

# WE HAVE PLENTY OF WORDS WRITTEN DOWN; WE NEED MELODIES!: THE PURCHASE OF THE FIRST RECORDING DEVICE FOR ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN SLOVENIA

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*This paper examines the endeavors of the Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs (OSNP) to acquire its first recording device for field sound recordings. The committee's large-scale plans to purchase two phonographs and a great number of wax cylinders were highly advanced for the time because this would enable systematic folk song research based on sound recordings with archived cylinders serving as references for notation and as a primary source. Unfortunately, the plans had to be curtailed considerably and were only carried out towards the end of the collection campaign.*

Keywords: *phonograph, wax cylinders, sound recordings, sound archives, Karel Štrekelj.*

*Prispevek raziskuje prizadevanja Odbora za nabiranje slovenskih narodnih pesmi (OSNP) za pridobitev prve lastne snemalne naprave namenjene terenskemu zvočnemu snemanju. Širokopotezno zastavljeni načrti nakupa kar dveh fonografov in večjega števila voščenih valjev, s čimer bi sistematično vključili zvočna snemanja v raziskovanje ljudskih pesmi, arhivirani valji pa bi služili kot referenca notnim transkripcijam in kot primarni znanstveni vir, so bili za tisti čas zelo napredni. Žal so se predvideni načrti uresničili šele na koncu zbiralne akcije in v precej skromnejšem obsegu.*

Ključne besede: *fonograf, voščeni valji, zvočna snemanja, zvočni arhiv, Karel Štrekelj.*

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the great enthusiasm of committee members and their good organizational skills, the results of the collection campaign conducted by the Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs (the OSNP) far exceeded everyone's expectations. *The success of the campaign was truly magnificent* [Murko 1929: 30]. In time, so many songs were collected that the material had to be reviewed and organized [Kumer 1995: 19], and at the end of 1910 committee members even decided that *detailed collection in individual parts of the country should be paused for some time because the collectors are exhausted* [Tominšek 1937: 311]. By 1913, more than 10,000 *folk songs with melodies* had been recorded, but when they were examined it was soon established that the notation very often did not correspond to the melody people had actually sung. Due to problems with polyphonic song notation, these songs were mostly recorded in unison. Polyphonic transcriptions were rare, in spite of the fact that collectors were instructed from the very beginning to *record songs as they are actually sung, including polyphonically!* After seven years of recording, M. Hubad stated (at the meeting of 27 Dec 1913): *"our records are mostly in unison, although the songs are polyphonic. It should be determined how the collected material is actually sung."* [Murko 1929: 29].

<sup>1</sup> This obviously did not happen because Kumer later established that *of all the polyphonic melodies in*

It therefore came as no surprise that, after long endeavors, committee members finally decided to purchase a phonograph. At a meeting on 29 November 1913, committee member Fran Milčinski summarized the committee's conclusions and cast a strong vote for the purchase of a phonograph: *We have plenty of words written down; we need melodies!* [A-OSNP, Minutes: 15].

When a phonograph was finally purchased, the first recordings were made more by chance than through careful planning, but committee members were very impressed with the results and made large-scale plans for future recordings. However, World War I started soon after and brought the committee's activities to a halt, which is how the recordings remained one of the committee's last significant achievements and certainly the first and only recordings made with a phonograph.

The phonograph recordings were made by Jure Adlešič in the spring of 1914 in Bela krajina. Even though a major part of the collection was either destroyed or lost, the 19 wax cylinders, almost half of which have been damaged, still remain an extraordinary ethnomusicological document of Slovenian folk singing and represent the oldest sound recordings in the Archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the SRC SASA.

Several articles and papers on the activities of the OSNP Committee and the phonograph recordings from Bela krajina have been published, but the existing bibliography is very vague and sometimes inaccurate or even incorrect regarding the background events leading to the purchase of a phonograph.<sup>2</sup> This paper therefore analyzes the committee's activities involving large-scale plans for making the first sound recordings of Slovenian folk songs and the much more modest realization thereof.

### FIRST PLANS FOR THE PURCHASE

The wish to record folk songs with a recording phonograph was present among the OSNP Committee members from the very beginning of their operation. The Slovenian committee<sup>3</sup> was formally established at the end of October 1905, after almost a year of selecting

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*the collection, practically all are harmonizations and therefore useless for the study of Slovenian polyphonic singing* [Kumer 1959: 209].

