was inherent in the people (*Volk*) and their shared culture.<sup>[19]</sup> What drew Pan-Slavists to his writings was that Herder called specifically for the Slavs to gather the "vanishing remnants of their customs, songs and legends, and finally give a history of the people," so that they may join "the painting of mankind."<sup>[20]</sup> The Pan-Slavists wanted to shake off the centuries-old perception of inferiority to their Germanic neighbors and show Europe their rich literary and folklore traditions.<sup>[21]</sup>

While many countries witnessed a Pan-Slavic movement, in the Czech lands especially there was a flourish of artistic activity. Herder, a Czech sympathizer, had characterized the Czechs as peace-loving people overwhelmed by their aggressive Germanic neighbors.<sup>[22]</sup> Following his ideas, Pan-Slavists in the Czech lands aspired to promote the use of the Czech language in an effort to revive traditional Czech culture and identity.<sup>[23]</sup> This was especially evident in Bohemia, where by the mid-nineteenth century the national language was only spoken by peasants, while the intelligentsia, nobility, and officials spoke German.<sup>[24]</sup> A movement began to make over the Czech language into a literary language, which involved compiling a history of the language and grammar as well as an official Czech-German dictionary.<sup>[25]</sup> Famous works by Czech writers were translated from German into Czech, while Czech folk songs and poetry were sought out and published.<sup>[26]</sup>

Herder's writings greatly influenced Pan-Slavic writers such as Jan Kollár (1793–1852) and the historian František Palacký (1798–1876), who composed works that emphasized Czech history and cultural traits distinct from their Germanic neighbors.<sup>[27]</sup> (The term “Germanic” is here used to describe any of the German-speaking lands neighboring Bohemia and Moravia - including nearby Saxony and Bavaria, towns in upper Hungary, and even Austria, particularly Vienna).<sup>[28]</sup> In 1824, Ján Kollár, a Slovak, published a romantic historical lyric and epic song called *Slávy Dcera* (The Daughter of Sláva).<sup>[29]</sup> This nationalist composition became the foundational literary work of Czech patriotism and resulted in Kollár being seen as the first great Czech poet.<sup>[30]</sup> *Slávy Dcera* is an allegorical epic in which the Slavs are personified by the Goddess Slava, a name associated not only with “Slavic,” but also with *slava*, “glory,” and *slovo*, “word,” the latter association perhaps alluding to Herder's assertion that Slavs are gifted in the arts of poetry and song. <sup>[31]</sup> Kollár uses a patriotic tone that calls the Slavs to unite and seek a glorious destiny.<sup>[32]</sup> In the poem, he describes beautiful and historically significant Slavic landmarks while repeatedly telling of attacks on Slava by virile, masculine Avar or Teuton warriors.<sup>[33]</sup>

No less patriotic, though not as dramatic, are the historical writings of František Palacký. In 1831, the Bohemian Estates commissioned Palacký to write a documentary history of Bohemia.<sup>[34]</sup> Palacký's history in five volumes (published between 1836 and 1867) was first published in German as *Die Geschichte von Böhmen, grösstenteils nach Urkunden und Handschriften*, and later in Czech as *Národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě*. While he would have preferred his works to be published in Czech first, Palacký understood that a German book would have a wider readership.<sup>[35]</sup> Palacký's historical narrative focused on periods, such as the reformist Hussite era, when the Czechs were self- ruling and on the forefront of European thought.<sup>[36]</sup> His history is aimed at characterizing the Czech nation in a way that matches Herder's glowing description of the Slavic people as,

small, indeed, but richly gifted, unusually progressive, enlightened, devoted to productive and useful work; not aggressive but heroic, fighting gloriously not only for its own life and its own independence and freedom but for the highest treasures of human society; greatly responsible for the progress of humanity, but suffering cruelly through the disfavor of fate, the malice of its neighbors, and the lack of inner concord.<sup>[37]</sup>

In 1848, Palacký was invited to participate in the German Parliament. Not only did he refuse the offer but, together with Slavic scholars Pavel Šafárik, Ludovit Štur, and Franjo Miklošić, he

also planned the first Slav Congress to take place in Prague in May of that year.<sup>[38]</sup> Palacký was unanimously elected to preside over the Congress, whose goal was to create and present a manifesto of Slavic rights to the European nations.<sup>[39]</sup> We know from Mucha's journals that he read Palacký's history in preparation for the *Slav Epic*, and even had quotes from Palacký displayed on the wall plaques next to the paintings when they were shown.<sup>[40]</sup>

Explorations of national identity in the nineteenth century gave rise to an interest in folk art, especially its relation to national character. In 1895, in an effort to promote the culture of the Czech-speaking people, the director of the National Theatre in Prague, František Adolf Šubert (1848–1915), organized a large ethnographic exhibition in Prague showcasing the regional cultures of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia.<sup>[41]</sup> Folk art, with its “alleged ancient character” made up a large part of the exhibition, which attracted national as well as international journalists and scholars.<sup>[42]</sup> That same year, Luboš Niederle, a Czech professor of archaeology and pre-history at Prague University, published an essay entitled “Dwelling of the Rural Folk,” in which he emphasized the significance of folk art as a manifestation of earlier Czech traditions.<sup>[43]</sup> Folk or peasant culture was seen as the keeper of the language and traditions of the ancient Czechs. With the increase of ethnographic exhibitions such as the one in Prague, folk art was reassessed by scholars such as Alois Riegl (1858–1905) in Vienna; Václav Vilém Štech (1885–1974), a student of Heinrich Wölfflin; and Antonín Matějček (1889–1950) in Prague, as an appropriation of high art.<sup>[44]</sup> Much of Czech folk art was seen as a Slavic interpretation of high art, from the Renaissance and Baroque periods, stylized and simplified for popular production and consumption.<sup>[45]</sup> Because it was seen as a condensed form of earlier Slavic traditions, the study of folk culture came to be seen as an important means to a national revival.<sup>[46]</sup>

As early as the second half of the nineteenth-century, the interest in folk culture came to be reflected in contemporary art. Czech artists like Josef Mánes (1820–71) and Mikuláš Aleš (1852–1913) depicted folk tales and folk heroes in their paintings. These folk revival paintings, such as Aleš's lunette murals for the National Theater in Prague (1879), were often only loosely based on folk literature.<sup>[47]</sup> They were an attempt at constructing the impression of the Slavs as a uniform and once autonomous race in Eastern Europe, with a shared culture, distinct from Germanic culture.<sup>[48]</sup> The success of this imagined uniformity was due to the effective incorporation of different local and regional identities, a strategy that, according to Stefan Berger, is essential for the creation of a national identity.<sup>[49]</sup> After elevation of the Czech language, knowledge of national history became a second foundational element of a unified cultural identity, and it renewed an interest in Slavic histories and legends.<sup>[50]</sup>

Mucha increasingly used Slavic legends in his Czech posters advertising nationalist cultural events and performance groups, which often included figures in folk costume and folk art motifs.<sup>[51]</sup> This is particularly evident in an early work for the Pěvecké Sdružení Učitelů Moraských, or Moravian Teacher's Choir, from 1911, which shows a girl in folk dress sitting in a tree (fig. 1). It is a celebration of an organization that was gaining international fame performing folk songs and music by Czech composers.<sup>[52]</sup> The girl, who is from the Czech town of Kyjov, wears a festive outfit with a dark blue apron embroidered with geometric floral folk designs over a red skirt and a white head scarf embroidered with flowers.<sup>[53]</sup> She is no longer the ethereal beauty of the Parisian posters, but an earthly representative of the Czech people. One hand is raised and cupped behind her ear in a listening gesture while her other



hand is raised to her mouth.<sup>[54]</sup> A multivalent reading of the poster could have her listening to the music of the choir, to the thrush behind her, or, given the Choir's reputation for spreading positive messages of nationalism, to news of freedom for the Czechs.<sup>[55]</sup>



Fig. 1, Alphonse Mucha, Poster for Pěvecké Sdružení Učitelů Moraských or Moravian Teachers Choir, 1911. Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984), 337. [\[larger image\]](#)

