

Věra Dvořáčková

The Origins of Czech Academic Lexicography. From Foreign Inspiration to State Formation Potential

The very first Slavic academic¹ explanatory dictionary, and still the most extensive dictionary of the Czech language, is the *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* 'Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language'. It was published in 1935-1957 and its nine large volumes record, in their considerable complexity, the lexical, grammatical, stylistic, orthographic, and orthoepic aspects of more than two hundred thousand words². Its compilation was preceded by in-depth preliminary investigations lasting many years, involving not only the gathering and classification of linguistic material but also a thorough study of lexicographic methodology and the design of a particular approach, as compatible as possible with Czech – an inflected, synthetic language, formed under circumstances of linguistic contact with German, the process of Czech national revival, and the formation of the so-called First Czechoslovak Republic.

This work had to be undertaken within the broader context of European lexicography, which was the chief source of inspiration during the evolution of Czech lexicography. It also led to a crucial understanding of the specific contemporary local (Central European) linguistic circumstances that gave the *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* its exceptional character. The objective of the present article is therefore not only to explain the unique local political, economic, and cultural conditions under which the dictionary was compiled but also to place the origins of Czech lexicography in the context of developments in European lexicography. In addition to the already existing literature, it draws upon previously unexplored archival sources of the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences (*Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR: MÚA AV ČR*) housed at the Czech Language Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts (*Ústav pro jazyk český České akademie věd a umění: ÚJČ ČAVU*).

1. *The Czech Lexicographical Tradition*

The primeval phase of Czech lexicography was perhaps the translational and interpretational comments added to texts written in a foreign language, in particular Latin.

¹ The term 'academic' herein refers to a scientific institution, usually an academy of sciences or a university.

² The afterword to the *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* states that it comprises some 250,000 entries. However, it was found during the digitisation of the dictionary, carried out by the CAS Czech Language Institute in 2007-2008, that the total count is slightly above 200,000.

Such comments are found, for instance, in the Latin treatise *Mater verborum* 'Mother of Words', dating back to the 13th century (Hladká 2005: 141). No systematic lexicographic work, however, existed before the 14th century when Bartoloměj z Chlumce (Bartholomew of Chlumec, also known as Claretus de Solentia), a teacher at the St Vitus's school (Vidmanová 1980: 218) and Master of the newly founded Charles University, enriched Czech science and literature. His dictionaries of Latin vocabulary and terminology with their Czech translations, written in verse, were intended primarily to be of assistance to university students (Šlosar 1990: 17). The publisher, linguist, historian, and philosopher Daniel Adam of Veleslavín published his work in the 16th century. His influence on Czech culture is considered so fundamental that the period in which he worked is referred to as the (golden) age of Veleslavín. His tetralingual dictionary was titled Bohemian-Latin-Greek-German quadrilingual nomenclature (*Nomenclator quadrilinguis Boemico-Latino-Graeco-Germanicus*) and was first issued in 1598 (Zíbrt 1900: 169). In the early 17th century the 'teacher of nations', the founder of modern pedagogy Jan Amos Komenský, prepared a great dictionary entitled *Thesaurus Linguae Bohemicae* 'The Wealth of the Czech Language'; he was unable to finish it, however, because his work was destroyed by a great fire in Leszno, Poland in 1656. His dictionary was intended to be a full lexical, grammatical, and phraseological compilation of the Czech vocabulary, from both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective (Hladká 2005: 145-146). Shortly after Komenský, still in the 17th century, Václav Jan Rosa began compiling a Czech-Latin-German dictionary with the same name (*Thesaurus Linguae Bohemicae*). His work was never finished but formed the basis for Josef Jungmann's highly valued 19th-century dictionary (Opelík *et al.* 2000: 1273)

In the 19th century, several significant bilingual dictionaries emerged, which were quite innovative for their time. These include the German-Czech Dictionary (*Deutsch-böhmisches Wörterbuch*), the first volume of which was published by Josef Dobrovský in 1802, while the second volume, issued in 1821, was prepared by Antonín Jaroslav Puchmayer and Karel Ignác Thám (Páta 1911: 201). Josef Dobrovský was the first to promote the principle of including only entries with proven provenance. In 1835-1839, a Czech-German Dictionary (*Slovník česko-německý*) in five volumes was compiled by Josef Jungmann. This work laid the foundations for the modern standard Czech language, and for more than a century it constituted the principal authority in language matters (Kraus 1993: 90). The Czech-German Dictionary with Particular Reference to Grammar and Phraseology (*Česko-německý slovník zvláště grammaticko-fraseologický*) by František Štěpán Kott (1878-1893) is of particular interest as it gives an extensive account of phraseology and dialect vocabulary.