<sup>2</sup> For example, Tominšek is wrong in the following:

*The committee made no recordings with a phonograph, although it had planned them all along. The first budget, adopted at the meeting of 24 December 1906, included the purchase of a phonograph and 20 cylinders for 272 crowns. The purchase was made neither then nor in the final stages of the committee's operation when Prof. Murko warmly recommended a phonograph, basing his opinion on his own experience with it in the Balkans.* [Tominšek 1937: 315]

Furthermore Kumer, citing Tominšek, writes that Štrekelj planned the purchase of a phonograph and cylinders as early as 1907 [Kumer 1995: 19]. In his book *Lepa Ane govorila* [Beautiful Ane Said], Julijan Strajnar extensively describes the committee's efforts to purchase a phonograph, but only from 1913 onwards [Strajnar 1989: 27–30].

<sup>3</sup> The Slovenian committee was presided over by Karel Štrekelj, a professor from Graz, who was responsible



Figure 1: A part of the wax cylinder collection from Bela krajina (photo: Drago Kunej).

committee members and planning the committee's activities. Some letters from Karel Štrekelj, who was later president of the committee, have been preserved in which he asked prospective committee members to join the OSNP Committee. One such letter reads: *We hope to be granted two phonographs by the ministry in order to record melodies. We could sometimes loan one to you and even send someone to teach you how to use it* [A-OSNP, f. 1, 27 May 1905]. This letter shows that Štrekelj had had a clear idea about collecting and recording folk songs even before the Slovenian committee was established.

Štrekelj extensively presented his views of the committee's operation at its first meeting on 17 December 1905. The agenda he prepared for it was very long, listing 14 items supplemented by numerous annexes<sup>4</sup> [A-OSNP, f. 1, Dnevni red]. Item 5, Questionnaire and Guidelines for Recording the Material, was supplemented by Annex C, which contained a draft version of the later publication called *Navodila in vprašanja za zbiranje in zapisovanje narodnih pesmi, narodne godbe, narodnih plesov in šeg, ki se nanašajo na to* (Guidelines and

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for correspondence with the main committee in Vienna and was also a sort of spiritual leader for the Slovenian committee. The Ljubljana executive board was led by Matej Hubad, a musician and conductor at the Glasbena matica. The committee's vice president was Matija Murko, also a professor in Graz and later in Prague. He became more involved in the committee's work when he became its president in 1913, after Štrekelj's death. The three committee members also played key roles in the planning and purchase of a phonograph.

<sup>4</sup> As Murko reports, the meeting at which the members discussed Štrekelj's well-prepared plans for the organization of work and preparation of publications lasted nearly eight hours [Murko 1929: 23].

Questions for Collecting and Transcribing Folk Songs, Folk Music, Folk Dances, and Related Customs). In the section on recording melodies, the use of a phonograph was suggested for easier and more precise recording of polyphonic songs [A-OSNP, f. 1, Annex C2: 6]. The manuscript in Annex C is in German and is practically identical to the Guidelines and Questions published in 1906 in Slovenian:

*Because it is very unlikely that enough skilled transcribers could be found, it is highly appropriate to capture such polyphonic folk songs on a phonograph, especially where precious folk songs are sung one after another in very short intervals. Using phonograms for notation is easier than transcriptions of songs immediately after they have been sung (from the singer's mouth).*

[Navodila... 1906: 18]

It may therefore be concluded that the advice to record folk songs with a phonograph predates the formal establishment of the Slovenian committee and that it had first been given by Štrekelj, even though it was Hubad that later prepared the guidelines for recording folk songs. Štrekelj clearly *followed folk song research all over the world ... and was well aware of the successful recordings of Russian folk songs made by Evgenia Lineva in 1902* [Murko 1929: 43].

