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Maximilián Václav Šimek: Precursor of Scientific Slavonic Studies in Central Europe – Stocktaking and Prospects

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The origin of scientifically pursued Slavonic philology before Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829) such as the interest of the *Czech Royal Society of Sciences – Královská česká společnost nauk* or Václav Fortunát Durych (1735–1802) in Slavonic studies during the years 1770 and 1800, have already been described several times. The fundamental studies by František PASTRNEK (1896) and Jan JAKUBEC (1901) were followed by a genial summary by Vatroslav JAGIĆ (1910). In spite of some minor works on the history of Slavonic philology before Dobrovský by Arne NOVÁK (1929) and Frank WOLLMANN (1953), a profound analysis of this thematic circle was not made until the publication of the habilitation by Walter SCHAM-SCHULA (1973), in which he reflected German philological and historical studies in the early phase of the Czech national movement.

Somewhat later, Věnceslava BECHYŇOVÁ (1978) analysed the origin and fate of Durych's project *Bibliotheca Slavica*. On the ground of new knowledge, Milan Kudělka, Zdeněk Šimeček and Radoslav Večerka (KUDĚLKA/ŠIMEČEK/VEČERKA 1995, VEČERKA 1996) considered it as important to evaluate the contribution of the first generation of the Czech philologists in a more differentiated way than it had hitherto been the case. They knew, however, that this demand could only be satisfied through editions of contemporary sources with a respective commentary.

In 2000, the symposium on the occasion of the 225th jubilee of Czech studies at the University of Vienna, brought about a new stimulus for research work on the oldest history of methodically and scientifically pursued Slavonic and Czech studies. As a result, an international project was formulated,¹ dealing with the Viennese share in the beginnings of the

¹ AKTION Österreich – Tschechische Republik, project no. 31p24 and follow-up project no. 35p5.

Czech National Revival and its central academic figure Josef Valentin Zlobický (1743–1810), the first university teacher of Czech worldwide. A team of Czech and Austrian specialists – philologists, historians and literary historians of the universities of Vienna and Brno as well as the Czech Academy of Sciences (Josef Vintr, Jana Pleskalová, Stefan Michael Newerkla, Václav Petrbok, Jarmila Vojtová, Walter Reichel) – was formed to gather, describe and evaluate the work of Josef Valentin Zlobický. The research project resulted in the publication of the enthusiastically received book *Vídeňský podíl na počátcích českého národního obrození – J. V. Zlobický (1743-1810) a současníci: život, dílo, korespondence / Wiener Anteil an den Anfängen der tschechischen nationalen Erneuerung – J. V. Zlobický (1743-1810) und Zeitgenossen: Leben, Werk, Korrespondenz*, edited by Josef Vintr and Jana Pleskalová (VINTR/PLESKALOVÁ 2004). It includes treatises on several thematic circles by all project workers and the edition of up to now unpublished archive material such as plans, documents and minor works by Josef Valentin Zlobický as well as the hitherto unpublished correspondence of Zlobický with his contemporaries Wenzel Martin Christoph Bergner, Jan Petr Cerroni, Bohumír Jan Dlabač, Gelasius (Job Felix) Dobner, Václav Fortunát Durych, Alexius Habrich, František Josef count Kinský, Jerzy Koźmiński, Wenzel Meyer, Josef Vratislav Monse, Adam Nechay, František Martin Pelcl, Josef František Rautenkranz and Maximilián Václav Šimek.

During the project work, Zlobický's contemporaries and precursors in Austria were also in the centre of our attention, by profession mainly teachers at educational institutions for officers of public administration in Vienna and Wiener Neustadt (NEWERKLA 2004a).² Among these teachers we must mention at least the first preceptor of Czech at Vienna's *Theresianum* Jan Václav Pohl and his successor Josef Werschauer (Veršauer), further the preceptor of Czech at the *Theresian Military Academy* in Wiener Neustadt Wenzel Michael Wiedemann (Václav Michal Vídeňman) and his successors Maximilián Václav Šimek and Atanáš Jan Blažej Spurný.³ Moreover, we have to hint at the fact that during the years 1784 and 1795, Václav Fortunát Durych was doing his research work in the Viennese Court library.

This early and scholarly institutionalized interest in Czech studies in Vienna can be linked with the first development phase of the Czech National Revival. In former times, the contributions and initiatives originat-

² Also cf. NEWERKLA (1999a+b, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004b–d, 2005).