Mucha's role as a nationalist is further cemented by his works for the Sokol, a gymnastics organization that organized competitions called *slets*. While the Sokol (the Czech word for falcon) may have trained youth for gymnastics and sports competitions, it also pushed an agenda of training active Czech patriots.<sup>[56]</sup> The Sokol movement combined traits of the Boy Scouts with the selfless patriotic spirit of the Green Berets in its effort to train young men and women to be the future leaders of the country.<sup>[57]</sup> Mucha designed the poster for the Slet Všesokolský of 1912, the sixth of these mini-Olympics, which was attended by other Slavic nations and promoted the dissemination of Pan-Slavism's tenets (fig. 2). The poster does not display an athlete, but a girl with a red cloak billowing in front of her. Over her white embroidered head scarf, she wears a crown in the form of city ramparts, suggesting that she is a personification of the city of Prague. The embroidery of the cloak and scarf show folk patterns and motifs. In her left hand she holds a staff topped with the emblem of the city. With her right hand and arm she grasps multiple wreaths. Mucha uses the circle to symbolize Slavic unity, and the leaves of the wreath are from the linden tree, which had been a Czech symbol since Kollár's poem *Slávy Dcera*, in which he opposed the German oak with the Czech linden.<sup>[58]</sup> Behind her, a large figure in shadows, representing a woman from early Slavic history, holds up a circle with spikes (which Dvořák calls a sun symbol) with one hand and with the other hand supports a falcon, the largest bird of prey in the Czech lands and the namesake of the organization. The lettering at the top and the bottom of the poster is set on a field of red, the official color of Sokol.<sup>[59]</sup> Many of the details of the poster were significant to his fellow Slavs, but they were innocuous enough to escape the attention of officials of the Austrian government, which still ruled over the Czech lands until 1918. The artist's son recounts that when asked to explain his work to Austrian authorities, Mucha would reportedly tell "fairy tales" to appease their curiosity and distract them from any problematic symbolism.<sup>[60]</sup>



Fig. 2, Alphonse Mucha, Poster for Slet Vsesokolský or The Sixth Sokol Festival, 1912. Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984), 339. [\[larger image\]](#)

### The Slav Epic

In 1911, Mucha set about researching and planning the *Slav Epic*.<sup>[61]</sup> The concept of the series was steeped in Pan-Slavism with its notions of shared Slavic history, pride in Slavic achievements and figures, a sense of unity among Slavic people, and hopes of creating an independent Slavic nation.<sup>[62]</sup> For the first time, these ideas would be expressed visually rather than in literary form. Mucha saw the *Slav Epic* as capable of providing the Slavic people with a visual representation of their identity. The *Slav Epic* comprises twenty canvases: ten devoted to specifically Czech subjects, and ten depicting broader Slavic themes.<sup>[63]</sup> With the financial backing of Charles Crane, a Czech sympathizer he had met in America, Mucha planned out what he hoped to be his legacy to the Czech capital Prague.<sup>[64]</sup> Inspired by his readings of Herder, Kollár, and Palacký, he wanted his cycle of paintings to distill the Czech national character in a series of mythological and historical paintings that extolled the best qualities of the Slavs. The individual works in the series depict early Slavic myths and legends, national saints such as Cyril and Methodius, the religious reformer Jan Hus, powerful rulers in Slavic history, wars in Slavic history, and the dream of living in a country free of oppression.<sup>[65]</sup>

Mucha spent a few years traveling with his wife Marie and young daughter Jaroslava sketching and photographing different areas in the Slavic lands, including the Balkans and Russia.<sup>[66]</sup> As part of his preparation, Mucha read histories by Palacký and Jaroslav Bidlo as well as the French writer of Slavic history, Ernest Denis.<sup>[67]</sup> Denis's interpretation of Czech history very closely followed that of Palacký.<sup>[68]</sup> Both authors emphasized the historic periods rich in Slavic contributions to Western history—what Pan-Slavist scholar Hans Kohn has called “nationalist messianism—as a way of justifying the creation of an independent Slavic nation.<sup>[69]</sup> The narrative tone of their histories is reflected in the narrative character of Mucha's paintings.<sup>[70]</sup>

Mucha believed that the significance of the *Slav Epic* necessitated a grand scale, and so he started the first painting on a canvas 26.6 feet wide and 20 feet tall.<sup>[71]</sup> The large format, in Mucha's opinion, added weight to the historic and symbolic content of his paintings.<sup>[72]</sup> He

was perhaps also trying to compete with fellow Czech artists Mikoláš Aleš, Vojtěch Bartoněk, Václav Jansa, and Karel Mašek, who had exhibited a jointly painted canvas measuring 33 feet wide and 26 feet tall, called *The Massacre of the Saxons at Hrubá Skála*, at the Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague in 1895.<sup>[73]</sup> Mucha's backer, Charles Crane, made arrangements with the city of Prague, which committed itself to build a permanent venue to display Mucha's monumental works.<sup>[74]</sup> The city, concerned about the cost of building a gallery large enough to house his collection, urged Mucha to reduce the scale of the works, but he refused to make the changes, stating:

To make them smaller would be impossible. The whole point would be lost. It must either be big, or not come into being at all. It mustn't look like an illustration for a book. . . . If there are going to be difficulties that will be the end. Let Krakow, Warsaw, or Moscow have it.<sup>[75]</sup>

Mucha put as much thought into his style as he did into his subject choices, concentrating on conveying the emotions of the scenes through skillful drawings rather than previously established national styles.<sup>[76]</sup> Drawing on his past experience as a scenic artist for the theater and his mural work in the Municipal Building in Prague, Mucha mixed a custom tempera paint for his large canvases, and oil paint for select details so as to achieve a luminous effect that he deemed necessary for the mythological tableaux he was creating.<sup>[77]</sup>

Altogether, the *Slav Epic* comprises twenty monumental canvases, starting with *Slavs in their Original Homeland* and ending with *Apotheosis of the Slavs*. Each work has a title and a subtitle that explains the importance of the specific scene for Slavic history.<sup>[78]</sup> The following discussion will serve to illustrate Mucha's adherence to Pan-Slavic ideas. The first canvas in the series, *Slavs in their Original Homeland*, subtitled *Between the Turanian Whip and the Sword of the Goths*, focuses on the trials of the Slavic tribes in the sixth century, when the lands where they were settling were contested by Germanic tribes on the one hand, and the Byzantine empire (which Mucha identified with the "Turanian whip" of the Turks) on the other (fig. 3).<sup>[79]</sup> The scene is set at night and is illuminated by the stars and burning homes in the distance. Two figures dressed in white at the bottom left of the canvas represent the "Slavic Adam and Eve," a peasant and his wife who have escaped an attack on their village by the group on horseback behind them.<sup>[80]</sup> They hide among their crops and face the viewer with a wide-eyed look of fear. In the upper right corner floats a cluster of allegorical figures shaded in blue to represent the spiritual realm.<sup>[81]</sup> A pagan priest looks up at the sky asking for mercy for his people. He is flanked by a youthful male, symbol of war, and a young girl, symbol of peace. Mucha may have wanted to allude to the instability and vulnerability of the tribes as they lived in isolation from each other, in order to suggest that by banding together, the Slavs could bring peace to their lands. It is important to note, however, that, even when confronted by combatants, the Slavs are not shown taking up arms.<sup>[82]</sup> In his three canvases devoted to famous battles, *After the Battle of Grunewald: The Solidarity of the Northern Slavs*; *After the Battle of Vítkov: God Represents Truth, not Power*; and *Petr of Chelčice: Do Not Repay Evil with Evil*, there are no images of strong warriors, of good triumphing over evil, or of people uniting for a cause. The viewer is confronted with the aftermath of war—survivors surveying fields of dead bodies.<sup>[83]</sup> The dates when these works were completed (1924, 1916, and 1918 respectively) suggest that events of the First World War may have played a role in these paintings' conception. Mucha's personal philosophy was that war should never be glamorized or celebrated, even in historic accounts.<sup>[84]</sup> The origins of that philosophy are found in the ideas of Palacký, who wrote:





Fig. 3, Alphonse Mucha, *Slavs in Their Original Homeland: Between the Turanian Whip and the Sword of the Goths*, 1912. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemine, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 258. [\[larger image\]](#)

Whenever we were victorious, it was always due rather to spiritual superiority than to physical might, and whenever we succumbed it was always the fault of a lack of spiritual activity and moral courage. . . . If we do not raise our spirit and the spirit of our nation to higher and more noble activity than our neighbors, not only will we fail to achieve an honorable place in the ranks of nations, but we will not succeed in defending finally even our original home.[\[85\]](#)