Even more detailed information on the use of the phonograph can be found in Annex H, supplementing item 12 on the agenda including the budget and activities planned for 1906. The annex, titled *Praeliminare* (Preliminaries), contained the committee's budget proposal for the rest of 1905 and for 1906. It was also enclosed with the minutes of the meeting and sent to the ministry in Vienna. Item 7 in the budget proposal listed two phonographs and 400 cylinders at a total of 1,320 crowns [A-OSNP, f. 1, Annex H: 1]. The annex presents arguments for the expenditure, including extensive arguments for the purchase of recording equipment. According to these, the Slovenian committee was in urgent need of at least two phonographs and a sufficient number of cylinders. The recordings obtained with a phonograph would primarily facilitate better and easier transcriptions of melodies, but less so for transcriptions of texts because there were not enough musically trained collectors in Slovenia that could make records of folk songs quickly and accurately [A-OSNP, f. 1, Annex H: 2–3].

Štrekelj was well aware of both the importance and advantages of the phonograph for recording folk songs, and was familiar with the positive experience of researchers and folk music collectors that used it in their work. However, he was also aware of the negative attitude towards the phonograph on the part of some collectors, resulting from the technical disadvantages of the device. He had to face such an attitude at the first meeting of the Vienna main committee on 28 November 1904, where the possibilities and needs of sound recordings for folk song collection were discussed. The president of the main committee and head of the entire collection campaign, Josef Pommer, took an extremely negative stand on

the use of sound recordings in folk song collection and would not change his position long after that<sup>5</sup> [Deutsch and Hois, 2004: 52].

This is probably why Štrekelj's arguments for the purchase of a phonograph in 1905 focused on explaining that opposition to the use of a phonograph in folk music was based on incorrect presumptions, which had been successfully proven by the collectors of Russian folk songs Evgenia Lineva and Aleksander Grigorov. Štrekelj continued by saying that the phonograph was an objective device and could therefore be of great help in folk song collection, in spite of its technical imperfections. [A-OSNP, f. 1, Annex H: 3].

It is clear that Štrekelj did not only estimate the costs, but instead based them on a concrete offer. Details of the quote are given in Annex H, in which Štrekelj stated that the phonograph most suitable for purchase was the *American type offered by J. Lorenz from Chemnitz*. It cost 150 marks and cylinders were sold at 4 marks each, amounting to 1,100 marks or 1,320 crowns for two phonographs and two hundred cylinders<sup>6</sup> [A-OSNP, f. 1, Annex H: 3].

Even bolder plans for sound recordings can be seen from the manuscript, a draft estimate of the Slovenian committee's expenditure for planned activities [A-OSNP, f. 11, draft]. The document is written in Štrekelj's handwriting and bears no date, although at some point it is clearly indicated that the (estimated) expenditure refers to 1905. In the document, Štrekelj defined and evaluated individual activities in ten items, especially the preparation and publishing of the Guidelines and Questions as well as the cost of fieldwork for song collection. All costs are rounded off, and some even corrected, which is why it can be assumed they were merely a rough estimate of all the funds required. Item 9 includes as many as three phonographs (at a total of 900 crowns) and 3,000 cylinders (at a total of 1,800 crowns). Compared to the expenditure stated in Annex H, the manuscript included the purchase of three instead of two phonographs and also indicated a much higher price for them as well. In addition, the number of planned cylinders was significantly higher and the price per cylinder much lower than in Annex H.

How serious Štrekelj really was about sound recordings may be further indicated by his recommendation in Annex H, explaining that he did not see a phonograph recording only as a means of easier and faster notation of the melody, but also as a reference for the notation used for future reviews of precision and adequacy of the transcriptions [A-OSNP, f. 1, Annex H: 3]. In spite of the technical weaknesses of phonographic recordings, he be-

<sup>5</sup> Pommer did not change his negative attitude for several years, in spite of all the arguments and evidence presented by those that had had positive experience with a phonograph. This presented a huge obstacle for the Slovenian committee and committees in other regions in trying to obtain a phonograph [cf. Deutsch and Hois 2004: 52–56].

<sup>6</sup> There is a clear error in the number of cylinders planned for purchase: on the first page of Annex H, two phonographs and 400 cylinders at a total price of 1,320 crowns were planned, whereas in the explanation of the expenditure on page three of the same annex Štrekelj calculated the required funds for two phonographs and 200 cylinders at a total price of 1,320 crowns [A-OSNP, f. 1, Annex H]. The exact number of cylinders planned for purchase is therefore unclear, although later documents clearly indicate that the committee had 200 cylinders in mind.



