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František Pospíšil's recordings, made in the summer of 1910 – an introduction

Although Pospíšil wrote his name in the protocols adding “cand. profess.” for his profession, he had probably already passed the state examination for secondary school teachers in the same year (cf. Neweklowsky 2009: 61). This fact might be confirmed by the recording date, which is not – as is usual – indicated by giving a specific day, but simply by the phrase “summer holidays 1910”.

As Neweklowsky (2009: 61) pointed out, Pospíšil – first as a student, then as a teacher – undertook numerous ethnographic expeditions both at home and abroad during his holidays, which allowed him to develop further his interests in traditional folk culture, music and dance, language and narration. While still in Vienna, he also attended lectures in phonetics and became interested in modern audio recording techniques.

Sigmund Exner, the founder and first director of the Phonogrammarchiv of the former Imperial Academy of Sciences, mentioned in his report from April 1910 that the planned expeditions also included František Pospíšil's project of recording the “Slavic dialect of Moravia” (Exner 1910: 346). In his report from 1911 he then noted that the archival collections had also increased due to the sound recordings comprising language (dialects) and songs which Pospíšil had delivered to the Phonogrammarchiv (Exner 1911: 401). Pospíšil recorded mostly songs, but also two fairy tales (all in all 17 recordings) in South Moravia, in the Croatian “language island” around Guttenfeld (Dobro Polje/Dobré Pole); in the border region near Slovakia, called the Slovácko region, he made 14 recordings of various songs, while one spoken dialect recording was made in the Haná region (see the contribution by L. Uhlíková). These recordings were wrongly classified as “Slovakian” in the first catalogue (Exner 1922: 65) and then given as examples of minority culture (similar to the Croatian minority in South Moravia) – a fact which Uhlíková discussed and corrected.

Due to his interests in the speaking of dialects as well as in folk singing, Pospíšil's studies were perfectly in keeping with the kind of research activities started by Josef Pommer. The latter was the initiator and head of the large-scale project of documenting folk songs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (i.e. “The folk song in Austria”, a joint project of the *k. k. Ministerium für Cultus und Unterricht* and the *Universal Edition*, cf. Deutsch & Hois 2004). Pommer had close contacts with colleagues in the respective regions of the monarchy. One of them was Leoš Janáček, the head of the Working Committee for the Czech Folk Song in Moravia and Silesia. While Pommer did not trust in the new technology, i.e. the phonograph, and even denied any benefit (cf. Adler 1909: 225, Lechleitner 2005: 185–186), Janáček used the phonograph with passion and found in Pospíšil a young like-minded colleague.

What role did the Phonogrammarchiv play? The Phonogrammarchiv would have liked to be a partner in Pommer's big project, but, for the reasons already mentioned, sound recordings were not on the agenda in the first years of this project. Therefore, the Phonogrammarchiv

followed its own strategy and cooperated with linguists and dialectologists in documenting the manifold German dialects then spoken throughout the monarchy (including territories on the fringes and so-called language islands, cf. Schabus 2003: 5–6). The Phonogrammarchiv was always open to researchers who asked for an *Archiv-Phonograph* in the course of their research projects. In return, those field recordings with attached documentation were added to the archival stocks. Pospíšil met the demands; the wax discs were processed for preservation purposes (for the metal negatives and the new wax positives, see “Guiding principles of the edition: 1. Historical material”), and, together with his detailed protocols, then became part of the holdings.

František Pospíšil (1885–1958) was interested in traditional folk culture, music and dance, as well as in language and storytelling and had a strong interest in technology. He probably had contact with Rudolf Trebitsch (1876–1918), an ethnographer who was interested in languages, music, dance, and customs. Trebitsch made field recordings not only in Greenland (1906) and in Celtic-speaking regions (1907–09), but also in the Basque country (1913), and handed over his collections to the Phonogrammarchiv (published as Series 5/1–3). Pospíšil’s fieldwork during the summer holidays of 1910 can be seen as in line with Trebitsch’s experiences in the field; both were interested in a specific language or dialect of a minority community and recorded sung and spoken items. Additionally, both researchers were cooperating with the Phonogrammarchiv. Moreover, Pospíšil amended his protocols after his fieldwork and made some corrections in red. He probably stayed at the Phonogrammarchiv in the summer of 1914 for this purpose, as can be seen from the date noted in the protocols. This timing might suggest that Trebitsch and Pospíšil, being colleagues of the same generation, could have met and exchanged their experiences (see Lechleitner 2008).

