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The Journey of the Holy Family and Hana Bočková, or How the Song about the Flight into Egypt Entered a Long Literary and Oral Tradition

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Kateřina Smyčková – Markéta Holubová – Tomáš Slavický

ABSTRAKT

Cesta Svaté rodiny a Hany Bočkové aneb Jak se píseň o útěku do Egypta dostala do dlouhé literární a ústní tradice

Tato případová studie přináší kritickou edici a analýzu české kramářské písně, která se věnuje útěku Svaté rodiny do Egypta. Píseň se dochovala v literární i ústní tradici po více než dvě století. Čerpá z apokryfních a jiných nekanonických zdrojů a je součástí anonymní, pravděpodobně katechetické katolické písňové tvorby šířené na okraji mediálního prostoru. Studie využívá interdisciplinární přístup a zkoumá dané téma z jazykového, literárněhistorického, etnologického a etnomuzikologického hlediska. Ilustruje rozdíly v přenosu textových a hudebních složek kramářských písní.

ABSTRACT

This case study presents a critical edition and an analysis of a Czech broadside ballad depicting the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. The song has been preserved in both literary and oral traditions over two centuries. It draws upon apocryphal and other non-canonical sources and is part of anonymous, likely catechetical Catholic song production disseminated on the fringes of the media space. The study employs an interdisciplinary approach, examining the subject from linguistic, literary-historical, ethnological, and ethnomusicological perspectives. It illustrates differences in the transmission of the textual and musical components of broadside ballads.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Narativní české kramářské písně; dětství Ježíše Krista; útěk do Egypta; apokryfní motivy; zázraky; ústní tradice a gramotnost; katecheze; recepcce; lidová píseň; interdisciplinární přístup.

KEYWORDS

Narrative Czech broadside ballads; childhood of Jesus Christ; flight into Egypt; apocryphal motifs; miracles; orality and literacy; catechesis; reception; folk song; interdisciplinary approach.

The object of our study is the Czech broadside ballad *Ach veliká láska Boží* (“Oh, Great Love of God”), which deals with the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. This broadside ballad was analyzed by Hana Bočková (2009),¹ to whose memory this issue of the journal is dedicated, and upon whose research we build here. In the presented study, we provide a critical edition of the song, enriched by interpretations of its two relevant components: text and music. We primarily focus on the most recent variants of the song and proceed retrospectively, i.e. against the flow of time, from the youngest variants to the oldest. In doing so, we strive to capture the media through which the song has passed during its history dating back to the early 18th century, with particular emphasis on broadside ballads and records from oral tradition.² In our analysis, we reflect on this broadside ballad’s continuity and change in written and oral tradition, from the perspectives of media space, function, reception, and regional variants. Based on previous research of other broadside ballads (FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022), we anticipate a relatively stable textual and a highly variable musical component.

The study is divided into the following sections: first, it provides an overview of the history of this song, including the ways in which it has been transmitted. This is followed by an edition of the broadside ballad and the song from oral tradition. Subsequently, we focus on an analysis of the textual and musical components of the song. Methodologically, we rely on the reception concept of folk song³ and the concept of intermediality of Early Modern song

1) Hana Bočková studied the Czech broadside ballad about the flight into Egypt prior to collaborating with us in our interdisciplinary project on broadside ballads (FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022).

2) We adopted a similar approach in previous works developed in collaboration with Bočková (FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022; 2023).

3) As we have presented in previous papers, we understand reception as the singing, popularity, and interpretation of broadside ballads (FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022; 2023). Czech broadside ballads contain only tune imprints (instructions on how to sing the song), meaning that it is through reception that the printed broadside ballad gains its musical dimension (SCHILLING 2015: 32). Through this process, it becomes part of an oral song culture, where songs are transmitted and shared through singing, listening, and memory. Within this context, popular tunes and songs of diverse origins merge, creating the conditions for the development and dissemination of song and tune variants. Our ethnomusicological perspective on reception differs from the philological one, which focuses on the impact of texts on readers and the ways in which literature is received (NÜNNING, ed. 2006: 661).

culture (SCHILLING 2015) in interdisciplinary research.⁴ Our approach is inspired by the conception of broadside production as part of popular culture, in which the phenomenon of so-called long duration is applied, allowing the coexistence of elements from different temporal and stylistic layers (MALURÁ 2021: 515–518). At the same time, we reflect on the significance of these songs for the formation of spirituality and their role in the process of rising literacy (SMYČKOVÁ 2022).

The Media Space and Function of the Song

The song we have edited is characterized by a history spanning approximately 200 years, unfolding primarily through broadside ballads printings, oral transmission, and, to some extent, manuscript records. The specific media space of the song's dissemination through broadsides is strongly linked to the oral tradition, which ultimately outlasted the printed form.

From the *oral tradition*, we know of four notated versions of the song from Moravia⁵ and one from Slovakia,⁶ all of which are closely related in text to the edited broadside version. Textually distinct from these is the oldest known (as far as we know) variant of the apocryphal song about the flight into Egypt. This song was recorded by František Sušil in the early 19th century, beginning with the incipit: *O veliká láska Boží, velká poníženosti, že Syn Boží chtěl snášeti z mládí za ňa bolesti* (“O great love of God, great humility, that the Son of God wished to endure pain for him since youth”).⁷ Sušil's version contains only ten stanzas and omits the popular motif of the visit to a bandit's house and the miraculous healing of his child. In contrast, the version we have edited (nineteen stanzas) includes and even further develops this miracle: the bandit anticipates the words

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- 4) The intermedial research approach stems from the particular phenomenon of the Czech broadside ballad, which combines text, music, and image, and was intended for singing and performance. We perceive it as a medium of historical communication that is not isolated but has intermedial connections with other media forms, including print, manuscript, and oral traditions. This concept broadens the historical perspective on the roles of broadside ballads in early modern culture and their extension across time and space.
 - 5) Two records come from the collections of the Institute of Ethnology of the CAS (EÚB A 508/6 Mariánské Hory, 1939; EÚB A 510/46 Stará Ves nad Ondřejnicí, 1941) and two additional records are from the B II collection (no. 978, Velká nad Veličkou, before 1889).
 - 6) One record comes from a contemporary Slovak pilgrimage hymn-book (DANCZI 1992: 273–276). The editor collected the songs in locations in southwestern Slovakia.
 - 7) MZA Brno. František Sušil, sign. G 10, inv. n. 548, fol. 5, without musical notation.

of the thief on Christ's right at the crucifixion,⁸ and his conversion becomes an emotionally charged catechetical element of the song.

