

**David Cooper**, University of Illinois

## **Abstract**

In this paper I examine the roles played by the Czech romantic forged manuscripts (Rukopis královédvorský and Rukopis zelenohorský) in Czech national society in the first half of the nineteenth century. Early considered to be sacred, mythic texts, the forged manuscripts played a visible role in important social rituals of the emerging Czech national society, many of which had religious overtones. These include rites of initiation into Czech national society, figured as religious conversion, the taking of a patriotic name as a version of baptism into Czech society, and defense of the authenticity of the manuscripts as a kind of confession of faith. I argue that the place of the manuscripts in these important national social rituals helps to account for the emotional reactions of patriots to later expressions of scholarly doubts regarding their authenticity.