In the early 20th century, however, a decision was taken to compile the very first Czech dictionary excluding any interpretation of the entries in a foreign language. As German was widely known prior to the First World War, its use was actually a matter of efficiency and practicality at the time, but since German soon declined in popularity following the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic, there was increasing demand for a modern dictionary of the Czech language reflecting the expanding Czech vocabulary (Šmilauer 1958: 566).

2. *European Lexicographical Experience*

The first great explanatory dictionaries in Europe were usually prepared in connection with the establishment of national academies of sciences, and the Czech case was no different. The establishment of the Emperor Franz Joseph Czech Academy of Sciences, Literature, and Arts in 1891 also reflected a demand for the creation of an extensive dictionary of the Czech language. The oldest academy in Europe, the Florence-based *Accademia della Crusca*, founded in 1582, focused primarily on philology, and in 1612 published a dictionary titled *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* 'Dictionary of the Academy of the Crusca'. This dictionary became the model for many other national languages of Europe: the French *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* 'Dictionary of the French Academy' (1694), the Spanish *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* 'Spanish Language Dictionary' (1726-1739), the *Dictionary of the English Language* by Samuel Johnson (1786) and the German *Deutsches Wörterbuch* 'German Dictionary' (1854) by the Grimm brothers.

The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, the dictionary of the French Academy of Sciences, which was completed in 1694³, served as the main source of lexicographical inspiration for the authors of the later Swedish dictionary. The decision to launch the preparatory work was adopted by the Swedish Academy in 1787 and work began in 1883, but the first volume of *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* did not appear until 1893 (Dvořáčková 2019: 223).

3. *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* 'Swedish Academic Dictionary'

This Swedish dictionary, completed in 2023, 140 years after it was begun⁴, comprises half a million entries representing standard Swedish in all verifiable written sources throughout history. It is one of the most extensive and complex monolingual dictionaries in the world⁵ (Falck-Kjällquist 1987: 20). With the objective of enriching the lexicographic perspective of the Prague-based Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language (*Kancelář Slovníku jazyka českého*) with experience from foreign institutes, the Czech linguist Josef Janko⁶ visited the Swedish city of Lund in 1911 to see this dictionary and to meet its authors. The excerpt rules dating back to 1898 and presented to Josef Janko, were in many respects similar to those used in the preparation of the Czech dictionary, which only validated the working methods that were already in use in Prague (ÚJČ 141). In a similar manner as in

³ Subsequent editions were issued in 1718, 1740, 1762, 1798, 1835, 1878, 1932-1935 and 1992.

⁴ Older volumes containing words that begin with A to R, conceived many decades ago, are supposed to be revised before 2030.

⁵ Although in the mid-1980s it was assumed that the last volume would not be published until the mid-21st century, the rapid boom of the IT industry, as well as of computational and corpus linguistics, considerably accelerated the work on the dictionary.

⁶ Josef Janko (1869-1947) was a Czech scholar in German and Slavic studies who devoted his theoretical works mainly to phonetics and etymology. He was one of the first instigators of the idea of creating a great monolingual dictionary and played a part in the gradual formation of its conceptual principles.

Sweden, all the relevant sources were divided into various categories and excerpted accordingly. Both in Prague and in Lund, the respective list of key works of Czech and Swedish literature were established as appropriate for full excerption, and special excerption principles were defined for academic terminology, while emphasis was placed on recording all existing semantic nuances, all rare and unusual words, forms, meanings, and means of expression.

The linguistic skills and professionalism of the excerptors (graduate and student philologists) were highly trusted in Sweden, granting them considerable decision-making powers. This meant they could add various notes to the excerpted entries concerning a special form, meaning, or structure, propose their semantic definition, as well as append the relevant synonyms and information about the origin of a word. However, unlike Czech lexicographers, the Swedish team strictly avoided including any dialect or slang expressions in their card archive and loan phrases that fully maintained their original form (for instance, *ad acta*).

The greatest difference between the emerging Swedish and Czech monolingual dictionaries was that the design of the Czech dictionary, contrary to the original intention, abandoned the thesaurus approach, and as a result, a purely synchronic dictionary was being compiled in Prague.

It is interesting to note that the Swedish dictionary is one of the few lexicographic works of this scale whose publication was completed several decades earlier than anticipated during its preparation. While in the 1980s the year 2045 was mentioned as the target completion date, the Swedes celebrated the publication of the final volume of one of the most important contributions to Swedish linguistics and culture in 2023 (SAO).

4. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* ‘*Thesaurus of the Latin Language*’

As early as May 1911, Josef Zubatý⁷ visited Munich to gather general lexicographic information. Work had been underway there since 1893 (Krömer 2009: 187-190) on the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, the first volume of which was published in 1900. (TLL; Bögel, Krömer 1996: VIII) On his return, he declared: “It is quite difficult to see how the methodology applied in the preparation of the Latin Thesaurus could be instructive for the preparation of our dictionary. The circumstances of these two undertakings are not identical” (ÚJČ 140).

Zubatý saw as the principal difference the diametrically opposed systems of financial support for the undertaking. The Thesaurus received consistent annual funding of 25,000 marks (about 30,000 Czech Crowns at that time) from five major German academies, namely Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Sächsische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, and Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. To this were

⁷ Josef Zubatý (1855-1931) was a Czech scholar in Indian and Slavic studies, a rector of Charles University, who – like Josef Janko – was a member of the original team of lexicographers who early in the 20th century began to prepare the design of the future dictionary.

added the proceeds of various public fundraising efforts, donations from private contributors, and significant material assistance (and professional support, of course) from interns who were regularly sent to Munich, financed by foreign companies.

Another difference (perhaps the most fundamental one) between the two dictionaries was the fact that the Latin *Thesaurus* involved a dead language, so the written monuments that could (and indeed were) used to compile it constituted a finite whole. In the documentary section, therefore, the Munich *Thesaurus* included all quotes from excerpted texts dated before the year 600 A.D. and all hapax legomena. In the case of an organically developing living language, a different approach was needed, in terms of methodology, design, and documentation.

The crucial factor from which, according to Zubatý, the Czech lexicographers should draw inspiration, was the method by which excerpts were derived from the sources in Munich. Zubatý considered that Czech excerptors, compared to their Munich colleagues, were given too much leeway, whereas this type of work ought to be as mechanical as possible in order to avoid the majority of inconsistencies and errors. In particular, he believed that the decision to skip redundant words in a given context should be reserved for the final editing phase. In this respect, Zubatý thought that cutting and pasting from printed specialized dictionaries was a worthwhile method, so the contents need not be excerpted manually but only affixed to the excerpt cards.

On the strength of his visit to Munich, Zubatý further recommended expanding the library of the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language to include all previously published Czech dictionaries and to excerpt all literature focused on the interpretation of individual words, whether from important older sources or the more recent literature on grammar in monographs and journals. He also advised that the documentation should be dated to the year in which the work from which the excerpt was taken was first published (ÚJČ 140).

In the event, the Munich model assisted Czech lexicographers mainly in the formal and organizational aspects of their work. The changes implemented included, for instance, using octavo excerpt card size instead of sextodecimo, making an identical shelf with cardboard boxes to store the excerpts, expanding the library following Zubatý's recommendations, and paying the excerptors the fee that was usual for the *Thesaurus*, i.e. 5 pfennigs per card. With the Czech dictionary, it was three hellers per card in the case of so-called full excerpts from an easy text if the excerptor produced fewer than 2,500 cards. The fee of 4 hellers applied to all cards over 2,500 and to "partial excerpts", and 5-6 hellers for excerpts from a difficult text (Dvořáčková 2011: 32). These amounts increased over time: by 1930, for instance, the fee for one card amounted to 40 hellers. On the other hand, the excerptors were still given considerable discretion, since unlike the case of Latin, the linguistic intuition of native speakers could be trusted, an important factor, especially in the case of the latest sources.

An important accompanying result that came to light during the many years spent perfecting the design of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* was the fact that lexicography became a specific linguistic discipline in its own right, not merely an auxiliary or accompanying means of linguistic research (Hays 2007: 490). This was an approach that later

resonated also in the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language and its postwar successor, the Czech Language Institute, even though the idea had to be vigorously defended, especially after the Second World War (Dvořáčková 2011: 123).

5. *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*⁸

Some Czech lexicographers, especially Bohuslav Havránek⁹, were greatly inspired by the large English dictionary titled *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1888-1928, 10 volumes, cfr. OED). It covered the English vocabulary from 1150 to the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. It was based on 5 million excerpted entries from 2,700 authors and 4,500 works, more than one-third of the documents being included in the publication. It is certainly interesting that the method used to derive the excerpts, and, for instance, the formatting of dictionary entries was to a considerable extent in accordance with the expectations of the Czech team (ÚJČ 145).