³ Cf. the studies by NEWERKLA (op. cit.), PETRBOK (2004) and VINTR (2004a).

ing from Vienna had been largely underestimated by the scientific community. In sharp contrast to the indisputable prominence and importance of Vienna for the beginnings of the Czech National Revival as well as for the beginnings of Slavonic studies, there is no cover-all monograph on this subject matter except for the above mentioned initiative publications (SCHAMSHULA 1973, VINTR/PLESKALOVÁ 2004) up to this day.

Undoubtedly, a necessary prerequisite for the successful fulfilment of such a task would be the description of the works and lives of the most important representatives of Czech and Slavonic studies in 18th century Vienna. As far as the latter is concerned, several new facts have turned up not so long ago. During the archive research for the project on the Viennese share in the process of the Czech National Revival, several manuscripts were rediscovered. Due to their great extent, not all of them could be edited in the book on Josef Valentin Zlobický. Among the most important personalities of Vienna-based Slavonic and Czech studies in the 18th century were certainly Jan Václav Pohl (1720–1790) and Maximilián Václav Šimek (1748–1798). The analysis of their activities and work can relevantly enlighten our – hitherto incomplete – knowledge about the beginnings of Slavonic studies and about the early phase of the Czech National Revival.

Pohl was the author of an influential Czech grammar in several editions, an orthographic primer in two versions (a Czech and a German one), rediscovered school books for Joseph II and a separate German-Czech-(Latin) dictionary, the unpublished manuscript of which has also been discovered in Vienna just recently. Pohl's life and his work shall now be analysed in detail by Tilman Berger from Tübingen university and his research team within the scope of the DFG-project "Precursors of Scientific Slavonic Studies: J. V. Pohl" (BE 2241/1-1),⁴ a complementary co-operational project to the FWF-project "Precursors of Scientific Slavonic Studies: M. V. Šimek" (P18661-G03),⁵ realized at Vienna university by the author of this article and his research team.

Styria-born and bred⁶ Šimek, the son of the immigrant brewer Karel Šimek from Trotina near Hradec Králové and his wife Alžběta Eleonora Frydrych from Litomyšl, was the polyglot author of several books, articles and maps on various themes (ŠIMEK 1778, 1779, 1782, 1784, 1785, 1787,

⁴ DFG = *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Agency).

⁵ FWF = *Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung* (Austrian Research Agency).

⁶ Šimek was born on August 18th, 1748 in Neudau on the Lafnitz. He attended school at Graz.

1788a+b, 1791), translator and engraver, preceptor of Czech in Vienna, Wiener Neustadt and elsewhere as well as an important trailblazer of the Czech National Revival in Austria (NEWERKLA 2002).

Except for further unpublished letters by Šimek, e. g. to the Görlitz-based lawyer, linguist and sorabacist Karl Gottlob Anton and others, the over 200 years missing extensive fair copy of the first part of the first volume of Šimek's comparative grammar of Slavonic languages in Latin (approx. 120 pp.), dedicated mainly to the phonology of the Slavonic languages and their graphic and orthoepic realization, and his detailed plan of the whole two-volume publication project (36 pp.), were rediscovered by Václav Petrbok in Prague. Both manuscripts were created in the early eighties of the 18th century, that is forty years before the publication of the *Institutiones linguae Slavicae dialecti veteris* (1822) by Josef Dobrovský⁷ and at least ten years before the publication of the *Bibliotheca Slavica* (1795) by Václav Fortunát Durych. The rediscovery of these manuscripts will bring about an important boost to the reflection of the roots and the origin of methodically and scientifically pursued Slavonic philology in a global dimension.

Šimek's contemporaries Josef Dobrovský and Josef Valentin Zlobický, then the two most influential personages in Slavonic philology, are responsible for Šimek's marginalization and sinking into oblivion after his death. Their correspondence bears witness to their conflicts with Šimek and to the unfavourable development of their attitudes towards Šimek as well. Because of that, nearly no attention had been devoted to Šimek in literature up to the present with the exception of short references or entries in biographical and other encyclopaedias,⁸ or sporadically in some treatises.⁹ Only texts by HŮRSKÝ (1935, 1936, 1938, 1955, 1980) and me (NEWERKLA 2002, 2004a) dealt with Šimek more minutely against the background of his philological, pedagogical and cartographic activities. Šimek, for instance, was the pioneering author of the first natural history in Czech

⁷ Cf. WEINGART (1923–1925).

