

## Jan Blahoslav's 1569 *Musica* as a Facsimile

Jan Blahoslav, *Musica*. A facsimile of the edition of 1569. Prepared by Petr Daněk and Jiří K. Kroupa. Koniasch Latin Press, Prague 2016, 200 + \*56 pages. ISBN 978-80-87773-37-6

In European history of the last several centuries, the Czech lands are most distinctive for their early adoption of religious reformation. The Hussite movement, arising from the legacy of Jan Hus (+1415), started a reformist mobilisation a full hundred years before Martin Luther, directing local social and cultural development up to the beginning of the Thirty Years' War. The Unity of the Czech Brethren, founded in 1457, became the most important heir of the Hussite legacy. Its multifaceted activities made their mark not only on the history of religion, but also on book culture, literature, spiritual poetry, and church song. After the victory of the counter-reformation in 1621, the church went into exile, where its legacy subsided, but also culminated in the work of Jan Amos Komenský, often referred to by his Latin moniker Comenius (+1670).

One of the key figures of the Unity of the Brethren at the time of its flourishing was Jan Blahoslav (1523–1571), according to his obituary a “great and dear jewel of the Unity”. This bishop tied his entire life and work with the church, enriching the Brethren ideology, particularly with stimuli from Christian humanism. Blahoslav was also the archivist, secretary, and historian of the Unity of the Brethren, writing a number of religious and educational treatises and contributing to the development

of his mother tongue with a translation of the New Testament and a book on Czech grammar. He also entered the history of Czech singing: he was the main editor of two of the most important editions of the Unity of the Brethren hymnbook, printed in 1561 in Szamotuły, Poland, and in 1564 in Ivančice, Moravia, contributing his own spiritual songs to both.

Blahoslav's *Musica* is a textbook presenting the foundations of music theory which the author created following the example of similar German textbooks during his editorial work on the hymnbooks of 1561 and 1564. It was to be an aid for those singing from these hymnbooks, but today, it is a unique historical document and the oldest known music theory work in Czech. Blahoslav published the work in 1558. At the time, however, he also compiled two extensive and historically valuable additions – instructions for singer and instructions on the composition of sacred songs – which he then appended to the second edition of the book in 1569. This second extended edition forms the basis for this new facsimile publication of *Musica*.

Facsimile editions of sources in Czech music have a long history, but to this day, they remain rather exceptional occurrences. The first editions of entire books appeared between the wars, initiated by Czech librarians: these were excellent reproductions

of the Brethren  
published w  
edition (192  
published b  
*Cimelia Bohem*  
however, on  
before the e  
valuable is t  
by the south  
Otradovic (1  
This new fac  
a reconstruct  
published in  
Musical fac  
of this publi  
brought the  
deserving of  
a facsimile e  
of the Unity



## O Křicích

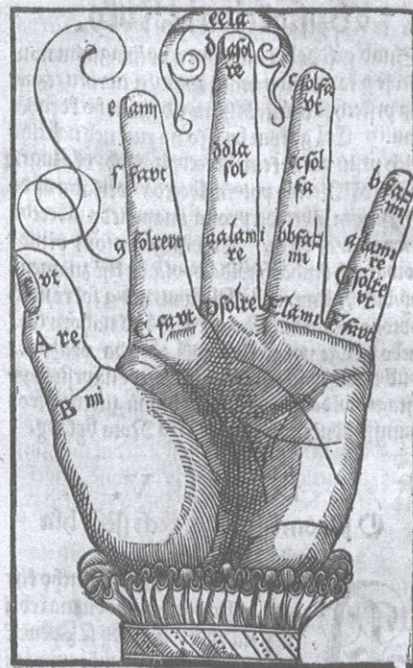
a neb hzvoláše w zpívání prošém. Někdy pak mlčky a tichož znamenáno byvá to msto literau. b: Cemuž ac se zpomíných věc lépe vyrozumj, wšak y tuto widělo mi se toho doznáuti.

