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Znojmo Chapbooks with False Imprints and Tools for their Detection

Martin Drozda

ABSTRACT

In the first half of the 19th century, one can relatively often encounter the phenomenon of false imprints in Czech chapbooks. In such cases, a different place of printing is indicated in the imprint than was the case in reality. Uncritical acceptance of data about the place of printing can then lead to completely erroneous conclusions in subsequent analyses. Using the example of a number of Znojmo chapbooks, the aim of this text is to demonstrate ways to identify chapbooks which have a false imprint. By analysing specific model chapbooks, we have been able to derive the tools that can be used for identification. A comparison of woodcuts turned out to be the main tool for identifying these prints. The study also shows that the Znojmo print shop produced a large number of chapbooks with a false imprint in the 1840s under Martin Hoffmann. The stated conclusions raise significant questions regarding any future evaluation of chapbook output at individual print shops on Czech territory.

KEYWORDS

Chapbook; broadside ballad; false imprints; Znojmo; Martin Hoffmann; Jaroslav Vobr's collection.

CZECH ABSTRACT

Znojenské kramářské tisky s fingovaným impresem a nástroje pro jejich identifikaci

U českých kramářských tisků se lze v 1. polovině 19. století relativně často setkat s fenoménem fingovaných impres. V takových případech se v impresu uvádí jiné místo tisku, než odpovídalo realitě. Nekritické přebírání údajů o místě tisku může v následných analýzách ovšem vést ke zcela

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mylným závěrům. Cílem studie je na příkladu znojenské produkce poukázat na způsoby, jak kramářské tisky s fingovaným impresem identifikovat. Problém je nastíněn pomocí analýzy konkrétních modelových kramářských tisků, na jejichž příkladě jsou demonstrovány nástroje, které je možné k identifikaci použít. Jako hlavní nástroj identifikace těchto tisků se ukázala komparace užitých dřevořezů. Studie také ukazuje, že znojenská tiskárna produkovala ve 40. letech 19. století za působení Martina Hoffmana velké množství kramářských tisků s fingovaným impresem. Uvedené závěry významně problematizují budoucí zhodnocení produkce kramářských tisků v jednotlivých tiskárnách na českém území.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Kramářský tisk; kramářská píseň; fingované impresum; Znojmo; Martin Hoffmann; sbírka Jaroslava Vobra.

Chapbooks (in Czech: *kramářské tisky*) are a source which can be used when pursuing a wide variety of scientific approaches and methods. This material is used by historians, ethnologists, literary specialists, linguists, and many others, since the rich content of chapbooks permits the expansion of our knowledge in many scientific disciplines.¹ The time and place a specific print arises represent important information for research into this material. This information is relevant, for example, in linguistic analyses or when evaluating the significance of the output from various print shops. However, with research involving chapbooks a major problem arises: whether the information given in a print conforms with the truth. In Czech chapbook output during the first half of the 19th century we relatively often come across the use of false imprints, that is, the provision of incorrect information on the place and date of publication (DROZDA 2022a: 150–159; 2022b: 137–158). Uncritical adoption of the information given in an imprint can thus lead to mistaken conclusions.

The reason for giving false imprints on Czech chapbooks was primarily printers' attempts to avoid having to get the compulsory approval of a print from the censors, which chapbooks were obliged to receive up until the middle of the 19th century (WÖGERBAUER 2015: 237). In order for the output and sales of chapbooks to be at all profitable, it was essential to keep production costs to a bare minimum. This partly involved attempts to avoid the lengthy approval process for chapbook manuscripts otherwise undertaken during the initial censorship procedure (SCHEYBAL 1990: 73). The outcome of this practice was a situation

1) The interdisciplinarity of research is most recently demonstrated by GLOMBOVÁ 2020.

where chapbooks represented a grey area in censorship practice, since part of the output was approved by the censor, part of it ended up on the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, and a further part was published uncensored without then being further investigated. As a rule, a police investigation into the production location of a chapbook was carried out when a particular print was linked to an offence, for example, the vagrancy of its sellers, or the perverse nature of a song text (WÖGERBAUER 2015: 255).

A pioneer in the detection of chapbooks with false imprints was the Brno-based collector and librarian Jaroslav Vobr (1939–2013). As a collector, he created one of the largest private collections of chapbooks (approx. 42,000 prints) which he also systematically organised, and from which he also identified more than a thousand prints with false imprints. He transferred information on the presence of any false imprint to the index cards he created for chapbooks made into blocks. For chapbooks preserved separately outside blocks, he gathered prints with a false imprint together, according to the stated printing house in which they were printed and stored them in marked envelopes with information about the real place of production. Although Jaroslav Vobr may be considered a leading expert on Czech chapbooks, his publishing activity in this area is very limited.² Thus, Vobr's greatest contribution to the subject of chapbooks with a false imprint is the identification of these prints within his own collection. However, we do not learn anything from his records about the way he detected false imprints.