As part of its preparatory work, in 1878 – ten years before the publication of the first volume – the English lexicographers published sample entries to gain preliminary feedback, which eventually proved a very good idea. The positive and negative responses greatly assisted them in their further work by highlighting certain weaknesses; at the same time, there was an unprecedented surge of interest in collaborating on the project, as over 800 new applications were received. No sample fascicle was published for the *Příruční slovník jazyka českého*, but five model entries were prepared (*cesta, po, vyvolati, sám, případný*, i.e. *way, after, induce, alone, potential*) and, as a trial, all entries beginning with the letter *ž* were processed one year before the first volume was published.

6. *Rečnik srpskohrvatskog književnog i narodnog jezika ‘Serbian Dictionary of Literary and Vernacular Language’*

In the summer of 1923, Bohuslav Havránek returned with an inspiring lexicographic experience from his visits to the lexicographic institutes in Belgrade and Zagreb (ÚJČ 142). What was most inspiring, however, was actually learning what to avoid.

Since 1893¹⁰, work had been underway at the Serbian Royal Academy on the compilation of an extensive thesaurus of the Serbian language, *Srpski rečnik književnoga i narod-*

⁸ Inspiration was drawn from the volumes already published and also from the design principles that the Czech linguists requested from their English colleagues.

⁹ Bohuslav Havránek (1893-1978) was a Czech scholar in Slavic and Balkan studies and a long-standing Director of the ČSAV Czech Language Institute, who participated in the preparatory work on the *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* already from 1915, and from 1942 was a member of the main editorial board.

¹⁰ At the celebratory gathering of the Serbian Academy in 1887 to mark the centenary of the birth of Vuk Karadžić, a Serbian linguist and the founder of the modern standard Serbian language, the pressing need to compile a great monolingual dictionary was presented by the historian and phi-

noga jezika. It was intended to reflect the wealth of the standard Serbian language and its dialects from 1783 to the present day. Although a sample volume had been published in 1913, the approach to its design was not at all received favorably by academia. After the First World War, therefore, the editorial team resumed work *ab initio*. Texts written in Croatian were also included in the excerption, and, as a result, the original title was changed to *Rečnik srpskohrvatskog književnog i narodnog jezika* 'Dictionary of Serbo-Croatian Literary and Vernacular Language'. The basic excerption principle was that of completeness, i.e. all words were to be verified in all their meanings and semantic nuances. However, as Bohuslav Havránek noted during his visit, virtually nothing was recorded fully and in detail. The editorial team allegedly considered total excerption merely a pointless accumulation of material, relying on documentation of common vocabulary in earlier published dictionaries. Thus, the Serbs totally disregarded linguistic development and neglected to proceed chronologically. As a result, already excerpted literature apparently had to be frequently reviewed again, as the recorded excerpts turned out to be insufficient.

In any case, this experience fully reflected the wholly inappropriate staffing of the Serbian lexicographical team. Whereas in the 1920s and 1930s, the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language had at its disposal ten internal members and on average 100 external collaborators, only one retired grammar school teacher and two former secondary school teachers were employed in the Serbian office. Moreover, one of them was employed only on a part-time basis. The excerption fees were the same as the Czech and the Munich fees, i.e. 5 para per card (ÚJČ 142).

Like the Czech Academy, the Serbian Academy also sought for many years to establish a language and linguistics institute to speed up work on the preparation of the dictionary and render it more effective. The Institut za srpski jezik was founded in 1947 (previously, the Academy had a lexicographic department only), just one year after the foundation of the Czech Language Institute.

Unlike the authors of the Czech dictionary, who, thanks to adequate funding, could begin publishing their work in the interwar period, their Serbian colleagues could not begin publishing their extensive work until 1959. The *Rečnik srpskohrvatskog književnog i narodnog jezika* is still being published today. The latest (21st) volume (*pogdekada – pokupiti*, i.e. *sometimes – pick up*) appeared in 2020, and approximately two-thirds of the Serbian alphabet is now being covered in this work.

