



# Between Adam Smith and Walter Scott: Scottish Enlightenment and Romanticism in the Czech Culture of the First Half of the Nineteenth Century\*

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## SYNOPSIS

The first part of this article discusses the influence of the representatives of the Scottish Enlightenment, including Hugh Blair, William Robertson, Adam Smith and David Hume, on the leader of the Czech national emancipation movement and founder of modern Czech historiography František Palacký (1798–1876). The second part assesses the influence of Walter Scott on the young romantic poet Karel Hynek Mácha (1810–1836), whose attempts to interpret Czech history from a tragic and ironic perspective problematized Palacký's position, especially with regard to his assumptions about the unity of a national community and its interests, as well as the perfectibility of individual nations and the human species.

## KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA / KEYWORDS

František Palacký; Karel Hynek Mácha; Adam Smith; William Robertson; Hugh Blair; Walter Scott; česká historie; české dějepisectví; skotské osvícenství; romantismus / František Palacký; Karel Hynek Mácha; Adam Smith; William Robertson; Hugh Blair; Walter Scott; Czech history, Czech historiography; Scottish Enlightenment; Romanticism.

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## PALACKÝ AND THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT

František Palacký's education was in many respects untypical. He was born in Hodslavice, a village in north-eastern Moravia, in a region where the counter-reformation enforced by the Habsburgs was not so successful as in other parts of the Kingdom of Bohemia, and where many people were secret Protestants (Palacký 1885, pp. 6, 23). After the enactment of the Patent of Toleration under the reign of the enlightened Habsburg Emperor Joseph II (1781), a major part of the population in this region

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became Lutherans, including Palacký's father, who was a village schoolmaster (*ibid.*). A strong believer in the value of religious freedom and good education, he sent his son first to a Latin grammar school in Trenčín, in what is now Slovakia, and later to a Protestant lyceum in Pressburg, or Pozsony (now Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia). In his teens Palacký mastered a number of languages, including English (*ibid.*, pp. 21–22). Towards the end of 1818 he befriended a Mr Egan, who, despite his humble standing (he was a groom in the stables of Count Grassalkovich, a Croatian aristocrat resident in Pozsony), had a good library and lent books to the young student (*ibid.*, p. 22; Vočadlo 1925, pp. 549–551).<sup>1</sup> Among the first volumes Palacký borrowed from Egan were Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters* (1783), which introduced him not only to oratory and literature but also to the principles of historical writing (Palacký 1885, p. 22; Vočadlo 1925, pp. 550–551).

It is a widespread opinion that Blair's *Lectures* had a dominant influence on the development of Palacký's aesthetics (Kraus 1995, pp. 261–268), but later research (Hlobil 2002, pp. ix–liv) has revealed the complexity of the genesis of Palacký's philosophical, aesthetic, historical and political concepts. It has been demonstrated how individual influences on Palacký are not as important as the contextual relationships among specific works within his extremely versatile scholarly readings. Hlobil has pointed out that apart from Jean-Baptiste Dubos's *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting, 1719), Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Artworks in Painting and Sculpture, 1755) and Benedikt Koller's *Entwurf zur Geschichte und Literatur der Aesthetik von Baumgarten bis auf die neueste Zeit* (An Outline of the History of Aesthetics and Its Sources from Baumgarten to the Present, 1799), Palacký was also influenced by the recent history of arts, humanities and natural sciences, especially the Göttingen school of historians including Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's *Geschichte der Cultur und Literatur des neueren Europa* (History of Culture and Literature in Modern Europe, 1796), Johann Dominicus Fiorillo's *Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste von ihrer Wiederauferlebung bis auf die neusten Zeiten* (History of the Pictorial Arts since their Revival to the Present Time, 1798) and Friedrich Bouterwek's *Geschichte der Poesie und Beredsamkeit seit dem Ende des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts* (History of Poetry and Oratory since the End of 13<sup>th</sup> Century, 1801) (Hlobil 2002, pp. xxxix–xlii).<sup>2</sup> These influences have contributed to a unique approach typical of Palacký's writing, which never closely follows its theoretical and methodological sources but tends towards a synthetic perspective based on comparisons among them.