The study which follows aims to indicate tools that can be used to identify chapbooks with false imprints. Chapbooks from the printing house in Znojmo will be used as an example, of which it was possible to identify approximately one hundred such prints in the Moravian Library collection. The study will thus, on the one hand, point out tools for identifying prints with a false imprint, and verify the accuracy of Vobr's identification of these prints, and on the other, show the extent and practice of producing chapbooks with a false imprint at one specific regional printing house.

2) In essence, this activity comprises just two studies on the fall of the Stonařov meteorite (VOBR 1968: 85–87; 1988, 235–240) and a diploma thesis about Jihlava prints of Czech broadside ballads (VOBR 1970).

The Znojmo printing house and production of chapbooks

In the 18th and 19th centuries, a large number of printing houses operating on Czech territory were involved in the production of chapbooks. The small scope of these prints did not place too many demands on production and, especially for small regional printers, offered the possibility of expanding the often modest incomes of a print workshop. The Znojmo printing house did not start operating until the beginning of the 18th century, when the printer Kryštof Antonín Wagner succeeded in establishing this new printing house in Moravia (CHYBA 1966–1984: 409). Initially, the printing house had to compete with printing houses in Olomouc and Brno, which were trying to maintain a monopoly on the production of prints in Moravia. For most of the 18th century, the business mainly profited from commissions from the religious brotherhoods and religious houses active in the surrounding area, but we also know that printing house's output included broadside ballads from its very beginning (DUFKA 2019: 52–106). However, the volume of chapbooks was probably not very large, as the print shop was able to secure income from more demanding products. The end of the 18th century had a significant impact on the history of the Znojmo printing house, since a number of its institutional customers disappeared as a result of Enlightenment reforms (religious brotherhoods, the monastery at Louka near Znojmo, the Jesuit college in Znojmo), and the printing house thus had to seek out a new niche in the book market. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Znojmo printing house underwent a protracted crisis, which was manifested in frequent changes of ownership, a lack of direction in the management of the print shop, and probably also the poor qualifications of employees (ČERNÝ 2000: 59).

A change only came about in 1823, when the printing house was acquired by Martin Hoffmann (1823–1856).³ Under his management there was a significant revival in production. Hoffmann began to produce a significant quantity of entertaining prose of various kinds, including, for example, religious narratives, picaresque adventure novels, the robber stories popular at the time, and sentimental short stories. In addition, the print shop continued to print calendars, broadside ballads, and prayer books. Although part of the output was published in Czech, most of Martin Hoffmann's output was published in German

3) Information can be found in the literature to the effect that Martin Hoffmann died in 1841 (VRBKA 1924: 3). However, according to the register of deaths, he died 4 May 1859 at the age of 62 (*Register*, p. 72).

having regard to the local German population and a partial orientation towards the Austrian market (ČERNÝ 1998: 22–54; 1999: 30–36; 2000: 59–71).

Although the oldest known Znojmo chapbook dates back to 1711,⁴ the peak of output in Znojmo probably only came about in the 19th century, with the activities of printers Martin Hoffmann and Martin Ferdinand Lenk (1857–1886). Despite being unable to track the total output of chapbooks from the Znojmo printing house in its entirety, since a significant part of this material has perished, the output trends can at least be captured in outline. The collection of the Moravian Library contains a total of 1,237 chapbooks produced in Znojmo. But only 25 date back to the 18th century. About 260 prints date from the first half of the 19th century, with the remaining more than 900 prints dating to the period after 1850. The output of chapbooks in Znojmo probably reached its peak in the 1850s, when the print shop regularly produced dozens of different broadside ballads and prayers every year; after 1860 however, there began to be gradual decline in the production of chapbooks.⁵

Identifying chapbooks with a false imprint

Although the existence of false imprints in chapbooks has long been known, methods for identifying these prints have received only a minimum of attention so far. One important contribution to this topic was made by Josef Petřtyl at the *Václavek Olomouc* conference in 1961, at which he drew attention to the possibility of using a comparison of woodcut blocks to identify chapbooks with a false imprint (PETR TYL 1963: 366–368). He rightly estimated that woodcuts, so typical of chapbooks, were an important resource for investigating the location of printing, while also pointing out the need to consider typographical elements. His contribution was based on research focused on the activities of the Chrudim printing house, which produced a large number of chapbooks with false imprints (PETR TYL 1956: 263; 1947: 76–77).

Woodcuts constituted an important part of the equipment of every print shop. They were usually passed on from owner to owner, together with all the shop's other equipment, and were used for decades, in exceptional cases even for centuries. Over this period, they could also move between shops if a print

4) KNM, sign. KP Špal. 130/17.