7. *Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika* [*Croatian or Serbian Language Dictionary*]

The Czech linguist Bohuslav Havránek also visited Zagreb in 1923. Work on the dictionary began at the South Slavic Academy in 1866, with the goal of designing a diachronic

logist Stojan Novaković, later to become Prime Minister and chairman of the Serbian Academy. Five years later, he outlined a detailed proposal to collect linguistic material and the method to conceive the Serbian thesaurus. Based on his initiative, the Academy also founded its lexicographical department.

dictionary covering vocabulary from its beginnings to the early 19th century. The interwar excerpt process Bohuslav Havránek witnessed was essentially random work, with each excerptor determining their own approach and level of detail – “everyone was making the excerpts according to their skills and inclinations”. This situation was the result of a lack of funding. “There has been and still is no office, no special accommodation or personnel; the editor has been carrying out almost all the work on his own and continues to do so; he is assisted in routine tasks by the Academy’s janitor and occasionally by a student. ... There is plenty of material ..., but it is neither complete nor chronologically accurate ... It is stored in the Academy’s cellar and arranged alphabetically – roughly” (ÚJČ 142). Despite all manner of difficulties involved in its preparation, the dictionary was finally published in full in 1880-1976, comprising 23 volumes and approximately 250,000 entries (Pavesić, Reizer 1965; Finka 1979: 5-13; Malić 1980-1981: 123).

8. *Polish Dictionaries*

The Czech linguists’ extensive international survey of lexicographical activity would not have been complete without including one environment particularly close to the Czech context: Poland. In Kraków, where Josef Zubatý visited, preparatory work had been underway since 1895¹¹ on the Dictionary of Old Polish (*Słownik staropolski*) (Urbańczyk 1953-2002: I-XIII). An authoritative source for the Polish language from the 16th to the early 19th century was the Dictionary of the Polish Language (*Słownik języka polskiego*) by Samuel Bogumił Linde, first published in 1806-1814 (Doroszewski 1951: 13-16; Siwkowska 1951: 6-11). What was interesting about Linde’s dictionary was that, in addition to documentation of literary sources, it also investigated contemporary general usage and the broader Slavic context; additionally, its entries were subjected to a thorough semantic analysis, directly in Polish, setting it apart from other existing bilingual dictionaries such as the German dictionary by the Grimm brothers, who employed Latin as a means of interpretation, or Josef Jungmann’s Czech-German Dictionary, which used German. However, little was made of this inspiring potential by the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language. After several revisions of the original design, a synchronic dictionary was eventually compiled, excluding historical stages of the Czech language.

In summary, it can be stated that the closest similarities to Czech lexicographical practices in terms of preparatory work and actual compilation were found in the Swedish *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* and *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, two dictionaries that supported the directions Czech lexicographers had set for themselves, and also served as models for the resolution of principles as yet undecided. These were, for instance, a sophisticated structure for semantic interpretation, the inclusion of retrievable nuances and polysemy, and the use of quotations as documentary evidence. An important feature of all

¹¹ The decision to compile an Old Polish Dictionary was adopted in 1873. In practice, work on the dictionary did not begin until the early 1940s.

three dictionaries was the stylistic categorization of keywords. There were minor differences, for instance, in the explicit determination of parts of speech, which the Swedish dictionary always provides, while the Czech and English dictionaries omit in the case of nouns.

9. *The Founding of a Czech Academic Lexicographic Institute*

As mentioned above, the traditional European institutional support for extensive dictionaries of national languages was provided by academies of sciences. The Emperor Franz Joseph Czech Academy for Sciences, Literature, and Art was founded in 1891 and renamed as the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1918, the year when an independent Czechoslovakia was founded as one of the successor states of Austria-Hungary. From the very beginning, one of the pillars of the Academy's work was the cultivation of the Czech language, which was to result in, *inter alia*, the publication of a large explanatory dictionary of the Czech language. The Lexicography and Dialect Commission was therefore established in 1905. Its members worked on aspects of design and methodology related to the proposed dictionary, and in 1911 the Commission established the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language (*Kancelář Slovníku jazyka českého*), which laid the foundation of the present-day Czech Language Institute. It should be added that two other institutes were involved in lexicographical research in the Czech Academy of Sciences: the Commission for the Dictionary of Medieval Latin and the Commission for the Dictionary of Old Slavonic Language and the Study of Church Slavonic and its Heritage. Regarding the Dictionary of Mediaeval Latin (*Slovník středověké latiny*), thorough excerption work from the relevant sources was underway from 1934, when the commission for the dictionary was founded, until the 1970s. The first volume was not published until 1977. The Commission for the Dictionary of Old Slavonic Language was founded somewhat unofficially in 1943. A sample fascicle appeared in 1956, and the dictionary was published in 1958-1997. Significant lexicographic works of a smaller scope were compiled with the support of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts such as the Dictionary of Lower Sorbian and Its Dialects (*Slovník dolnolužického jazyka a jeho nářečí*) by Arnošt Muka. The Academy's most important lexicographical institutions, however, are undoubtedly the Academy III Class Lexicography Commission¹² (known as the Lexicography and Dialect Commission until 1919), and the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language (*Kancelář Slovníku jazyka českého*), which was established by the Commission and directed on its initiative. The chief outcome of its work was the most extensive reference dictionary of the Czech language to date, the Compact Dictionary of the Czech Language (*Příruční slovník jazyka českého*)(1935-1957)¹³.