1 Čech (1898, p. 391) lists Egan's first name initial as 'P'. Apart from Blair's *Lectures*, Palacký borrowed from Egan a volume of *The Spectator* with Addison's essays on The Pleasures of Imagination (nos. 411–421) and also Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744) with the introduction by Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1806) and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

2 Despite the indisputable merits of Hlobil's research, the two notebooks referred to as *Literaria I* and *II*, used by Palacký between 1816 and 1872 and deposited at the Library of the Czech National Museum (shelf mark XVII F 49), are still waiting for a thorough examination. The report on them by Hostinský (1898, pp. 387–390) is too general, and Hlobil's account (2002, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii, xli–xlix) is selective.



The present article, on the one hand, narrows Hlobil's scope to the examination of Palacký's Scottish sources, and, on the other hand, extends it to individual influences in their historical context, as they appear in Palacký's early notes, especially in the late 1818 and early 1819 entries in his *každodenníček* (daily journal). My principal aim is to demonstrate the force of Palacký's synthetic approach, typical already of his early reflections and critical thought. Thanks to this approach, Palacký was able to merge diverse cultural influences on the basis of his original philosophical, aesthetic and religious assumptions. He could also identify models of historical scholarship, whose thought he would not slavishly follow, but creatively develop and transform.

In contrast to the earlier approaches, exemplified by the controversy between Otakar Vočadlo and František Václav Krejčí, whether Palacký was more decisively influenced by the Scottish and English Enlightenment or by the German classical philosophy (Vočadlo 1925, pp. 547–553),<sup>3</sup> I propose that the Scottish Enlightenment thought was an important catalyst of the developments in Palacký's thought, especially of his humanistic understanding of the process of national emancipation, which was opposed to aggressive nationalist ideologies and which directly anticipated the thought of T. G. Masaryk.

Palacký started reading Blair's *Lectures* on 2 December 1818 when he met Egan (Palacký 1898, p. 20). Although he had learned English only recently (he names Professor Selecký as his teacher and 'intimate friend'; Vočadlo 1925, p. 549), his English excerpts from Blair contain very few mistakes. Palacký's *každodenníček*, started shortly before the beginning of the study of Blair's lectures, was inspired by Edward Gibbon.<sup>4</sup> The Notebook is the key source on Palacký's reception of Blair.

The general motivation to study Blair's *Lectures* was Palacký's interest in 'Blair's accent on correct language and advanced literacy in the mother tongue,' as well as his awareness of the fact that the lack of knowledge of these was 'a serious hindrance to a public life' and their command, on the other hand, was transforming eloquence and taste into 'a mode of social and cultural mobility' (Fischer 1926, p. 262). It should be remembered that Blair was imitating and expanding the 1751 Glasgow University lectures of Adam Smith, which, according to Robert Crawford, 'appealed to the Scots

3 Vočadlo quotes Palacký's letter to Jungmann of 14 July 1819: 'The Czechs have already too long been content to serve apprenticeship to the Germans and have been afraid of independent thinking; it is time for them to awaken from a sleep that has lasted two centuries and break their fetters' (Vočadlo 1925, pp. 548). The radicalism of this statement is not in keeping with Palacký's effort, evident from his contemporary notes, to produce a harmonious synthesis of the best achievements of Scottish, English and German philosophical and historical thought. Vočadlo emphatically refutes F. V. Krejčí's assumption that Palacký was 'imbued with German culture' (ibid., p. 552). For an attempt at an impartial view of the controversy, see Fischer (1927a, pp. 155–157).

4 'Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, where I used to read the extracts which he made from his daily readings, awakened in me the resolve to start something, on the same lines. I therefore began my first diary on the 25 November, 1818' (Vočadlo 1925, p. 549). Palacký read the first volume of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* between 2 and 7 January 1819 (Palacký 1898, p. 29).



who were upwardly mobile: he [Smith] offered a chance to hear “proper English” spoken, as well as about what constituted good style’ (Crawford 2000, p. 28).<sup>5</sup>

More than Smith and Blair, Palacký was interested in the emotional, expressive power of language. He put an emphasis on the expressive power of primitive languages (mentioned in Blair’s Lecture VI) connecting it with Herder’s theory of the emotional nature of the speech of early cultures,<sup>6</sup> but also, more surprisingly, with Schiller’s concept of the ‘naïve’ art of the ‘Greeks, Romans, Slavs, Hungarians, Gaels, Americans’ (Palacký 1898, p. 25), which he extolled against the ‘sentimental’ art of modern Western nations. More than Schiller, however, Palacký stressed the ‘plastic, intuitive and practical’ spirit, free ‘construction’ [syntax, style], and relatively minor role of abstraction in ancient Slavic, Hungarian, Celtic, and Native American languages, in opposition to German or French (ibid., p. 26).