5) Created using the Moravian Library collection and the Aleph library record system. The paper worked with the entire collection of chapbooks, which currently (March 2, 2023) include 44,257 records.

shop was moved or equipment was moved between print shops owned by the same family of printers. The makers of blocks in regional printers were mainly local craftsmen, who created entirely naive and primitively cut images (HOLUBOVÁ 2012: 10–11; KNEIDL 1983: 26–27; DROZDA 2022c: 100–114). Their imperfections and uniqueness are important, since prints from these blocks are relatively easy to distinguish from those of other print shops. The ability to create sets of prints with the same woodcut is a basic prerequisite for identifying chapbooks with a false imprint, as it makes it possible to compare the imprints for prints which have a single printing block in common.⁶

Vobr's sorting of individual chapbooks by print shop provenance made it possible to trace the affiliation of individual woodcut blocks to specific print shops, as well as the typographical treatment of individual print shops. Woodcuts and typography were probably the main tool for Jaroslav Vobr to identify the place of printing for chapbooks without an imprint and prints with a false imprint. One important factor in identifying a print shop using a woodcut is also the fact that after 1850, as a result of changes in the approval of print output, imprints with the actual place of printing began to be consistently used. This makes it possible to link print shops to the specific blocks used in them in the 2nd half of the 19th century, and to retrospectively trace print shops' production of prints without an imprint in the previous period. If a woodcut known from the output of a specific print shop after 1850 is also found on an older print, e.g. from the beginning of the 19th century, and the same place of printing is found in the imprint, there can be no doubt that the print shop used this printing block throughout the intervening period. If at the same time we find identical woodcuts on chapbooks with a completely different place of printing, and the chapbook does not show a typographical layout typical of the print shop mentioned in the imprint, it can be reasonably assumed that this is a print with a false imprint.

In the following section are six examples from the Moravian Library in Brno which Jaroslav Vobr identified in his card catalogue as Znojmo chapbooks with a false imprint. Using other prints, arguments will be sought to support Vobr's contention. In verifying Vobr's claims, we will clearly demonstrate in practice the tools that can be used to identify false imprints, and at the same time point out their limitations. When determining chapbooks with a false imprint, one

6) Part of the cataloguing of chapbooks in the Moravian Library collections involved making a record of the illustrations used on chapbooks, which is linked to an internal image database of chapbook iconography. This database currently holds almost seven thousand images. Linking the image database with the Aleph library record system makes it possible to search for prints on which the same illustration can be found.



Figure 1. On the left, broadside ballad with false imprint from Znojmo. *Píseň o myslivečku*, 1846, MZK, sign. VK-0000.084, přív.15; below, a Znojmo print dated 1852. *Nová píseň o veselí jarním*, 1852, MZK, sign. VK-0000.555,5.

must always speak more in terms of probabilities, because, with only some exceptions, it is basically impossible to prove a false imprint in a chapbook on the basis of contemporary documentation.⁷

The first broadside ballad with a false imprint from Znojmo is “Píseň o myslivečku” (“A Hunter’s Song”) (Fig. 1 – left). The song features a figurative woodcut of a man and woman embracing each other on the title page. The motif of a man and a woman holding each other is common on the front pages of secular broadside ballads. This woodcut motif probably did not originate in Znojmo. We also know an identical composition from woodcuts used in the printing houses in Jihlava and Chrudim.⁸ Despite the fact that the composition of the scene is the same at the three print shops mentioned, the individual woodcuts show small differences in the details, based on which it is possible to safely distinguish the individual woodcuts. In the case of the Znojmo block, the

7) One exception, for example, is the record of an official inspection of the Jihlava printing house, during which Jihlava prints with false imprints were found (VOBR 1970: 43).

8) E.g. MZK, sign. VK-0004.601 (Chrudim), VK-0000.298, přív.1 (Jihlava).

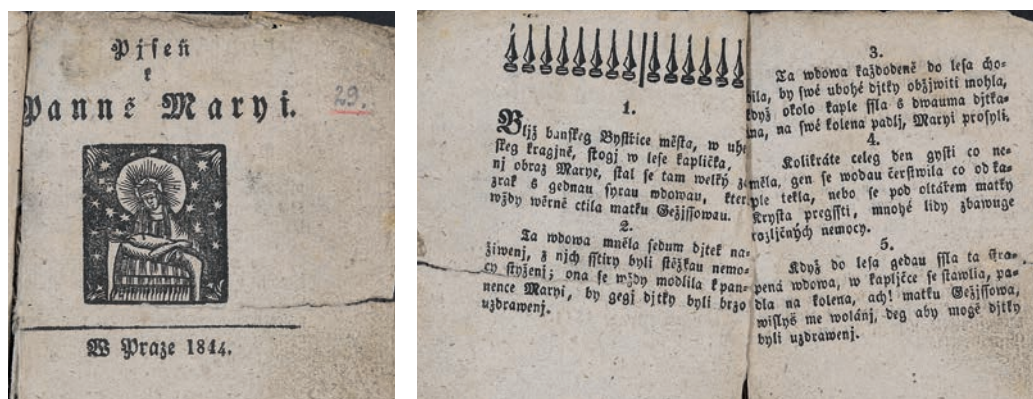


Figure 2. *Píseň k Panně Marii*, 1844, MZK, sign. VK-0000.722, přív.28.