¹² The Czech Academy for Sciences and Arts comprised four 'classes': Class I covered philosophy, social sciences, and historical disciplines, Class II encompassed natural sciences, Class III represented philological disciplines, and Class IV was dedicated to the creative arts, music, and literature.

¹³ Despite the title, *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* 'Compact Dictionary of the Czech Language', which might imply a publication of a lesser extent, this is a truly monumental work. The title was chosen deliberately, reflecting the decision to abandon the idea of creating a thesaurus – a

10. *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* [Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language].

Příruční slovník jazyka českého was published in 1935-1957 after preparatory work had begun as early as 1905 and is the very first completed monolingual dictionary of Slavic provenance. It was based on the extensive and methodically thorough excerption work, now generally referred to as the Modern Czech Lexical Archive (*Novočeský lexikální archiv*) (Goláňová 2011). This material later formed the basis of other Czech monolingual dictionaries, especially the Dictionary of the Standard Czech Language (*Slovník spisovné-
ho jazyka českého*) (1960-1971) and the Dictionary of Standard Czech for Schools and the General Public (*Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost*) (1978). The card excerpts were derived mainly from works of fiction, as well as from academic literature, a selection of newspapers, magazines, and translations¹⁴.

The original design had envisioned the compilation of a thesaurus (Filipec 1958: 216). In 1913, however, this idea was reconsidered, and it was decided that the earliest entries in the future dictionary would be limited to the last quarter of the 18th century. In the late 1920s, a fundamental change occurred, following the decision to prepare a synchronic dictionary, covering approximately the preceding 50-60 years. For the period before 1870, only works by some important authors were excerpted (Hodura 1959: 11). The actual compilation of the entries was carried out in agreement with the sophisticated lexicographical theory published by Alois Získal¹⁵ in the journal “Slovo a slovesnost” (Získal 1938). The members of the chief editorial board were Oldřich Hujer, Emil Smetánka, Miloš Weingart, Bohuslav Havránek, Vladimír Šmilauer, and Alois Získal.

The dictionary was not normative, as it did not serve a codifying function; it was a descriptive lexicographic work that focused mainly on the current state of standard Czech vocabulary. Marked lexemes, such as archaisms and dialect entries, were included only in exceptional cases. Semantic interpretations were gradually made more precise to capture all relevant nuances and cases of polysemy as comprehensively as possible. The use of quotations as documentary evidence reinforced the impartiality of the lexicographic work. Its principal achievement was the inclusion of stylistic classification of lexical units (Karlík *et. al.* 2017).

After the publication of the final, 8th part (9th volume), Addenda to the Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language (*Dodatky k Příručnímu slovníku jazyka českého*) was

dictionary containing all words from the very first period of the language – by the late 1920s, while leaving room for the project’s potential revival in the future. It was obvious that the contemporary dictionary needed to be much less extensive than a thesaurus, a distinction the title aimed to convey.

¹⁴ The Modern Czech Lexical Archives are now available in electronic form at <<http://bara.ujc.cas.cz/>>.

¹⁵ Alois Získal (1891-1974) was a Czech scholar in linguistics and Bohemian studies, From 1939 he was director of the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language and in the period between 1946 and 1956 was director of the Czech Language Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts.

planned but remained only an unfinished manuscript, freely available in electronic form since 2013 at <<http://bara.ujc.cas.cz/bara/>> (Dvořáčková 2013).

11. *Financial Provision for the Great Dictionary of the Czech Language*

For many years, science was seen not as an occupation but as a whim, a caprice, or a hobby. As it has always been seen as virtuous and fair for someone to pay for his hobbies, science could never pay its promoter. It therefore used to be an occupation for rich private individuals or for those who made a living through other, accepted, and recognized work (Smetana 1965: 28-29).