As is evident from the above paragraph, another crucial point of Palacký’s interest was the use of Blair’s *Lectures* as a potential mediator between the classicist and romantic approaches to aesthetics. This is discussed in Lecture III dealing with the notion of the sublime, which Palacký already knew from Kant’s philosophy. In the *každodenníček* Palacký argued against Blair’s pragmatic interpretation of the sublime, though he in many other cases accepted the pragmatism of the common sense philosophy. According to Palacký, the criticism of the sublime cannot *a priori* depend ‘on the consensus of a certain group of people’ but has to take into account the diversity of human nature and ‘internal sensation’ of individuals (ibid., p. 22). Rather than directly following Blair, Palacký used one of the main features of Kant’s definition of the dynamic sublime, namely ‘the infinity of power’, but pointed out the capacity of the sublime experience to overcome the ‘earthly limitations’ and to become a manifestation of God’s goodness and grace, as evident in the sublime architecture of Gothic cathedrals (ibid.). Significantly, the qualities of Gothic architecture, which, according to Burke, excited terror, and which Blair connected with ‘awful obscurity’ and ‘disorder’ (ibid., p. 23), were seen by Palacký in their positive potential, as the sources ‘new living images’ (ibid.).

Palacký saw the dynamic sublime as a force coextensive with the human capacity of imagination, of which he learned both from Addison’s essays on the Pleasures of Imagination in *The Spectator* and from Mark Akenside’s eponymous poem (ibid., p. 32). The evidence of this tendency can be found in a passage in the *každodenníček* which links Palacký’s thought on the sublime with Neo-Platonism and Christian mysticism:

*Does not sublimity exist only where the infinity of force, which we attribute to higher beings and worlds, appears to our senses? Is it not at the very moment, when all*

5 Although Smith had destroyed the manuscript of the lectures, his notes were discovered in 1958. According to Crawford and Wilbur Samuel Howell they can be ‘seen as being at the root of what constitutes the university canon of English literature and also at the root of the struggle between vernaculars and the standard English language, both issues which were central not just to the Scottish tradition, but also to the international English-speaking world in the centuries which followed’ (Crawford 2000, p. 29; Howell 1971; pp. 156, 716).

6 Both Blair and Herder follow Robert Lowth’s *Latin Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1741–1750) (Abrams 1971, pp. 77–78).

*earthly limitations disappear and humans become gradually awakened as they ascend to higher and glorious essences and feel themselves connate with those beings whose mighty footprints they behold? Is not sublimity the power and the tie awakening in us a slumbering demon in a similar way as during the visitations of his majestic kinsmen descending from the Divine Sanctuary, sent by the Most Merciful like the visible angels dispatched by Him to the desperate abode of misery [...]?* (ibid., p. 23)



This very intense poetic passage expresses Palacký's aversion against the rationalism of Kant's definition of the sublime, as well as against the pragmatism of Blair's approach to Burke and Longinus (whose definitions of sublime Blair found incompatible) and connects the sublime with the religious values of Divine grace and mercy.

Surprisingly, however, Palacký's occasional resistance to German speculative thought and Scottish common sense philosophy does not lead to their negation but engenders their fundamental transformation. The reflections on the sublime inspired by Blair and Kant can be said to nourish the key concept of Palacký's philosophy, namely the 'Božnost', which can be translated as 'Godliness' and defined as 'the connate likeness of man and God' and 'the real contents of all finite purposes of human life' (Fischer 1926, p. 77).<sup>8</sup> Fischer explains Palacký's notion in a simple and straightforward way: 'God is the highest objective idea, Godliness is the highest subjective idea' (ibid.).

