PARTIAL MEMORY LOSS: SACRED FOLK SONGS OF THE CZECH LANDS

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Praise God that I was born
That I have enjoyed my years of youth
I had only those in the whole wide world
They are gone, never to return.

O Man, just you remember,
That you will be nothing but ashes and mud
When you arrive for judgement at the Lords of the Lord
No excuse will help you

If only heaven could be bought
Few paupers would be there
But heaven high cannot be bought
So pauper equals ruler there.[1]

This well-known folk song from Moravia (the Horňácko sub-region) has not been chosen randomly to open this paper. It represents a very interesting, though not unique, phenomenon: in one stanza the singer has used a folk tune and text combining folk invention and the words of a sacred song known from Czech and Moravian hymnbooks (see appendix no. 1).[2] The song became famous within the Moravian folklore movement and on the air (Czechoslovak Radio) due to Martin Holý (1902-1985), a traditional singer from the village of Hrubá Vrbka. His son

1. The text follows the singing of Martin Holý, CD *Zpěvákovo rozjímání*. Aton 2000.
2. The third strophe quotes and further develops a sacred song motif found in hymnbooks as far back as the 16th century (*Rozpomeň se, lide, na to / Oh People, Remember…* see e.g. the 1522 hymnbook by Václav Mířínský, there with the note "An old one with its own tune"). The first strophe is known as an inner strophe of the folk song *Nad Myjavú sú dvě hvězdy jasné,* the second strophe would be performed in Horňácko with many dance songs. For more, see the CD booklet for comments by Dušan Holý, CD *Zpěvákovo rozjímání* (booklet, pp. 11-13).

Dušan Holý has been one of the most outstanding performers of traditional songs of the Horňácko region, as well as a university professor and specialist in music folkloristics. In 2016, Dušan Holý published a CD of his beloved Moravian and Slovakian folk songs[3], which closes with a sacred song called *Z nebe Boží požehnání / God's Blessing from Heaven*. Dušan's wife, Ludmila Holá, contributed a note in the CD booklet saying that Dušan Holý would listen to the song at wedding feasts, as it was used as a pre-reception prayer and sung by the best man. In Hrubá Vrbka, it was often performed particularly by his father, Martin Holý. Ludmila Holá further states that the song was written down at the nearby village of Velká nad Veličkou, and published by the collector František Bartoš in his second volume of folk songs (1889); nevertheless, the song has almost been forgotten. It was her comment in connection with the topic of the 2019 Náměšť colloquy that made us ponder the reasons why today many sacred folk songs have been almost forgotten, despite being for centuries a part of the great singing tradition of the Czech population, and why and how the songs gradually faded from popular repertoire and from most of the collections and songbooks of folk songs published in the 20th century. Let us also consider the reasons why the songs actually entered the folk singing tradition, how they were disseminated and how this transformed it.

Czech hymnology applies the term **sacred folk song**[4] to a sacred song with a religious text in the national language, which is intended for general singing by the congregation not only in church and sacred ceremonials outside the church, but also, for instance, in religious brotherhoods, at school, and at home worship. Hence the term sacred folk song cannot be understood as another form of folklore production: the term derives from an understanding of the people as a community of lay participants of the service. "The folk" (or, common people) as understood in ethnology and

3. CD *U chodníčka.* Dušan Holý (vocal) and Jura Petrů (cymbalom). Aton 2016.
4. In literature also called the church songs, religious songs.

by folkloristics would in this case be only one of several diverse social groups of the performers of the songs; common people would permanently adopt only a smaller part of this repertoire (Kouba 2007). As is evident from the very hymnological definition of sacred folk songs, the occasions for using the songs did not occur during church services only, but had their place in everyday life as well. Nevertheless, this has not always been the rule.

The tradition of sacred singing by the general public has been quite long in the Czech lands, dating back to the 14th century. It is dealt with in detail, especially in a monograph by Zdeněk Nejedlý on the history of singing in the pre-Hussite and Hussite periods.[5] Nejedlý argues that it was also Jan Hus (1369-1415), a Czech founder of religious reform, who was an active agent in the development of the singing of diverse classes of people in the church (Nejedlý 1955: 46-56). In addition to the liturgical choral in Latin, which people did not understand, sacred songs originated in the Czech language and on Czech territory already in the 14th century. This occurred to such an extent that in 1408 the Prague synod issued official consent for the singing of only four such songs in the church. This resulted in the effective banning of all other Czech sacred songs, unknown to us today. The four exceptions were the hymn *Hospodine, pomiluj ny / Lord, Have Mercy on Us*, and the songs *Svatý Václave / Saint Wenceslas*; *Jezu Kriste, štědrý kněže / Jesus Christ, Generous Priest*, and *Buóh všemohúcí / God Almighty* (Nejedlý 1954: 341). Previously, the role of the public was in the call *Kyrie eleison*, whose shortened colloquial form is the word *Krleš*. Later on, the invocation *Kyrie eleison* was supplemented with several words and sung to the melody taken from the church version of *Kyrie eleison* (Nejedlý 1954: 318).

5. Nejedlý, Zdeněk: I: *Dějiny předhusitského zpěvu v Čechách*; II: *Počátky husitského zpěvu;* III: *Dějiny husitského zpěvu za válek husitských*. Praha: Královská česká společnost nauk, 1904, 1907, 1913. Second edition was published as *Dějiny husitského zpěvu.* Books 1-6. Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1955-1956.

As stated above, sacred folk songs (as we understand the term in this paper) do not imply that the songs were created by the people. As Zdeněk Nejedlý illustrates in his monograph (ibid), Jan Hus did not refuse singing, unlike other reformers (such as the English theologian John Wycliffe, and locals Matthew of Janow or John Milíč from Kroměříž); conversely, he considered songs equal to prayers. In his opinion, for diverse classes, songs were more accessible and effective than spoken prayer; song melody worked better in strengthening the turning of a believer to God. Hus introduced the singing of Czech sacred songs in the church: he included songs after the sermon. He proceeded from the four approved songs and introduced other songs by creatively touching on some of the songs[6], and bidding people to sing the sacred songs in the privacy of their homes. He preached against the singing of various secular songs (such as love and jocular songs, or even profane songs), especially on Sundays (Nejedlý 1955: 50).

