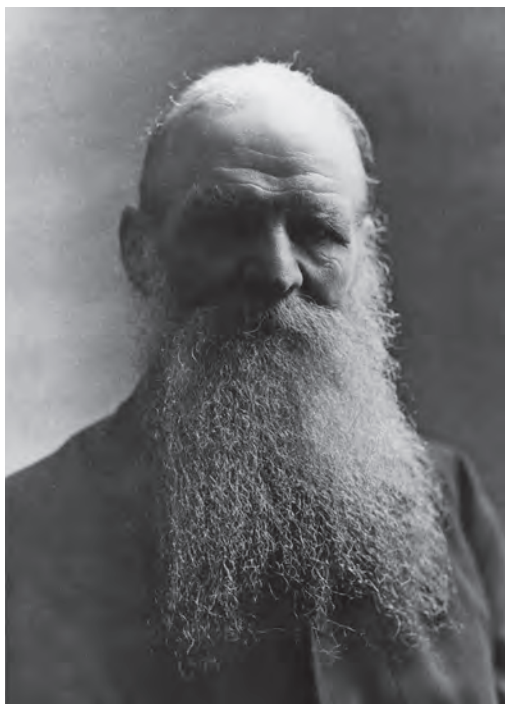


JIRÍ POKORNÝ
JOSEF HLÁVKA

(15 February 1831, Přeštice – 11 March 1908, Prague)

Even in his childhood his extraordinary artistic talent was in evidence, so after his secondary school studies he attended Prague Polytechnic and the Viennese Academy of Arts, thus systematically preparing for a career as an architect and builder. Hlávka was assisted in this by a state grant, which enabled him to get to know the art of central and southern Europe. After returning to Vienna he went into business as a builder and architect. The construction boom in Vienna during the 1860s enabled Hlávka's company to win great acclaim, though of course this would not have happened without his excellent organizational skills, knowledge, artistic feel and incredible commitment to work (which in a sense was actually self-destructive).

It was his construction of the Court Opera, Archduke Wilhelm's Palace, St Othmar Church and several commercial and tenement buildings that brought Hlávka to the attention of Viennese society. Over a single decade he erected at least 140 large buildings – the exact number has not yet been ascertained, but evidently he had up to fifty under construction at the same time. Yet he still found time for his own architectural activities. In Prague in particular he designed and built *Zemská porodnice* (Land Maternity



Josef Hlávka

MIA CAS, Masaryk Academy of Labour (MAL) fonds, Box 45, ID No. 344

Hospital). An even greater opportunity awaited Hlávka in Chernivtsi, the capital of Bukovina (nowadays one of the largest cities in Ukraine), where he was to build a residence for the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Bishop (nowadays the home of the Chernivtsi University).

This constant hard work combined with taxing journeys between Vienna, Prague and Chernivtsi exhausted Hlávka both physically and mentally. In 1869 he suffered a breakdown in health and was left paralyzed in both legs. Nothing remained but to give up all professional activities and he then had to focus on recovery, which took him some ten years. Once he had recovered, Hlávka never returned to his original profession. He placed all his energies at the disposal of the nation, whose intellectual development



Josef Hlávka's native house in Přeštice.

*MIA CAS, Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts (CASA) fonds, Box 189,
ID No. 258 J. Hlávka's personal fonds*

he wished to encourage with his financial support. This decision was undoubtedly due in part to the fact that although he had married twice he did not have children to bequeath his property to either from his first marriage to Marie or his second marriage to Zdeňka.

The first foundation, which Hlávka set up with his first wife Marie, was the *Josef Hlávka and Marie Hlávková Czech University Foundation*, with a total of 22,000 gulden, the interest from which was to keep three students at Prague University. In 1883 he provided 25,000 gulden for students at the Czech Technical University and in 1884 he set up the *Jubilee Fund for the Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences*. This fund, which grew over three years to 35,000 gulden, was intended to support publication activities at that institution. In 1891 Hlávka provided 15,000 gulden for the erection of an equestrian statue of St Wenceslas on Wenceslas Square in Prague in front of the recently completed Museum of the Kingdom of Bohemia building (nowadays the



Land Maternity Hospital in Prague, designed and erected by Josef Hlávka.
MIA CAS, Bohumil Vavroušek Photographic Collection fonds, No. B, ID No. 4372

National Museum). That same year he gave the Association of Czech Engineers and Architects 3,000 gulden for their study trips abroad. In April 1893 he presented the Ministry for Culture and Education with material on the nationalization of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, together with a commitment to establish a special foundation with 100,000 gulden for study and travel grants for this reorganized school. In 1901 he put forward a proposal to establish an Association for Student Hostels at Czech Institutes of Higher Education in Prague, providing 200,000 crowns for these purposes. This capital, plus the contributions of other association members, enabled him by 1904 to put up a hostel building and make it available to the student body for use.

However, Hlávka had greater and even more far-reaching plans. Even back in the mid-1870s he had been thinking of setting up a large endowment fund, the proceeds of which would have been