It is even more surprising that Palacký uses the empiricist and proto-pragmatic positions found in Blair and Adam Smith's *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (1795)<sup>9</sup> to rectify the mysticism of his reflections. This occurs for instance in the passage in the *každodenníček* inspired by Herder's *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*:

*truths [...] cannot be viewed from a certain fixed position: they result from the connection of multifarious circumstances amassing and aligning in a chain of necessary and productive experiences. As new bodies emerge from diverse connections of elements and others rise from their mixtures, so lead truths derived from individual experiences to principles which may contain the germs of systems or become an always open source of knowledge and experience which can be built upon. [...] If all histories of individuals and their Bildung were known, it would change the whole didactics!* (Palacký 1898, p. 28)

Here the formation of Palacký's specific approach to philosophy, history and education becomes evident, namely his art of mediating between mysticism, Leibnizian

7 Vočadlo translates it as 'divinity' (Vočadlo 1925, p. 552).

8 Fischer quotes from Palacký's notebooks *Literaria Parerga*, Library of the Czech National Museum (shelf mark 11 D 19).

9 The volume of Smith's shorter essays on the history of astronomy and ancient physics, logics and metaphysics, imitative arts, the affinities between music, dancing and poetry and between certain English and Italian verses, and on the external senses was published posthumously with a long biographical and critical introduction (Smith 1795). According to Hlobil (2002, pp. 46, 47, 91), Palacký's *Historical Survey* may refer to this volume.



foundations of organicism<sup>10</sup> and a pragmatic, even perspectivist, approach to truth and experience.

This original synthesis is accomplished by means of Palacký's emphasis on the importance of fiction, whose creative development is equally important as the growth of the 'richness of language' manifesting itself in the expressive power of words. These derive their force from the power of nature: all abstract concepts stem from 'sensuous name[s]' (Fischer 1926, p. 203). This shows the distance of Palacký from Hegel's philosophy, with which he was often linked by his interpreters (Fischer 1927b, pp. 31-34; Heidler 1911, pp. 1-12).<sup>11</sup> For a justification of the importance of fiction in historical narratives Palacký uses Blair's Lecture 37 quoting Francis Bacon's *De Augmentis scientiarum* (1623)<sup>12</sup>: 'Our taste for fictitious history is a proof of greatness and dignity of human mind' (Palacký 1898, p. 30). Fictitious history is equal to the epic poetry of the ancients.<sup>13</sup> Palacký's emphasis on fiction empowering historical narratives follows Blair's reflection on the power of rhetoric and also Bacon's critique of 'idols': the fictions of things and events ('rerum simulachra'; Bacon 1662, p. 145) cannot be allowed to subjugate human spirit but must be shaped by its creative desires ('ad animi desideria accommodando'; *ibid.*). Following Bacon and Blair, Palacký considers this maxim a cornerstone of his system. In his view, historical narratives are shaped by art, which is 'a quest for beauty'; however, in contrast to a historiographer, an ingenious artist recognizes beauty 'intuitively' (Fischer 1926, p. 63).

Palacký's approach to historiography was shaped by Blair's *Lectures* 35 and 36 on historical writing. Despite the fact that Blair's analysis is focused on ancient historians ('Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Tacitus and Sallust'; Blair 1831, p. 476), Palacký eagerly accepted his conclusion that '[t]he office of a historian [...] record[s] the truth for the instruction of mankind' and that 'contemplating [...] with a [...] dispassionate eye, [he] must present to his readers a faithful copy of human nature' (Palacký 1898, pp. 477-478). To an even greater extent, Palacký was influenced by Blair's requirement that the historian should give to his narrative 'as much unity as possible' and that this unity must be based on 'a progress of some great plan or sys-

10 On the foundations of the theory of organic form and the eighteenth-century organicism in Leibniz's *Monadology* see Abrams (1971, pp. 202-203).

11 Heidler (1911, pp. 1-12) demonstrated that Palacký did not subscribe to Hegel's concept of Absolute Spirit, but understood history as a victorious struggle of the Spirit with matter in which the Spirit has become embodied. The working of the Spirit is that of centralisation, emancipating individuals from the medieval feudal system. It also leads to the spiritual awakening of nations and their formation of nation-states, which is the beginning of history in a higher sense. Palacký adopted Hegel's dialectical method but not in its speculative form. He emphasized the importance of antagonisms (Germans versus Slavs) for the development of political forms and cultures (those of Central Europe).