Efforts to spread religious singing widely among the general public initiated a further development that in the Czech lands resulted in the emergence of numerous sacred folk songs and the development of manuscript hymnbooks and printed hymnbooks. The origin and dissemination of these songs was a joint effort of all locally active Christian churches, involving the Czech population as well as the German one (Fukač 1997: 170). We are not going to deal with these songs or their musicological features here; nevertheless, it is important to note, from the point of view of folkloristics, that these songs apply a rather loose connection between music and text. The melodies were rarely composed anew and often new texts were set to borrowed melodies (i.e. contrafracture): from the Gregorian chant, Latin sacred songs, newly composed sacred and secular songs in the national language, and (especially in the 15th and 16th centuries) from secular folk songs. It was exactly this popularity of the

6. For a discussion on Hus's authorship of the selected sacred folk songs, see e.g. Kouba 1972; see also Tesař 2017: 2-3.

period folk songs that the Reformation church intentionally used to widely spread their texts (Kouba 2007). It is a well-known fact that some references in hymnbooks (such as "Sung as *Pěkná Káča trávu žala" / Pretty Cathie Cut the Grass*) represent the oldest sources of the study of folk songs in the Czech lands (for more see Hostinský 1892; Branberger 1910-191; Bek 1957, etc.). In everyday life, the practice of composing new texts to already known melodies meant that in the field of sacred folk songs (both Czech and European), there were more song texts than melodies. As musicologist Jan Kouba (2007) argues, this tendency was not disrupted until the Baroque period by some composers.

The ways of adopting sacred songs varied. Songs were disseminated through the production of printed songbooks (provided the users were not illiterate, which in the 15th century was only a small percentage of the Czech population); while singing in church, initially only after sermons, but also with prompting (such as following a precentor at the service or at religious processions); and finally, on private occasions, at home, that is, by oral transmission. Alongside the ways of reception and interpretation, there was the possibility of the emergence of song variants, which will be discussed later. As compared to secular folk songs, the emergence of song variants was limited to congregational singing based on printed material, which is sure to have existed. Variation processes were also limited by the memory of performers, and by several related factors, such as: respect for God (same as in a prayer), collective performance of the song, the setting of the church, and the repetition of the performance given by a certain norm. We may say that the cooperation of these factors positively influenced the memory stabilization of individual songs.

The reproduction of Czech sacred folk songs had always been fairly simple. The singing was predominantly monophonic and the performers learnt it by following other believers at the service (the practice has been kept to this day); following music notation in singing has been rather rare to this day. Consequently, memory has played an important role, as well as instrumental support (organ,

previously harmonium), which has been valuable till the present. In the case of adopting sacred songs, it is not only mechanical memory that counts; there has always been a link to the reception of faith and strong emotional experience. Faith and emotions have always helped preserve songs in memory. Conversely, adopting sacred songs can be negatively influenced by the tight bond to the primary singing event, singing at church. Some events are regular (repeated once or several times a week), whereas some songs are performed in connection with a specific holiday or a period of the Church year, the best example being Christmas songs and carols. It is documented that informers refused to sing them outside the Christmas period; they would sing them just once a year. Nevertheless, it is evident that people remember them well, especially as concerns the melody. In regards to the text, sacred songs have upheld an important formal element from their very beginning: the strophic quality of the songs. The songs are short and their melody is repeated in each strophe, which is an advantage for the memory as compared to the long flow of the chorale/hymn. It is because of these typical features that sacred folk songs have become an integral part of the Czech folk singing tradition, and in some cases have even entered secular folk songs, and similarly, would exist in text and melody variants.

Sacred folk songs and traditional folk singing

Since the days of Jan Hus, sacred folk songs were used not only for congregational singing at religious ceremonies, but also for the singing at home in the family, both while working and praying. Josef Vlastimil Kamarýt (1797-1833), a Czech Catholic priest and collector of folk songs, remembers his childhood and the time spent with his mother: *"I used to sit by her in utmost ease and for quite a while during long winter evenings, while she would sit by a distaff or needle and sing* ***Vímť já jeden stromeček / I Know a Little Tree*** *or about a beautiful lamb. Both of the two songs I certainly enjoyed, because I remember them best of all.*" (Kamarýt 1831: IX) As to the function of sacred songs, it is

important to note that during Advent in some regions, no other songs were allowed to be sung but religious songs (Bartoš 1889: XCV). In his work on traditional folk music in the Horňácko region, the Moravian ethnomusicologist Dušan Holý explains that the singing of sacred folk songs in this specific ethnographic region was much more connected with the Protestant environment than the Catholic one: "*They would sing in the morning, after getting out of bed, and in the evening before going to bed; most in the fasting period and during Advent; then they would sing for whole evenings. At home, sacred songs would also be performed every Sunday, before they went to church*." (Holý 2012: 44)[7]

The repertoire of sacred folk songs contained more than just major Church holidays of the year (songs of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, pilgrimage songs, and songs to the saints); it accompanied worshippers in their everyday activities (morning and evening songs, general songs), at family ceremonies (wedding songs, funeral songs), and even for securing livelihoods (plea songs – for harvest or rain). Sacred folk songs were primarily disseminated by means of printed and manuscript hymnbooks, and since the 16th century, also by means of chapbooks, which were favoured by the general public. Evidence of this is provided by the aforementioned J. V. Kamarýt:

"*When I collected in villages and commissioned to collect, there was rarely a shack that would not serve me a pretty stitched volume, and in each hamlet, there were to be found many of the familiar chapbook hymnbooks. The same went for small towns and to a larger extent bigger towns. This concerns sacred songs, as secular songs were hardly available, not even half as many. Nevertheless, the more they live through the singing of the people, the less they are available on paper.*" (Kamarýt 1831: XV-XVI) These printed sources strengthened the presence of songs in the

7. Field research has shown that sacred folk song singing within a family was in practice till the early 1970s in selected Protestant families in the Horňácko region; it was dependent mostly on the religiousness of specific families.

live singing repertoire, which is documented in the recordings of many collectors as far back as first half of the 20th century.

As has been exemplified in research on sacred folk songs, the dividing line between official church singing and its folklorised forms has never been sharp. Hence, it was often just the local tradition of the church singing that represented the first stage of the adaptation of officially-disseminated sacred songs to local conditions, with the performance characteristics of singing and the aesthetic feelings of worshippers (Urbancová 2011: 126).[8] Despite a certain bond to the paper version[9], the sacred folk songs lived on in tradition to a certain extent in oral forms. Similarly to secular folk songs, they were prone to folklorisation. This concerned especially **text and melody variability**, and the **means of singing performance**.