In contrast, *manuscript media* transmit the song's text without musical notation and are linked to broadside ballad printings. One example is a hymn-book from Vsetín, which preserves an incomplete version of the song's text (dated 1734), likely copied from a now-lost broadside ballad printing.⁹ Another is a Slovak hymn-book from Banská Štiavnica (FOBB 1792 – cf. RUŠČIN 2022: 315).¹⁰ A manuscript play script demonstrates the intermedial connection between the broadside ballad and the folk drama: the director Josef Havel, known as Vilím Lastibořský (1778–1838),¹¹ inserted two stanzas from the broadside ballad – those concerning the healing of the thief's son and the father's conversion – into a Nativity play (MENČÍK 1894: 153–154). This example comes from the Podkrkonoší region, renowned for its Passion plays; local variants of the Nativity play are indirectly attested in nearby villages such as Vysoké nad Jizerou and Haratice.¹²

Broadside ballad printings circulated the song's text from around 1713,¹³ or more broadly from the early 18th century until the end of the 19th century,¹⁴ across various printing houses, either anonymously or with imprints (Litomyšl, Olomouc, Brno, Prague, Příbram, Pardubice, Jihlava, Hranice, Opava, Český Těšín, Banská Štiavnica, Skalica).¹⁵ The song texts are relatively stable, though the title appears in two versions: in a common formulation as *Žalostivá cesta* (“Sorrowful Journey”) or in a more specific title such as *Vejpis oné žalostné cesty [...] vytažený z Života Krista Pána* (“Excerpt from the Sorrowful Journey [...] taken from the Life of Our Lord Christ”).

In printed production, the occurrence of the song is limited solely to broadside ballad printings. Its absence from other forms of printed religious texts, combined with its vitality in oral tradition, corresponds to other broadside ballads with apocryphal themes and themes of unofficial Marian apparitions.¹⁶ The song

8) See the section *TEXT* (table no. 1)

9) Firstly, the title of the song matches that of later published broadside ballad, and secondly, it was included among other texts predominantly of broadside ballad printings (MŽÍK 1731–1734, fol. 323v–324v).

10) See the presentation of Peter Ruščin (RUŠČIN 2019).

11) The village of Lastiboř, today Vlastiboř; see more in RON 2009: 47–48.

12) *The Play about the Nativity of the Lord*. KOCHÁNEK 1877; RON 2007: 255–256.

13) *Žalostivá cesta Ježíše, Josefa a Marie z Nazaretu do Egypta*, 1713.

14) *Píseň o žalostné cestě svatých tří osob [...] do Egypta*, 1887.

15) VESELSKÁ 1982: nos. 17, 245–246, 639, 754, 762, 898, 968; KLIMEKOVÁ et al. 1996: nos. 144–151; KOPALOVÁ – HOLUBOVÁ 2008: nos. 277–280; DROPOVÁ – KREKOVIČOVÁ 2010: 306–308; SKOŘEPOVÁ 2016: 23; DRAGONOVÁ – SZTURCOVÁ 2019: nos. 27, 404, 461; HOLUBOVÁ 2021: nos. 145–149; POLÁKOVÁ 2023: nos. 114–120.

16) For further details, see FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022: 299, 478.

was also used in regions connected with Jesuit milieu and pilgrimage sites. The emergence and dissemination of the song likely involved the Kamenický family's printing house in Litomyšl and the printing house of František Antonín Hirnle in Olomouc. F. A. Hirnle (1697–1758), who came from the Jesuit printing house in Prague, also printed an anonymous apocryphal broadside ballad with the theme of the death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary.¹⁷ Among the earliest media transmitting the song's text is a manuscript hymn-book from Vsetín, where long-term Jesuit missions operated from the college in Uherské Hradiště (ZEMEK – KOLÁČEK 2001: 208). The text of the song also appears in a manuscript hymnbook from Banská Štiavnica, a pilgrimage site with a calvary founded by the Jesuits in the mid-18th century; the broadside ballad was later also published in the local printing house (DROPOVÁ – KREKOVIČOVÁ 2010: 306).¹⁸

We have almost no evidence on what occasions the song was performed. František Sýkora mentions that the song was sung during feather stripping (SÝKORA 1912: 16); in rural areas, inherited stories in songs were typically sung during communal autumn work or during vigils held for the deceased in their house. However, the collector Lýsek recorded a custom in Silesia of lay village catecheses featuring the singing of broadside ballads, including those with apocryphal themes. These gatherings happened “in a large village room”¹⁹ and took place as recently as on the eve of the Second World War. This corresponds with Hana Bočková's interpretation of apocryphal songs as part of religious education and as a supplement to pilgrimage literature (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 10). The composition of the song supports this thesis – an independent introductory invocation of God's love and series of names, known from contemporary Latin models, followed by a closing prayer.²⁰ Selected motifs may also have appealed to the audience of religious plays as exempla, as illustrated by the Vlastiboř Nativity Play.

17) *Píseň o líbezném smrti a radostným nanebevzetí Marie Panny* [Olomouc, 1751–1820]. For more on the printing house, see: https://www.encyklopedieknihy.cz/index.php/František_Antonín_Hirnle, accessed February 16, 2025.

18) A similar theme and connection to pilgrimage literature can be found in the Polish broadside ballad about the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, with the first lines *We czwartek wieczór pierwszego marca posłan był anioł*, recorded from the oral tradition of a church singer in the pilgrimage village of Skrzyńsko after 1970 (BARTKOWSKI, ed. 1990: 335). A younger Polish broadside ballad printing originates from Częstochowa, where it could still be purchased at pilgrimages after 1932 (*Pieśń nowa [...]*, [1932]; GROCHOWSKI 2009: 331–332; RATAJCZAK 2011). We thank Monika Szturcová for providing the source.

19) For further details, see FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022: 299.

20) A similar narrative approach can be observed in the Czech version of the broadside ballad about Theresa of the city of Vardajn from 1735 (*Ach slávo, slávo nebeská! Lásko velká Jezu Krista!* FROLCOVÁ–KOSEK et al. 2022: 212–213).