primary distinguishing feature is the deformed face of the woman. This woodcut from the Znojmo printing house can be found in the Moravian Library collection in a total of six chapbooks, one of which bears the Znojmo imprint and dates to the beginning of the 19th century, two bear the imprint “W Praze” (“In Prague”),⁹ with the remaining three coming from the Znojmo output of Martin Hoffmann and Martin Ferdinand Lenk in the 1850s.¹⁰ Znojmo prints from the beginning and then the middle of the 19th century show that the block was used at the Znojmo printing house in the 19th century. The discrepancy between two imprints in a series of prints with the same woodcut indicates that these are prints that were actually made in Znojmo, but with a false imprint.

The model of the Znojmo print was probably a broadside ballad genuinely produced by one of the printing houses in Prague: in the Moravian Library collection there is a very similar print entitled “Píseň o myslivečku” (“A Hunter’s Song”) which was printed by the Prague printer Bedřich Styblo in 1848.¹¹ Although there are slight differences in the typesetting of the Znojmo and Prague prints and the whole type is shifted by one page, the title of the song, the text, and the layout of the stanzas on the pages are identical in both prints.¹²

9) Since the format of the imprint is an important tool for identifying chapbooks with a false imprint, I present the format of imprint in transliterated form.

10) MZK, sign. VK-0014.688 (Znojmo); VK-0000.084, přív.15 (Prague); VK-0007.383 (Prague); VK-0000.046, přív.1 (Martin Hoffmann, Znojmo, 1856); VK-0007.130 (Martin Hoffmann, Znojmo, 1856); VK-0000.625, přív.38 (Martin Ferdinand Lenk, Znojmo).

11) Even though the print came from a later period, it is possible that the broadside ballad printed in Prague in 1848 was based on an older original. The practice of reprinting broadside ballads was common in the 19th century. The imprint form contained the following: *W Praze 1848. K dostání u Bedřicha Stybla, v knihářském krámě na dobytčím trhu, v čisl. 558* (“In Prague 1848. Available from Bedřich Styblo at his bookshop on the cattle market, No 558”).

12) MZK, sign. VK-0000.465,12; VK-0000.084, přív.15.

A comparison of woodcuts can also be used for the following print (Fig. 2), where the woodcut with the motif of the Taferl Pietà can be documented, as it was for the Znojmo print, probably to the beginning of the 19th century,¹³ likewise with later prints from the 1850s.¹⁴ The block was also used in the 1840s as in the earlier example to produce prints with a false imprint. Several prints containing this woodcut mention Prague as the place of origin in the imprint, two other prints are said to have come from Skalice.¹⁵ Use of the same woodcut over a short period of time in several print shops distant from each other, and which had no ownership connection between them, is often indicative of false imprints. However, it is essential to provide evidence, e.g. typical damage to a block or imperfections in the detail,¹⁶ that these really are prints from the same block, and not just a very successful imitation.

That the “Píseň k Panně Marii” (“Song to the Virgin Mary”) really does come from Znojmo is evidenced on the first page with the lyrics by the typographic decorations in the header, which we know from the output of the Znojmo printing house, and which, by way of contrast, we do not know from chapbooks from other print shops.¹⁷ With chapbooks, the very form of an imprint can raise suspicions of it being false. In the case of Prague chapbooks, it was common to include the name of the printer, publisher or distributor (“In Prague at the Hrabowski heirs”, “In Prague at Jan Rokos”, “In Prague at M. Gintl in Platys”).¹⁸ The austere imprint “In Prague”, possibly supplemented by a given year of publication, is relatively often, but not always, false.

Two other chapbooks (Fig. 3) also bear evidence of a false imprint by their very appearance. Both prints give the Prague printing house of Bedřich Stýblo as the place of origin. Since this printing house did indeed produce chapbooks, these particular prints may not have waved any red flags at first glance. But if we look at Stýblo’s output of chapbooks in more detail, we find that this print-

13) The print is undated; however, based on the typography it can be assumed that the date of origin was the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, or the first half of the 19th century, see MZK, sign. VK-0001.052.

14) E.g. MZK, sign. VK-0000.212,přív.3 (1852); VK-0000.562,22 (1853); VK-0007.206 (1857), VK-0007.376 (Martin Ferdinand Lenk).

15) Of a total of seven prints with a false imprint, five contain information on being printed in Prague in 1844 (MZK Brno, sign. VK-0000.006,přív.15; VK-0000.099,přív.1; VK-0000.621,přív.20; VK-0000.722,přív.28; VK-0002.780), the remaining two were ostensibly printed in Skalica in 1844 (MZK, sign. VK-0002.458) and 1845 (MZK, sign. VK-0000.637,přív.10).