During the studies of variational processes, we can observe the frequent use of dialect expressions, as well as minor irregularities in the text (such as grammatical changes of words, changes without semantic shift, and even replacing words with those of other meaning), shifting of strophes, shortening of songs (such as a decreasing of the number of strophes connected with the memory of performers; nevertheless, some of them were able to interpret the song's full text). There was also the emergence of textual contamination, that is, merging the texts of various sacred songs.[10] This can often be found in songs that are labelled Contemplative by collectors. Their specific character, a type of pondering on general human matters, especially on sorrows and the transience of human life, gave performers more space for their creative invention and activity. This is documented in many written records of oral tradition, including the song that opens this

8. For more on Church singing and the singing of sacred folk songs, see Ruščin 2012: 9-15.
9. For details on manuscript hymnbooks, and their links to printed hymnbooks, local tradition and oral transmission, see Smyčková 2017: 22-41.
10. In this regard, there is a detailed comment on the study of the variability of manuscript hymnbooks by Kateřina Smyčková (2017: 41-58).

paper. From the textual point of view, these songs combine motifs from sacred folk songs and traditional folkloric song tradition (i.e. typical folkloric poetics and motivation), and they would regularly employ expressions in dialect. The merging of secular and sacred songs is also known in the traditional wedding, a ceremony that combines sacred and secular spheres, and seriousness and solemnity with merriment and even eroticism. Songs that were performed especially at the wedding supper would often use biblical motifs and make reference to legends of the saints[11], as well as to make use of their parodies[12]. Nevertheless, parodies of sacred songs would originate also outside of the context of the traditional wedding (see appendix no. 3).

The variability of melodies of sacred folk songs is connected to the fact that many of them followed a "common note", that is, they would use generally known melodies, which were also linked with other sacred or secular songs. Further on, the variability was also connected to the actual oral dissemination of songs, maintaining the melodies in the memory of singers only (many hymnbooks used no musical notation; some used partial musical notation). Nevertheless, it is precisely this certain extent of fixation of sacred folk songs to their paper records that results in substantially less melody variability than what is known in the case of secular folk songs (Kouba 2007).

The performance of sacred folk songs in some regions was also influenced by certain vocal manners arising from the folk singing culture. These would include a) song **melody modification**, both in the singing of one specific text in several melodies, even by one and the same singer, and in a form of minor changes in the singing of a melodic line, and b) **vocal ornamentation**. The means of ornamentation was the individual vocal manner and was used only by selected singers in the folk singing tradition. The ornaments include appoggiaturas, passing appoggiaturas, anticipations,

11. In Czech folkloristics, the term *legends* denotes songs on the lives and deeds of Christian saints.

groups before and after the notes of a principal melodic line and passing legato notes. Nevertheless, their selection, frequency of use, or specific melody part where the tune was graced with ornaments depended on the performer, and were sometimes significant for him. This rather melismatic folk singing is known from many regions, but sadly only few collectors could record it. Those who did manage this include Hynek Bím, who was Janáček's[13] associate (see appendix no. 2), and Martin Zeman from the Horňácko region.

One of the authors of this paper happened to encounter the live performance of sacred songs in her field research. Her sound recordings of the vocals of František Buláň of Velká nad Veličkou originated in 1968-1971, and are kept at the phono archives of the Brno branch of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences.[14] An analysis of Buláň's vocals revealed that he partially transferred his manner of ornamenting the tunes of secular folk songs to those of the sacred songs as well. He performed the songs using an Evangelical hymnbook published in Pest in 1848 (it has been kept in the family to this day). Buláň's vocals were characteristic by their slides, indications of glissando, turns and appogiaturas, that is, common minor ornamentations. Despite the fact that he followed the text from the hymnbook,

12. In this regard, there is a very interesting material called "Musicians' Supper", recorded by the collector Martin Zeman in the communities of Suchov and Nová Lhota in Horňácko in 1885 (see Bartoš 1889: 489-493 and Zeman 2000: 135-148). It is a combination of prayer parodies, reading from the gospels, and sacred and secular folk songs, performed by musicians and youth, including the best man of a wedding feast (musicians played during the feast and the youth served the members of the wedding, thus they could not join the general merriment, and used this parodic performance as compensation).
13. This modification of simple hymnbook tunes also attracted Janáček himself, who commented on it in his study *O hudební stránce národních písní moravských* (subchapter VII, the Church songs), which was published as part of the third collection by Bartoš (1899-1901). He also identified the tunes of sacred folk songs that in his opinion "belong to folk songs due to their type and form" (in this group, he also included folk songs with religious motifs that stand between sacred and secular song). See. Janáček 2009: 262-267.
14. For the singer, see more in Toncrová, Marta 1999: Zpěvák František Buláň z Velké nad Veličkou (1899-1974). In: *Slovácko* 41, pp. 117-120.

he would automatically use some dialect expressions from the region of Horňácko. A detailed analysis would perhaps reveal other modifications of textual elements of his performance of sacred songs. Also of interest is the proposed research of the vocal performance of his daughter, who is the last member of the family to retain in her memory the melodies that have been orally transmitted for generations, taken from a hymnbook with only partial musical notation.

Finally, there is another interesting phenomenon connected to the existence of sacred folk songs in folk tradition: the link of religious motifs and folk creative invention. These are folk songs with religious themes, but which cannot be considered sacred songs, or function as prayers, or be part of home worship. They fulfilled other functions and, surprisingly, served as dance songs. This fact was already noted by František Sušil (1804-1868) in his third collection (Sušil [1853-1859]), when at a song which he called *Trojí pozdravení panny Marie / Three Greetings of the Virgin Mary,* he added the note "Dance, religious".[15] The same matter was discussed further by František Bartoš (1837-1906) in his second collection, where he argues that a popular dance of the Haná region included the *cófavá* dance, which would usually be accompanied by religious songs, such as *Matičko kopecká, ó jak se te hezká* /*Virgin Mary of Svatý Kopeček, How Beautiful You Are* and *Proč, Maria, proč si tak naříkáš / Why Are You So Crying, Maria* (Bartoš 1889: IV). Further research has also documented this practice in the regions of Silesia,[16] Lachia,[17] Horňácko,[18] etc. (see appendix no. 4).