⁸ Cf. BAUR (1803: 881–882); D'ELVERT (1850: 268–269, 1854: 300); FISCHER (1985: 136–137); GRÄFFER-CZIKANN (1835/IV: 538); HAMBERGER-MEUSEL (1798/VII: 127–128); HORANYI (1809/II: 643–645); JIREČEK (1876/II: 256); MEUSEL (1812/XII: 162–163); OSN (1906/XXIV: 618–619); SCHMUTZ (1822/III: 483); WINKLERN (1810: 224–225, 1842: 105–106); WURZBACH (1875/XXIX: 328–329); ZEMEK/BOMBERA/FILIP (1992: 116).

⁹ Cf. ALTER (1799); BURIAN (1844); BÍLÝ (1904); ČENSKÝ (1876); JAKUBEC (1909); KIDRIČ (1930, 1947); MENČÍK (1888); NEWERKLA (1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2001); RÖSSEL (1895); SCHAMSCHULA (1973).

language (ŠIMEK 1778) or a history of the kingdom of Bosnia (ŠIMEK 1787), he edited and translated a description of the Roman Catholic confession in comparison with the Russian Orthodox one (ŠIMEK 1782), contributed with his engraved maps to the first Austrian Atlas of the World (ŠIMEK 1788a) or devised an Austrian-Russian-Turkish Military Atlas (ŠIMEK 1788b). Our last study in this context (NEWERKLA 2004a), reminded the scientific community and culturally minded public of Šimek as the author of the above mentioned comparative grammar and history of the Slavonic languages.

After his arrival in Vienna in 1774, Šimek's initially close contacts with Josef Valentin Zlobický had been of great consequence for his activities in the field of Slavonic studies. In those days, Zlobický was musing upon writing a pan-Slavonic grammar as well as a history of the Slavonic languages. He was inspired by Johann Christoph Gatterer and his *Einleitung in die synchronische Universaltheorie ...* [Introduction to the synchronic universal theory ...] (GATTERER 1771), Johann Georg Meusel,¹⁰ Johann David Michaelis and especially by August Ludwig Schlözer and his *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte ...* [General Nordic history ...] (SCHLÖZER 1771). Maybe, the inspiration also arose from reading Matej Bel's introduction to Pavel Doležal's *Grammatica Slavico-Bohemica ...* (1746) and Bohuslav Balbín's *Dissertatio apologetica pro lingua Slavonica, praecipue Bohemica*, published in 1775 by František Martin Pelcl.

Our research work so far indicates that of all mentioned scholars Schlözer – apart from two publications by Johann Leonhard FRISCH (1727) and Johann Siegmund Valentin POPOWITSCH (1750) – had the biggest influence on Zlobický. Two remarks by Schlözer were most influential: First, among the places fit for pursuing Slavonic studies Schlözer had enumerated only Vienna and St Petersburg, because “nur an diesen Orten lassen sich Männer denken, die dem Slavonischen Sprach-Studio einen ununterbrochenen Fleiß mehrere Jahre schenken, etwa ein Dutzend Sprachlehren und Wörterbücher kritisch und vergleichend durchstudiren, und solchergestalt aus dieser [...] Arbeit, zu der der Ausländer weder Beruf noch Zeit hat, ein Hauptgeschäfte machen” [only in those places one can imagine men who dedicate themselves for several years to the study of

¹⁰ Perhaps his *Sammlung und Abstammung Germanischer Wurzel-Wörter, nach der Reihe menschlicher Begriffe, zu Erweis der Tabelle, die der Preisschrift über die zwei Hauptdialekte der Teutschen Sprache angefügt worden ist* [Compilation and derivation of Germanic root words, in succession of human concepts, providing evidence of the table that was added to the prize-winning treatise on the two main dialects of the German language], Halle an der Saale 1776.

the Slavonic languages with incessant diligence, read discriminatingly and with a comparative approach through a dozen of grammar books and dictionaries, and by that manner of means make this kind of work, for which the foreigner has neither the vocation nor the time, their main occupation] (SCHLÖZER 1771: 330). Secondly, Schlözer formulated a thought, adopted later by Zlobický:

Unmaßgeblich dünkte ich nemlich, ein Slavischer Sprachforscher von Profession nähme I. zehen Slavische Grammatiken (von so vielerley Slavischen Mundarten möchten etwa Grammatiken existiren) vor sich, gienge jedes Kapitel einzeln durch, zeichne sich die Paradigmata und Regeln jedes Dialects einzeln heraus, rucke sie sodann zusammen, stelle z. Ex. die Pronomina, wie sie der Kroate, der Oberlausitzer, der Ungrische Slave u. s. w. declinirt, in Einer Tabelle auf, und füge am Ende allgemeine abstrahirte Regeln bey, welche Nationen einander in diesem Theil ihrer Sprache am nächsten kommen, wie sie stufenweise sich von einander entfernen, und wie diese Entfernung aus dem allgemeinen Genie jedes Dialects zu erklären sey. Dies gäbe eine allgemeine verglichene Slavische Sprachlehre von ein paar Alphabeten. Hierauf verfertige er auf ähnliche Art II. ein allgemeines verglichenes Slavisches Wörterbuch in etymologischer Ordnung, suche jedesmal das einfachste Stammwort auf, bemerke, in welcher Slavischen Mundart dasselbe noch übrig sey, und formire sodann dessen ganzes Geschlechtregister mit allen seinen Abkömmlingen in allen bekannten Slavischen Dialecten. Aber die bisherigen Special-Grammatiken und Special-Lexica sind noch fehlerhaft [...]. Gut, sie sind fehlerhaft, aber doch zu der vorgeschlagenen Absicht brauchbar. Schreibt nur erst mit Hülfe dieser fehlerhaften Wörterbücher ein allgemeines; eben dadurch werden künftig vollkommene Special-Lexica bewirkt werden. Aber langweilig, mühsam und verdrüßlich wäre freilich die Arbeit! Hiewider weiß ich keinen Rath. (SCHLÖZER 1771: 330).

[In my humble opinion, you see, I would say that a professional linguist doing research on the Slavonic languages should first of all take ten Slavonic grammars (for about this number of Slavonic dialects, grammars might already exist), read through each and every chapter, excerpt the paradigms and rules of each and every dialect, then compile them, for example make a table of how the Croat, the Upper Lusatian, the Hungarian Slav etc. declines the pronouns, and add general derived rules, which nations come closest to one another in this field of their languages, how they gradually differ from one another, and how this difference can be explained on account of the general genius of each and every dialect. This way, we would come up with a general comparative grammar of a few Slavonic languages. Thereupon, the linguist should secondly compile along the same lines a general comparative dictionary of the Slavonic languages

in etymological order, search each time for the simplest principal word form, note in which Slavonic dialect the same is still remaining, and then make up its complete gender paradigm with all its derivatives in all known Slavonic dialects. However, up to this day the specialized grammars and specialized dictionaries are still full of mistakes [...]. Why, they are faulty, nevertheless we can use them for the purpose proposed. First, compile a general dictionary with the help of these faulty ones; only that is how we will come up with perfect specialized dictionaries in the near future. But of course, such a task would be tedious, tiring and irksome! I am at a loss as to what to do against that.]

Zlobický himself however was not the scholar who had enough time for this hard task. Therefore, he had to refrain from starting the work himself. In his letter to Josef Dobrovský from June 4th, 1781 he wrote “Ich sah mich in diesem neuen Standorte gezwungen, die Bearbeitung meines Projektes einem andern einzuräumen, wozu sich Šimek nach langem Zureden endlich entschlossen hatte.“ [In my new standing, I had to transfer the processing of this task to another person, and Šimek eventually consented after I had been encouraging him for a long time.] (PATERA 1908: 4). Thus, Zlobický had succeeded in his effort to win a person for putting his plan of compiling a comparative grammar and history of the Slavonic languages into action.

Šimek took it upon himself to gather the material and made rapid progress. Soon, he could submit the first volume's first part of the planned publication. This first volume with the title *Slavische Sprachforschung in tabellarischer Darstellung des Gegenverhältnisses slavischer Mundarten nach den besten dermaligen Sprachlehren ausgerichtet* [Slavonic linguistic studies on the diversified interrelations among the Slavonic dialects in tabulated description, oriented by the best grammars of that time] was devised as a more or less synchronic pan-Slavonic grammar. The rediscovered extensive fair copy of this volume's first part (approx. 120 pp. in Latin) is ready for the press, includes several clearly arranged tables and contains mainly remarks about the phonology of the Slavonic languages and their orthographic as well as orthoepic realization.¹¹ It starts with a comparative table of the alphabets of the Slavonic languages. In further sections, the individual alphabets and languages are analysed in detail. After the tabulated reproductions of each and every alphabet, we find remarks on the pronunciation of every single letter as well as on specific features of the presented languages such as word accent, contractions, combi-

¹¹ This fair copy will be edited within the scope of the FWF-project P18661-G03.