## PERSISTENT PLEAS FOR AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF A RECORDING DEVICE

The great enthusiasm with which the Slovenian committee approached the activities for the purchase of a phonograph for folk song collection was greatly obstructed by the ministry in Vienna through a much smaller grant than the committee had needed and applied for. The funds approved by the ministry sufficed only for the activities that had already been carried out by the committee: organization of the first meeting and costs of correspondence [A-OSNP, f. 11, 5 March 1906]. Despite this, the committee was still seriously considering the purchase of a phonograph, which can be seen from Štrekelj's letter [Štrekelj to Ludvik Kuba, A-OSNP f. 2, no. 14/5]. In this letter, Štrekelj mentioned *the costs of publishing of the Guidelines and Questions and the purchase of a phonograph* as the most important expenditures. He also asked the committee in Ljubljana for its permission *to submit an appeal to the ministry in which I will restate the urgent need for an increase of the grant as suggested in the budget for 1906* [A-OSNP f. 11, 5 March 1906]. In the autumn of 1906, the ministry did approve some additional funds for the Slovenian committee, but allocated them specifically to the preparation of publications as proposed in the budget. Pommer's influence and his negative attitude towards sound recordings clearly outweighed Štrekelj's well-founded arguments.

In spite all this, Štrekelj still would not give up on a phonograph, because he sent a note to the committee about the authorization of additional funds, adding briefly: *If any [funds, D. K.] are left unused, we can buy one phonograph and at least a few cylinders* [A-OSNP, f. 8, 24 November 1906]. In the next letter, sent to Ljubljana three days later, he defined the expenditure of the new donation in more detail, adding: *We can buy one phonograph and a limited number of cylinders: a phonograph for 150 marks, 25 cylinders for 100 marks, a total of 250 marks or 195 crowns* [A-OSNP, f. 2, no. 35/19].

In mid-December 1906, Štrekelj replied to Hubad's letter by sending him a budget proposal for 1907 to be discussed by the committee at the meeting of 14 December 1906. Item 6 listed the purchase of phonographs and cylinders for 900 crowns in total, the lower costs resulting from the possibility for the purchase of one phonograph from the funds for 1906 [A-OSNP f. 2, no. 48/21], as he had already mentioned in previous letters. The proposed items and funds were changed somewhat at the meeting, but the purchase of a phonograph with cylinders for the suggested price was passed and entered in the budget for 1907 [A-OSNP f. 7, add. no. 28]. The minutes of the meeting were then sent to President Štrekelj for review.

Štrekelj commented on the adopted proposal in great length. In his draft of the letter to the committee [A-OSNP, f. 2, no. 58/29], he requested further explanation of certain budget items and called on the committee *to raise the amount for phonographs* at the expense of some publications, explaining that *this year's proposed amount for phonographs should not be less than last year (1,320 Kr) because none has been bought so far*. Štrekelj went even further

in his letter to Hubad [A-OSNP, f. 2, 31 December 1906], in which he wrote: *Why is this year's price for a phonograph lower? Have you received a better offer this year? If we proposed 1,320 last year, we should do the same for 1907, because none has been bought so far.* Štrekelj's comments must have been passed by the committee, because item 5 in the report on the activities of the committee and budget for 1907 sent to the ministry includes the purchase of two phonographs and 200 cylinders for 1,320 crowns [A-OSNP, f. 3, add. no. 36/70]. Later in the document, Štrekelj stressed the urgent need for a phonograph. He believed it was necessary for critical evaluation and study of melodies. According to him, at least two phonographs and an appropriate number of cylinders were therefore indispensable.