12 This treatise is an expanded Latinized version of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (1605).

13 'Cum historia vera, obvia rerum satietate et similitudine, animae humanae fastidio sit, reficit eam Poësis, inexpectata et varia et vicissitudinum plena canens. Adeo ut Poësis ista non solum ad delectationem, sed etiam ad animi magnitudinem et ad mores conferat. Quare et merito etiam divinitatis cuiuspiam particeps videri possit; quia animum erigit et in sublime rapit; rerum simulachra ad animi desideria accommodando, non animum rebus (quod ratio facit et historia) submitiendo' (Bacon 1662, pp. 144-145).



tem of actions' (ibid., pp. 478–479). Although histories of the whole nation or empire 'must be imperfect' (ibid., p. 479), they ought to be dedicated to the search and discovery of systemic features. The only historian of the Antiquity able to narrate history 'upon such a comprehensive and connected plan' (ibid., p. 480) was Polybius, the Greek historian of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. In modern history, 'orations', introduced by Thucydides, are no longer relevant. Instead, the historian has to deliver 'in his own person, the sentiments and reasoning of the opposite parties' and 'drawing of characters' (ibid., p. 491). From Blair, Palacký also learned about modern Scottish historians, namely George Buchanan, David Hume and William Robertson (ibid., p. 494).

William Robertson, whose *History of Scotland 1542–1603* (1759) Palacký read in the spring of 1819 — in order to practice his English, as he mentions in his *každodenníček* (Palacký 1898, p. 49) — had a significant impact on Palacký's ideas of the use and strategy of historical writing. In a conversation with Palacký recorded in the *každodenníček*, Slovak scholar Ján Benedikti remarked: 'Bohemia cannot have a great historian since it does not have a great history [...there is] an absence of a "spirit of history"' (i.e., historicity) in the Czech land. '[The past] life can be understood only "through [the present] life"' (ibid., p. 35). Palacký argued against this opinion using the examples of 'the Scottish Robertson' and 'the Swiss Müller' (ibid.).<sup>14</sup> Czech history should not be studied from the old chronicles, but narrated by present-day historians using the 'inherent power of imagination' (ibid.).

In contrast to Robertson, Palacký subscribed to the organic theory of the nation, which is evident, for instance, in his *Krasovědné myšlenky* (Aesthetic Thoughts, 1818).<sup>15</sup> In spite of this romantic, speculative and ideological orientation, reading Robertson seems to have persuaded Palacký to write what Fischer calls 'a pragmatic history of Bohemia' (Fischer 1926, p. 100). Simultaneously, Palacký valued Robertson's emphasis on the wholeness of historian's account, which he also noticed in David Hume's synthetic concept of history (Fischer 1927b, p. 63).<sup>16</sup>

Palacký's approach to Czech history was inspired by Robertson's Preface to the first edition of the *History of Scotland*. Like Robertson, who was searching for a way to describe one of the most controversial periods of early modern Scottish history, namely '[t]he transactions in Mary's reign' which 'gave rise to two parties which were animated against each other with the fiercest political hatred embittered by religious zeal' (Robertson 1817, pp. iii–iv), Palacký was striving to find an 'evidence more authentic and more impartial' (Fischer 1926, p. 100) than polarized accounts

14 Johannes von Müller (1752–1809), a friend of J. G. Herder, was the author of *Die Geschichte der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft* (Histories of the Swiss Commonwealth, 1786–1808).

15 "That ubiquitous organism, that all-penetrating power of resemblance bringing to light synthetic figures in organic beings and even regular figures in crystals" (Palacký 1902, p. 76).

16 It is not surprising that Palacký disagreed with Hume's philosophical scepticism, pointing out its limitations which were explored by Kant, who has shown that the problem of epistemology is not that of faith but of the validity of knowledge: 'The guarantee of existence is generally the subject, not the object' (Fischer 1926, p. 47). On Palacký's reception of Hume see also Moural (2005, pp. 268–279).