nations of letters and their phonetic realization, etc. In Šimek's terminology, we are confronted with the *Alphabetum Glagoliticum vulgo Hieronymianum* (and its variants), the *Alphabetum Cyrillicum vulgo Illyricum*, the *Alphabetum Neo-Ruthenicum vulgo Russicum*, the *Alphabetum Slavonicum, Croaticum et Dalmaticum vulgo Illyricum vulgare caractere Latino*, the *Alphabetum Vindicum per Carnioliam, Carinthiam et Styriam inferiorem a Vindis seu Vinidis acceptatum characteris latini*, the *Alphabetum Polonorum, Pomer. et Siles.*, the *Alphabetum Bohemicum et Moravic.* and the *Alphabetum Sorabico-Lusaticum super. et infer.* Often, additional information is included such as the comparison of Glagolitic with Hebrew letters and their realization, a comparative Latin-Czech-Hungarian word list in the passages on the Czech language or a table comparing the differences between the orthographic systems of Jakob Xaver Ticin, Michał Frencl, Georg Matthaei, Gottlieb Fabricius, Johann Gottlieb Hauptmann and others in the section on the Sorbian languages.

The title of the whole two-volume publication project was to be *Slawische Sprachgeschichte oder Kritische Klaßifikation der österreichischen Slawen ihrer alten, mittleren, auf itzt noch herrschenden Sprachen, wo nebst einer politischen, geographischen und philologischen Beschaffenheit ihrer Länder und Bezirke, die sie bewohnen, auch hauptsächlich ihre Mundarten, Verbindung und Abweichung der selben von einander, hergestellt werden* [History of the Slavonic languages, or Critical Classification of the Slavs in Austria, their old, middle and still prevailing languages, in which – apart from the political, geographic and philological nature of their countries and districts they are living in – mainly their dialects, and the correspondences and differences among those, will be presented]. The detailed draft of both volumes (36 pp.) has also been discovered just recently.¹²

Zlobický, whose library disposed of about 1700 titles (VINTR/PLESKALOVÁ 2004: 24), loaned several relevant books to Šimek to help him achieve the project's aims. Šimek's role in this context was one of an eclectic and compiler. His main achievement was the condensation of the then current understanding of the Slavonic languages as presented in the specialized standard books of his time, and Šimek amply quoted many of them. As already said above, the analysis of his rediscovered manuscripts from the early eighties of the 18th century could bring about an im-

¹² This draft will also be edited within the scope of the FWF-project P18661-G03. For its contents see its already published shorter version in VINTR/PLESKALOVÁ (2004: 255–260), a six-page draft written by Šimek himself and found in the inheritance of Václav Fortunát Durych (cf. KŘIVSKÝ 1978).

portant boost to the reflection of the roots and the origin of methodically and scientifically pursued Slavonic philology. That is because for the first time, we are able to obtain a clear idea about the state of knowledge concerning the Slavonic languages at the end of the 18th century. We can at the same time clearly show the differences to Josef Dobrovský and his new scientific approach in his *Institutiones linguae Slavicae dialecti veteris* (1822)¹³ as well as hint at the organically grown development stages, that made this new quality of Dobrovský's approach possible.

Šimek's work was not only advanced by Zlobický, but also supported by other important personalities of his time such as the historian and curator of the Viennese Court library Josef Benedikt Heyrenbach, the lawyer and linguist Karl Gottlob Anton, the patron count Evžen z Vrbna a Bruntálu (Eugen von Würben und Freudenthal), the director of the Viennese Court library Gottfried van Swieten, the nuncio and archbishop Giuseppe Carampi and others. Everything seemed to promise a successful end to Šimek's efforts; in 1783 in his *Nachricht an die Gelehrten, Wien den 24. July* [Message to the scholars, Vienna, July 24th], he announced the publication of his pan-Slavonic grammar for subscription. Cyrillic and Glagolitic types had already been developed for the press, but a severe controversy between Šimek and Zlobický¹⁴ and in part also the insufficient interest of subscribers eventually led to the abandonment of the whole project. The first volume's first part containing a pan-Slavonic phonology was never published, and the work on both volumes was never completed. Zlobický described the fate of the publication project as follows. According to his letter to Dobrovský from October 15th, 1798, Šimek destroyed all the material, he had prepared (PATERA 1908: 139).¹⁵ Now, after the rediscovery of the above mentioned manuscripts, we have to revise these statements by Zlobický as further attempts to discredit his former friend and co-worker Šimek, even after his death on July 7th, 1798 in Rabensburg, Lower Austria.

¹³ Cf. WEINGART (1923–1925).

¹⁴ Zlobický failed Šimek at an examination that was considered a prerequisite for teaching at Vienna's *Theresianum*, the magnet school of his time. (NEWERKLA 2002: 64–65, PATERA 1908: 169).

¹⁵ Cf. also the similar account in a letter to the Moravian and Silesian historiographer Jan Petr Cerroni in MENČÍK (1919/1921: 85).

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