Mucha devoted four canvases to the introduction of Christianity to the Slavic lands, focusing especially on the important contributions of Saints Cyril and Methodius. In *Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia: Praise the Lord in Your Native Tongue* (fig. 4), Mucha focuses on a historic event that was important for the survival of the Slavonic language. At the end of the ninth century, Prince Rostislav of Great Moravia appealed to the Byzantine emperor to send out missionaries who could teach people in their native tongue, in order to prevent the Germanization of his land by German missionaries. In response, two monks from Salonika, Cyril and Methodius, came to Velehrad in Moravia and translated parts of the New Testament into Old Church Slavonic.[\[86\]](#) In this complex and crowded painting, Mucha depicts the return of Saint Methodius to Great Moravia from Rome and the reading of the Papal Bull to Prince Svatopluk, Rostislav's successor, in the courtyard of Velehrad, as, off to the side, German missionaries glower at the scene. The figures in the sunlight represent the earth-bound world, whereas the figures shaded in blue and floating in the air occupy the spirit world. The floating figures include Saint Cyril comforting frightened pagan women, and Prince Rostislav on his throne together with the patriarch of the Eastern Church. On the right side, four floating figures depicted in a style derived from Byzantine icons represent Kings Boris in Bulgaria and Igor in Russia, and their wives, who supported the spread of Christianity in the Slavic language.[\[87\]](#) In the foreground stands a young man who looks out at the viewer. In one outstretched hand he holds a circle, while the other is raised and made into a fist, symbolizing Slavic unity and strength, as we know from Mucha's Sokol posters. In this painting Mucha depicts the long history of Old Church Slavonic, praises those who brought it to the Slavs, and provides a connection between Czech nationalism and the Eastern Church.



Fig. 4, Alphonse Mucha, *Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia: Praise the Lord in Your Native Tongue*, 1912. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemain, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 268. [\[larger image\]](#)

The first three paintings in the series (*Slavs in their Original Homeland*, *Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy*, and *The Festival of Svantovít: When Gods Are at War, Salvation is in the Arts*) all feature earthly and (blue-shaded) spiritual realms, but in later paintings this conceptual arrangement is discontinued. After 1912, Mucha depicts only the earthly aspects of historical events. He honors figures from the Hussite Revolution, or great Czech religious reformation, in a set of paintings designed to be displayed as a triptych: *John Milič of Kroměříž: A Brothel Converted into a Convent*; *Master Jan Hus Preaching in Bethlehem Chapel: Truth Prevails*; and *The Meeting at Křížky: Sub Utraque*.<sup>[88]</sup> The Czechs looked to Jan Hus not just as the leader of the first Reformation movement, but as a champion for justice.<sup>[89]</sup> Palacký had presented Hus as a pioneer of freedom and equality who would promote the growth of rationalism and liberalism throughout Western Europe.<sup>[90]</sup> Mucha's emphasis on the Hussite movement appears to be directly related to Palacký's emphatic writings on the Czech reformer. Palacký had been warned against praising the religious reformist by Count Sedlnitzky, head of the police in Vienna, who saw the elevation of this activist as seditious propaganda against the Empire.<sup>[91]</sup> It was even suggested by a professor of theology named Scheiner that Palacký's Czech histories be suppressed because he highlighted Hus as a martyr without faults, and never posited the opposing viewpoint of Hus as a heretic.<sup>[92]</sup> Notwithstanding the Austrian government's opposition, Pan-Slavists elevated the Hussite period as the epitome of Czech nationalism, embodying the Slavic love of liberty.<sup>[93]</sup>

Mucha also pays homage to great Slavic kings and royalty, but while many historians saw Charles IV and Rudolph II as the greatest kings in Czech history, Mucha saw them as too German, thus making their depiction incongruous with the nationalist program of the *Slav Epic*.<sup>[94]</sup> In his painting *The Hussite King Jiří of Poděbrady: The Treaties Are To Be Preserved*, Mucha depicts one of Palacký's favorite Czech kings and again highlights the Hussite movement.<sup>[95]</sup> He then pays tribute to the southern Slavs in *The Coronation of the Serbian Tsar Štěpán Dušan as East Roman Emperor: The Slavic Code of Law*.<sup>[96]</sup> Mucha's choice of Otakar II, in *The Bohemian King Přemysl Otakar II: The Union of the Slavic Dynasties* (fig. 5) is indicative of a larger Pan-Slavic agenda. Otakar II became king of Bohemia and other surrounding territories in 1253, but was also the Duke of Austria.<sup>[97]</sup> During his reign, Otakar defeated the armies of Béla IV of Hungary, after which he arranged the marriage of his own niece to Béla's son in

order to keep peace between the two countries. In this painting, Mucha shows the celebration of this marriage, in front of a half-domed structure emblazoned with the king's eagle emblem. [98] The lower rim of the dome is decorated with the heraldic crests of the different territories under Otakar's rule, representing Mucha's ideal of different groups of Slavs under one shared rule. Otakar's military victories led him to be called the "Iron King," while the wealth he gained by wise management and through the silver mines of Kutná Hora earned him the nickname "Golden King." [99] In the painting, trinkets, ornaments, and carpets, all hinting at the affluence of Otakar's court, decorate the front of the composition. Anyone who knew that Otakar met his death battling Rudolph of Hapsburg, the founder of the house of Austria, could read this image as a display of what once was and what Austria had destroyed. Moreover, the image of a Bohemian king as the source of unity among different Slavic territories and rulers expresses the notion that the Czechs, once independent, could aid in the freedom of all Slavs.



Fig. 5, Alphonse Mucha, *The Bohemian King Přemysl Otakar II: The Union of the Slavic Dynasties*, 1924. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemin, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 272. [\[larger image\]](#)

After the paintings of great kings, Mucha's *Epic* concentrates on recent events in Slavic history. *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia: Work in Freedom Is the Foundation of a State*, depicts the reading of the Emancipation Edict in 1861, long after serfdom was abolished in Europe. The viewer is faced with a subdued crowd in front of a hazy image of St. Basil's cathedral in Moscow. [100] In the painting *The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree: The Slavic Revival*, the only unfinished canvas in the collection and the only one not exhibited during the artist's life, Mucha portrays the rising patriotism of contemporary Slavs (fig. 6). [101] Omladina was a patriotic, anti-Austrian, anti-clerical youth organization founded in the 1890's and dissolved by the Austrian government in 1904 with the arrest of its leaders. [102] Mucha's scene shows a circle of strong youths kneeling and holding hands with outstretched arms, making their pledge to the patriotic organization under the image of Slavia in a linden tree. Around the inner circle stand representatives of the different Slavic tribes, recognizable by their traditional dress. The figures at the bottom of the canvas sit on a low wall that resembles the edge of a stage are famously known to be Mucha's wife and children. [103] The girl playing the lyre on the left hand side was re-used as the poster image to advertise the *Slav Epic* when it was exhibited around Europe and America. [104] Although the event he had chosen was

contemporary, Mucha set the scene in a dream-like bucolic setting, with the figures dressed in folk costumes, recalling the poetry of Kollár and obliterating any temporal references to ensure the image would never appear dated to future viewers.



Fig. 6, Alphonse Mucha, *The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree: The Slavic Revival*, 1926. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemain, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 300. [\[larger image\]](#)

In the final canvas, *Apotheosis of the Slavs: Slavs for Humanity* (fig. 7), a large allegorical male figure rises in the background carrying in outstretched arms two wreaths from which red and white ribbons flow, representing the strength of the new independent republic of Czechoslovakia. A haloed image of Christ behind him suggests the divine approval of the unification of the Slavs as Christians. In front of him are figures representing all of the Slavic tribes in folk costumes from different regions as well as flags of countries that supported the freedom of the Slavs.<sup>[105]</sup> The canvas is divided into colored sections, each representing a different period or group. The blue areas here contain figures from the mythical history of the Slavs, while the red areas show figures from the height of the middle ages. The dark figures in the black area represent enemies, lurking in the shadows along the edges of the canvas. The bright yellow areas that illuminate the center of the canvas highlight Slavic people. Holding various symbols of freedom, they are celebrating together with soldiers of the other countries that helped the Slavs achieve that freedom. A swirl of white fabric flows across the canvas from the bottom left corner, where men carrying Linden branches are entering beside a woman throwing her hands up in exaltation, linking the celebrating Slavic people. Symbols and representatives from Mucha's previous images, like his Sokol posters, are combined in this painting celebrating peace, unity, and patriotic pride. Mucha includes scenes representing each Slavic nation and ties them together in his *apotheosis*.