of the Hussite wars and the events leading to them. In Dugald Stewart's *Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D.D.*, Palacký found sympathetic features of Robertson's political stance, especially his loyal 'patriotic' role during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. He also read David Hume's letter reprinted there praising Robertson's *History* and stating that 'no Englishman' would be 'capable of composing such a work' (Robertson 1817, p. xx). Hume's eulogy continued quoting usual English judgements about Scottish writing as 'very barbarous in the expression' and praising Robertson as an exception to this opinion: 'had he lived all his life in London and in the best company, he could not have expressed himself with greater elegance and purity' (ibid., p. xxx). Another important influence on Palacký's approach to historiography was the way Robertson made Scottish history interesting for English readers. Here, as well as in Palacký's thought, aesthetics, fiction and history interpenetrate:

*To adapt a history of such a country to the present standards of the British taste, it was necessary for the Author not only to excite an interest for names, which [...] were indifferent or unknown, but [...] unite in his portraits of the truth of nature with the softenings of art, and to reject whatever was unmeaning or offensive in the drapery, without effacing the characteristic garb of the times [...] translating their [Scottish] antiquated fashions into the corresponding fashions of our times (ibid.).*

The introduction also mentioned the importance of 'double language standard' (ibid., p. xxxi) for Robertson's style and historical narrative. It is beyond all doubt that this presentation of Robertson's *History* shaped Palacký's historiographic objectives. The evidence of this is Palacký's letter to Josef Jungmann of 3 December 1819, which declares his aim to write the history of Bohemia following Robertson's *History* (Palacký 1898, p. 30).

As mentioned in the introduction, Palacký transformed and developed the groundwork of his ideas from the works of Blair, Robertson, Smith and Hume in the context of the works of many other thinkers. Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), for example, which Palacký studied in 1819, presents the ethical argument against religious dogmatism, proposes morality as a necessary basis of the state, and opposes the use of force (Fischer 1927b, p. 60). Another important influence was Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, from whose *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (1752) Palacký made 6 pages of excerpts in the *Literaria* notebooks. Bolingbroke corroborated the thoughts of Smith and Blair on 'historical pragmatism', advocating for teaching by examples from history rather than by means of moral principles. Although Palacký had never fully embraced this approach, he valued the 'moral autonomy of the historian, his mission to awaken both individuals and societies, and especially the growth of self-consciousness, self-awakening' (Fischer 1927b, p. 62).

It can also be demonstrated how the emphasis in Scottish Enlightenment thought on perfectibility,<sup>17</sup> as well as political and social modernisation, influenced Palacký's approach to universal history as the progress of civilisation marked by increasing centralisation. This, however, was sharply distinguished from bureaucratic cen-

<sup>17</sup> Palacký's ideas of human perfectibility were also influenced by the thoughts of Mme de Staël, whose *De l'Allemagne* (1813) he admired.





tralisation imposed by modern multinational states, including the Austrian Empire (Fischer 1926, p. 219). Despite his rejection of administrative centralisation, Palacký was convinced that small nation-states had no future, which led him to repudiate Hungarian and Polish uprisings and champion the idea of Austria as a federal state. He refused the invitation to the Pan-German Frankfurt Parliament of 1848 based on his persuasion that Austria should preserve its unity and safeguard the equal rights of nations: 'If there were no Austria from ancient times, we would have to create it in the interest of Europe and even humanity itself' (Fischer 1926, p. 220). Against the centralizing and globalizing movement of modern civilization, Palacký emphasized the 'national principle' (ibid., p. 259). Although his concept of the nation was ethnocentric, it was counterbalanced by the requirement of political federalism expressed most cogently in his *Idea státu rakouského* (The Idea of the Austrian State, 1865), which anticipates various twentieth-century developments in political thought including the notion of devolution.

The development of Palacký's relationship to Austria anticipates the course of T. G. Masaryk's thought (Fischer 1927a, p. 232). Palacký and Masaryk shared a critical attitude toward liberalism and emphasized the political role of the state (moral function, safeguarding the equality among nations). Fischer points out that Palacký did not reject liberalism as such, but only the opinions of specific liberals (ibid., p. 333). Simultaneously, he was strongly against the idea of elect nations (Germany, Russia, Poland) and Panslavism. His firm conviction was that 'the idea of humanity' should be the moving force of national development (ibid., p. 335). In a letter to a Czech journalist and satirical poet, Karel Havlíček (1821–1856), Palacký wrote:

*if we wish to be a nation, we do not need only national history but also our representation in the world of literature. A single Walter Scott would now be more useful to us than five Žižkas,<sup>18</sup> since the latter would not be able to act today when the mind of the nation is wading in the quagmire of everydayness* (Fischer 1927b, p. 270).