Ale žebý pak nepřetně byto akdyby příkazdem zpívání wšickni Křicové spočátku lin napřívání byli / protož obyčej gest tjm sebe ani msta nezaměstnávati bez potřeby / ale gediny toliko Křic sůstym Charakterem / neb způsobem zvyklau gij sřigáru naznamenati / aby od toho gednoho gij omštech ginych na kterých by mštech kterých bysřnadně mohlo sauzeno býti.

Zi pak Křicové kteréž obyčej gest znamenávati nastraně w předku zpěvu / tu saú tež na řebřku / vřázání nřikolitergym způsobem. Některj proto že wtom nenj gednostegnost / gedni tak giny ginař znamenávaj / wšak proto wšse newelmi daleko gedno od druhého / galsř Charakterové vřazuj.

Že pak Křic kterýž má býti znamenán na před w zpívání / nemá ginde než na líně býti pozřčen / sřigúra přednj vřazuže.

Wyšve



translation of the New  
ch grammar. He  
ch singing; he was  
most important editions  
ymnbook, printed  
and in 1564 in Ivančice,  
spiritual songs to

presenting  
ry which the author  
of similar  
editorial work on  
54. It was to be an aid  
ymnbooks, but today,  
ent and the oldest  
Czech. Blahoslav  
the time, however, he  
nd historically valuable  
ger and instructions  
songs - which he then  
n of the book in 1569.  
forms the basis for this  
Musica.

n Czech music have  
they remain rather  
first editions of entire  
vars, initiated by  
xcellent reproductions

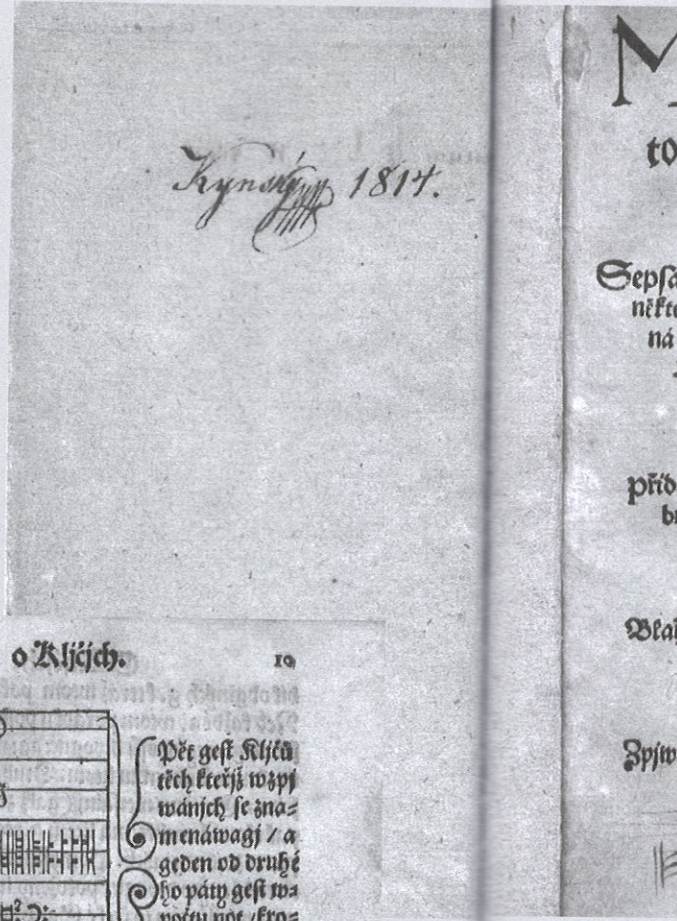
of the Brethren hymnbooks printed in 1531 and 1541, published within the *Monumenta Bohemiae Typographica* edition (1926-1931). Several music sources were then published by the National Library's post-war series, *Cimelia Bohemica*, between 1967 and 1972. Individually, however, only a few of these items were published before the end of the 20th century. Among the most valuable is the facsimile of *The Czech Lute (Loutna česká)* by the south Bohemian organist Adam Michna z Otradovic (published by Martin Horyna in 1984). This new facsimile of Blahoslav's *Musica*, which is a reconstruction of the original form of the book, was published in Prague by KLP - Koniasch Latin Press. Musical facsimiles are not rare in the production of this publisher - active since 1993 -, who has brought them out in various forms and functions deserving of greater attention. Among these is a facsimile edition of Komenský's last edition of the Unity of the Brethren hymnbook from 1659,