16) The standard of woodcuts in regional printers was often limited by the lack of collaboration with more skilled artists, which led to graphically cruder depictions that are easier to recognise and harder to imitate. Specific blocks are thus easier to identify.

17) The use of these typographical ornaments in chapbooks of the Znojmo printing house can be documented, for example: MZK, sign. VK-0000.554,13; VK-0000.207, přív.14; VK-0000.555,9.

18) E.g. MZK, sign. VK-0000.153, přív.20; VK-0000.357,přív.28; VK-0000.014,přív.12.



Figure 3. Two chapbooks with false imprint from the Znojmo printing house. *Pravdivá píseň o jednom strašlivém příběhu, který se stat v sardinské zemi na den narození Krista Pána na příklad vydaná v roku 1849*, 1849, MZK, sign. VK-0007.386; *Nábožná modlitba k Paně Marii za odvrácení metly Boží, a všech truchlivých časů*, 1849, MZK, sign. VK-0017.129.

er used certain elements in the imprint which we do not find in these prints. Firstly, he would give his full name, or at least his last name with the initial of his first name, and always used the form with a “y” (Stýblo) in his last name.¹⁹ In addition, Styblo’s prints were characterised by a higher standard of graphic editing (use of woodcuts, quality of type). So the few prints with the “*W Praze u Stibla ...*” (“In Prague at Stiblo...”) form of imprint are thus distinguished at first glance from genuine chapbooks issued by this Prague publisher.²⁰

19) *W Praze 1847. K dostánj u Bedřicha Styblo na dobytčjm trhu, w knihařském krámě, čjso 558* (“In Prague 1847. Available from Bedřich Styblo at his bookshop on the cattle market, No 558”), MZK, sign. VK-0002.860; *Tiskem a nákladem B. Stýbla w Praze* (“Printed and published by B. Stýblo in Prague”), MZK, sign. VK-0016.416; *W Praze 1848. Wlastnost a k dostánj u Bedřicha Styblo* (“In Prague 1848. Owned and available from Bedřich Styblo”), MZK, sign. VK-0002.720.

20) In the Moravian Library in Brno a total of 8 such prints are registered, sign. VK-0000.177, přív.7; VK-0000.177, přív.8; VK-0000.660, přív.17; VK-0000.664, přív.34; VK-0007.386; VK-0017.128; VK-0017.129; VK-0017.130.

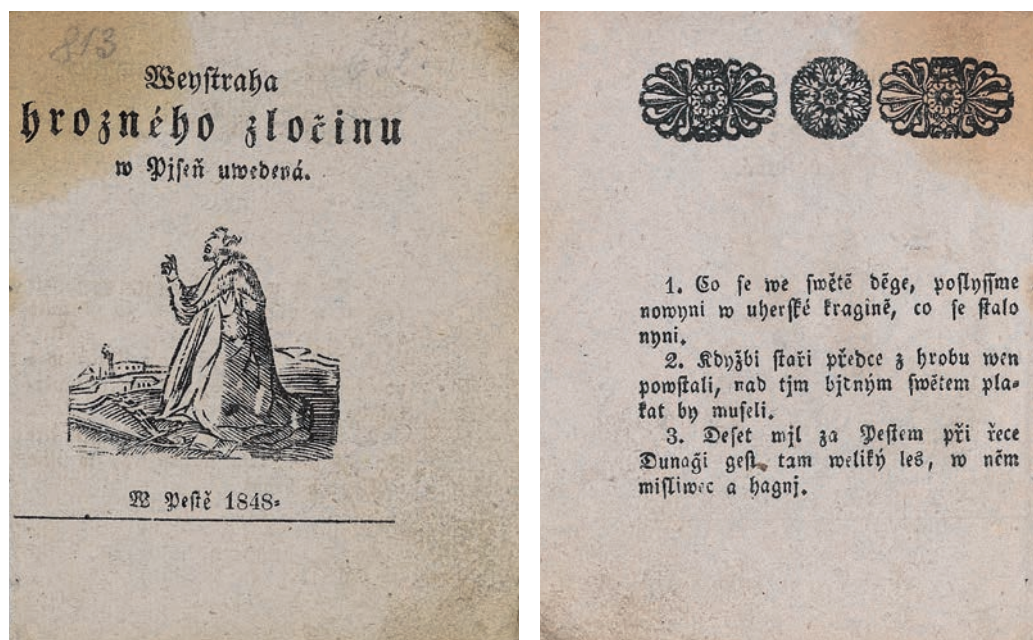


Figure 4. *Vejstraha hrozného zločinu v píseň uvedená*, 1848, MZK, sign. VK-0007.388.