Fig. 7, Alphonse Mucha, *Apotheosis of the Slavs: Slavs for Humanity*, 1926. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemin, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 303. [\[larger image\]](#)

The *Slav Epic* is a collective representation of moments in the history of the Slavs, conveying Pan-Slavic ideals not in literary but in visual format. It links the different Slavic nations by emphasizing their shared historical and cultural traits. Mucha chose the *Slav Epic's* moments and figures based on those highlighted by Palacký in his histories, and displayed the Slavic characteristics described by Herder. Mythical and legendary characters described by Kollár gain a new life in the paintings lending a mythical character to the cycle. All twenty canvases carry strong echoes of these Pan-Slavic writers.

### Conclusion and Epilogue

Mucha began the *Slav Epic* in 1910 and worked on it through World War I, which saw the defeat of Austria and the formation of the new independent state of Czechoslovakia in 1918.<sup>[106]</sup> The final painting in the series was completed in 1926, eight years after the establishment of the new state, when peace had been achieved but patriotic fervor and Pan-Slavism had died down. Mucha's type of nationalistic fervor was now considered old-fashioned, as was his style of painting.<sup>[107]</sup>

Modernism had made its entry into the world, with such movements as Expressionism, Cubism, and Futurism, and by 1926 non-objectivity in art already had a fifteen-year-long history. Gustav Klimt, a fellow student of Hans Makart, had led the Vienna Secession Movement in the 1890s.<sup>[108]</sup> Fellow Czech artist František Kupka, who had moved to Paris at the same time as Mucha, had turned away from Art Nouveau towards rhythmic abstraction. In 1912, he exhibited his painting *Fugue for Two Colors* (National Gallery, Prague), which was among the first truly non-objective paintings.<sup>[109]</sup> Other Czech artists like Emile Filla, Josef Čapek, and Bohumil Kubišta had made their names in modernist art. The architect Adolf Loos, born just a few miles away from Mucha's hometown of Ivančice, had derided excessive ornamentation, stating that there "was a direct connection between the elimination of ornament and the cultural maturity of a nation."<sup>[110]</sup>



When the first few pieces of the *Slav Epic* were shown to the public at the Klementinum in Prague in 1915, they were scoffed at because they were considered old-fashioned.<sup>[111]</sup> Mucha's severest critic, the writer and left-wing poet Stanislav Kostka Neumann, wrote of the series, "It is simply a sugary monstrosity of spurious artistic and allegorical pathos which, if exhibited permanently, could harm the taste of the public."<sup>[112]</sup> Neumann was a futurist artist who in 1913 had written a manifesto called "*Otevřená okna*" (Open Windows), condemning the promotion of folk art for nationalist aims. He specifically called Mucha and historicism obsolete.<sup>[113]</sup>

This attitude against historicism was shared by Tomáš G. Masaryk, the first president of the newly formed Czechoslovakia.<sup>[114]</sup> In an effort to develop a new and modern nation, Masaryk stated the need for the Czech people to look forward rather than backward. He claimed that a preoccupation with the once great past of Bohemia was detrimental to the modern national character. He singled out Palacký, stating that his "historicism has led many of our best people toward sterile conservatism," and blamed the works of Pavel Josef Šafařík and Kollár for emphasizing the past.<sup>[115]</sup> While it is understandable that Masaryk would want to concentrate on the future, his turn away from these authors meant a rejection of the very Pan-Slavism that had led to the Czech Revival—the movement that elevated the Czech culture to the point where it could once again sustain an independent country. In 1919, Arnošt Procházka, in his book *On the Edge of Time*, labeled the "peace myth [as] a national curse," calling "Czech pacifism, the Czech 'dove-like nature,' and the Czech's readiness to forgive wrongs and to forget any humiliation they have suffered" as "hideous monsters that pose a horrifying threat to any national future."<sup>[116]</sup> The quest for a modern twentieth-century identity supplanted the previous century's scholarship and theories. Mucha found himself in a new era without any knowledge of how he got there. As Derek Sayer explains, "his patriotism became petrified . . . increasingly identified with static symbols of Czech nationality while ever more cut off from the realities of the rapidly changing Czech lands."<sup>[117]</sup> Everything about the series, from its style to its message, made it archaic in the twentieth century.

When the Nazis marched into Prague on March 15, 1939, Mucha was one of the first to be arrested as a problematic nationalist. He was soon released, but died months later of pneumonia.<sup>[118]</sup> The Nazis also banned the works of Palacký, calling him a "fanatical Germanophobe" and blaming his "distorted history" for the current unrest in Central Europe.<sup>[119]</sup> Mucha and his family had the *Slav Epic* rolled up and stored in the basement of the Archives of the Czech Lands, hidden from the Nazis and later the Communists. The paintings that were meant to lend the nation a sense of identity were away from view, and the literary works that inspired them were either banned or deemed outdated and unpopular. Mucha's great work never saw the reception and acceptance he had envisioned in his dreams.

In 1949 a small group of Mucha supporters initiated the fight to put the *Slav Epic* back on exhibit.<sup>[120]</sup> Thanks to their efforts, and those of the artist's children and grandchildren, the paintings were eventually put on display in an old chateau in nearby Moravský Krumlov in 1963.<sup>[121]</sup> By the time the paintings resurfaced, not many viewers could remember the patriotic fervor of the pre-unification years.<sup>[122]</sup> With the continued suppression of Palacký's histories during the Communist regime and the negative feelings towards historicism that still circulated, the scenes were viewed as grand, yet foreign, even to Czechs, leaving the significance of the *Slav Epic* lost to modern audiences. It is only in the post-modern and post-

communist era, when nationalism has regained a foothold in eastern and central Europe, that the *Slav Epic* resurfaces in national consciousness in the twenty-first century.<sup>[123]</sup>

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## Notes

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[1] In 1897, when a newspaper reported “Sarah Bernhardt plucking [Mucha] out of a Hungarian gypsy camp where he beguiled her with his violin playing and singing under the light of a full moon,” Mucha had Bernhardt state on his behalf that he was in fact “a Czech from Moravia not only by birth and origin, but also by feeling, by conviction and by patriotism.” Brian Reade, *Art Nouveau and Alphonse Mucha* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1967), 4. See also Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History*, trans. Alena Sayer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 150–51.

[2] Mucha was a member of the Slavic groups Lada and the Czech Society Beseda. He was known to use his studio as a sort of welcoming post for all Czechs who came to Paris. Mary Gail Kana-Butrica, “The Historical Paintings of Alphons Mucha: *The Slav Epic* (master’s thesis, University of Texas, 1979), 34. Despite his interaction with groups such as the symbolists, Pre-Raphaelites and English Arts and Crafts, and artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Sérusier and Gauguin, Mucha did not consider himself a member of any movement. Ronald F. Lipp, “The Message and the Man,” in *Alphonse Mucha*, ed. Sarah Mucha (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd. in association with The Mucha Foundation, 2005), 12; and Reade, *Art Nouveau and Alphonse Mucha*, 18.

[3] Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, 150. In a famous quote, Mucha’s son describes his father’s responses when asked about his style and influences: “Who were his predecessors? My father’s answer would probably have been that these and other elements are as old as art itself, and that even prehistoric potters ornamented their jars with curved lines because straight lines are tiring to the eye. This was how he always evaded talking about himself. Whenever he was asked a direct question he first went into great detail about the origins of art in general and then suddenly passed on to what, according to him, art should express. He would not have decried influences. Art was the legacy of centuries, and the artist’s duty was to increase it. He appropriated willingly—he learned to know, as he would say—anything that corresponded with his artistic temperament.” Jiří Mucha, *Alphonse Mucha: The Master of Art Nouveau*, trans. Geraldine Thomsen (Prague: Knihovna, 1966), 82.

[4] Born in 1860 in the Moravian town of Ivančice to a court-usher father and an extremely religious mother, Mucha’s early years saw many political changes for his country that would instill a sense of patriotism. For example, in 1866 the Hapsburgs were driven out of Germany after defeat by the Prussians. They then turned to patch up a previously ruined relationship with Hungary and, in 1867, formed the new Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1871 the Czechs fought to restore the rights and autonomy of the old Bohemian kingdom, but, due to opposition by German and Hungarian liberal sides, the changes were never enacted. Lipp, “Message and the Man,” 12; and Richard F. Nyrop, ed., *Czechoslovakia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed. (Washington DC: United States Government as represented by the Secretary of the Army, 1982), 25–26.