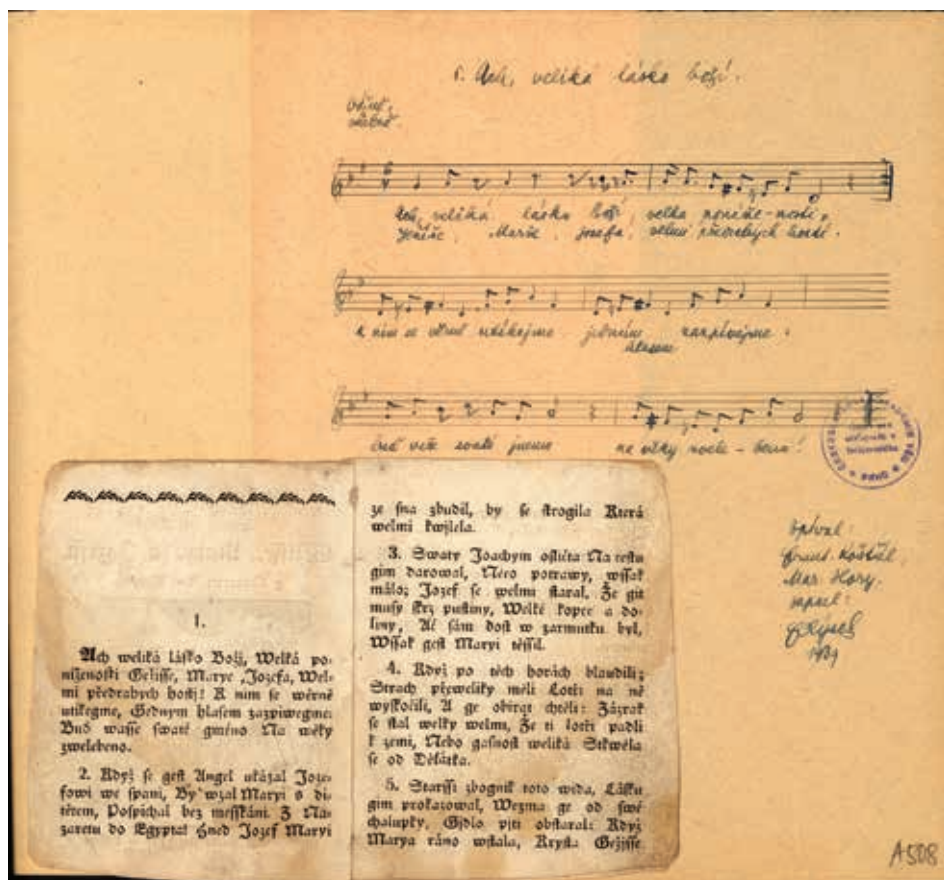


Figure 1. Record of the edited song from oral tradition and an opened broadside ballad printing (second and third pages), EÚB A 508/6, A 508/6KT



Figure 2. Title page of the edited broadside ballad A 508/6KT



Figure 3. Woodcut from the title page of a broadside ballad from 1736, the typical depiction of the flight into Egypt, EÚB E 21/1-30 [2]

Edition²¹

Musical Transcription

Vážně, velebňě

Ach ve - li - ká lá - sko Bo - ží, vel - ka po - ní - že - no - sti
Je - ží - še, Ma - ri - e, Jo - se - fa, vel - mi pře - dra - hých ho - stí.
K nim se vě - rně u - tí - kej - me, je - dním hla - sem za - zpí - vej - me:
buď va - še sva - té jme - no na vě - ky zve - le - be - no!

Text Transcription

[1r]

Píseň o žalostné cestě svatých tří
osob Ježiše, Marie a Jozefa
z Nazaretu do Ejipta

A song about a sorrowful journey of
three Holy Figures: Jesus, Mary and
Joseph, from Nazareth to Egypt

Vytištěná u Karla Procházky v Těšíně

Printed at Karel Procházka's in Těšín

[1v]

1. Ach veliká láska Boží,
velká poníženosti
Ježiše, Marie, Jozefa,
velmi předrahych hostí!
K nim se věrně utikejme,
jednym hlasem zazpívejme:
buď vaše svaté jméno
na věky zveleveno.

1. Oh, great love of God,
great humility
of Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
the dearest guests!
To them faithfully let us hasten
with one voice let us sing:
may Your Holy Name be
forever glorified.

21) In the editing of the music and text, we followed the guidelines used in the edition *Má svou známou notu* (FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022: 223–230).

2. Když se jest anjel ukázal

Jozefovi ve spani,
by vzal Marii s Ditětem,
pospichal bez meškání
z Nazaretu do Egypta!
Hned Jozef Marii ze sna
[2r]
zbudil, by se strojila,
která velmi kvílela.

3. Svaty Joachym oslička²²

na cestu jim daroval
něco potravy, však málo;
Jozef se velmi staral,
že jit musí skrz pustiny,
velké kopce a doliny,
ač sám dost v zarmutku byl,
vsak jest Marii těšil.

4. Když po těch horách bloudili,

strach převeliky měli,
lotři na ně vyskočili
a je obirat chtěli:
zázrak se stal velký velmi,
že ti lotři padli k zemi,
nebo jasnost veliká
stkvěla se od Děťátka.

5. Starši zbojnik toto vida,

lásku jim prokazoval,
vezma je do²³ své chalupky,
jídlo, pití²⁴ obstaral:
když Maria ráno vstala,
Krista Ježíše koupala;

2. When an angel appeared

to Joseph in his sleep
he told him to take Mary with the Child
and hurry without delay
from Nazareth to Egypt!
Instructing her to get ready,

Joseph immediately woke Mary,
who loudly wailed in distress.

3. Holy Joachim gave them

for their journey a little donkey
and some food, but not much;
Joseph had no peace,
for they had to walk through wastelands,
great hills and valleys,
though he himself was deep in sorrow,
still he comforted Mary.

4. While they wandered in those hills,

they were terribly afraid,
bandits sprang upon them
and wanted to rob them:
a very great miracle happened,
the bandits fell to the ground,
because a great radiance
shone forth from the Child.

5. Seeing that, an older robber,

showed them love,
took them to his small cottage
and gave them food and drink:
when Mary rose next morning
She took Jesus Christ to bathe,

22) <oslička>

23) <od>

24) <pjti>

[2v]

v ten koupel žena lotra
dítě své také dala.

and into the bath the bandit's wife
added her own child as well.

6. Které plné strupuv bylo,
neřestí obkličené;
jak je do vody vložila,
bylo hned uzdravené;
mordyř vida té milosti,
plesal velikou radosti;
přes hory je zprovodil,
takto k Děťátku mluvil.

6. That child had many scabs
and was surrounded by vice,
as she put it in the water,
the child healed at once;
seeing this mercy, the murderer
rejoiced with all his heart
and led them through the mountains,
to the Child he spoke these words.

7. Když se budeš ubirati
do království věčného,
rač na mne pamatovati,
sluhu²⁵ však nehodného!
Na to jest vzal odpuštění,
pad na kolena až k zemi;
svaty Jozef s Marií
velmi zemdleni byli.

7. As You make your way
to the eternal kingdom,
please remember me,
your unworthy servant!
He accepted forgiveness
and fell to the ground upon his knees;
Holy Joseph and Mary
were weary beyond measure.

8. Pod jedným stromem seděli,
kdež překrásne ovoce
bylo, ale však vysoko
dostat nemohouce:
ten strom rychle bez prodlení
ohnul se až k samé zemi;

8. They sat beneath a tree
that bore beautiful fruits,
but so high up
that they couldn't be reached:
without delay, the tree quickly
bent down to the very ground;

[3r]

Jozef s Pannou²⁶ Marií
zase se občerstvili.

Joseph and the Virgin Mary
had refreshment once again.

9. Lvové, draci, nedvědové
z jeskyních vylezali,
velkou poklonu činice,

9. Lions, dragons and bears
crawled out of their caves
and bowed down to them

25) <Sluhů>

26) <Panau>

jako by je vitali:
když již z těch hor vychazeli,
ptákuv houfové litali,
všickni hlasem spivali,
zdrav buď, náš Stvořiteli!

10. Kde ty osoby svaté šly,
ruže jim prokvitaly,
ke cti, chvále Krista Pána
libou vuni dávaly;
však když k Hermu poli přišli,
velky zástup lidu našli,
jenž se stromu klaněli,
jemu Božskou čest dali.