In the case of the “Nábožná modlitba k Panně Marii” (“Devout Prayer to the Virgin Mary”) (Fig. 3 – right) the falsification of the imprint can be proved by comparing the woodcuts, as the illustration used can also be found in an older broadside ballad printed in Znojmo and in the relatively large output of chapbooks from the 1850s.²¹ In the case of “Pravdivá píseň o jednom strašlivém příběhu” (“A true song about a terrible story”), a comparison of the woodcut cannot be used, because apart from the print mentioned, the woodcut used is found in the Moravian Library collection only on two identical copies and on one print which cannot be geographically determined.²² In the header on the back of the title page, however, there is a decoration that we know from the output of several clearly falsified prints.²³ With the imprint of “Pravdivá píseň o jednom strašlivém příběhu” (Fig. 3 – left), there are significant indications that it has been falsified (the shape of the imprint, decoration on the back of the title page), but the degree of probability is lower than for “Nábožná modlitba k Panně Marii” (Fig. 3 – right).

21) E.g. MZK, sign. VK-0000.659, přív.6; VK-0000.625, přív.62; VK-0007.145; VK-0000.673, přív.5.

22) MZK, sign. VK-0000.177, přív.8; VK-0000.660, přív.17; VK-0001.478; VK-0007.386.

23) E.g. MZK, sign. VK-0007.379; VK-0007.384; VK-0007.380.

As a rule, a chapbook also becomes suspect if a Czech-language print (with the exception of Skalica in Slovakia) gives a place of origin abroad (SCHEYBAL 1990: 73; SMETANA – VÁCLAVEK 1949: 11). In the case of “Vejstraha hrozného zločinu v píseň uvedená” (“The Warning of a Terrible Crime Given in Song”) (Fig. 4), which was supposed to have been printed in Pest (Hungary) in 1848, comparison of woodcuts cannot be used to identify a false imprint, because the block used is not known from any other chapbook. In the case of this print, however, a conclusion can be drawn on the falsification of the imprint based on the typographical decorations in the header of the second sheet, where the text begins (Fig. 4 – right). We also find this composition of decorative ornaments in other prints from the 1840s, which were supposed to come from Lemberk (1845) and Pressburg (1847).²⁴ However, both these prints contain woodcuts that we know from the 1850s from the output of the Znojmo printing house.²⁵ It can therefore be assumed that this composition was used by Martin Hoffmann to produce chapbooks with a false imprint. That being said, it is clear from the foregoing that even if we may doubt the actual printing in Pest in this case, the degree of probability is lower than in the cases given earlier. On the other hand, it has not been possible to find any evidence that the print came from any other printer and did not actually originate in Znojmo.

In addition the following print, “Nová píseň o pravdivém zázraku” (“A new song about a true miracle”), was supposed to have been printed abroad, specifically in Bratislava (Pressburg) in 1848 (Fig. 5 – below). In this case, however, it is possible to identify it as a false imprint, using a woodcut. On its title page there is a scene with the motif of our Lady of Sorrows which was used by the Znojmo printing house in first half the 19th century and which continued to be used there in the 1850s.²⁶ In addition to the foreign location of the print and use of the woodcut, in this case it is also possible to make a comparison of the typeface and typesetting. When comparing the two pages of text (Fig. 5, on the top right, a Znojmo print from 1850, below, a Znojmo print with the alleged place of printing at Pressburg in 1848), one cannot fail to notice that the typeface is identical, and that the printing defect in the form of the weak imprint of the type on the paper is strikingly similar. These specifics are typical of the Znojmo printing house and part of its output in the period around the middle of the

24) MZK, sign. VK-0007.387; VK-0007.383; VK-0007.377.

25) MZK, sign. VK-0007.188; VK-0007.130; VK-0000.058, přív.16.

26) MZK, sign. VK-0007.146 (Znojmo, 1830); VK-0000.023, přív.2 (Znojmo, 1850); VK-0000.097, přív.18 (Znojmo, 1854).