15. See Sušil 1951: 63 (song no. 63/140).
16. Here it is linked to the "starodávný" dance. See Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (branch Brno), phono archives, call number PJ 105B, an interview of J. Gelnar with the collector Helena Salichová dated 13 June 1969. The collector directly named, among others, the song *Na sionské hoře kvítek kvete*, distributed in printed form and sold at annual markets.
17. See e.g. Lýsek 2004: the whirling dance "taněc" was accompanied by the legends' texts.
18. See Miškeřík 1994: here it merges texts with religious topics and the "sedlácká" dance.

When the ways have divided: sacred folk songs and Czech music folkloristics

It is documented that in the Czech lands, sacred folk songs were paid attention to early on – at the beginnings of an organized collecting effort, which is evident from the instructions for a governorate collecting project in 1819,[19] as has been discussed previously at several music colloquies here in Náměšť nad Oslavou. In accordance with the official criteria of the Ministry of the Interior, which directed the activity as a whole, the assignment was to record in selected lands of the Habsburg Monarchy an older layer of secular folk songs (especially those connected to specific festivals and wedding and funeral ceremonies), melodies of "national" dances, and "the church songs, which have been maintained for many years"[20] (Vetterl 1994: 10). For the sake of interest, let us mention a personal activity of the head administrator Némethy of the Frýdlant, Northern Bohemia, estate, who on March 15, 1819 sent a circular to local teachers and choirmasters in which he developed details to the three aforementioned general requirements of the ministry. (It is hard to say whether it was based on his personal understanding of the topic, or done with the help of another knowledgeable person.) As the ethnomusicologist Jaroslav Markl says:

"*According to Neméthy, primarily church songs, mass songs and other similar songs were to be collected, namely, only their first voice, though with complete texts. Special attention was to be paid in this respect to the old songs of supplicants, those at processions, evensongs, Stations of the Cross, pilgrimages,*

19. The project started in 1819; nevertheless, some older records of songs and instrumental music were gathered as well. The material collected from the area of Moravia and Silesia was deposited in two slightly different copies in the archives in Vienna and Brno (for more see Vetterl 1994); in Bohemia the project was concluded in 1823; the final point came in 1825, when the Rittersberk's *České národní písně* (*Böhmische Volkslieder*) was published (for more see Markl 1987).
20. In his note on church songs and funeral songs, the collector Vincenc Merlíček argued that "songs older than 50 years are in the hymnbook *Slavíček*, which are not in his possession, and thus here are included only the songs that were required." (Vetterl 1994: 10).

intercessions and more, if they were to include songs which people would commonly sing together." (Markl 1987: 37)

In an attempt to quantify the results of the whole governorate collecting project in respect to this topic, the sources related to songs in the Czech language and its dialects provide evidence of about 64 sacred and 232 secular songs[21] (ratio circa 1:4) from Bohemia, and 323 sacred songs (including carols, pastorales, and funeral songs) and 555 secular songs (ratio circa 1:1.6) from Moravia and Silesia. For comparison, let us note that in the Moravian communities with German inhabitants, there were 106 religious and 58 secular songs (ratio circa 2:1). As Markl says, some Czech contributors made allusion in their records to some negative consequences of the Josephine reforms (Markl 1987: 48). One such note can be found in a dispatch from the district office in České Budějovice: "*In regards to church songs, which have been maintained for many years, I consider it necessary to mention that in many communities, it is impossible to submit any, because following the Josephine Church reform, they are the same as everywhere else…*" (Markl 1987: 44) As we will see later, the reforms of sacred singing were one of the reasons for the decline or demise of many sacred folk songs.

As to the further development of interest in sacred folk songs in the field of the gradually emerging Czech music folkloristics, it can be stated that this field has never been a major subject of interest to collectors: it was more usual to record sacred songs in an area where singers were close to them. There is a certain exception in the aforementioned Josef Vlastimil Kamarýt, who in 1831 and 1832 published two volumes of Czech sacred songs as recorded in folk tradition (see appendix no. 5). In his introduction, he says that country women "*sing religious songs with greater fervour and more often than secular songs; they could be considered the champions of religious singing*". He then explicitly draws attention to the influence that chapbooks had on this field of folk singing:

21. For the life story of the original records from the Czech lands and their partial destruction, see Markl 1987: 40-58.

"*It is not only in shrines and at sacrifices, but also in their shacks and workshops, behind the plough and with the sickle where one can hear sacred songs that are even more emotional. Czech secular songs, when printed, are thoroughly 'meant to delight the minds of young men and maidens about the light emitted,' as their titles say. However, when this bright young man and that blossoming maiden sometimes become so distressed, no song can amuse them. Is it not three times more emotional when she sings O Maria! Zpomeň na mne! [Oh, Virgin Mary, remember me] with her crying eyes in front of a picture of the most holy bearer of delights, or somewhere outside, alone, with desire?*" (Kamarýt 1831: IX)

Despite the claim that sacred folk songs were strongly represented within folk singing, we can regularly find this song type in older collections, but to a much lesser extent. Obviously, the collectors did not ask for these songs directly,[22] with the exception of epic compositions, which in the 19th century were appreciated as proof of the cultural maturity of the nation. There is evidence of epic songs depicting, for instance, stories from the lives of saints (e.g. legends). Already in the records of František Sušil, who as a priest was very inclined to the topics of saints and miracles, there are numerous examples of such songs. In his third collection (Sušil [1853-1859]), he devoted already the first section of the volume to sacred songs. Together with a section called Lyrical, they make a whole which Sušil somehow incorrectly labelled Sacred. As to the collection by Karel Jaromír Erben *Prostonárodní české písně a říkadla* (Erben 1862, 1864), sacred songs can be found only as part of the Narrative Songs section (e.g. legends) and as part of the Worldly Vanity, Death and Funeral section. Several other

22. It is no surprise that most of them were recorded by Kamarýt and then Sušil, who were both Catholic priests. The question is whether they required them: it may be assumed that the singers themselves performed them to the collectors, logically expecting that they would be interested in them. This is because we also know that people in the country did not understand Sušil's interest in secular folk songs and were even outraged by it (Vychodil 1898: 75; Mikšíček 2007: 514-516).