[5] The term "Slavic" is here referring to one of the branches of the Indo-European group of languages. Susana Torres Prieto, "Slavic Epic: Past Tales and Present Myths," in *Epic and History*, ed. David Konstan and Kurt A. Raaflaub (West Sussex, England: Blackwell, 2010), 1:223.

[6] Alphonse Mucha in a letter to a friend, quoted in Jiří Mucha, *Alphonse Maria Mucha: His Life and Art* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 145. The Czech text is given in Jiří Mucha, *Kankán se svatozáří: život a dílo Alfonse Muchy* (Prague: Obelisk, 1969), 194–95. The address is not identified nor a specific date given, other than the year.

[7] Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, 19.

[8] Art Nouveau masters such as Fouquet, Lalique, and Louis Comfort Tiffany in America used these design aides. Mucha, *Master of Art Nouveau*, 135, 144, 198; and Reade, *Art Nouveau and Alphonse Mucha*, 26.

[9] This trip was not very successful, but it did provide Mucha the opportunity to meet Charles Crane, a Czech sympathizer who would become the patron of *The Slav Epic*. Mucha, *Master of Art Nouveau*, 251.

[10] Husslein-Arco and others, eds. *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 232; and Kana-Butrica, "Historical Paintings," 11.

[11] The term "Slavic" is here referring to one of the branches of the Indo-European group of languages. Prieto, "Slavic Epic," 1:223.

[12] Josef Starošík, *Alfons Mucha-Slovanská Epopej*, trans. S. P. Jakobson, exh. cat. (Moravský Krumlov: CSSR, 1974), 5–6.

[13] Jiří Mucha, the artist's son, has stated that he attributed this perceived snub from the art world to his father's patriotism, stating "He refused to become a Frenchman, so they omitted him from the history of French art and are only now beginning to forgive him for his 'sins.' He didn't ask for French citizenship; this was the main reason that, after World War I, they removed his name from art textbooks. As a result, his world reputation suffered greatly." Antonín J. Liehm, "Jiří Mucha," in *The Politics of Culture*, trans. Peter Krussi (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 207.

[14] Victor Arwas, Jana Brabcová-Orlíková, and Anna Dvorská, *Alphonse Mucha, The Spirit of Art Nouveau* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998)

[15] The *Slav Epic* is on temporary display in Prague's Veletržní palace, despite concerns by the Mucha foundation and Mucha family over the conditions under which the works are being exhibited. "We as a family have not been involved in the transfer and installation of the epic in Veletržní palác. We have consistently agreed with the leading conservators of the Czech Republic, including the director of conservation at the National Gallery, who recently reaffirmed his grave doubts about the sensibility of a long-term exhibit [of] the Slav Epic." The Foundation is involved with the City of Prague to find a long-term solution. "Specifically we are working on the concept of placing the Slav Epic in Hlavní Nádraží, the main railway station, which is a wonderful, honourable building that is not really used anymore. It is currently being conserved and reconstructed, and there is sufficient space there not only to show the works as my grandfather wished, but also—unlike in Veletržní palác—to show all of the background material—the studies and photographs—to give the whole story of the Slav Epic. All that material will come from our collection." John Mucha, "The Mucha Family Voices Concerns as Slav Epic Goes On Display in Prague," Mucha Foundation, News, May 13, 2012, accessed December 18, 2013, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/about/news/item/the-mucha-family-voices-concerns-as-slav-epic-goes-on-display-in-prague>.

[16] The first Pan-Slav Congress met in June 1848 with Palacký in the chair. The Second Pan-Slav Congress met in Moscow in 1867 and "claimed Russian leadership of the Slav world." Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1965), 71–72.

[17] Joep Leerssen, "The Poetics and Anthropology of National Character (1500–2000)," in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*, ed. Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (New York: Rodopi, 2007), 73.

[18] Herder was a student of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who was heavily influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 93. On the importance of language, he is quoted as saying: "Hat wohl ein Volk, zumal ein unkultiviertes Volk etwas Lieberes, als die Sprache seiner Väter? In ihr wohnet sein ganzer Gedanken reichertum an tradition, Geschichte, Religion, und Grundsätzen [alle der Fülle] des Lebens, alle sein herz und Seele. Einem solchen Volk seine Sprache nehmen oder herabwürdigen, heißt ihm sein einziges unsterbliches Eigentum nehmen, das von Eltern auf kinder fortgeht." ("A people, and especially a non-civilized one, has nothing dearer than the language of its fathers. Its whole spiritual wealth of tradition, history, religion, and all the fullness of life, all its heart and soul, lives in it. To deprive such a people of

its language or to minimize it, means to deprive it of its own immortal possession, transmitted from parents to children.”) Johann Gottfried Herder, in *Sämtliche Werke* (Riga, 1793), vol. 17, chap. 10, p. 58, line 146. English translation from Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953), 7. Herder then goes on to emphasize the importance of language, “Sprache ist das Band der Seelen, das Werkzeug der Erziehung, das Medium unserer besten Vergnügungen, ja aller gesellschaftlichen Unterhaltung.” (“Language is the bond of souls, the tool of education, the instrument of our highest pleasures, indeed of all social relations.”) Johann Gottfried Herder, “Ueber die Fähigkeit zu sprechen und zu hören” [About the ability to speak and hear], in *Sämtliche Werke*, 18:384.

[19] “Herder’s central political idea lies in the assertion that the proper foundation for a sense of collective political identity is not the acceptance of a common sovereign power, but the sharing of a common culture. For the former is imposed from outside, whilst the latter is the expression of an inner consciousness, in terms of which each individual recognizes himself as an integral part of a social whole. To the possession of such a common culture Herder applies the term nation or, more precisely, *Volk* or nationality. The principle source of both its emergence and perpetuation is language. It is through language that the individual becomes at once aware of his selfhood and of his nationhood. In this sense individual identity and collective identity become one.” F. M. Barnard, *J. G. Herder on Social & Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7. See also Kohn, *Nationalism*, 32; and Dominic Eggel, Andre Liebich, and Deborah Mancini-Griffoli, “Was Herder a Nationalist?” *Review of Politics* 69, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 54.

[20] “Da wir aus mehreren Gegenden schöne und nutzbare Beiträge zur Geschichte dieses Volks haben, so ist zu wünschen, daß auch aus andern ihre Lücken ergänzt, die immer mehr verschwindenden Reste ihrer Gebräuche, Lieder und Sagen gesammelt und endlich eine Geschichte dieses Völkerstammes im ganzen gegeben würde, wie sie das Gemälde der Menschheit fodert.” Johann Gottfried Herder, “Slawische Völker,” in *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Riga and Leipzig, 1791), vol. 4, chap. 16, para. 4.

[21] Mucha, *His Life and Art*, 261–62.

[22] “Sie waren mildtätig, bis zur Verschwendung gastfrei, Liebhaber der ländlichen Freiheit, aber unterwürfig und gehorsam, des Raubens und Plünderns Feinde. . . . Denn da sie sich nie um die Oberherrschaft der Welt bewarben, keine kriegssüchtige erbliche Fürsten unter sich hatten und lieber steuerpflichtig wurden, wenn sie ihr Land nur mit Ruhe bewohnen konnten, so haben sich mehrere Nationen, am meisten aber die vom deutschen Stamme, an ihnen hart versündigt.” (“They were charitable, hospitable to excess, lovers of free country ways, yet submissive and obedient, averse to pillage and robbery. . . . For they never competed for supremacy in the world, had no war-addicted hereditary princes among them and preferred to have been taxed in cases where they could occupy their land with peace, as several nations have done, but the German tribes sinned hard against them.”) Herder “Slawische Völker,” chap. 16, para. 4. Herder was a German, but there were many Germans at this time interested in Czech history, as they saw the Czechs as a romanticized downtrodden culture. See Marta Filipová, “The Construction of a National Identity in Czech Art History,” *Centropa* 8, no. 3 (September 2008): 258; Tomáš G. Masaryk, *The Meaning of Czech History*, trans. Peter Kussi (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1974), 56.

[23] David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 33.

[24] *Ibid.*, 33.

[25] *Ibid.*; and H. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States* (London: Methuen, 1977), chap. 4.

[26] Miller, *On Nationality*, 18–19.