Despite this statement, it can be said that the financial conditions under which the Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language (*Průruční slovník jazyka českého*) was compiled and published can generally be seen as very favorable within contemporary and academic contexts, although the Austro-Hungarian era, in particular, differed from the era of the First Czechoslovak Republic. Before 1918, under the influence of the newly emerging conditions for systematic lexicographical work, and also under the impact of generally unfavorable circumstances such as the First World War, Czech academic lexicography was largely driven by the enthusiasm of interested linguists and their colleagues, with the Academy management willing to provide adequate financial support for the *Dictionary*. However, the situation changed significantly when the new Republic was established. Even though the austerity measures demanded by the Great Depression in the early 1930s had an impact on the incomes of the Office, the *Dictionary* continued to enjoy substantial financial support from the state throughout the interwar period. This was due not only to the public demand or to the high academic value of the first published outcomes of the lexicographic work, but most of all to the nation-forming, or even state-forming potential of the Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language (*Průruční slovník jazyka českého*), since a great dictionary of contemporary Czech was seen as a suitable complement to the hard-won national idea of Czechoslovakism, based on the national language¹⁶ (ÚJČ 6). The independent existence of the First Czechoslovak Republic in Central Europe was in fact built on the Slavonic basis of the so-called Czechoslovak nation and the construct of the so-called Czechoslovak language (Sobota 1929: 32). The political and national motivation was and is quite evident – in a state with numerous non-Slavonic minorities, led by Czech Germans who made up a quarter of the total population. In linguistic terms, however, this

¹⁶ The primary presumption after 1918, when Czechoslovakia became one of the successor states of Austria-Hungary, was that the Dictionary would not only capture the Czech language, but the “Czechoslovak language”, an artificial construct unfounded on linguistics and anticipated to confirm the justification of an independent Slavic state, albeit with a numerous German minority, in the middle of Europe. The linguistic inaccuracy and high demands of the Czechoslovak dictionary project led to the Slovak part soon being abandoned, and work continued only on preparing the Czech dictionary.

was a purposeful, and consequently misunderstood, idea of a joint language stemming from shared roots. This was the reason why, for some time after 1918, the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts continued to cling to the idea that the dictionary should be compiled not only for the Czech language but also for the Slovak language. Even though this idea (even if conceived in a parallel bi-lingual form), soon proved to be unviable in academic as well as staffing terms, the emerging great dictionary of the Czech language was widely acclaimed and trusted.

To a considerable extent, this was also related to the pre-First Republic and interwar phenomenon of the “nationalization of scientific knowledge”, i.e. the involvement of science and academia in the process of shaping a modern nation, with the humanities and social sciences playing a primary role. This idea apparently aligned with the vision of the first Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, a university professor of philosophy. Furthermore, financial support for the dictionary was a manifestation of the interwar state’s preference for the humanities and social sciences, based also on the conviction that the development of research in the technical and natural sciences should be closely coordinated with industrial and agricultural activities, and also financed by those involved in such spheres, while state support should primarily focus on ensuring the satisfactory development of the social sciences and humanities, which despite lacking immediate commercial potential, broadly influence the positive functioning of society. The Dictionary project therefore enjoyed regular subsidies from the state, regional and municipal authorities, foundations, and, to a lesser degree, also private entities, in particular savings banks and insurance companies. In 1923, for instance, with the income of the whole Czech Academy amounting to almost one and a half million Czechoslovak Crowns, the Office for the Dictionary of the Czech Language alone had a budget of more than 100 thousand Crowns. In the mid-1930s, however, following the impact of the recession, when the Academy had to considerably reduce its spending with 600 thousand crowns per year, the annual budget of the Office even increased to almost three-quarters of the income of the whole ČAVU. The income of the ČAVU therefore fell to almost one-third, while, by contrast, that of the Office rose by one-third.

Support for the dictionary did not cease even during the Second World War, when the Czech Lands became the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, although it understandably faced major restrictions. The work on the new dictionary slowed down considerably, and throughout virtually the entire Nazi occupation, the threat loomed that the work would be brought to a halt, or even that the volumes already published would be destroyed. Credit is primarily due to the land inspector for the language of schools, Jaroslav Zima, for ensuring that the completed volumes were not shredded. Forced labor or imprisonment imposed on some authors, as well as strict censorship, were other major difficulties that had to be faced (Barvíková *et al.* 1998: 81). After the war, the completion of the missing volumes was again supported by the revived Czechoslovak state, and the lexicographic task that had taken so many years could eventually be accomplished in 1957 (ÚJČ 108, ÚJČ 114).