songs that are heavily influenced by folk tradition are incorporated individually in a section devoted to annual customs (Christmas carols, songs for the Holy week and songs for the feast of St. John the Baptist). Quite exceptional is the incorporation of sacred folk songs in the second and third volumes of collections by František Bartoš (Bartoš 1889; Bartoš – Janáček 1899-1901). The majority are hymnbook songs recorded by a colleague of Bartoš, Martin Zeman (1854-1919), in his native region of Horňácko. This Slovácko sub-region had a large population of Protestant inhabitants, and up to the 20th century,[23] it preserved very old printed hymnbooks and manuscript hymnbooks. The incorporation of sacred folk songs in the second and third collections by Bartoš directly copies their content. This material, which amounts to several hundred units (BII no. 884-983; BIII no. 1877-2052 + legends 2053-2057), was included at the very end of Bartoš's editions as independent sections. Collections that extend to regional levels, represented by Čeněk Holas's *České národní písně a tance* (1908-1910), offer a completely different approach, because the collectors, as will be shown later, perceived the songs to be of different quality. This view seems to augur a further development of Czech music folkloristics. Despite some attention devoted to sacred songs, they gradually fade away from collectors' records. Today we can only guess as to why. It is a fact that collecting activity reflected certain theoretical notions on the existence and function of folk songs; hence, it was primarily focused on the creation of the folk, which was logically represented by secular folk songs.

It cannot be said that Czech folkloristics did not pay attention to sacred folk songs. They were intentionally recorded, for instance, within the collecting and editing project Folk song in Austria (Das Volkslied in Österreich, 1904-1918), which in the Czech lands employed two working committees focused on collecting and publishing Czech folk songs. In 1914, the Working Committee for Czech National Folk song in Bohemia initiated the proposition

23. In many families up to the present.

of a division of the edition series that was also to include sacred folk songs, namely in two separate volumes: epic songs and lyrical songs. It is interesting to note that this song type should be placed at the very end, after the volumes devoted to various kinds of secular folk songs, chapbook songs, nationalized songs, and popular hits (see Toncrová – Uhlíková 2017: 47). A new edition outline of the State Institution for Folk song[24] of 1929 incorporates a volume of sacred folk songs conversely as the second one, immediately after the 14th-17th centuries historical songs (ibid). Nevertheless, as we know, almost nothing has remained of these plans.[25]

Plans for the above-mentioned edition provide proof of an imagined division where the secular folk song and sacred folk song parted, especially in the field of Czech music folkloristics and its editing activities. The 19th century and the early 20th century were marked by large comprehensive editions that extended beyond the regions (Sušil, Erben, Bartoš, Holas) and aimed to show the abundance and variety of song in the whole nation, especially with consideration to aesthetic and ethnic criteria. After 1918, scholarly research in the field of music folkloristics further focused especially on what they understood to be the truly authentic folk song. Individual publishing intentions focused on thematic editions, regional editions, and later on at the monographs of individual performers. Apart from sacred songs connected to Christmas and Easter holidays (carols) and traditional weddings, almost no sacred folk songs were included. The reasons why is simple enough: sacred songs did not differ very much at the regional and local levels. This was primarily caused by the basic way that they were disseminated through common singing and their versions being set

24. The State Institution for Folk Song was established in 1919, several months after the founding of Czechoslovakia. In its activities (such as in organization, and more), it continued the editing project Folk Song in Austria.

25. The activities of the State Institution for Folk Song included book editions Janáček, Leoš – Váša, Pavel 1930[-1937]: *Moravské písně milostné*. Praha: Státní ústav pro lidovou píseň v ČSR; Jungbauer, Gustav 1930-1937: *Volkslieder aus dem Böhmerwalde.* Praha: Státní ústav pro lidovou píseň v ČSR.

in writing. Their specific character was distinctly commented on by Čeněk Holas in his edition, which organizes songs by ethnographic region: "*It is only the sacred songs from the whole of Bohemia that form one group, due to their different character. In gathering these songs, I have limited myself substantially.*"[26] (Holas 1908: VII)

From a long-term point of view, the fact that sacred folk songs were not incorporated in the print editions of folk songs meant that the general Czech public did not include sacred folk songs within their understanding of folk singing, or music folklore, except for Christmas and Easter carols, and the aforementioned Contemplation songs. This is a vast cultural loss that could lead us – without the knowledge of the development of local research in folklore – to the observation of the whole issue as manipulation with collective memory, especially within the context of the political development after 1948. The vanishing of many sacred folk songs from the singing tradition and then from the memory of singers was also connected with the Catholic reforms of church singing. Apart from the Theresian and Josephine reforms (17th century), particularly the Cecilian reform[27] after 1863 made a distinctive impact in the Czech

26. Holas further writes: "All pilgrimage songs that I have had in my hands in manuscript collections I have fundamentally excluded. The tunes of these songs were of no obvious benefit for music, and as regards to the texts, I rightly suspect that the songs are mostly produced in familiar pilgrimage destinations […] and they are distributed carefully among the pilgrimage procession leaders and are disseminated this way. Today, not many precious sacred folk songs can be found." (Holas 1908: VII)

27. The Cecilian movement aimed mainly to reform Catholic singing. It happened first in Germany (Munich, Regensburg) from the 1820s on. In the Czech lands, the first impulses emerged in the 1820s, the main rise coming after the celebration of the Cyril and Methodius millennium anniversary in 1863. The movement refused the secularisation of church music and the abundance of orchestral manifestations in liturgy. Its goal was the return to Gregorian chant and vocal polyphony in the vein of the 15th century production of Giovanni Pierluigi da *Palestrina*. Its goal was homorhythm, looser tempo, and easy feasibility. Vocal production was stressed, as church music was to be a manifestation of purity, sublimity, dignity, and calm. New songs originated in the spirit of these principles and were to replace the repertoire from the old-time hymnbooks. In an effort to combine modern musical requirements and liturgy, vocal choirs, musical schools and courses were established that were based on the new principles. The Union for the Improvement of Church Music in Bohemia

lands, partially also affecting Protestant church singing. Due to this reform, older hymnbooks were prohibited and removed from the churches; they contained songs taken originally from the Utraquist and Protestant songbooks. In his collecting practice, Hynek Bím, a close associate of Janáček, could have faced the consequences of the ban when he set about to record by phonograph some old-fashioned church songs performed by local singers in the community of Vnorovy. The repertoire mostly included songs taken from the Baroque Catholic hymnbook *Slaviček rájský* by Jan Josef Božan, which a local priest forbade and confiscated immediately before the recording. Thus the singers were not able to sing by heart the songs that Bím had on his list, so only a fragment of the intended repertoire was recorded (Uhlíková 2012: 132-133). The strong bond of the sacred folk song singing practice to its written forms/patterns has been documented by many records of the songs from the folk singing tradition: hence, it is evident when the singers used their chapbook or hymnbook, and when they sang by heart. Original multi-strophic songs remain in the memory of singers only to the extent of several strophes, with some exceptions; thus some variance from the original text or meaning can often be observed.