[27] “A disciple of Rousseau, [Herder] compared favorably the rural and backward Slavs with the highly civilized Romance and Germanic peoples, whose very degree of civilization implied their alienation from the state of nature and therefore their approaching decadence.” Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953), 1.

[28] Robert B. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality* (Budapest: Central European University, 1994), 167.

[29] The first three cantos, published in 1824, contained 150 sonnets. In 1832, two further cantos were added, and in its final form the poem consisted of as many as 622 sonnets. “Ján Kollár and Literary Panslavism,” *The Slavonic Review* 6, no. 17 (December 1927): 336–43. Inspiration for the character of Slava as an embodiment of Slavdom comes from Bohuslav Tablic’s “Svetlo literárního umění” (“The Light of the Literary Art”) published in 1806. Jelena Milojković-Djurić, *Panslavism and National Identity in Russia and in the Balkans 1830–1880: Images of the Self and Others* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1994), 15. Kollár then published his *O literární vzájemnosti mezi kmeny a nářečími slavskými* (On the literary reciprocity between Slav tribes and vernaculars) in Pest in 1835. The following year it was translated into Czech and published in the journal *Hronka*. Two years later he translated the work into German, which led to it later being translated into



Serbian, Russian and other Slavic languages, becoming known as the “Manifesto of the PanSlavic literary collaboration.” Milojković-Djurić, *Panslavism and National Identity*, 15. See also Jovan Skerlić, *Istorija nove srpske književnosti* (Belgrade: Prosveta 1967), 216.

[30] Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 11.

[31] Ibid., 16. A partial translation can be found in Paul Selver, *An Anthology of Czechoslovak Literature* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1929), 42–46.

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[32] Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 15. Example: “Slavové! vy ducha nesvorného, živí v rozbrojích a hryzotě, jdíte všickni spolu jednotě od uhlí se učit řeřavého; ve hromadě svazku společného dokud to jest, hoří v teplotě, hasne každý uhel v samotě, odervaný ode druha svého: Učiňte tu radost milé matce, Rusi, Serbi, Češi, Poláci, žíte svorně, jako jedno stádce! Tak vám vojna lidožerná vládce, tak vlast nerozterhnou chytráci, a váš národ pervý bude v krátce.” (“Hear me Slavs, men of a discordant soul, living constantly in bitter enmity, get together and in unity learn a lesson from a burning coal. There, together in a glowing whole, each coal heats and burns in jolity, but alone, without security slowly dies and reaches not its goal. Hand in hand, unite to please your mother, Every Russian, Serb and Czech and Pole, Live like one great clan in peace together. Only thus no wars nor hatred of another can destroy your Nations mighty role, You'll stand firm, none dare your life to smother.”) Ján Kollár, *Slávy Dcera*, Zpěv II. Labe, Rén, Veltava, verse 270, Zlatý Fond [Golden oldies] online literary database, SME (the Slovak Spectator, a newspaper organization), accessed December 18, 2013, [http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/142/Kollar\\_Slavy-dcera/3](http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/142/Kollar_Slavy-dcera/3). English translation from Roderick Aldrich Ginsburg, *Ján Kollár, A Poet of Slavism* (Prague: Czech Literary Press, 1943), 6–7.

[33] “Kdo zhanobil v jednom národu lidstvo celé? Zardi se, závistná Teutonie, sousedo Slávy, Tvé vin těchto počet spáchaly někdy ruky. Neb krve nikde tolik nevyžil černidlaže žádný Nepřítel, co vylil k záhubě Slávy Němec.” (“Who in assaulting one, insulted all nations and men? Blush envious Teuton, whose lands bordered the homes of the Slavs, your hands are stained with the guilt of these most callous crimes. For nowhere on earth was blood of freemen so wantonly spilled as that which the Teutons had spilled, all slavdom to destroy.”) Ján Kollár, prologue to *Slávy Dcera*, SME, Zlatý Fond, accessed December 18, 2013, [http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/142/Kollar\\_Slavy-dcera/1](http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/142/Kollar_Slavy-dcera/1). English translation from Ján Kollár, *A Prologue to Sláva's Daughter*, trans. Roderick Aldrich Ginsburg (Prague: Czech Literary Press, 1943), 12. See also, Alfred Thomas, *The Bohemian Body: Gender and Sexuality in Modern Czech Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 26.

[34] Barely any of Palacký's writings have been published in English. The best resource is Joseph Frederick Zacek, *Palacký: The Historian as Scholar and Nationalist* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1970), 38.

[35] Ibid., 59, 61–62.

[36] Palacký's histories are based heavily on Herder's writings on the Slavs. Palacký called Herder the “Apostle of Humanity” in his acknowledgements to the philosopher's influence in the Slavic cultural revival. Milojković-Djurić, *Panslavism and National Identity*, 11.

[37] Václav Vlček, “Dějepisické dílo Františka Palackého,” *Osvěta*, no. 6 (1876), 402, as translated by Zacek in *Palacký*, 61.

[38] “I am a Bohemian of Slavic origin, and whatever I now possess or may yet own I have consecrated wholly and forever to the good of my nation. Small in numbers is the nation, yet since time immemorial it has maintained its individuality and sovereignty; true, its rulers have for ages been parties to the league of German princes, but the nation has never regarded itself as one with the German nation, not have others classed it as such during all these centuries. The relations of Bohemia such as they were, first with the Holy German Empire and thereafter with the Bund, were always a pure formality of which the Bohemian people and their Estates took little or no notice.” Palacký, quoted in Thomas Capek, *The Slovaks of Hungary, Slavs and Panslavism* (New York, The Knickerbocker Press, 1906), 36–37. See also Milojković-Djurić, *Panslavism and National Identity*, 29–31.

[39] However, this ultimate goal was unsuccessful after fighting broke out in Prague between delegates and followers of the Slav Congress and conservative German Burghers, and the congress was forced to disband. Lawrence D. Orton, *The Prague Slav Congress of 1848* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1978), 104–5.

[40] Unfortunately, records detailing which quotes were displayed with which paintings have yet to be uncovered. Anna Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” in Arwas, Brabcová-Orkiková, and Dvořák, *Spirit of Art Nouveau*, 100.

[41] “The main organizers included the Prague-based professors of aesthetics, ethnography and anthropology, politicians and members of Czech nobility and land patriots.” Marta Filipová,



"Peasants on Display: The Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition of 1895," *Journal of Design History* 24, no. 1 (September 2011): 2.

[42] Quotation, *ibid.*, 15. For more on Czech folk art at this time, see also Marta Filipová, "National Treasure or a Redundant Relic: The Roles of the Vernacular in Czech Art," *RIHA Journal* 66 (February 26, 2013): 7, 15.

[43] "It was the people of the plain Czech villages that rose four and [a] half hundreds years ago to . . . shake off the burden of foreign oppression from the homeland's shoulders. It was the same people . . . who for hundreds of years carried not only their own language but also the customs and traditions of the ancestors to such an extent that this deprived and almost extinct nation could be awakened to a new life." Luboš Niederle, "Byt lidu vesnického. Výstavní dědina," [Rural folk dwelling. The exhibition village] in Emil Kovář, *Národopisná výstava eskoslovanská v Praze. Druhá zpráva o innosti výboru* (Prague, 1893), 97. Quoted in Marta Filipová, "The Peasant as a Spectacle: The Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition of 1895," 6, paper presented at the conference *Instruction, Amusement and Spectacle: Popular Shows and Exhibitions 1800–1914*, University of Exeter, April 16, 2009.

[44] It should be noted that these art historians all made similar statements about the historical value of folk art, though most thought its modern significance was solely in this historical context: "The art historian Alois Riegl (1858–1905), gave Folk art significance in keeping local history, but did not hold much hope for its future. For more on Riegl, see Michael Gubser, "Time and History in Alois Riegl's Theory of Perception," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 66, no. 3 (2005), 462. For Antonín Matějček, folk art was always derived from primary, higher forms of art "when the nation as a whole was pushed away from cooperation in artistic culture and [Czech art] was only local art. . . . In this period without national art [the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries], the common people assumed the creative lead and nationalized the outcomes of the great international culture." Antonín Matějček, "O vyschlém prameni," in *Hlasy světa a domova* (Prague: Spolek v tvárních umělců Mánes, 1931), 218. Translation from Marta Filipová, "Between East and West: The Vienna School and the Idea of Czechoslovak Art," *Journal of Art Historiography* 8 (June 2013), 14. Václav Vilém Štech was more supportive of the importance folk art had as a national art. As Marta Filipová wrote: "As a social phenomenon, folk art was for [Štech] a collective activity and it was expressive of the national culture." Filipová, "Between East and West," 15, in which she summarized Václav Vilém Štech, "Umění města a venkova," in *Pod povrchem tvarů* (Prague: Václav Petr, 1941), 59. See also Filipová, "National Treasure," 41.