to which we devoted several pages in a previous edition of *Czech Music Quarterly* (see 2019/1). Blahoslav's *Musica* is another extraordinary publication, both in its selection of model and in its realisation. This excellently prepared book in pocket-size format was primarily intended as an exclusive souvenir for the guests of the Prague Spring music festival - it is dedicated to its seventieth anniversary. The book's potential reach, however, seeing as it provides a full English translation of the Czech commentary, is considerably broader, as this title is among the essential sources of Old Czech music and its author among the key figures of Czech history. This is also why this tome has a considerable bibliography of secondary literature. It is worth mentioning that Blahoslav's *Musica* 1569, the first music theory book in Czech, also became the subject of one of the first monographs of Czech musicology. In 1896, Otakar Hostinský,



one of the founders of Czech musicology, published a complete and commented edition, along with an anonymous Brethren *Muzika* from 1561, whose author hid under the name Josquin. Hostinský was mostly an aesthete and a critic of contemporary music, but in this case, he admirably entered a very particular topic from the history of music theory. In 1923, the second classic in the field, Vladimír Helfert, also wrote a valuable study on the sources of Blahoslav's *Musica*, and musicologists' interest today is undiminished.

In our context, it is worth mentioning the work of professor Thomas Sovík (\*1953), an American of Czech heritage who wrote a dissertation on both the *Musica* analysed by O. Hostinský (Ohio 1985), thus launching his now extensive academic career. The results of this dissertation were published in print in Kosmas (vol. 6, 1987). In 1991, in Denton, Texas, Sovík published the first edition of Blahoslav's *Musica* from 1558 and the so-called Josquin *Muzika* from 1561 as two books. These are paperbacks providing English translations of the texts, with commentary,



o Křicích. 10

ee	la	sol	
dd	la	fa	m
cc	sol	m	re
bb	fa	re	vt
aa	la	vt	
G	fa	vt	
F	la	sol	re
e	la	fa	vt
d	la	sol	re
c	fa	m	re
b	fa	m	re
a	la	m	re
G	sol	re	vt
F	fa	vt	
E	la	m	re
D	sol	vt	
C	fa	m	re
B	la	m	re
A	re		
F	vt		

**Dvogit**  
neb wpo-  
sokl.

**Křicij**  
se delj  
na li-  
tery.

**Dvessj a**  
**ostri.**

**wlissj a**  
**hrubé etu**  
**sté galo**  
**barbaung**

**Wpswelenj Křiciku.**

Porádek liter od nejnišší až do nejwysší /  
galby šel rozumš / je po abecedě / od A až do  
G. Za pal litera křeráz dole na líně gest po-  
ložena. i. I gest křek z. tak položena pro roz-  
st. W ti, dje

*Handwritten note: 23 předání neproštem genj fove o karmata Sgurochis roj a Yoz v. Sdali by wá roškonog mo Křicow, a stmo jspřobem se paměta wost.*

*Handwritten note: 23 předání neproštem genj fove o karmata Sgurochis roj a Yoz v. Sdali by wá roškonog mo Křicow, a stmo jspřobem se paměta wost.*

complem  
of the Cz  
*Musica* ma  
ested par  
The epilo  
in Prague  
informati  
Blahoslav  
this epilo  
a mere tw  
rich infor  
extending  
a detailed  
exegesis i  
least half  
miniature  
The intro  
and his oc  
activities i  
is introdu



Kynda 1814.

# MUSICA

to gest Knjzka Zpewa  
kum/nalezite zprawy  
w sobe zawragicz.

