Janáček's Glagolitic mess: Notes on the text of the *Glagolitic Mass* and pronunciation guide

Janáček's original intention in composing what became known as the Glagolitic Mass was to set an Old Church Slavic version of the Ordinary of the Roman Catholic Mass. Old Church Slavic (OCS) is the earliest written Slavic language; it was based on an eastern South Slavic dialect and originally used the distinctive alphabet shown above, which is called Glagolitic.

When OCS was first developed there were few differences in the language spoken by groups of Slavs settled all over eastern Europe, so that OCS texts could have been easily understood everywhere. But as the spoken languages changed over time they became more and more distant from OCS, and where this written language continued to be used (primarily in the Orthodox Church), it was adapted towards the spoken idioms, so that after the year 1100 we can only speak of Russian Church Slavic, Bulgarian Church Slavic, Serbian Church Slavic, etc.

Although OCS was also used in the western part of the Slavic territory, it was replaced here by Latin after the Great Schism of 1054 divided Christianity into eastern and western branches. Church Slavic continued to be used in the Catholic Church only in some parts of Croatia.

No complete missal survives from the OCS period, and the later Church Slavic texts from the eastern churches would not be appropriate for a Catholic mass. However, a Glagolitic Croatian Church Slavic missal, based primarily on the text of the oldest surviving Croatian missal from the 14th century, was published in 1905. The Czech scholar Jozef Vajs published two Latin-alphabet transcriptions of parts of this missal in 1919 and 1920, which gave Janáček something to work with, but the text of the Mass as Janáček set it presents us with several problems:

- In his conversion of the text from the Glagolitic to the Latin alphabet, Vajs adapted the orthography and pronunciation towards Czech; moreover, the 1919 and 1920 versions differ significantly, and both contain numerous mistakes.
- Janáček used both the 1919 and 1920 transcriptions in different parts of the mass (sometimes both in the same movement). He also worked from memory in some of his revisions of the manuscript and failed to check the text against the original sources, leading to additional errors. In setting the text Janáček was

strongly influenced by the stress of modern Czech (which always falls on the first syllable), rather than the word stresses that we can reasonably assume for OCS.

• Before the mass was published, the text was sent to Miloš Weingart, a professor of Slavic studies in Prague, to be checked. He corrected a number of Janáček's and Vajs's inconsistencies and mistakes, and also changed the language to remove some of its Czech and Croatian features, making it more like the language of the earliest OCS texts in some respects. Other editors made additional changes. However, some post-OCS phonological features of the text have been left unchanged in all versions, and some mistakes in the text could not be corrected because they would require significant recomposition.

As a result, the various editions of the Glagolitic Mass have slight differences in the text, and none of the versions is completely correct.

Guide to pronunciation

Vowels

i, u, e, o, a	pronounced more or less as in Latin.
У	pronounced the same as i ¹
ě	<i>ye</i> as in 'yes'

Consonants

vard

Note that both I and r can function as vowels; words like *plna*, *Chrste* are two syllables: pl-na, Chr-ste.

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Information on the composition of the Glagolitic Mass taken from Wingfield, Paul. 1992. *Janáček: Glagolitic Mass*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹ The letter y represented a distinct vowel in OCS, and y and i are pronounced differently in Russian Church Slavic (e.g., in the Rachmaninov *Vespers*). In Croatian Church Slavic the sound represented by y had already fallen together with the vowel i, and the Glagolitic missal that the text of the mass is taken from used a single letter for both original sounds. Vajs (1920) and Weingart changed the text, writing y where it would be historically expected. This is similar to the modern Czech orthography, which distinguishes y and i in spelling, even though they are pronounced identically. Since neither the Croatian nor the Czech pronunciation distinguishes the original vowels y and i and the text is not authentically OCS in the first place, there is no real reason to distinguish the two sounds in performing the Glagolitic Mass.