## WALTER SCOTT'S INFLUENCE ON MÁCHA<sup>19</sup>

Karel Hynek Mácha, the most gifted Czech romantic poet, also referred to Walter Scott, not as a potential teacher of the Czech nation but as a representative of a different, richer and more cosmopolitan culture than that of the Czech emancipation movement of the mid-1830s. Mácha and Palacký met in 1835, and their encounter had political overtones. Commissioned by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bohemia, Count Karel Chotek (1783–1868), Palacký asked the young poet to write an ode celebrating

<sup>18</sup> Jan Žižka of Trocnov (ca 1360–1424) was a military leader of the Hussites.

<sup>19</sup> The second part of this paper follows some passages of Procházka (2007, pp. 173–189). This study also discusses Scott's influence on Karel Hynek Mácha's predecessors and contemporaries, such as the poet František Ladislav Čelakovský (1799–1852), dramatists Václav Kliment Klicpera (1792–1859) and Josef Kajetán Tyl (1808–1852), or on the historical novelists of the second part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Václav Beneš Třebízský (1849–1884) and Alois Jirásek (1851–1930).



the arrival of Ferdinand V, King of Bohemia and Emperor of Austria. When Mácha's ironical poem *Na příchod krále* (On the King's Arrival, 1835), mentioning the 'deserted Prague' and the 'dark night' of the nation and calling for a genuine Czech king, was refused by the Governor and prohibited from publication, Palacký criticized Mácha in an oblique and perhaps even ambiguous way, saying that his poetry had not sufficiently demonstrated 'the necessity of an idea' (Mácha 2008, p. 63). While Palacký had in mind the federalist future of Austria, Mácha labeled him as an adherent of German culture 'searching for philosophy in poems as the necessary thing' (ibid.). There was, however, a different problem: Mácha saw the present and future of the Czech nation more pessimistically than Palacký.

Mácha was an avid reader of Scott's novels in German translation. Many of his poems, prose fragments and an attempt at a historical novel, *Křivoklad* (Křivoklad Castle, 1834), testify to Scott's powerful influence. Thanks to the survival of Mácha's notebooks, his reading of Walter Scott and creative use of Scott's motifs can now be reconstructed. While Mácha strives for an expressive style integrating a few details taken from Scott's text in the dynamic flow of his poetic narrative, Scott dwells on static details, and ironically recapitulates the causes of past events. Where Scott evokes the 'memory' of a place in the context of both local historical time and the history of the Reformation, Mácha attempts to represent a scene from history as a subjective, dreamy vision. This is typical of Mácha's *Křivoklad* as well as of his fragments of historical tales *Klášter sázavský* (The Sázava Monastery, about 1832) or *Valdice* (1836).

In Mácha's works, Scott's fiction functions as an intertext, mediating between available accounts of Czech history (especially the 1541 chronicle by Václav Hájek of Libočany, end of 15th century — 1553), and Mácha's draft of his historical fiction.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Scott's novel here becomes a transformative agent, stimulating both the independent imagination and narrative strategy, as well as a revisionist reading of history. While Mácha may not copy Scott's account of 'idolatry' and 'superstitious devotion of the papists' in *The Abbot* (1820) (Scott 1906, p. 122), he does select the Stuttgart edition, translated by Leonhardt Tafel (Scott 1828), where the passage critical of Catholicism is retained (rather than the Vienna edition, in which that passage was deleted by censors). Later drafts of the historic tetralogy inspired by Scott's other novels show that the Czech religious reformer Jan Hus (ca 1370–1415) would become an important character in it.

Mácha's preoccupation with Scott's novels shows a range of different concerns which are later articulated in his major works. For instance, in the case of *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), it extends from wild Alpine sceneries to subtle political stratagems.<sup>21</sup>

20 René Wellek shows that for Mácha Scott was also 'the intermediary of other influences: the Gothic novel and Shakespeare' (Wellek 1963, p. 167).