[45] Filipová, "Peasants on Display," 32.

[46] *Ibid.*, 15.

[47] For a description of the historical significance of these paintings, see J. E. S. Vojan, "Fine Arts in Bohemia," *Bohemian Review* 2 (February 1918), 25. The presence of these paintings, with their Slavic styling of Slavic legends, inside the theater meant for the upper classes, was itself a statement to the Germanic nobility that the Czech culture was reclaiming its place in the country. Filipová, "National Treasure," 19; and Jeremy Howard, *Art Nouveau: International and National Styles in Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 80.

[48] Peter Niedermüller, "Politics, Culture and Social Symbolism," *Ethnologia Europaea* 24, no. 1 (1994): 23–25.

[49] Stefan Berger, "Writing National Histories in Europe: Reflections on the Pasts, Presents and Futures of a Tradition," in *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, ed. Konrad Hugo Jarausch, Thomas Lindenberger, and Annelie Ramsbrock (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 59.

[50] Masaryk, *Meaning of Czech History*, 18.

[51] See his posters: *Výstava Českého Severovýchodu*, or Northeast Bohemia Fair (1903), and *Jarní slavnosti Pěvecké a Hudební V Praze*, or Spring Festival of Song and Music at Prague (1914). Erin Dusza, "Epic Significance: Placing Alphonse Mucha's Czech Art in the Context of Pan-Slavism and Czech Nationalism" (master's thesis, Georgia State University, 2012), chap. 2, accessed December 18, 201, [http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art\\_design\\_theses/103](http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art_design_theses/103).

[52] Mucha, *His Life and Art*, 267.

[53] Anna Dvořák, "Le Style Mucha: Posters," in Arwas, Brabcová-Orkiková, and Dvořák, *Spirit of Art Nouveau*, 176.

[54] Ancient Egyptians used the motif of a finger in the mouth to indicate a youth; I interpret the gesture from the modern context of nervousness.

[55] Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984), 336.

[56] "The Sokol was organized by Jundřich Fügner (1822–1865) and Dr. Miroslav Tyrš (1832–1884) in 1862 under the influence of the German gymnastic movement, founded by Jahn, to animate the nation with ideals of equality and brotherhood (The Sokols called each other 'brother' and addressed each other with 'thou'), mental vigor and physical fitness. . . . Tyrš was a student of classical antiquity and of the history and theory of the arts: from the beginning he tried to make the Sokol an educational movement on a broad cultural basis." Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 184.

[57] Rennert and Weill, *Complete Posters*, 338.

[58] Description of poster's symbolism from Dvořák, "Le Style Mucha," 177. Kollár, *Slávy Dcera*, 1824, Zpěv V. Acheron, verse 644. Czech original found at SME, Zlatý Fond, accessed December 18, 2013, [http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/142/Kollar\\_Slavy-dcera/3](http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/142/Kollar_Slavy-dcera/3).

[59] Dvořák, "Le Style Mucha," 177.

[60] Mucha, *His Life and Art*, 238.

[61] Mucha, *Master of Art Nouveau*, 258.

[62] In an interview in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on July 14, 2012 with John Mucha and Sarah Mucha, who are the directors of the Mucha Foundation, and Tomoko Sato, the curator of the Mucha Foundation, at the grand re-opening of the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library we discussed Mucha's reading of Pan-Slavist scholars, and John Mucha affirmed that Mucha had read Herder, Kollár, and of course Palacký.

[63] Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, 151.

[64] Crane agreed to pay Mucha a stipend equal to \$15,000 a year. Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 97.

[65] Waights Taylor, *Alphonse Mucha's Slav Epic, an Artist's History of the Slavic People* (Santa Rosa, CA: Waights Taylor, 2008), 11. Though not a scholar, his useful chart showing name, date, and dimensions is here used.

[66] Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 97.

[67] *Ibid.*, 100.

[68] Denis's work has not been translated into English, but can be found in the original French as Ernest Denis, *La Question d'Autriche: Les Slovaques* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1917).

[69] Zacek, *Palacký*, 91–92.

[70] Lenka Bydžovská and Karel Srp, "The Slav Epic - Word and Light," in Husslein-Arco and others, *Alphonse Mucha*, 58.

[71] Taylor, *Alphonse Mucha's Slav Epic*, 11.

[72] Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 97.

[73] Bydžovská and Srp, "Slav Epic - Word and Light," 60.

[74] Charles Richard Crane was an American minister to China and an advisor to President Wilson on his diplomatic mission to Russia. He was also a friend of Professor Tomáš Masaryk. Anna Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 104n5. Due to the fact that neither Crane nor Mucha ever specified the time frame in which such a structure should be built, the issue is still being contested today. Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 97.

[75] Mucha, *Master of Art Nouveau*, 148.

[76] "I must choose a technique which doesn't take too long. . . . This is why I think oil painting is too technical and not suitable for expressing ideas. In oils the technique is always visible, and this I don't want . . . if it is broadly painted it's just shallow virtuosity, unworthy of serious subjects. And if it is too meticulous and naturalistic, the harsh colors will kill the idea and the whole thing looks terribly heavy handed and forced. My work must be like sudden shouts without any bravado technique, honestly felt and honestly expressed, with no showing off, no acrobatics of the brush. I think I will do it like the tragedy of the German Theatre, only better and more seriously worked out, with the main stress on drawing, while the colour, harmonious and natural, should be subordinate. Now I'm looking for a method and I think I have found it. Contemporary oil technique has nothing in common with the Slav spirit . . . it is French, or Dutch, perhaps even German or Italian, but not Slavonic. We must start from a completely different angle . . . not painting because . . . we get satisfaction from effects of light and colour, but because . . . painting is a more direct way of conveying feelings. And these feelings must remain the principal object while technique and colour must be subordinate. This is my new approach . . . and perhaps I'll be able to do something really good, not for the art critics but for the improvement of our Slav souls." Letter from Alphonse Mucha dated February 1910 in Mucha, *Master of Art Nouveau*, 250–51.

[77] "A mixture of egg yolk mixed with ground pigment and water to which he added oil." Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 98.

[78] For a complete listing, and reproductions, see "Themes, Slav Epic," Mucha Foundation, accessed December 17, 2013, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic>. For more information on each painting, including the subtitles, see Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 96–123.

[79] Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 107.

[80] The identity of the figures in the paintings and in the summaries are taken from Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 107–22.

[81] Husslein-Arco and others, *Alphonse Mucha*, 232.

[82] Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 116.

[83] In giving the background of *After the Battle of Grunewald*, the Mucha Foundation wrote, "The German Catholic military order of the Teutonic Knights settled in the Baltic area in the early 1400s in a bid to spread Christianity among the pagan tribes in the region, and to Poland and Lithuania beyond. To defend their lands from Catholic colonisation, the Slavs, the Poles and the Lithuanians signed a treaty. On 15 July 1410 the allies defeated the Teutonic [*sic*] Knights in a fierce battle at Grunewald in Poland.

Mucha chose to depict the scene of the battle the following morning. The Polish king Wladyslaw stands in the middle of the body-strewn battlefield and covers his face in horror. His country may be free, but this freedom has come at some cost." Mucha Foundation, "'The Slav Epic' cycle No. 10: After the Battle of Grunewald (1924)," accessed December 18, 2013, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/219/>. In discussing *Petr of Chelčice*, the foundation wrote, "Petr of Chelčice was a pacifist thinker from Bohemia who was fervently opposed to war and military action in the name of religion. Mucha subscribed to much of Chelčice's thinking and chose to depict the more sinister side of the Hussite Wars in this canvas, concentrating on their effect on the lives of innocent victims. The village of Vodňany fell victim to repeated Hussite attacks and the inhabitants were forced to flee their homes, taking the bodies of the injured and dead to the nearby town of Chelčice. Consumed by grief and anger against the Hussites, they gather around the bodies of the victims and the few possessions that they have managed to bring with them. Petr Chelčický, who stands at the centre of the composition with a Bible under his right arm, offers comfort to the victims and implores them not to give in to vengeance." Mucha Foundation, "'The Slav Epic' cycle No. 12: Petr of Chelčice," accessed December 18th, 2013, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/223/>.