Štrekelj's decisive arguments for the purchase of a phonograph reflect his strong belief on the usefulness and necessity of the use of sound recordings for folk song collection. What is more, he was certain that the Slovenian committee would soon obtain recording equipment because he also planned a detailed register of the collected material, including *a list of inventory, together with anything in the committee's property, namely: a) hand-written collections, b) printed collections, c) phonographs and cylinders, d) publications...* [A-OSNP, f. 2, no. 58/29]. Štrekelj elaborated on this in his letter to Hubad on 9 January 1907 [A-OSNP, f. 2, no. 3/53], in which he proposed appointing an archivist that would be responsible for the committee's collection:

*Each collection, song, and object should be numbered.... Each cylinder should therefore be numbered as well; 35.40 [for example] identifies the 40th cylinder in the group registered with number 35. Without identification numbers, the transcription of cylinders will be impossible.*

Members of the Slovenian committee were not as convinced as their president about the indispensability of recording folk songs with a phonograph, which can be deduced from the explanation found in the minutes of the meeting of 30 January 1907 for why the amount for the purchase of a phonograph was lowered, [A-OSNP, f. 3, no. 72/35]:

*The budget contains only a rough sum for a phonograph in the amount of 900 crowns; anyway, committee members believe that enough qualified men can be found to record songs directly, which is why the complex phonograph procedure would only be resorted to in exceptional cases and in remote areas.*

Committee members saw the phonograph only as a useful tool for those lacking skills in notation, failing to realize the qualities of the device that enabled objective records of sound, according to Štrekelj's strong belief.

The ministry in Vienna clearly felt that recording folk songs with a phonograph was unnecessary, which can be seen from its letter of 22 June 1907 [A-OSNP f. 3, 78/39], calling upon the Slovenian committee to be highly economical with the approved funds and to discontinue all activities not absolutely necessary for the collection of folk songs. It explicitly mentioned the planned purchase of a phonograph as an example of unnecessary



spending and added it might be bought sometime in the future. Štrekelj forwarded the bad news to the committee members in his letter of 9 July 1907, noting also that the ministry had approved neither the appointment of an archivist nor the establishment of the archives and the purchase of an archival cabinet.

Probably due to strong opposition of the ministry, phonographs and cylinders were not entered in the budget for 1908. Štrekelj explained this by stressing that the goal for 1908 was the allocation of as much funds as possible for song collectors and for payment of debt that had accumulated in previous years. He again assigned great importance to sound recordings for critical analysis of melodies and continued by saying that the Slovenian committee would solicit for funds for a phonograph again the following year [A-OSNP f. 3, no. 48/94].

Štrekelj kept his promise, because item 6 of his budget proposal for 1909 [A-OSNP f. r 3, no. 120/61] contains the purchase of two phonographs and 200 cylinders at a total price of 660 crowns. It seems unusual that, although the same quantity of recording equipment was entered in the budget proposal, the costs were only half of the costs foreseen in previous years. Because this is only a draft version of the budget proposal, the explanation might lie in Štrekelj's explanation of the purchase: he again stressed the importance of a phonograph in studies of melodies and the urgent need for the committee to acquire at least one phonograph with the appropriate number of cylinders. Due to necessary cost cuts, Štrekelj lowered the quantity of recording equipment and the required funds by half, possibly forgetting to change the quantity of the recording equipment in the budget proposal.

The proposal to the ministry for the purchase of a phonograph was rejected again at the end of February 1909 with an explanation that doing so would considerably increase the costs of the collection campaign because a phonograph would then have to be granted to other committees as well. After some consideration, however, the ministry did grant the purchase of a phonograph to some committees such as the Romanian and the Polish ones [Deutsch and Hois 2004: 55], but not to the Slovenian one.

Because the Slovenian committee failed to receive the funds required for phonographs in 1909, its budget proposal for 1910 [A-OSNP f. 3, no. 144/76] contains the purchase of one phonograph and 100 cylinders. The total budget amount is very similar to the one from the previous year: the items and explanations are the same, but the requested funds are somewhat differently allocated. The argumentation for the purchase of a phonograph is also almost the same as the previous year.

It could not be established what activities were carried out for the purchase of recording equipment between 1910 and 1912. What is known, however, is that the Slovenian committee did not receive a phonograph and cylinders. The reason for this might lie in the fact that Štrekelj, who was the initiator of the purchase of the phonographs, fell ill: *he was confined to bed in mid-July 1911, although he had been ill before* [Murko 1929: 31]. His illness *caused disorganization in the committee* [Murko 1929: 31]. After a long and painful illness, Štrekelj died on 7 July 1912.