As already indicated, Pospíšil made recordings in three regions during the summer of 1910: in South Moravia, where he recorded mainly Croatian inhabitants (during what we would today call minority research), in the Slovácko region, and in the Haná region. As he did not indicate the precise date, it is not possible to decide whether he visited South Moravia or the Slovácko and Haná regions first. As already mentioned, he made almost the same number of recordings in South Moravia and the Slovácko region; his methodological procedure, too, seemed to be the same – asking the performers to enter a yard where he had positioned the recording machine (cf. the photographs). Most likely, the preparation of the protocols followed the same model: he filled in the fields of the header, also noting down the melodies and texts, and in both cases he revised his notes four years later, during the summer holidays of 1914.

Pospíšil’s spoken and sung recordings of Croats in South Moravia have already been published (see Lechleitner & Marošević 2009). In that publication, Pospíšil’s collection was one of ten others subsumed under the title of *Croatian Recordings 1901–1936*, covering regions of today’s Croatia as well as Croats living abroad, e.g. in Molise (Italy) or Moravia.

As a result of the cooperation with two specialists from Brno, Hana Dvořáková and Lucie Uhlíková, this publication is now specifically devoted to Pospíšil and his recordings from the

Slovácko and Haná regions. In this case it is possible to concentrate much more on Pospíšil's activities. Thus, Dvořáková made it possible to include the photographic material from the Moravian Museum in Brno as additional sources to the sound recordings, accompanied by a commentary on Pospíšil's method of combining photography (later also film) and sound; the identification of the people and places in the pictures was only possible thanks to the information provided by both the Moravian Museum and the Phonogrammarchiv. Uhlíková, on the other hand, contributed valuable text and music transcriptions and delivered musical analyses and comments to aid understanding of the repertoire, social aspects, customs etc.

In this focused publication, thanks to the commentaries of Dvořáková and Uhlíková, new findings shed light on methodological approaches and fieldwork at the beginning of the 20th century, shortly before the outbreak of World War I. The two collections, the sound recordings in the Phonogrammarchiv and the photo collection of the Moravian Museum in Brno (MZM), provide deeper insight into Pospíšil's activities.

Although there are no documents in the Phonogrammarchiv indicating a close personal contact between Exner (or the archive's staff) and Pospíšil, he must have been very well informed (see Pospíšil 1920). As Hana Dvořáková points out in her commentary (see Dvořáková, page 2), his contact with the archive is evident when one considers his deposited recordings and the respective contents (completely in line with the Phonogrammarchiv's collection strategy), his corrections in the documentation, and the references in the yearly reports. Also, from the archival perspective, Pospíšil's collection fits very well into the concept of the Phonogrammarchiv – his interest focused on cultural expressions, on what was unknown in one's vicinity. In those days, cultural diversity (historically caused by political decisions or social demands leading to migration movements) became established as one of the mainstream research fields. From the archive's point of view, changing cultures and cultures on the verge of extinction attracted attention. Trebitsch pursued such research strategies and probably paved the way for Pospíšil, enabling him to get in touch with the archive. Trebitsch's interest focused on the cultures on the fringes of Europe, the Inuit in Greenland, the Celtic- and Basque-speaking peoples – such cultures had not been very well studied at that time or were considered to be dying out (e.g. the Gaelic language). Neither Trebitsch nor Pospíšil focused only on language and music, both also having an interest in ethnography. Trebitsch collected everyday items, toys, clothes, etc., ethnographic objects in general, which he delivered to the nascent ethnographic museum in Vienna. Trebitsch might have met Pospíšil, and he might have suggested to him that he contact the various Viennese institutions.

Today, historical sound documents are valuable sources for diachronic research. This is one of the reasons why UNESCO has included the Phonogrammarchiv's "Historical Collections 1899–1950" as documents of universal significance in the World Register of its "Memory of the World" Programme. In order to give the interested community the opportunity to participate in these valuable collections, the Phonogrammarchiv is eager to publish the historical

recordings as a complete edition, and the present publication is part of this undertaking. The whole publication project is intended to give back the “sounding” history to the descendants of the respective cultures and to provide the academic community with easy access to the historical collections of the Phonogrammarchiv. In this particular case the publication is devoted to the inhabitants of the Slovácko region, with the aim of commemorating their cultural heritage and continuing in contemporary mode, as Uhlíková wisely mentions in her commentary.

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