11. Ten strom s sebou zatřas velmi,
ďábel z něho vyletěl,
poklonil se k samé zemi;

lid pohansky ho viděl,
[3v]

strachem všickni až strnuli²⁷:
ten strom nabyl velké moci,
němí, slepi, kulhavi
zdraví tu nabyvali.

12. V tom městě byl chrám pohansky
vystaveny nákladně,
kdež pohané modly měli
ozdobené²⁸ překrásně
v počtu tři sta šedesáte:

když ty tři osoby svaté
tam vešly, dveře samy
hned se jim otevřely.

as if in greeting:
when they were leaving the mountains
flocks of birds flew by
all of them sang,
hail to You, our Creator!

10. Where those Holy Figures walked
roses opened in bloom,
in honour of Christ the Lord,
giving off their lovely fragrance;
but when they entered Hermopolis
they found a big crowd of people
who were bowing down to a tree,
showing it divine honour.

11. That tree shook violently,
a devil flew out of it
and then it bowed down to the very
ground,
the pagan folk saw it,

everyone was petrified with fear:
the tree gained enormous power,
the mute, the blind and the lame
all were healed here.

12. In that city was a pagan temple,
it had been built at great expense,
a place where pagans had their
beautifully decorated idols,
there were three hundred and sixty of
them:
when those three Holy Figures
entered, the doors themselves
immediately swung open.

27) <ftanuli>

28) <ozdobné>

13. Modly hned na zem padaly,
v kusy se polamaly,
ďablové ukrutně řvali,
po Ejiptě litali;
kněz pohansky se poděsil,
pad na zem, Ježíše prosil,
v ochranu se poddával,
za Boha je vyznával.

14. Pohane se rozhněvali,
zamordovat je chtěli,
Ježíš, Maria, Jozef,
oni se skryt museli,
fikovy strom se rozvinul,
[4r]
je skryl, až ten lid pominul,
kdež ochráněni byli,
po dnes máme znamení.

15. Svaty Jozef s Matkou Boží
o trunk vody prosili,
v mnohých domích žádajice,
aby se občerstvili:
nechtěl se žáden slitovat,
jim trunku vody darovat!
O velká nevděčnosti!
Tupíš svych drahych hosti.

16. Matka Boží litostivě
k Bohu se jest modlila²⁹,
zemdlena jsouc s svym Synáčkem,
občerstveni žádala:
rychle tu po pravé straně
vyskočila krásná studně,
takže se občerstvili,
Božskou moc velebili.

13. The idols at once fell to the ground
and shattered into pieces,
devils roared ferociously
and sped over the skies of Egypt;
the pagan priest took fright,
fell to the ground and begged Jesus,
gave himself into His protection
and declared Him God.

14. The pagans grew angry
and wanted to kill them,
Jesus, Mary and Joseph
had to hide,
A fig tree opened itself

and hid them until the folk had passed,
and where they were protected,
to this day we have a sign.

15. Holy Joseph with the Mother of God
begged for a sip of water,
asking in many houses
so that they might find refreshment,
but no-one was willing to show mercy
and give them a sip of water!
Oh, such immense ingratitude!
You insult your dear guests.

16. The Mother of God sorrowfully
prayed to God,
exhausted, with her little Son
She asked for refreshment:
swiftly to her right
sprang forth a beautiful well,
so they refreshed themselves
and praised the Lord's might.

29) <modlil a>

17. Jak po dnes máme znameni,
kde ta studnice byla,
neb bašamova zahrada
sama se tam vštipila:
kdež se lidu velmi mnoho
uzdravilo času toho,
divuv, množství zázraku
stalo se toho času.

18. Ach přerozmili křesťane³⁰!
Mužem si povážiti,
jak v maličkosti Pán Ježíš
musel mnoho snášeti;
my, když nějaké soužení
máme, hned si stěžujem,
on za nás mnoho vystál,
by nám všem lásku získal.

19. Vážme si jeho milosti
a často rozjimejme,
tuto píseň ke cti, chvále
Krista Pána zpivejme;
celym srdcem pozdravujme,
často vroucně volejme:
Ježíš, Jozef s Marii,
buďtež ochránci naši.
Amen.

17. Till this day we have a sign
where the well was,
because a balsam garden
took root there by itself:
where many people
were healed at this time,
many wonders, miracles happened
at such a time.

18. Oh, dearest Christians!
May we contemplate
all the things Lord Jesus
had to bear in His lowly infancy;
we are quick to complain
whenever some affliction affects us,
yet He endured so much on our behalf
that He might attain love for us all.

19. Let us esteem His grace
and let us often think upon Him,
this song to glorify and praise
the Lord Christ – let us sing;
let us revere with all our heart,
let us often and ardently chant:
Jesus, Joseph and Mary,
O be our protectors.
Amen.

Text

We present here one of the most recent versions of the song *Oh, Great Love of God*, preserved in the collections of the Brno branch of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences. This version is documented in two forms: (1) an oral tradition record, transcribed by the collector František Lýsek in 1939³¹ at the home of folk singer František Košťál (born ca. 1882) in the

30) <křesťane>

31) EÚB A 508/6, notated collection of songs by the collector František Lýsek (1904–1977); 1 stanza.

village of Mariánské Hory, and (2) an undated broadside ballad printed by the publishing house of Karel Procházka in Těšín (HOLUBOVÁ 2021: no. 145).³² The oral record and the broadside ballad are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. The broadside ballad obtained by Lýsek corresponds in many respects to the variant analysed by H. Bočková (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 4).³³

Bočková classifies broadside ballads among the religiously educational works of the Baroque period, thereby opening the discussion on the interaction between apocryphal literature³⁴ and Czech broadside ballads in the context of religious education.³⁵ The connection of the song to catechesis is somewhat unusual, given its reliance on non-canonical texts. In this case, the brief biblical account of the flight into Egypt³⁶ did not provide sufficient material for an extended narrative, leading to the incorporation of motifs from Jesus' childhood drawn from apocryphal sources (DUS – POKORNÝ, eds. 2021: 301–304). As explicitly stated in the titles of many prints, the song is based on the widely read religious-educational work *Veliký život* (“The Great Life”) by the Capuchin Martin of Cochem (first published in Czech in 1698³⁷). However, unlike Cochem, the song's author employs a different narrative strategy:

“In the text, the author steps back from the role of a preacher who persistently admonishes and urges the recipient toward spiritual contemplation and self-reflection. Instead, the reader—relieved of these demands—assumes the position of a passive observer, as permitted by the broadside ballad. Active contemplation is expected only at the beginning and, most notably, in the final section,

32) EÚB A 508/6KT, *Píseň o žalostné cestě svatých tří osob [...] do Egypta*, [1846–1896]; 19 stanzas.

33) *Vejpis oně žalostivé cesty Ježíše, Marie a Jozefa do Ejipta z Nazaretu [...]*. Olomouc, [František Antonín Hirnle], [1750], Knihopis database: K16744, according to the Moravian Library catalogue, sign. STS-0510.570.

