

Pavel Štěpánek, ed. Ondřej Jakubec, *Trajectories of Spanish Art and Culture in Bohemia. Studies and Essays about Spanish and Ibero-American Art*, Olomouc: Palacký University Olomouc, 2021, 263 pp. ISBN 978-80-244-5866-3

The book *Trajectories of Spanish Art and Culture in Bohemia. Studies and Essays about Spanish and Ibero-American Art* was published by the Palacký University in Olomouc as a homage to the lifelong work of Professor Pavel Štěpánek, an art historian with remarkable knowledge and passion for the art and culture of Spanish and Portuguese-speaking world. He is a professor emeritus at the Palacký University in Olomouc and an external professor at the Charles University in Prague. Professor Štěpánek also collaborates with many international institutions such as the Real Academia de Belles Artes de San Fernando Madrid or the Reial Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi Barcelona and is the recipient of numerous international awards, such as the Order of Isabella the Catholic, granted by Spanish King Juan Carlos I in 2006, the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle, to mention just a few.

This publication presents a selection of Štěpánek's most important studies. It is a collection of articles written over the course of four decades, between 1980 and the 2010s. Readers will find eleven essays on various subjects, starting with a brief commentary on the development of Czech and Slovak relations with Spain and concluding with an article on the Czechoslovak exhibition of Cândido Portinari's paintings.

The essays deal with different periods and subjects spanning from the Middle Ages until the 20th century, but the leitmotif is the connection between Spain and Bohemia, be it in art, sociocultural contexts, or philosophical approaches. There is only one exception, namely the last article, which deals with cultural contacts between Czechoslovakia and Brazilian artists of communist background.¹ In that article, Štěpánek describes the

journey of the works of various Brazilian artists to the exhibition hall in Prague in the early 1950s. The exhibition itself was fully initiated by the Czechoslovak side, politically motivated, and yet of great artistic value,² with a special focus on the work of Cândido Portinari.

Cândido Portinari, a Brazilian painter born to Italian immigrants, spent some time studying and working in Europe. Upon returning to Brazil, he painted both the beauty of Brazilian nature and social subjects. In his work, he tried to capture the true 'Brazilian soul', mostly through the depiction of the poorest Brazilians and their life. In the Czech Republic, his name is nowadays not well known but internationally, he is renowned for the great canvas 'Guerra e Paz' commissioned for New York headquarters of the United Nations. Special focus is placed on the importance of Portinari's work known to the Czechoslovak public since the end of the Second World War, which is still kept in the collections of the National Gallery in Prague. The author continues by explaining the importance of Portinari's solo exhibition in 1960 that was later shown also in Bratislava, Brno, and Prague. The text concludes with the sad history of Portinari's needless death.

In the Foreword, Vicente Carreres, an essayist and philologist, writes that it is only now that the book could come into existence, because 'it is a product of an entire life research and passion for Spanish and Latin American culture'.³

In relation to this quote, I believe that the greatest strength of this book is the thorough and in-depth research of many aspects of interconnections between the cultures of Bohemia, Spain, and the Hispanic world, which are nowadays perceived as separate. Štěpánek clearly proves that mutual intertwining and influence have been always present. For example, in the essay 'Spanish Decorative Arts 1550–1650', he investigates the

ries of Spanish Art and Culture in Bohemia, pp. 239–250, First published in *Bulletin Národní galerie v Praze* XXVI, 2016, pp. 70–79.

² Ibidem, p. 240.

³ *Trajectories of Spanish Art and Culture in Bohemia*, Foreword by Vicente Carreres, p. 6.

¹ Pavel ŠTĚPÁNEK, "Cândido Portinari (1903–1962) in Czechoslovakia", in: *Trajecto-*

story of Emperor Rudolph II Habsburg and his stay at the court of Philip II in Madrid, which had a strong impact on Rudolph's life and his future interest to the arts and alchemy.⁴

The book of essays by Pavel Štěpánek is an eminently important resource for in-depth research. It is mainly intended for art historians who are interested in the Hispanic world and its links to Bohemia. Although for readers who lack a sound knowledge of Spanish art in general this book could be sometimes confusing and overwhelming, I can heartily recommend it to all people who would like to expand their knowledge beyond the standard of Czech academia. It is also a useful tool for students who focus on Spanish art and its connections with Bohemia from the Middle Ages until the present day.

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(Written in English by the author)

<https://doi.org/10.14712/24647063.2025.19>

Vendula V. Hingarová, *Česká a slovenská periodika v Argentině* [Czech and Slovak Periodicals in Argentina], Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 2021, 246 pp. ISBN: 978-80-7571-078-9

Benedict Anderson's memorable work *Imagined Communities* had shown us that we can view national consciousness also through the lens of indirect relationships between the nation and its people, such as the links created by the printing press and circulation of periodicals in vernacular languages.⁶ While Anderson's ideas were inspired by an analysis of the emergence of Creole nationalism in America, they are also relevant to a better understanding of the publishing activities of migrant communities that settled in the Americas and their wider implications.

Vendula Hingarová's book is dedicated to the Czech and Slovak press in Argentina. Czech and Slovak immigrants formed but a small fraction of

the fast-expanding immigrant population in Argentina; in early twentieth century, about 30% of that country's population had been born abroad. In this multiethnic and multilingual country whose government was actively trying to attract (white) immigrants to populate the allegedly empty pampas, growing diasporas took pride in publishing periodicals in their national languages.

As noted above, the Czech and Slovak diaspora was small. In 1907, the first Czech journal, *Slavia*, was printed in 250 copies while the Italian daily *La Patria* had a circulation of 40,000.⁷ Although the Czech and Slovak publishing efforts were initially something of a 'Cinderella' among the larger foreign diasporas with their own press (p. 26), they spanned a century and jointly form a unique testimony about the cultural and political history of Czechs and Slovaks living on the other side of the Atlantic.

Vendula Hingarová's book is the result of a pioneering research conducted in archives in Argentina, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, USA, and Germany. In its second part, the volume offers a systematic overview of 45 periodicals produced in Argentina by Czech and Slovak immigrants and their offspring from 1907 until 2003. The periodicals are introduced in an alphabetical order (Part II, pp. 113–222) and each entry contains bibliographical details, names of the main editor(s), and a reproduction of the cover page. What is especially praiseworthy is that Hingarová managed to find several previously unknown titles, thus expanding our knowledge of publication activities of Czechs and Slovaks in Argentina. Accompanying indexes of periodicals, people, places, and institutions make the book easy to use for further research (Part II, pp. 233–241).

But this publication is much more than a systematic reference guide to periodicals produced by the Czechs and Slovaks in distant lands. This is mainly thanks to the opening essay which introduces readers to wider historical, political, and social circumstances of the century in the course of which the titles in Czech and Slovak came into existence in Argentina (Part I, pp. 13–110). This

⁴ Ibidem, pp. 165–204.

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⁶ Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: 1983.

⁷ Samuel L. BAILY, "The Role of Two Newspapers in the Assimilation of Italians in Buenos Aires and São Paulo, 1893–1913", *The International Migration Review* 12/3, Autumn 1978, pp. 321–340.