Sepsana Jazykem Ceskym z zádosti  
někerých dobrých přátel. A wylisze-  
na nepprvé / leta Páně / 1 5 5 8. w  
Holomaucy. Nynj znovu  
pilně skorygowaná a wylis-  
stěná.

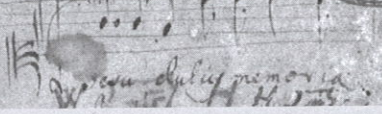
přidány sáu Regule / a nautený počte-  
bná Kantorům y písni sklada-  
telům.

Zátn. 38.

Blahoslavensj gest ten lid kcerj vni ra-  
dostně prozpěwovati. r.

Zátn. 46.

Zpieweje Bohu nassemu zpieweje  
Zpieweje vměle,



10  
Pee gest. Ksica  
tech kcerj wzpy  
wánjch se zna-  
menawagi / a  
geden od druhé  
ho pány gest wa-  
poczu noc / kro-  
mē negniššho  
T. ten sedmý  
gest od K.  
bršku.  
aš do neywošš/  
ed/od. A aš do  
ena líně gest po-  
ložena pro ro-  
dž

complemented by black-and-white reproductions of the Czech original. Thanks to Sovík, Blahoslav's *Musica* made it far beyond the Atlantic and any interested parties can now read its first edition in English. The epilogue to the new facsimile, published in Prague in 2016, contains more detailed information on this and other literature relating to Blahoslav's *Musica*. Written by editor Petr Daněk, this epilogue is a brilliant work of musicology: on a mere twenty-two pages of octavo size, he presents rich information, clearly summarising and newly extending the topic, documenting everything with a detailed bibliography. The conciseness of this exegesis is supported by the footnotes, taking up at least half of the text, often creating what is akin to miniature dictionary entries. The introduction briefly presents Jan Blahoslav and his oeuvre, as well as a short overview of his activities in the field of spiritual song. *Musica* is introduced as part of Blahoslav's work on

the Brethren hymnbook, as well as in the context of European music textbooks from the 16th century, expounded on by the extensive note no. 15 (which contains an interesting final hypothesis that in 1558, Blahoslav probably "did not know any German music textbooks"). In a similar manner, note no. 16 summarises the conclusions in the literature about the competing Brethren Josquin *Muzika 1561*, which is also newly framed as an inspiration to the second, extended edition of Blahoslav's treatise. This is followed by detailed bibliographic descriptions of both editions of the *Muzika* including an interesting history of the individual copies, as well as the first detailed comparison of the 1558 version with the 1569 reedition. This complex view of a specialised handbook is then complemented by a reflection on its practical use and terminological contributions, concluding with a remarkable finding by the author about the connection between Blahoslav's "regulae for singers" with the tradition of Czech verse teachings for church singers. The new facsimile is a perfect imitation of the original: printed in the original pocket-book format on quality toned paper, it is neatly bound in solid brown panels. All this is crowned by the beautiful original cover art by Jana Koksteinová (Jiří K. Kroupa, the second editor, provides a detailed note on her inspirations in his final commentary). If the term "cimelia" began appearing in the names of Czech facsimile series in the sense of a rarity or jewel in book form, then this facsimile – in addition to its historical value – is also a gem of a book: bibliophilia of the highest rank; a book as a rare item for collectors. In conclusion, let us put to mind that this facsimile (and the reproduction of the 1659 Komenský hymnbook) is only a sample of the broader and multi-genre productions of Prague's KLP – Konias Latin Press, which last year inconspicuously entered into its second quarter-century of activity. Its productions are usually recognisable at first sight given the perfect outward appearance, but they are also accompanied by repeatedly outstanding editorial work on the texts. They can also boast realisations of the most editorially demanding tasks such as Petr Voit's large syntheses on Old Czech book printing and the like. Finally, it is also remarkable how important their published titles from the sphere of the humanities are, including some of the best works in contemporary Czech musicology. Today's digital age brings a number of doubts about the sense and necessity of the printed book. The representative sample from contemporary Czech book culture published by KLP is one answer to these doubts.