34) Although the term *apocryphal song* is not precisely codified in the Czech context, we use it analogously to *apocryphal legend* or *apocryphal text*, terms commonly employed – though not explicitly defined – by historians of early Czech literature. By this, we refer to a song that narrates events from the life of Jesus Christ or other biblical figures, specifically those that fall outside the biblical canon, particularly those found in the apocryphal gospels. In this approach, we draw, among other sources, on the more detailed classification of legends, especially apocryphal ones, in Polish broadside ballads, as outlined by P. Grochowski (GROCHOWSKI 2016: 43–47).

35) The apocryphal nature of the song aligns with the illustration on the title page of the edited broadside ballad (Fig. 2). Instead of depicting the conventional scene of the Holy Family with a donkey – widely circulated in earlier prints (Fig. 3) – it features a preceding apocryphal episode from the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*: the child Mary with her parents, Anne and Joachim (DUS – POKORNÝ, eds. 2021: 292–293). This depiction reflects a familial perspective on the Holy Family, emphasizing the ‘five most holy persons’, a motif also common in contemporary popular devotional prayer prints.

36) “So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’” (Mt 2, 14–15) (BibleGateway.n.d.).

37) Cochem's work has been published in a modern critical edition (SLÁDEK – PEISERTOVÁ – BREŇ, eds.). In this article, we cite Cochem's text according to the original. For its transcription, we follow the rules applied in the edition *Má svou známou notu* (FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022: 223–230).

where the composition, concluding in the form of a prayer, firmly reinforces its religiously didactic purpose” (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 7–8).

The broadside ballad operates independently of the authority of the teacher-catechist, instead aiming to educate through narrative and the prevailing conceptualization of human life as a journey.³⁸ The anonymous author seeks to engage the audience through the familiar practice of singing broadside ballads, traditionally used to announce intriguing novelties in markets, town squares, and near churches. This form of communal communication and dissemination was reaching its peak in the 18th century – around the time of the song about the flight into Egypt. However, rather than addressing listeners with the customary call to attention (e.g. “Gather people and hear me tell...”), the song opens with a deeply emotional exclamation (“Oh, great love of God, great humility of Jesus, Mary, Joseph”), further intensified by its hymnic character. This approach echoes Jesuit catechetical practices, where children were summoned to sing prayers in public squares with the aid of a bell (ŠKARPOVÁ – SLAVICKÝ 2011: 135).

The song’s lyrics also take on the qualities of a fairy-tale-like narrative, appealing to both adults and children. Framed within the motif of pilgrimage, it simultaneously foreshadows Jesus’ mission by depicting the infant in Mary’s arms as a miracle worker and bestower of grace upon a thief and his son.³⁹ For this reason, the broadside ballad is “not a depiction of flight, but of a triumphant journey” (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 9).

The adaptation of Cochem’s *Veliký život* – an extensive prose text – into the much more condensed format of a broadside ballad necessitated significant narrative modifications. Moreover, following Roger Chartier’s argument (1999: 274), we can assume that this transformation also altered the audience and the way they interpreted the text. Tailoring the work for a less educated and experienced readership led to a more condensed and dynamic narrative, a shift in the narrator’s role and their interaction with the audience, a simplification of sentence structures, and a transformation of visual imagery.⁴⁰

38) For more details see DUFKA et al. 2016.

39) This alludes to the thief-criminal who was crucified to the right of Jesus (Luke 23:41–43). In Catholic tradition, he is known as the ‘penitent thief’, Saint Dismas.

40) “The new public’s reading style called for brief, self-contained sequences clearly separated from one another. It demanded the use of images, at times borrowed from another book, that clarified the meaning of the text and served as an aid to memorization. It required repetition more than invention: each new text was a variation on already known themes and motifs” (CHARTIER 1999: 278).

Long descriptive and reflective passages from *Veliký život* were omitted (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 7), and the narrator – originally a guiding voice – became a straightforward, descriptive storyteller who recounts dramatic events without commentary or moral interpretation. However, the meditative function of Cochem’s work was at least formally preserved by framing the narrative within a prayer, as seen in the opening stanza and the final two stanzas. These passages particularly emphasize devotion to the Holy Family, specifically the veneration of the names “Jesus, Mary, Joseph”. Although this cult has medieval origins, it reached its peak in the early 18th century, when numerous prayers and songs were dedicated to these “three holiest names”, and some religious confraternities adopted them as their patronage.

It is noteworthy that, despite its relatively brief length, the song preserves all six micro-narratives from Cochem’s 71st chapter, *How Great the Miracles Happened on That Journey in Egypt*, though it alters their sequence in one instance. The first miracle – the ambush by the robbers – supersedes the original opening episode of the tree bending down to the weary Mary, likely because it is the most engaging story for the audience.

The narrative unfolds through six miraculous events: the ambush by the robbers, followed by the healing of the robber’s son and the robber’s conversion; the bending of the fruit tree to Mary; the expulsion of the evil spirit from the tree; the purification of a pagan temple from idols and demons; the Holy Family’s concealment within a fig tree; and the miraculous emergence of a well. Interwoven with these dramatic wonders are additional motifs, including beasts guiding the family out of the mountains, talking birds, and blooming roses.

The narrative is highly condensed, without digressions, and relies on simple yet effective techniques to convey dramatic action. Its dynamism is achieved through a high frequency of verbs – typically at least one per verse – along with expressive phrases (“who loudly wailed”, “devils roared ferociously”) and hyperboles (“petrified with fear”, “a very great miracle happened”). Unlike in Cochem’s text, where emotions are elicited through the narrator’s direct appeals, here they emerge organically from the miraculous micro-narratives themselves (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 8).

The shift to a different format also required adjustments in the handling of certain motifs. Notably, unlike in the preface, the text omits the explicit identification of the robber leader with the penitent thief whom Christ later encounters at the crucifixion.

The above-mentioned strategies of adapting Cochem’s text into a broadside ballad can be demonstrated by comparing a passage from *The Great Life* with

just under three stanzas of the earliest known version of the ballad from 1713. Unlike Cochem's text, the ballad condenses the story and reduces the perspective of characters that are not essential to the plot:

<p>Cochem 1698, p. 398</p> <p>Nejsvětější Panna velmi se radovala z té tak dobré příležitosti. Protož své milé Děťátko, jak nejlípeji mohla, opatřila. Když pak je v vodě zmyla a jeho plínky vyprala, ta též manželka toho lotra své malé dítě, které všeckno malomocné bylo, umyla je v té vodě, v které byl Pán Ježíš zmytý; kteráž ihned od toho malomocnosti očištěné bylo. Tomu velmi ten lotr se podivil a čím dýle, tím lípej Svátost toho Děťátka poznával. Protož když na druhý den s tou největší uctivostí za dobrý kus cesty Marii a Jozefa vyprovázal, naposledy řekl k tomu Dítěti: „Pamatuj na mě, když přijdeš do Království tvého.“ A to jest ten Lotr, který potom s Pánem Ježíšem byl ukřižován a jej po tom blesku, který v dětinství jeho z jeho obličejce pocházet viděl, na kříži zase poznal; protož zase poznova tehdáž k němu řekl: „Pamatuj na mě, Pane, když přijdeš do Království tvého.“⁴¹</p>	<p>když Maria ráno vstala, Krista Ježíše koupala; v ten koupel žena lotra dítě své také dala.</p> <p>6. Které plné strupuv bylo, neřestí obkličené; jak je do vody vložila, bylo hned uzdravené; mordýř vida té milosti, plesal velikou radosti; přes hory je zprovodil, takto k Děťátku mluvil.</p> <p>7. Když se budeš ubirati do království věčného, rač na mne pamatovati sluhu však nehodného! Na to jest vzal odpuštění, pad na kolena až k zemi;</p>
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Table 1. Comparison of Cochem's *Veliký život* with the oldest broadside ballad variant from 1713