THE PURCHASE OF A PHONOGRAPH AND CYLINDERS  
IS FINALLY ACCOMPLISHED

On 17 January 1913, the ministry appointed Matija Murko as the new president of the Slovenian committee and revived the activities related to the purchase of a phonograph:

*Murko envisaged how the collection campaign could be systematically brought to the end ... and considerably speeded up the process.*

*Under his leadership, the collection guidelines could lead to new achievements, ... especially with the technological advantages offered by a phonograph and the accuracy of transcriptions carried out by trained professionals.*

[Tominšek 1937: 308–309]

Murko became deeply involved in the purchase of a phonograph: using his acquaintances in international professional circles,<sup>7</sup> he collected the necessary information on the usefulness of the phonograph for folk song collection,<sup>8</sup> the range of phonographs on offer, and their price. By this time, phonographs and wax cylinders had also become significantly cheaper, making them much more accessible.

Item 5 on the agenda for the very first meeting that Murko led after Štrekelj's death was *Discussion on the use of a phonograph* [A-OSNP, f. 38, 5 April 1913]. The minutes of the meeting [A-OSNP, Zapisniki: 8] read that Murko reported on a phonograph that was owned by the Academy of Science in Vienna and suggested:

*it should be lent to the committee to carry out the necessary activities, or the academy should record Slovenian songs by itself! ... Another option would be to acquire the Edison phonograph. Decision: to either borrow the phonograph from the academy or buy the Edison.*

A report on activities in 1912 that was sent to the ministry [A-OSNP, f. 5, Vorschlag] was written by Murko shortly after the meeting and was based on Tominšek's report [A-OSNP, f. 5, no. 112]. It contains an *extraordinary expenditure: for a phonograph, first installment = 500 crowns*. This shows that the committee started saving for the purchase, although the exact price and delivery details were still unclear.

Murko's position on the importance of making sound records of Slovenian as well as other folk songs can also be established from agenda for the meeting of the main committee in Vienna, which took place on 13 and 14 June 1913, item seven being: *Prof. Murko's*

<sup>7</sup> According to Tominšek, Murko was a very influential person and could assert his influence in the right place [Tominšek 1937: 309].

<sup>8</sup> Murko's interest in the purchase of a phonograph and its use is understandable because he used it quite a lot in his own work. He reported on his experience with a phonograph in two reports to the Austrian Academy of Science [Murko 1912, Murko 1915], and the first one was also sent to his colleagues at the OSNP in order to convince them that a phonograph really was useful.

motion for recording folk songs in Austria with a phonograph [A-OSNP f. 5, Einladung]. At the meeting, Murko

*proposed to the Vienna Academy of Science, which had a special phonograph commission with a specially designed phonograph, much praised for its age, that it start being used for recording folk songs of Austrian nations.... Two professors, academy members, were appointed to be responsible for organizing the activities at the academy. [Murko 1929: 20]*

With his proposal to the main committee, Murko aimed to ensure the use of contemporary technical equipment for recording and preservation of as many folk songs as possible. By getting the academy to take over the recording part, Murko hoped to relieve the Slovenian committee of some of the workload and expenditure. However, judging from his letter of 26 June 1913 sent to the Slovenian committee, he did not fully trust the academy's assurance to make recordings of folk songs of the Austrian nations on a phonograph:<sup>9</sup>

*It has been decided that a phonograph could be used as an aid, should individual committees wish so.... A way to provide a phonograph for the Slovenian committee has already been found. What is more, a standard phonograph will be bought from Wertheim of Berlin, not costing the expected 500–1000 Kr., ... but as little as 50 marks, whereas the price for a cylinder is 40 pfennigs. In my opinion, we should order a phonograph as early as this year. [A-OSNP Minutes: 15]*

In several more letters, Murko asked the committee members in Ljubljana to make a decision about a phonograph as soon as possible and tried to persuade them to make the purchase. His eagerness is understandable because he made another field trip to the Balkans that summer, where he did research on folk epics and used the phonograph that belonged to the Vienna academy, and was more than pleased with the results.