The further decline of many Protestant sacred songs is connected to the merging of the former Lutheran and Calvinist denominations into the Czech Brethren Protestant Church in 1918, and the resulting introduction of new sacred songs (see Holý 2012: 44, footnote 227).

The gradual disappearance of sacred folk songs in the 20th century was also undoubtedly highly influenced by the general decline of singing, which concerned all folk songs in general. That

originated in the spirit of new principles in 1826, as did the organ school for the education of musicians. In Prague, Ferdinand Lehner established the magazine Cecily, which was renamed and transformed after national tendencies in 1879; its new name Cyrill was also applied to the Czech version of the Cecilian movement, resulting in the movement's new name Cyrilism. The Cyrilic General Union was established in 1879, when its subordinate church schools and Cyrilian unions were established in towns and villages. In Moravia, the principles of Cyrilism were adopted by the composer Leoš Janáček, who initiated the establishment of the Union for the Improvement of Church Music in Moravia (1881) and the organ school in Brno (Küfhaberová 1997).

is why a platform labelled folklorism endeavoured to intentionally maintain and revive music and dance folklore. Folklorism first developed within the national movement; later on mostly within the activities of associations. After 1948, it developed as a state-organized field of totalitarian culture politics. It is a sad fact that in the period when Czech folkloristics finally began to approach folk singing in a complex way, without aesthetic criteria and without considering song provenience,[28] the publishing of the collections of folk songs was on principle influenced by the communist doctrine. Folk song editions were published primarily for use by the massively established folklore ensembles (see Pavlicová – Uhlíková 2018: 191). Choreographic descriptions of folk dances took precedence, while the song materials themselves were played down. Some folklore manifestations had to be completely overlooked for political reasons (Toncrová 1998: 150; Uhlíková 2013: 138).

Obviously, it is not necessary to explain here in detail that the communist ideology did not favour songs connected with Christianity. Even fairly innocent secular folk songs were not allowed to be broadcast on radio if they contained even a slight textual allusion to Christianity (the word church or God was enough). Christmas carols were regularly subject of re-textualization: instead of Baby Jesus, they sang about a little boy or simply a baby. Nevertheless, the basic problem of a certain "memory loss" in the area of Czech sacred folk songs (originating within several centuries and also spreading within folk culture and related singing traditions) is the general decline of singing, and the gradual decline of the functions

28. Up to the middle of the 20th century, the notion of folk song in Czech folkloristics was extended to include all that "people sung and perhaps still sing that are not only *secular folk songs*, but also *sacred songs*, regardless of whether Czech people sang them by heart or from a hymnbook. Incorporated here are also *Czech songs from chapbooks*, and the category of *Czech secular popularised songs*, which originated from a category created by Otakar Hostinský. Czech secular folk songs, whose production perhaps peaked in the 18th century – from the later periods, and *Czech worker's songs* are included in Czech folk singing as well…Finally, a large category of individual *non-popularised Czech songs* cannot be excluded from this area" (Smetana 1993: 19-20).

of these songs due to the transformation of society. Finally, there were also church reforms of sacred singing and the replacement of an older layer of sacred folk songs with new repertoire. Apart from the required hymnbook songs, today in church and outside, one can also hear songs accompanied by guitars or various instrumental groups, whose melodies and performance are being inspired by various genres of non-artificial music, in addition to traditional folk music. Nevertheless, many old-fashioned sacred folk songs still survive in the folk singing tradition, and can be recorded. Today the question remains as to whether there are any collectors left who would set out for songs in the pursuit of field research.

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Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences, branch Brno; phono archives; Sign. PJ 105; J. Gelnar interviewed by H. Salichová, (1969).

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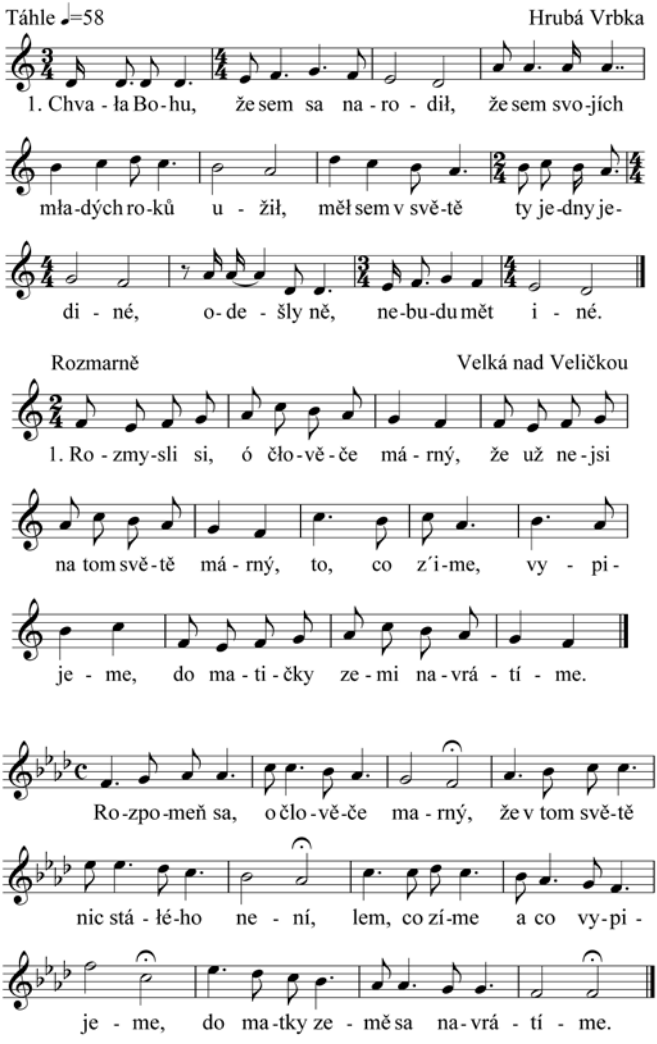
Summary