For *After the Battle of Vítkov*, the foundation's website says, "When King Wenceslas IV died in August 1419, he was succeeded by his brother Sigismund, King of Hungary. However, the Czech people, who held him responsible for the death of Jean Hus, refused to accept his claim to the throne. With the support of the Catholic Church and the German army, Sigismund launched a crusade against the Hussite movement and succeeded in occupying Prague Castle where he was crowned king. In July 1420, the Hussites challenged Sigismund at Vítkov Hill on the outskirts of Prague. Led by their military leader Jan Žižka, the army of Hussite followers was joined by Czech soldiers from Prague who launched a surprise attack from the rear. Together, they succeeded in overpowering Sigismund and his men, forcing their retreat and Sigismund's abdication. Mucha's theatrical composition portrays the solemn mass given by the priest that led the Czech soldiers from Prague. Holding a monstrance, he is surrounded by clergy lying in supplication on the ground. The rising sun penetrates the clouds and casts a celestial spotlight on the figure of Žižka, the victorious leader, who stands to the right of the composition with the weapons of the conquered army at his feet." Mucha Foundation, "'The Slav Epic' cycle No. 11: After the Battle of Vítkov," accessed December 18, 2013, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/222/>.

[84] Mucha, *His Life and Art*, 149.

[85] "Speech at the General Meeting of Svatobar, November 27, 1864," as translated in Zacek, *Palacky*, 27–28.

[86] The missionaries even received permission from Rome to continue their teachings. Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 108.

[87] Ibid. Boris I of Bulgaria supported Cyril and Methodius after they were expelled from Bohemia and imprisoned by the German Bishops. Steven Runciman, *The Great Powers of Europe, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* 6 (London: George Bell & Sons, 1930), 101, 115–17, and 124–25.

[88] All painted in 1916. Taylor, *Alphonse Mucha's Slav Epic*, 11.

- [89] This is also seen in his depiction of Hus in the Municipal Building where he labeled his spandrel portrait with the word "*Spravedlnost*" (justice). Husslein-Arco and others, *Alphonse Mucha*, 238–39; and Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 11–12.
- [90] Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 24–25.
- [91] Zacek, *Palacký*, 63.
- [92] *Ibid.*, 64.
- [93] Carlos Reijnen and Joep Leerssen, "Czechs" in Leerssen and Beller, *Imagology*, 136.
- [94] Bydžovská and Šrp, "Slav Epic - Word and Light," 58–59.
- [95] "Hussitism was given another chance to become a real social force in the reign of Jiří of Poděbrady (1458–1471), and Palacký believed that if the movement had relied on monarchic authority it would have created a new society. In his view, a great historical opportunity for the Czech people to provide Europe with a new model of civilization died with Jiří of Poděbrady." Jiří Štaif, "The Image of the Other in the Nineteenth Century: Historical Scholarship in the Bohemian Lands," in *Creating the Other*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 91.
- [96] "Štěpán Dušan was responsible for expanding the Slavic territory in the 1300s and for establishing a code of law that was valid throughout his empire. In 1346, following successive military victories against the Byzantine Empire, he crowned himself Tsar of the Serbs and Greeks in Skopje. In this episode, Mucha depicts the procession following the Tsar's coronation. Dušan stands in the middle of the procession with two men on either side holding regal robes. The procession is led by young girls in Serbian folk costume who convey Mucha's faith that the younger generation will carry forward Pan-Slavic ideals." Mucha Foundation, "The Slav Epic" cycle No. 6: The Coronation of Serbian Tsar Štěpán Dušan," accessed December 18, 2013, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/217>.
- [97] Charles Edmund Maurice, *The Story of Bohemia from the Earliest Times to the Fall of National Independence in 1620: With a Short Summary of Later Events* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), 66.
- [98] Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 110.
- [99] *Ibid.*
- [100] The suggestion for the scene apparently came from Charles Crane. Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 116.
- [101] Started in 1926. Taylor, *Alphonse Mucha's Slav Epic*, 11.
- [102] Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 120.
- [103] *Ibid.*, 122.
- [104] *Ibid.*, 120.
- [105] *Ibid.*, 122.
- [106] Mucha had to reduce the scale of the canvases from the 20 x 26 ft. size of the first seven paintings to 13 x 20 ft., and later even 13 x 16 ft. due to restrictions from the war. Bydžovská and Šrp, "Slav Epic - Word and Light," 60.
- [107] Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, 160.
- [108] Mary Gail Kana-Butrica, "The Historical Paintings of Alphonse Mucha: The Slav Epic" (master's thesis, University of Texas, 1979), 31n83.
- [109] "From National Self-Determination to Cosmopolitanism (1867–1918)," in *The Czech Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, The World Readers, ed. Jan Bažant, Nina Bažantová, and Frances Starn (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 203.
- [110] Adolf Loos, from "Ornament und Verbrechen" (1908), trans. Wilfried Wang, in *The Architecture of Adolf Loos* (London: Arts Council Exhibition, 1985), 103.
- [111] Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, 20, 163.
- [112] Sigma [Stanislav Kostka Neumann], "Vastenecký případ Alphonse Muchy" [The patriotic case of Alphonse Mucha], *Kmen* 3 (May 1919), 17.
- [113] Originally from Stanislav Kostka Neumann, "Otevřená okna," *Lidové noviny*, August 9, 1913, 1–2; reprinted in Jiří Padrt, ed., *Osmá a Skupina výtvarných umělců 1907–1917* (Prague: Odeon, 1992), 138–40; and summarized in Filipová, "National Treasure," 45.
- [114] Masaryk served as president from 1918 until 1935. Karel Kubiš and others, "Czech Republic: Nation Formation and Europe," in *Entangled Identities: Nations and Europe*, ed. Atsuko Ichijō and Wilfried Spohn (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 140.
- [115] Masaryk, *Meaning of Czech History*, 114.



[116] Arnošt Procházka, *Na okraj doby* [On the edge of time] (Prague: Ludvík Bradáč, 1919), 112, as translated by Robert B. Pynsent in *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality* (Budapest: Central European University, 1994), 149.

[117] Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, 160.

[118] Anna Dvořák, "New Aspirations, 1900–1939," in Arwas, Brabcová-Orkiková, and Dvořák, *Spirit of Art Nouveau*, 41.

[119] The Germans had begun burning his works in town squares as early as 1890. Critic Josef Leonard Knoll, a professor of general and Austrian history at Prague University, urged that the work be suppressed before it created "thirteen million Slavs burning with national fanaticism and hatred against Germans." Zacek, *Palacký*, 78, 107–8.

[120] Dvořák, "Slav Epic," 103.

[121] Tony Paterson, "Battle Over Legacy of Father of Art Nouveau," *The Independent* (London), August 16, 2010, 22.

[122] Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, 160.

[123] At the time this article is being written, the Mucha Foundation, headed by John Mucha, the artist's grandson, is still battling with the city of Prague about where the *Slav Epic* will be put on permanent display as well as preserved. John Mucha, "Mucha Family Voices Concerns," Mucha Foundation, News, May 13, 2013, accessed December 18, 2013, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/about/news/item/the-mucha-family-voices-concerns-as-slav-epic-goes-on-display-in-prague>.



## Illustrations



Fig. 1, Alphonse Mucha, Poster for Pěvecké Sdružení Učitelů Moravských or Moravian Teachers Choir, 1911. Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984), 337. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 2, Alphonse Mucha, Poster for Slet Vsesokolský or The Sixth Sokol Festival, 1912. Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984), 339.

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Fig. 3, Alphonse Mucha, *Slavs in Their Original Homeland: Between the Turanian Whip and the Sword of the Goths*, 1912. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemin, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 258. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 4, Alphonse Mucha, *Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia: Praise the Lord in Your Native Tongue*, 1912. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemin, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 268. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 5, Alphonse Mucha, *The Bohemian King Přemysl Otakar II: The Union of the Slavic Dynasties*, 1924. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemine, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 272. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 6, Alphonse Mucha, *The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree: The Slavic Revival*, 1926. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemin, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 300. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 7, Alphonse Mucha, *Apotheosis of the Slavs: Slavs for Humanity*, 1926. Tempera with oil details on canvas. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jean Louis Gaillemin, Michel Hilaire, and Christiane Lange, eds., *Alphonse Mucha* (Vienna: Belvedere, 2009), 303. [\[return to text\]](#)