To maintain rhyme and rhythm, the song also alters the number of idols miraculously destroyed in the pagan temple. While Cochem's original text invokes the macrocosmic motif of 365 days in a year, the song adjusts this to 360 for

41) "The Blessed Virgin was overjoyed by such a good opportunity. So she took care of her beloved Child as best she could. After washing Him in the water and rinsing His swaddling clothes, the wife of the thief also washed her own small child – who was completely leprous – in the same water in which the Lord Jesus had been bathed. The child was immediately cleansed of the leprosy. The thief was greatly amazed by this and, the more time passed, the more deeply he came to recognize the holiness of the Child. The next day, he accompanied Mary and Joseph for a good part of their journey, with the greatest reverence. As they parted, he said to the Child: 'Remember me when You come into Your Kingdom.' And this is the thief who was later crucified with our Lord Jesus, and who, on the cross, recognized Him again because of the lightning-like radiance he had once seen emanating from His face in childhood; and so, recognizing Him once more, he said: 'Remember me, Lord, when You come into Your Kingdom.'"

the sake of rhyme (*v počtu tři sta šedesáte: / když ty tři osoby svaté*, i.e. rhyming “sixty” with “holy”).

Another notable change appears in the song’s depiction of the landscape where the ambush occurs. In *Veliký život*, the Holy Family is caught in a vast open field, allowing them to see the raiders approaching from afar, which heightens their anxiety and sense of helplessness. In contrast, the song situates the ambush in the mountains, where the robbers spring upon them unexpectedly. Additionally, the characters’ dialogues are omitted and biblical intertextuality is diminished – the reference to Isaiah’s prophecy is absent when the pagan idols are destroyed, and the motif of leprosy is replaced by the more general affliction of “scabs” and “vice”.⁴²

Cochem’s depiction includes extensive informative and expository passages, aligning the text with travelogues and topographical works. In contrast, the song focuses on the narrative itself, presenting it as a gradual journey that anticipates Christ’s future redemptive work – a path marked by both suffering and triumph. This theme is reinforced through the use of opposites: the child Jesus wrestles with the robber, Mary and the infant confront devils and pagan priests, and the Holy Family faces opposition from pagans, with each challenge ultimately leading to either conversion or reverence for the Holy Family.

Additionally, the song devotes significant attention to nature, which, as a divine creation, not only serves as the setting but also actively contributes to the miraculous elements of the story (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 9). Trees genuflect to dispense food, they open their trunks to provide sanctuary, and they heal the sick, roses bloom in the wilderness, birds greet the Creator with human voices, wild animals emerge from their dens to bow before the Holy Family, a well springs forth to quench their thirst, and a balsam garden flourishes around it.

Apocryphal motifs related to the flight to Egypt appear in the Czech literary tradition as early as the mid-14th century, notably in the *Život Krista Pána* (“Life of Christ the Lord”). This text follows the medieval Latin tradition, which includes several meditative (and partly apocryphal) biographies of Jesus Christ. An anonymous Old Czech author references the cutting down of pagan idols upon the Holy Family’s arrival in Egypt and their stay in the city of Hermopolis (STLUKA, ed. 2006: 46). The apocryphal episode involving the destruction of idols is also mentioned in the song *Jedniem hlasem tiemto časem* (“With one voice at this time”), first attested in the *Jistebnice Hymnbook* (DAŇHELKA, ed. 1952: 48), and traditionally used in Protestant hymnbooks until the 18th century. In

42) In certain editions of the song, the child’s illness is referred to as *French*, meaning syphilis, which associates the robber’s family with divine retribution for their moral decline (BOČKOVÁ 2009: 9, note 13).

addition to the notable textual similarities with our song (“To them faithfully let us hasten, with one voice let us sing”), it is also significant that later versions of *Jedním hlasem* omit this apocryphal motif, reflecting the gradual retreat of apocryphal themes from high literature into peripheral folk art.

Czech ethnomusicological literature contains two legendary interpretations of the Holy Family’s flight to Egypt. The first version, associated with Cochem, was spread through the broadside ballads, while the second version is documented solely in oral tradition⁴³ (for more on the sources, see the previous section *The Media Space and Function of the Song*). Additional sources provide evidence of German-language versions of the flight to Egypt song, which are widely known, including in the German-speaking region of Kuhlant (Kravařsko) in northern Moravia.⁴⁴

This popular international theme (classified by folklorists as type ATU 750E)⁴⁵ and its various episodes are reflected in several prose versions within Czech folklore. For instance, one tale tells of a flower that loses its scent because it refuses to reveal itself to the Holy Family during a storm. Similarly, the aspen tree is punished for not providing shelter to the Holy Family, fearing that Herod might cut it down (KŘEMEN 1910: 45–46, 66). In fairy tales, naturalistic motifs of shielding the Holy Family from Herod’s pursuers appear as fast-growing grain or a swarm of attacking bees (KŘEMEN 1910: 64–65). Other stories recount more miraculous events. For example, the rejuvenating power of Jesus’ swaddling clothes, hung on a rose bush, causes the roses to bloom with a powerful fragrance. In another tale, the bath water left by the infant Jesus cures the sick child of a robber. The robber repents and embraces faith, rejoicing in the child’s healing. In yet another version, the armless daughter of a blacksmith is healed (her limbs regenerated) when, at the Virgin Mary’s request, she holds the baby Jesus in her arms (KŘEMEN 1910: 67–68; ZÍTEK 1906: 126–127; SATKE 1984: no. 77).

Although there is a time span of more than 140 years between the oldest known version of the broadside ballad from 1713 and the version published by the Procházka printing house, which the collector obtained from a folk singer, the two do not differ significantly in terms of text or language. The differences are found on the level of phonological, grammatical, or lexical variants.

43) The motif of Mary alone wandering with the infant Jesus through the fields, and the miraculous sowing of grain that shields them from Herod’s soldiers, is developed in this song legend. This particular version appears only marginally in the Czech repertoire (ŠRÁMKOVÁ – SIROVÁTKA 1990: 69–70), yet it resonates across a wide area of Lusatian-Serbian song legends (HAUPT – SCHMALER 1953: 275–276) and Polish carols (BARTMIŃSKI 1996: 326–327).