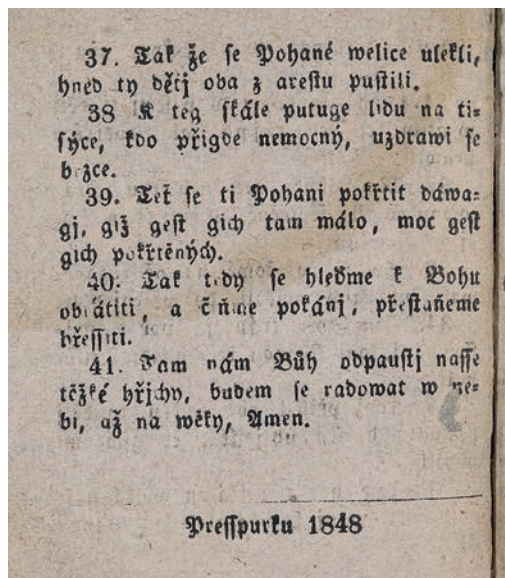
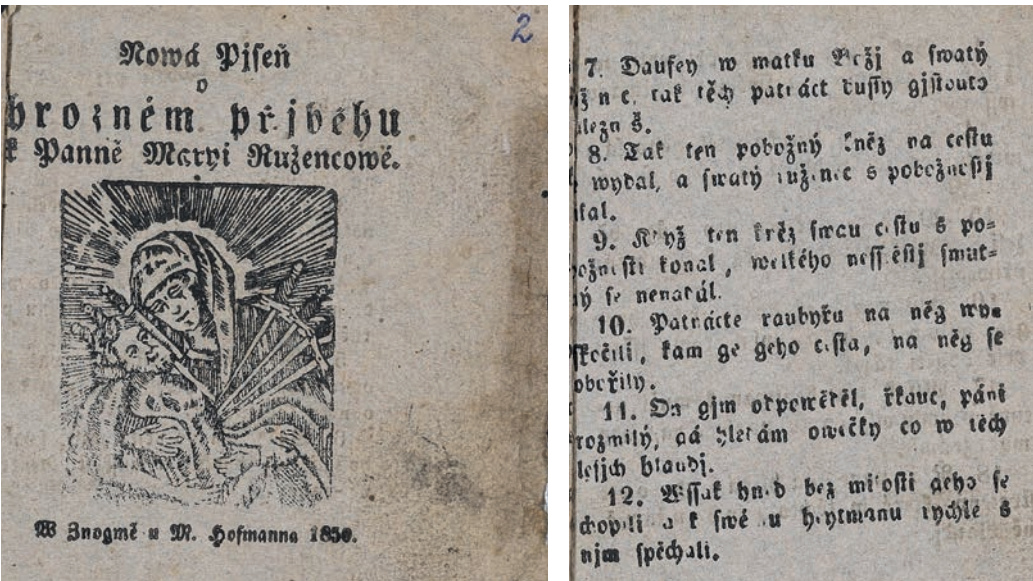


Figure 5. On the top, title and third sheets of *Nová píseň o hrozném příběhu k Panně Marii Růžencové*, 1850, MZK, sign. VK-0000.023, přív.2; Below, last sheet of *Nová píseň o pravdivém zázraku, který se stal ve francouzské zemi. Pro polepšení života našeho v roku 1848*, 1848, MZK, sign. VK-0000.237, přív.15.

19th century. This example thus shows the options for using a font to identify prints with a false imprint. The comparison of font sets is especially useful for false chapbooks allegedly printed in Skalica, because the Skalica printing house

used unique, typical font sets that distinguish them from the output of other printers producing chapbooks. If they cannot be found on a print with a Skalica imprint, the correctness of the imprint must in principle be in doubt.²⁷

From these examples, one may conclude that in the case of chapbooks identified by Jaroslav Vobr as chapbooks with a false imprint from Znojmo, there is significant evidence to support his claim. Of the six model examples, it is possible to provide evidence for four quite convincingly, using a comparison of the woodcuts on the title page and, as a rule, other elements that support the thesis of a false imprint. Although the two remaining examples cannot be identified as being Znojmo prints with the help of the woodcut, the decoration in the first page header, together with the text and the shape of the imprint, indicate that they are probably Znojmo prints; at the same time, there are no indications that would connect the prints to other printing houses. In general, the identification of chapbooks carried out by Jaroslav Vobr may be considered reliable and based on an extensive comparison of the material examined.

Znojmo chapbooks with a false imprint

In the Moravian Library collection in Brno there are a total of 102 chapbooks which were determined to be prints with a false imprint from the output of the Znojmo printing house. Given that there are a total of 256 Znojmo prints in the collection from the first half of the 19th century, when prints with a false imprints were created, the proportion of prints with a false imprint reaches a respectable 39.84% in this period.²⁸ This number points to a large proportion of the output from the Znojmo printing house being produced with a false imprint, and thus highlighting the danger of uncritically adopting the information given in the imprint of chapbooks from the first half of the 19th century.²⁹

27) Cf. MZK, sign. VK-0000.593,11 (Znojmo print with the imprint “*W Skalicy*” [“In Skalica”]). The Znojmo printing house produced only a very few chapbooks with false “in Skalice imprints” because the Skalice printing house was located relatively close to Znojmo.

28) A total of 1,237 chapbooks printed in Znojmo are located in the Moravian Library collection (December 16, 2022). Of the 256 Znojmo prints from the first half of the 19th century, 30 examples show no imprint, 10 represent a torso, 102 prints had a false imprint, and 114 contained an imprint with information about having been printed in Znojmo, most often in the following form: *W Znojmě u Martina Hofmanna* (“In Znojmo at Martin Hoffmann”), *Wytisštěná w Znojmě* (“Printed in Znojmo”) or *Wytisštěná, a k dostánj w Znojmě* (“Printed and for sale in Znojmo”).