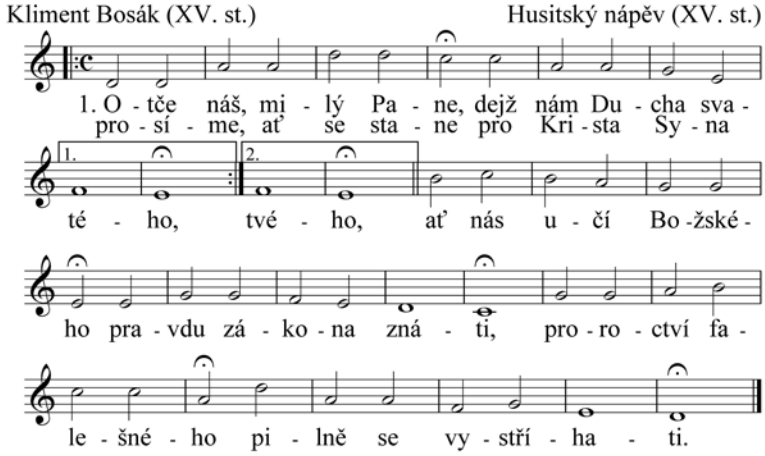
The paper deals with religious folk songs of the Czech lands, their origin and development. It illustrates how sacred songs came into the folk singing tradition, how they spread within it and how they were transformed, commenting also on their primary religious function. The authors attempt to discover why at present these Czech sacred folk songs have been largely forgotten, despite the fact that for centuries they were part of folk tradition. They are interested in why and how these songs gradually vanished from folk singing occasions, as well as from most of the collections and songbooks published in the 20th century. Various issues of a certain "memory loss" in connection with Czech sacred folk songs within folk culture would include these: the transformations of the scholarly subjects of Czech music folkloristics in the first half of the 20th century; the coming of totalitarian cultural politics after 1948; a general decline of singing activity; the gradual loss of function of these songs due to social changes; the demise/extinction of many singing occasions; and, last but not least, church reforms of sacred songs that resulted in replacing older layers of sacred folk songs with new repertoire reflecting the transformed society.

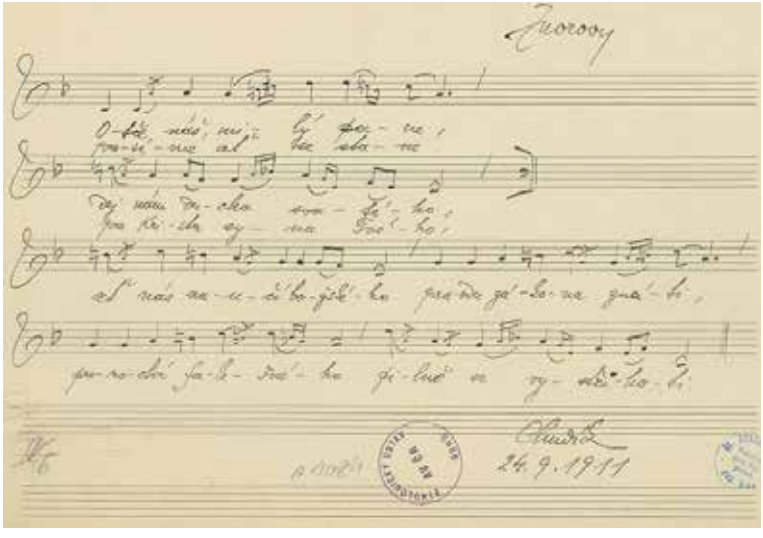
Key words: Czech religious/sacred songs; folk songs; religion and folk culture; variational process and sacred songs; totalitarian censorship; folklore and communication memory.

Přílohy / Appendix:

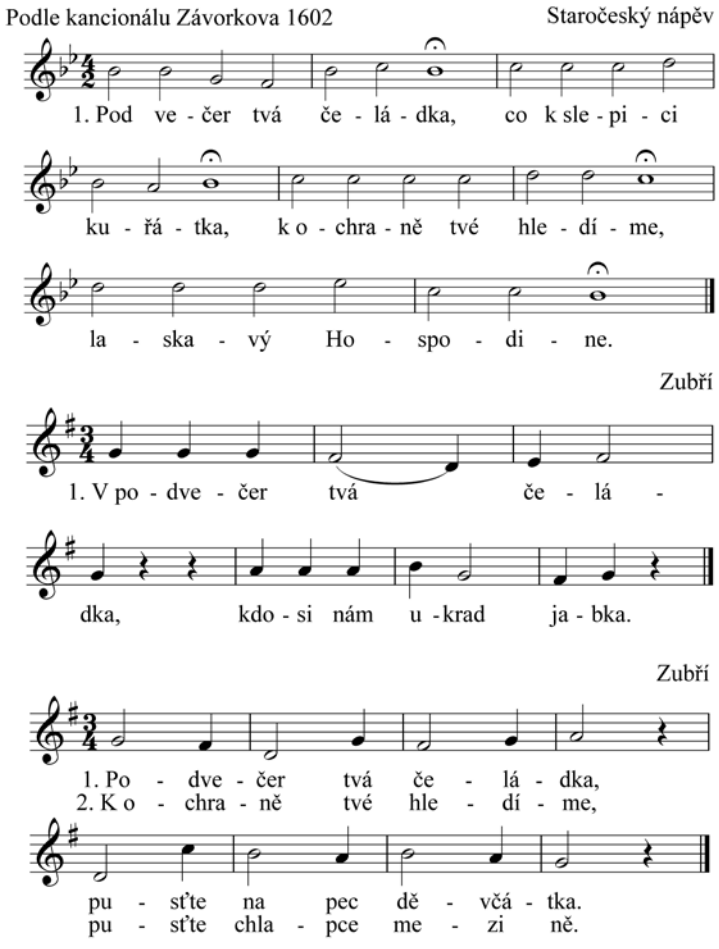


1. Lidová píseň „Chvała Bohu, že sem sa narodił" a dvě textově s ní související lidové písně zapsané na konci 19. století (Velká nad Veličkou, EÚB A 1178/239; bez lokality, EÚB A 1378/136) / Folk song "Thanks God I was Born" and two text-related folk songs recorded at the end of the 19th century (Velká nad Veličkou, EÚB A 1178/239; no locality given, EÚB A 1378/136)