21 According to Wellek (1963, p. 166), Mácha links the wild Alpine landscape at the beginning of Scott's novel with the rugged cliff above the monastery of Svätý Jan pod Skalou and the rocky ravine of Šárka, both locations connected with events in Czech sagas, legends and early history. Wellek's conjecture (ibid., p. 166) about the connection between Svätý Jan and the castle of Karlštejn, central to 'Karlův Týn', a planned volume of Mácha's historical tetralogy, is plausible. It indicates that the volumes of the 'Hangman' tetralogy follow-



From the fourth and twenty-second chapters of *A Legend of Montrose* (1819), Mácha draws the fatal scenes of his novel *Cikáni* (The Gypsies, 1835) and from *Quentin Durward* (1823) he takes the inspiration to create characters of King Wenceslas IV and his Hangman, the descendant of the extinct royal house of the Přemyslids. In Mácha's only historical novel, *Křivoklad*, the influence of Scott's writings gives rise to the proto-existentialist conflicts of late Romanticism, emphasizing the analogy between the individual tragedies of his heroes and the tragic events of Czech medieval history, which seems to move hopelessly toward a still greater decay of royal power and the feudal state. This is symbolized by the interchangeable identities of the King and his Hangman: Mácha's apostrophes, 'King Hangman!' [...] 'Hangman King!' ('Králi kate!' [...] 'Kate králi!', Mácha 2008, p. 136), refer to the Hangman's royal ancestors, effectively erasing the difference between the king and his executioner.

Perhaps the most inventive adoption and transformation of Scott's writings can be found in the third and fourth cantos of Mácha's lyrical-epic tale *Máj* (May, 1836). Here, Scott's image of scattered 'bones of men, / In some forgotten battle slain / and bleached by drifting wind and rain' and of 'the leader's skull, / Still wreath'd with chaplet, flush and full' (Scott 1909, p. 230)<sup>22</sup> in the third canto (III.5) of *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) is expanded and transformed into a string of sublime metaphors of the transience of individual consciousness, lapse of historical time as well as of the discontinuity of time in general:

*About the head the sunset bright  
Lay like a wreath of roses growing,  
Gilding the bony face with light,  
On fretted skin and white jaw glowing.  
In the hollow skull the breezes sped  
As if grim laughter mocked the dead,  
[...]  
The last indignant thoughts of the defeated dead,  
Their unremembered names, the clamour of old fights,  
The worn-out northern lights, after their gleam is fled,  
The untuned harp, whose strings distil no more delights,  
The deeds of time gone by, quenched starlight overhead,  
[...]*

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ing *Křivoklad* were intended to combine panoramic historical perspective with accounts of minute but symptomatic historical events, dramatic, adventurous scenes and dynamic, powerful landscape descriptions.

22 Mácha excerpts the German translation by Adam Storck: 'Aus alter unbekannter Schlacht / So gräßlich in matten Mondesschein, / Das weiß gebleicht hat Wind und Regen. [...] Und manch' Gewürm sich træg bewegt / An diesem bleichenden Gebein, / Das einst sich flink und stark geregt. / Der Schedel, der dort ragt allein, / [...] / Umkränzet von vollblühndem Kranz;' (Scott 1826, pp. 235–236; Mácha 1972, pp. 84–85). Other motifs in the extract, namely the vegetation overgrowing human bones, have inspired different passages in the third and fourth cantos of *May* (Mácha 2010, pp. 778–819).



*As the smoke of burnt-out fires, as the shatter'd bell's chime,  
Are the dead years of the dead, their beautiful childhood time.*  
(Mácha 2010, pp. 815–817, 811)<sup>23</sup>

Mácha's transformation of Scott's rendering of a folk saga about the birth of Brian the Hermit into a text symbolizing different dimensions of time, both individual and collective, apocalyptic and discontinuous ('the dead years of the dead, their beautiful childhood time', *ibid.*, p. 811), is a fitting means to conclude this account, which attempted to demonstrate both the potentialities and the limitations of the influences of the Scottish Enlightenment and Romanticism in Palacký's and Mácha's works. Mácha's catachrestic metaphors anticipate modern reflexive poetry and twentieth-century thought about time and history. It is not surprising they had an immense influence on Czech twentieth-century poetry and are topical even today.

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<sup>23</sup> This passage from the third canto of Mácha's poem repeats itself with some variation in Canto IV.

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