12. Conclusion

The *Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language* (*Příruční slovník jazyka českého*) is not, as its title might imply, a small book containing basic information about Czech vocabulary. In the late 1920s, when the idea of publishing a Czech thesaurus was postponed indefinitely and the decision was made to proceed with the contemporary vocabulary only, the dictionary was intended to comprise around 5,000-6,000 pages. But even this estimate was exceeded – by nearly twice as much. The team of authors included 26 linguists headed by Alois Získal who laid the foundations of the modern Czech lexicographic and lexicological tradition. This was a tradition that had taken long to emerge and was, to a considerable degree, influenced by the experience that its creators had gained in academic institutions abroad where extensive lexicographical works were produced.

The *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* is still the most extensive monolingual Czech dictionary of the standard language (though not exclusively), comprising nine large volumes that record, to an unprecedented extent, the lexical, grammatical, stylistic, orthographic, and orthoepic aspects of more than two hundred thousand words. Its compilation was based on what was, at the time, the biggest excerpt of a Slavic language, and its format had a fundamental impact on matters of Czech stylistics and linguistic culture. Finally, the *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* served as the basis for the new Rules of Czech Grammar (Havránek, Trávníček 1957). The richness of the lexical archive of contemporary Czech has enhanced the understanding of the true standard Czech language and also facilitated the preparation of a retrospective archive that enabled a detailed study of Czech word formation.

In addition to the herculean efforts of those who worked on it, substantial support from the Academy of Sciences, in fact, the state, was also necessary to enable the compilation of such a dictionary. This support was evident, particularly during the First Czechoslovak Republic when the compilation of an academic lexicographical work dealing with Czech vocabulary was considered a political task promoting state formation.

The final volume of the descriptive Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language was published in 1957, and it was followed by other dictionaries of contemporary Czech, notably the normative Dictionary of the Standard Czech Language (*Slovník spisovného jazyka českého*)(1960-1971) in four volumes, and a further normative dictionary, Dictionary of Standard Czech for Schools and the General Public (*Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost*)(1978) in one volume. Since 2012, the Czech Language Institute has been working on the Academic Dictionary of Contemporary Czech Language (*Akademický slovník současné češtiny*) which is expected to contain 120,000-150,000 lexical entries, some of which are already available online (ASSČ).

Abbreviations

- ASSČ: <https://slovníkcestiny.cz/o_slovníku.php> (latest access: 22.07.24).
- OED: *Oxford English Dictionary*, <<http://public.oed.com/history-of-the-oed/>> (latest access: 22.07.24).
- SAO: *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*: <www.saob.se> (latest access: 22.07.24).
- TLL: *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, <<http://www.thesaurus.badw.de>> (latest access: 22.07.24).
- ÚJČ 6: Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR – Praha, Ústav pro jazyk český České akademie věd a umění, Box. 1, inv. no. 6, *Negotiations regarding the establishment of the Czech Language Institute*, 1918-1919.
- ÚJČ 108: Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR – Praha, Ústav pro jazyk český České akademie věd a umění, Box. 5, inv. no. 108, *Ledger book of incomes and expenses*, 1941-1951.
- ÚJČ 114: Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR – Praha, Ústav pro jazyk český České akademie věd a umění, Box 6, inv. no. 114, *Subsidies from the Ministry of Education and National Awareness*, 1945-1949.
- ÚJČ 140: Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR – Praha, Ústav pro jazyk český České akademie věd a umění, Box 7, inv. no. 140, *J. Zubatý's notes on the "Thesaurus Linguae Latinae"*, 23 June 1911.
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- ÚJČ 142: Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR – Praha, Ústav pro jazyk český České akademie věd a umění, Box 7, inv. no. 142, *A memorandum on the preparatory works of the Serbian Royal Academy in Beograd for the "Dictionary of the Serbian Language" and on the work on the "Dictionary of the South Slavic Academy in Zagreb"*, 1923.
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Abstract

Věra Dvořáčková

The Origins of Czech Academic Lexicography: From Foreign Inspiration to State Formation Potential

This paper deals with the beginnings of Czech academic lexicography in the context of contemporary international lexicography. When work on the first dictionary covering the contemporary Czech vocabulary commenced, many other lexicographic projects were under way in Europe, frequently not comparable in terms of staffing and funding. The authors of the Czech dictionary were able to learn from the experience of their colleagues abroad, which helped them understand what could be useful in the context of the Czech language, what sources of inspiration could be drawn on, and where greater account should be taken of specific local circumstances. The compilation of the *Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language* was also substantially influenced by the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. In light of its multi-national population, in particular the numerous German and Hungarian minorities, the republic conceived the compilation of an extensive dictionary of the Czech language as a project with significant potential for state formation.

Keywords

Origins of Czech Lexicography; Monolingual Dictionary; Příruční slovník jazyka českého; Reference Dictionary of the Czech Language; European Lexicography.