The Ljubljana committee members also made inquiries about a phonograph. Hubad reported at the meeting of 17 July 1913 about the visit of Evgenia Lineva and her husband Alex [A-OSNP Minutes: 12], who

*had collected many Russian folk songs with a phonograph.... Their experience with the phonograph, which cost about 80 marks, was very positive.... It was therefore agreed to purchase such a phonograph from this year's funds.*

The committee appointed Hubad to visit Lineva at Bled, where he was staying at the time and to inquire about the brand of the phonograph. Hubad reported on his visit to Bled at the next meeting of the executive board, which took place on 29 November 1913. He said that Lineva *was a great phonograph enthusiast* and that the device was *more than indispensable for polyphonic singing* (A-OSNP Minutes: 15). Based on Murko's recommendations and

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, his lack of trust later proved to be justified because he reported that, as far as recording activities carried out by the Austrian academy are concerned, *no results were seen, at least not in Slovenia* [Murko 1929: 20].

their own inquiries, committee members passed the following decision: *A phonograph shall be purchased from Warenhaus Wertheim in Berlin for 50 marks. The purchase will be carried out by the committee secretary* (A-OSNP Minutes: 15).

## CONCLUSION

Following this decision, much correspondence with the supplier took place and the committee experienced several problems and complications with placing the order. At the beginning of January 1914, a final offer arrived from the company A. Wertheim G.m.b.H of Berlin [A-OSNP, f. 14, no. 38] and was accepted by the committee: a phonograph for recording and replaying at a price of 48 marks and recording wax cylinders at a price of 40 pfennigs. The exact date of purchase is not known. Following some problems with the supply, the equipment arrived in Ljubljana in the middle of February 1914. This ended the committee's long

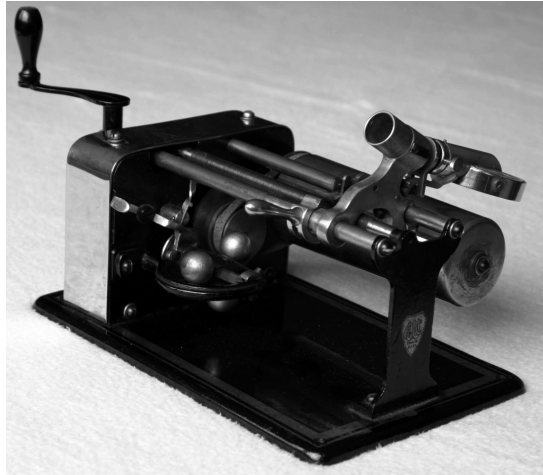


Figure 3: The incomplete phonograph of the Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs as preserved until today.

and difficult endeavors to acquire its own recording device with which Slovenians could finally start making field recordings of folk music for scholarly purposes. At the time, Štrekelj's large-scale plans for recording folk songs with at least two phonographs and a few hundred cylinders were very liberal because the phonograph was still an exceptionally rare tool for ethnomusicological research on folk music in central Europe. The Slovenian committee was among the first, and certainly the most comprehensive, to include sound recordings in its techniques and adopt a new approach to folk song research. In doing so, it became a role model for other researchers and committees, and its persistent efforts to purchase a phonograph and its well-founded arguments regarding the scholarly application of the phonograph in ethnomusicological folk song research contributed much to the establishment of sound recordings for the extensive *Folk Song in Austria* collection program. Štrekelj's plans to archive the recorded cylinders in order to serve as a reference for melody transcriptions initiated a new approach to folk song recording and research, and recognized sound recordings as a primary and verifiable source for research. Collectors that still relied exclusively on transcription or used a phonograph only occasionally to simplify the transcription process failed to comprehend this valuable advantage of the phonograph.

Therefore, these highly liberal ideas did not gain recognition in ethnomusicological research until much later times.

Despite all the complications and long-lasting efforts to acquire its own recording device, the Slovenian committee finally did reap the fruits of its work, and research on the Slovenian folk song entered a new era, the beginning of which was announced by a short note on the invitation to the committee meeting of 11 February 1914 [A-OSNP, f. 8, Vabilo]: *The phonograph has arrived.*

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“BESED IMAMO DOVOLJ ZAPISANIH, TREBA NAM MELODIJ!”