29) A similar proportion can also be observed in the case of the Chrudim printing house, where, based on the Moravian Library collection, the number of identified chapbooks with false imprints from the same period was 30.2% (DROZDA 2022b: 148).

The Znojmo printing house used false imprints for all the main types of chapbooks (religious songs, secular songs, prayers). In the sample at the Moravian Library, religious songs predominated (45), while secular songs (35) and prayers (22) were less frequent. In the case of the Znojmo printing house, the most common false place of printing was Prague, which was found on more than three quarters of the identified prints with a false imprint (77 out of 102), while Bratislava/Pressburg (7) was also comparatively common. Other locations occurred in a range of one to three cases; with the exception of Těšín and a general “Silesia”, all these locations were outside the administration of the Moravian-Silesian Governorate. These were locations in Bohemia (Klatovy, Litomyšl), Hungary (Pest, Skalica, Trenčín), Prussia (Kladsko, Ratiboř) and fictional locations abroad (Aldona). Listing remote locations made it less likely that the print with false imprint would be traced back to the printing house in question. The high proportion of false imprints mentioning Prague and, on the contrary, the very low proportion for the closer Skalica in the case of the Znojmo printing house corresponds to findings obtained from the analysis of Chrudim chapbooks with false imprints. The Chrudim print shop also falsified prints to several places abroad, but most often to Prague, where more printers operated, and to distant Skalica, which was located on Hungarian territory. In both cases (Prague and Skalica), this accounted for roughly a third of the output of the Chrudim printing house (DROZDA 2022b: 150). From an analysis of the output of both printing houses, it is possible to observe a tendency to use a distant location as a false place of printing, located ideally in another province of the Austrian Empire.

The analysis of Znojmo chapbooks with a false imprint also points to the fact that most of these prints (80 out of 102) contain an imprint date falling within the 1840s. Another twelve prints do not give a date, but from the text of the song we learn that the event being described falls in the same period.³⁰ Only ten songs fail to indicate the date, either in the imprint or in the text.³¹ The dates given in the imprints and texts thus show that the origin of the Znojmo chapbooks with a false imprint must be laid at the door of printer Martin Hoffmann, who probably only started producing false prints in the 1840s.

30) One example may be *Patrný zážrak svatého Petra a Pavla, jenž se stalo v roku 1846 v hlavním městě Římě* (“A clear miracle of Saints Peter and Paul, which happened in 1846 in the city of Rome”) (MZK, sign. VK-0000.581,10) or *Píseň nová o překrutném mordu* (“A new song about a cruel murder”), which was supposed to have taken place in London in 1841 (MZK, sign. VK-0000.594,11).

31) From the undated prints there are also two songs with the imprint *W Praze u Jana Rokosa* (“In Prague at Jan Rokos”), which refer to a Prague printer active at the end of the 18th century. Given the overwhelming preponderance of Znojmo chapbooks that contain a false imprint and include printing information for the 1840s, it seems likely that these are late reprints from that period.

Conclusion

From an analysis of chapbooks with a false imprint, it became clear that the basic tool for their identification is the comparison of woodcuts, most of which were on the title page. Comparing the imprints of chapbooks with the same woodcut makes it possible to trace discrepancies that point to the possibility that these are prints with false imprints. Although the woodcut itself can point to the presence of a false imprint, for a specific print one must still take into account other elements that would support the proposition of a false imprint. First, it proved useful to compare the typographical decoration (or woodcut) in a first page header with similarly decorated text from a printing house which we suspect of falsifying an imprint. This should then be followed by a comparing the imprint on a suspect print with the shape of the imprint which was normal for the printing house declared in the imprint, as any discrepancy is further evidence of a false imprint. Less reliable, although useful in many cases, is a comparison of font sets. When identifying chapbooks, one must always try to provide a double proof: to try to prove that the falsified print does not come from the output of the printing house in question, and, at the same time, to prove that the given decoration and font can be found in the output of another printing house that may be suspected of falsification. Based on the analysis, the reliability of Jaroslav Vobr's identification of chapbooks in his collection was also proven.

This study, based on an analysis of chapbooks from the Moravian Library collection, shows that the Znojmo printing house produced a significant number of chapbooks with a false imprint during Martin Hoffmann's activity in the 1840s. Considering the total production of chapbooks in Znojmo in the first half of the 19th century, the proportion of these prints in the Moravian Library collection was almost 40%. Most of the prints gave Prague as their false location (although it is perhaps plausible that they were reprints of prints originally from Prague). The printing house used the false imprint most often for religious songs, somewhat less for secular songs and prayers. The study thus provides further proof of the significant degree of unreliability of the information given in the imprint on chapbooks from the first half of the 19th century and points to the danger of uncritically adopting these data for further analysis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MZK – Moravská zemská knihovna v Brně (Moravian Library, Brno)

MZA – Moravský zemský archiv v Brně (Moravian Provincial Archive)

KNM – Knihovna Národního muzea v Praze (Library of the Czech National Museum)

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