44) These sources have been compiled in a comprehensive study by Dietz-Rüdiger Moser (MOSER 1971) and continue to be the focus of ongoing research, along with other international parallels.

45) UTHUR 2004: nos. 284–286.

Litomyšl 1713	Těšín [1846–1896]	
3rd stanza		Linguistic differences
Svatý Joachym voslička na cestu jim daroval, ně tc o potravy, však málo, Jozef se velmi staral, že [skr]z takové pustiny, velké kopce [a] doliny, ač sám dost v zármutku byl, srdce Mariji těšil. ⁴⁶	Svaty Joachym osličta (sic!) na cestu jim daroval ně co potravy, však málo; Jozef se velmi staral, že jit musi skrz pustiny, velké kopce a doliny, ač sám dost v zarmutku byl, však jest Marii těšil	prothetic <i>v-</i> long consonant /c/ lexical differences lexical differences
5th stanza		
Starší mordýř to vidouce, lá[sku] jim prokazoval, vezm ouc je [do] své cha- loupky, jídlo, pítí doda[va]l , když Maria ráno vstala, Kri[sta] [Je]žíše myla , ⁴⁷	Starší zbojnik toto vida, lásku jim prokazoval, vez ma je od (sic!) své chaloupky, jídlo, pítí (sic!) obstaral : když Maria ráno vstala, Krista Ježíše koupala ;	lexical differences/ differ- ent converb affixes different converb affixes lexical differences lexical differences
16th stanza		
Matka Boží litostivě k Bohu [se] jest modlila, zemdlená jsouc s [sv]ým Děťátkem , občerstvení žádala, [r]ychlosti po pravé straně stu[dn]íce vyskočila,	Matka Boží litostivě k Bohu se jest modlila, zemdlena jsouc s svym Synáčkem , občerstvení žádala: rychle tu po pravé straně vyskočila krásná studně ,	lexical differences lexical differences lexical differences a different rendering

46) "Holy Joachim gave them for their journey a little donkey and some food, but not much; Joseph had no peace, And through the wastelands, great hills and valleys, though he himself was deep in sorrow, still he comforted Mary's heart."

47) "Seeing that, an older murderer showed them love, took them to his small cottage and gave them food and drink: When Mary rose next morning She took Jesus Christ to wash."

občerstvíc se Matka [B]oží, moc Božskou velebila. ⁴⁸	takže se občerstvili, Božskou moc velebili.	resulting from a different interpretation of the depicted situation
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Table 2. Comparison of the edited version of the broadside ballad with the oldest variant from 1713

The most significant differences observed in the examples appear in the final couplet, which, while using similar vocabulary, shifts the overall meaning. This suggests possible changes in interpretation resulting from later reception, which could also account for other minor lexical variations. The remaining differences stem from language variation typical of the period or changes in the language standard between the 18th and mid-19th century (*nětco* → *něco*, *voslička* → *oslička*, *těšil jest* → *těšil*, *vidouce* → *vida*).

The broadside ballad printing published in Těšín exhibits several dialectal features traceable to the Silesian-Czech dialect area. These include phenomena of dephonologization of vowel quantity, manifested either in the incorrect marking of vowel length in short syllables (<na mne pamatowati / Sluhů wšfak nehodného>), or in the omission of length marking in long vowels (*ruže jim prokvitaly*). Further features include the unification of the hard-pronoun and compound declension (*jednym*), which appears throughout much of the Moravian dialect area and here occurs in a shortened form consistent with the aforementioned Silesian-Czech dephonologization of quantity (ČJA4: 384). Also present is the syncretism of the genitive and locative (*z jeskyních*), attested in some Silesian-Czech dialects (BĚLIČ 1972: 163). Additional elements corresponding to a Silesian-Czech background include certain originally archaic forms, such as the masculine gender of the noun *koupel* (*v ten koupel*), and the genitive plural ending in *-uv* (*strupuv*). As mentioned above, the broadside ballad is presented – except for the introductory and final stanzas – in a straightforward narrative style. However, in accordance with the apocryphal material it adapts, it also adopts a range of linguistic characteristics associated more with the elevated style of ecclesiastical communication. These include regular use of complex (hypotactic) sentence structures, though mostly limited to a single level of subordination⁴⁹ (*Kde ty osoby svaté šly, ruže jim prokvitaly, ke cti,*

48) “The Mother of God sorrowfully prayed to God, exhausted, with her little Child She asked for refreshment: in an instant to her right sprang forth a fount, and refreshing herself, the Holy Mother praised the Lord’s might.”

49) This means that the given complex sentences contain only subordinate clauses dependent on the main clause, and not subordinate clauses dependent on other subordinate clauses.

chvále Krista Pána libou vůni dávaly; však když k Hermu poli přišli, velký zástup lidu našli, jenž se stromu klaněli, jemu Božskou čest dali); enjambment (*Svatý Joachym oslička / na cestu jim daroval / něco potravy, však málo; Pod jedním stromem seděli, / kdež překrásné ovoce / bylo, ale však vysoko / dostat nemoouce; když ty tři osoby svaté / tam vešly, dveře samy / hned se jim otevřely*); periphrastic passive constructions (*buď zvelebeno*); word order inversion (*rač na mne pamatovati sluhů však nehodného!*); and, occasional phonetic ornamentations, such alliteration (*velký velmi*). These phenomena suggest that the composer or adapter of the broadside ballad likely had an educated background.

The version of the ballad obtained from a folk singer – attested only by its introductory stanza – fully conforms to modern standard Czech and, with one exception, does not exhibit any dialectal features. One instance of Silesian-Czech dephonologization of vowel quantity (*velka*) may be considered a reflection of the local dialect; the other shortened form (*jmena*) is attested in earlier developmental stages of Czech and therefore cannot be interpreted as primarily dialectally motivated.

Melody

The melody of this broadside ballad has been preserved only through oral tradition and ethnomusicological sources. As previously mentioned, the documentation of the edited version of the ballad was created as part of a folklore collection effort in the regions of Lašsko and Silesia (HOLUBOVÁ 2021: 24–26). From oral transmission, collectors recorded three additional regional musical notations⁵⁰ representing the final developmental stage of this broadside ballad. Oral tradition was likely the sole medium through which the melodies of the ballad were passed down. The ballad itself later became a melodic source for another broadside ballad with a Passion theme, *Vždycky mně na myslí leží, bych do cizích zemí šel* (“It Always Weighs on My Mind That I Should Go to Foreign Lands”).⁵¹ This indicates that the ballad *Ach velká láska Boží* (“Oh, Great Love

50) Melody 1 (see edition); Melody 2: EÚB A 510/46, Stará Ves nad Ondřejnicí, 1941; Melody 3: B II, no. 978 (first notation), Velká nad Veličkou; Melody 4: B II, no. 978 (second notation), Velká nad Veličkou. Indirect evidence comes from the Vysočina region: Kateřina Klusáková from Heraltice (b. 1836) sang the ballad while feather-stripping (SÝKORA 1912: 16).