*Nakup snemalne naprave je predsednik OSNP Karel Štrekelj načrtoval že od samega začetka zbiralne akcije. Iz nekaterih pisem, ki jih je pisal bodočim članom Slovenskega odbora, ugotovimo, da je imel Štrekelj že pred ustanovitvijo in delovanjem Slovenskega odbora dokaj jasno predstavlo o zbiranju in zapisovanju ljudskih pesmi ter uporabi fonografa pri tem. Svoje videnje delovanja Slovenskega odbora je obširno predstavil na prvi seji Slovenskega odbora dne 17.12.1905, saj je zanj pripravil obsežen dnevni red s štirinajstimi točkami in številnimi pisnimi prilogami; v prilogah C in H zasledimo tudi več podrobnosti o predvidenem fonografiranju ljudskih pesmi. V predračunu Slovenskega odbora za leto 1906 so vključeni tudi stroški za nakup fonografov, v utemeljitvi tega nakupa pa je navedeno, da Slovenski odbor neobhodno potrebuje vsaj dva fonografa z ustreznim številom valjev (najmanj 200) za snemanje. Posnetki naj bi služili predusem za boljše in lažje zapisovanje melodij in ne toliko za zapis besedila. Za tisti čas zelo širokotezni načrti pa so bili prvotno morda še večji, saj iz rokopisnega dokumenta, ki predstavlja nekakšen osnutek ocenitve potrebnih sredstev za aktivnosti Slovenskega odbora, razberemo med drugim tudi stroške za kar tri fonografe in 3000 valjev.*

*Štrekelj se je pomembnosti in uporabnosti fonografa pri zapisovanju ljudskih pesmi dobro zavedal ter je bil seznanjen z dobrimi izkušnjami tistih raziskovalcev in zapisovalcev ljudske glasbe, ki so pri svojem delu uporabljali fonograf (npr. E. Lineva). Zavedal pa se je tudi, da so nekateri*

zapisovalci proti uporabi fonografa, predvsem zaradi tehničnih pomanjkljivosti aparata. Eden takšnih je bil tudi predsednik glavnega odbora na Dunaju in vodja celotne zbiralne akcije Josef Pommer, ki je močno zavrl nakup fonografov. Zato tudi ministrstvo ni odobrilo Slovenskemu odboru nakupa snemalne opreme več let, čeprav so zanj vztrajno prosili. Štrekelj, ki je bil glavni iniciator nakupa fonografov, je po dolgi in mučni bolezni poleti 1912 umrl. Novi predsednik OSNP Matija Murko, ki se je tudi zaradi osebnih izkušenj s fonografom močno zavzel za nakup, je priskrbel ustrezne informacije o ponudbi, dobavi in ceni aparatov ter ga toplo priporočal odbornikom tako v Ljubljani kot tudi na Dunaju. V začetku leta 1914 smo Slovenci malo pred koncem celotne zbiralne akcije, po številnih zapletih in prošnjah, naposled dobili prvo lastno snemalno napravo.

Širokopotezno zastavljena ideja fonografiranja domačih ljudskih pesmi z najmanj dvema fonografoma in nekaj sto valji je bila za tiste čase zelo napredna, saj se je takrat v osrednjem evropskem prostoru fonograf za etnomuzikološke raziskave domače ljudske glasbe le redko in zgolj priložnostno uporabljali. Slovenski odbor je želel med prvimi, usekakor pa najbolj obširno in celovito, vključiti zvočna snemanja v svoje delo in novost v raziskovanje ljudske pesmi. S tem je postal vzor tudi drugim raziskovalcem in odborom ter je s svojimi vztrajnimi prošnjami za nakup fonografov in tehtnimi utemeljitvami njegove znanstvene uporabnosti pri etnomuzikološkem raziskovanju ljudske pesmi veliko pripomogel, da se je zvočno snemanje kasneje le uveljavilo v zbiralni akciji Ljudska pesem v Avstriji. Štrekljevi načrti arhiviranja posnetih valjev, ki naj zaradi svoje objektivnosti posnetega služijo kot referenca notnim zapisom, odpirajo novo metodo v zapisovanju in raziskovanju ljudske glasbe. S tem postane zvočni posnetek primarni in preverljivi vir v raziskovanju ljudske glasbe. Tisti, ki so se še vedno oklepali le notnega zapisovanja ali pa so fonograf le priložnostno uporabljali zgolj kot pripomoček za lažji notni zapis, tega niso mogli doumeti. Zato so se te napredne ideje pri etnomuzikoloških raziskavah splošno uveljavile šele mnogo pozneje.

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