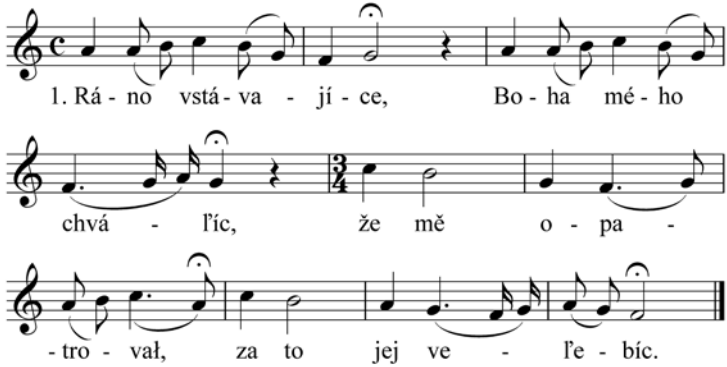
2. Píseň „Otče náš, milý Pane" z evangelického kancionálu (Zpěvník českobratrské církve evangelické, 1931) a zápis téže písně z lidové zpěvní tradice (Vnorovy, 1911, sběratel Hynek Bím, EÚB A 1084/47) / Song "Our Father, Dear Lord" from evangelical hymnbook (Songbook of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, 1931) and a record of the same song from the folk singing tradition (Vnorovy, 1911, EÚB A 1084/47)

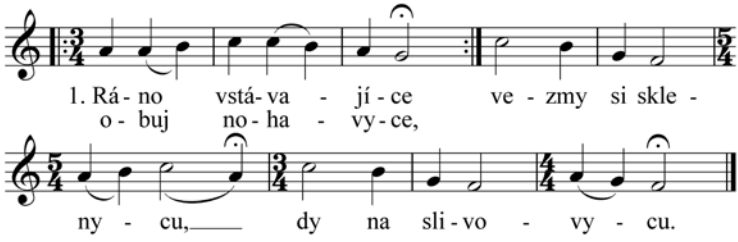


3. Duchovní písně a jejich parodie z lidové zpěvní tradice: „Pod večer tvá čeládka" – večerní píseň z evangelického kancionálu a její dvě lidové parodie z Valašska (Zubří, 1925, sběratel Jan Nepomuk Polášek, EÚB A 144 / 51–53); „Ráno vstávajíce, Boha mého chválíc" – lidová duchovní píseň z Horňácka (B III/1880) a její dvě parodie ze stejného regionu (B II/877, Miškeřík 1994: 33) / Sacred songs and their parodies from the folk singing tradition: "Your Servants in the Evening" – evening song from an evangelical hymnbook and its two folk parodies from the Moravian Walachia region (Zubří, 1925, collected by Jan Nepomuk Polášek, EÚB A 144/51-53); "Praising God, Getting Up in the Morning" – sacred folk song from the Horňácko region (B III/1880) and its two parodies from the same region (B II /877, Miškeřík 1994: 33)

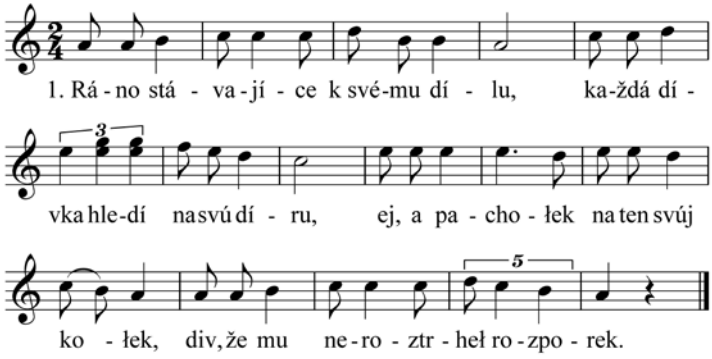
Volně

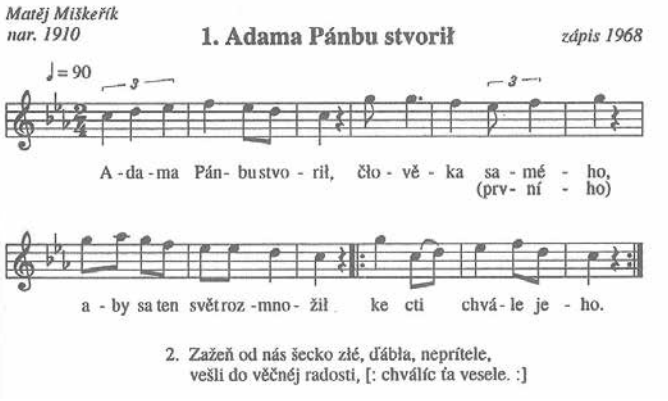
Velká nad Veličkou



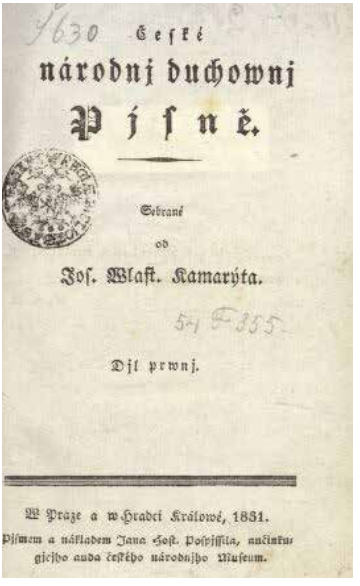


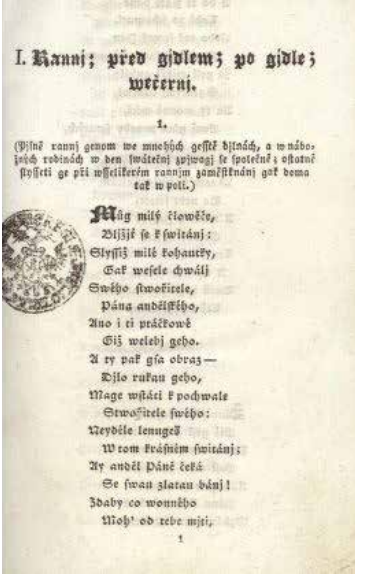
Horňácko





4. Taneční píseň „Adama Pánbu stvoril" z Horňácka / Dance folk song "God created Adam" from the Horňácko region (viz / see Miškeřík 1994: 11)





5. První díl nejstarší edice českých lidových duchovních písní / Volume One of the oldest edition of Czech folk sacred songs (viz / see Kamarýt 1831)