51) This Passion-themed broadside ballad appears in numerous *špalíčky* “blocks”, i.e. private collections of broadside ballads made/stitched by the consumer (KOPALOVÁ – HOLUBOVÁ 2008: nos. 3088, 3089, 3091, 3095, 3097, 3098).

of God”) was widely known in the second half of the 18th and the early 19th century.

The edited melody from oral tradition (Mariánské Hory, 1939) diverges from the typical melodic patterns of narrative songs commonly used in Czech broadside ballads. It does not draw from the hymnographic tradition of printed hymnals, despite being originally composed in the early 18th century to the melodies of two spiritual songs dedicated to Christ.⁵² The edited melody represents a type of regional interpretation of folk devotional songs characteristic of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is characterized by a linear melodic structure,⁵³ an octave range with a minor third, and the emphasis of the subdominant (lower fourth) tone. This simple mode is based on a marked minor tonic and a major dominant, and at the same time can be interpreted as part of a pre-harmonic (overtone) tonal series. It shares features with certain melodies found in Baroque hymnals, such as the widely known Marian song *Pod tvůj plášť se utíkáme* (“Under Your Cloak We Take Refuge”).⁵⁴ The odd meter of the melody is not clearly discernible; instead, it is characterized by rhythmic slowing at cadences or line endings, which weakens the metrorhythmic symmetry of the melody. Another oral musical variant of the ballad *Ach veliká láska Boží* (“Oh, Great Love of God”)⁵⁵ is related to the melodic reference *Přijdiž, přijdiž, ó můj Jezu* (“Come, come, O my Jesus”), well known from broadside ballads of the 18th century. This melodic reference appears in other 18th- and 19th-century broadside ballads as well, including pilgrimage songs. A typical feature of the melody’s reception in regional oral tradition is that it does not exist in a single fixed form; rather, its individual musical realizations vary.

52) The first refers to the melody *Přijdiž, přijdiž, ó můj Jezu* (“Come, come, O my Jesus”). The occurrence of this song in printed hymnographic sources is extremely rare (HTB, Rosenmüller 1712, 180–181). The second refers to the melody *Když pak přijde můj Pán Ježíš* (“When My Lord Jesus Comes”). This song exists in two notations (the first in MHB/2021; the second in ŠtejKan 1764, 890).

53) This means that the ballad is characterized primarily by a distinct melodic component, whereas other broadside ballads are often defined by a strong rhythmic element – such as a dance-like quality (the metrorhythmic principle of the melody; see FROLCOVÁ et al. 2022: 552–553 for further detail).

54) MHB/111.

55) B II: 623, first melody under song number 978; cf. ŠtejKan 1764, 890. This melody and its reception are the subject of further research.

Conclusion

The inspiring work of Hana Bočková has led us to continue adopting an interdisciplinary perspective on Czech broadside ballads and their role in shaping spirituality, language, music, and education in the Central European context of the 18th and 19th centuries. Building on her previous research, we have focused here on the apocryphal ballad *Ach velická láska Boží* (“Oh, Great Love of God”), whose thematic and narrative tradition reaches far back into the Middle Ages. Its immediate model for the author/adaptor was *Veliký život* (“The Great Life”) by Martin of Cochem. The author/adaptor preserves Cochem’s main motifs but reworks them in their own language, which reflects an educated background. The ballad under study represents a model example of a Baroque broadside ballad with non-canonical – but not anti-canonical – content, which was not supported by the official Catholic milieu or its media. Unlike other religiously motivated broadside ballads, the media presence of this broadside ballad is limited; it lacks the usual convergence of multiple channels of (Catholic) religious dissemination, such as printed hymn-books, prayer books, pilgrimage books, etc. The broadside ballad circulated primarily through media on the periphery of the media space (SMYČKOVÁ 2022), likely due to its departure from official Church doctrine. It was transmitted through a single printed medium (the broadside ballad printing), as well as partially through manuscript hymn-books (likely lay catecheses) and responses within the oral tradition – surviving the Enlightenment and the 19th century. It was preserved into the 20th century, along with certain elements of the older, high-style Baroque language layer. As in other cases, we observe a certain tension between the textual and musical components: while the textual form of the broadside ballad was transmitted in a relatively stable form, its melody varied significantly. This divergence clearly reflects the differing modes of transmission – text by print, melody by memory. The analyzed broadside ballad thus serves as a model illustration of the specific status of long-lasting broadside ballads, situated on the boundary between literacy and orality. Differences in the transmission of text and melody also suggest that any historical interpretation of broadside ballads must carefully consider the phenomenon of their “developmental/historical continuity”.

From the clues identified in our research, several questions emerge for which we do not yet have definitive answers and which require further investigation. Certain facts suggest the possibility that we are dealing with a ballad originating

in a Jesuit context with a catechetical function – one that deliberately concealed its identity. These include: the Olomouc provenance of the early broadside ballad printing; the printing of another anonymous broadside ballad with an apocryphal theme concerning the death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary; the figure of the printer (F. A. Hirnle), who had come to Olomouc from the Jesuit printing house in Prague; manuscript and oral evidence of the ballad from locations associated with Jesuit missions in eastern Moravia (Vsetín, Velká nad Veličkou) and from pilgrimage sites with a Jesuit presence (Olomouc, Brno, Banská Štítnice); elements of the older, high-style Baroque language layer; a contrafactum of a Christological song from the hymnal of Jesuit Matěj Václav Štejer; and the composition of the narrative ballad framed by sung prayers. These facts direct our attention toward printing houses in towns with Jesuit colleges; for example, in Innsbruck was published an independent German broadside ballad about the flight into Egypt, including an apocryphal motif. Although similar in theme, however, it was different in form and content (KLIER 1955: 60).⁵⁶

Future research should also focus on the international parallels of the broadside ballad and its intermedial connections with folk theatre.⁵⁷ Thematically, the broadside ballad belongs to two international contexts: the first includes songs about the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt; the second comprises songs about the conversion of a sinner or non-believer to the true faith through the miraculous healing of their child. From today's perspective, both themes represent a form of contamination within the domain of legendary songs. However, only some of them entered the media space of broadside ballad production during the period of recatholization and the Enlightenment.

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56) It is the motif of a tree bending down to offer its fruit as refreshment to the travellers. For further versions and contexts of German-language songs about the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt – transmitted through oral, manuscript, and printed media – see MOSER 1971.

57) According to the diaries of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the Carmelite sisters in the convent performed a play titled *The Flight into Egypt* in January 1896; the play included an episode depicting the healing of Dismas's leprous son (DE MEESTER 2002: 84).

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ABBREVIATIONS

EÚB Dokumentační sbírky a fondy Etnologického ústavu Akademie věd ČR, pracoviště Brno (“Documentary collections and collections of the Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Brno”)

MZA Moravský zemský archiv Brno (“Moravian Land Archive, Brno”)

NK Národní knihovna Praha (“National Library, Prague”)

SM Slovácké muzeum v Uherském Hradišti (“Slovácké muzeum, Uherské Hradiště”)

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