



Fig. 1
The *Archivphonograph Typus 1*
©Phonogrammarchiv (OeAW)

The various transformations of the *Archivphonograph* in the expedition of Paul Kretschmer to Lesbos in 1901

What can a phonograph tell about its life? Similar to personal biographies and memoirs, object biographies can act as carriers of different meanings and functions between different individuals as well. These diverse stories can be brought to the fore, with the aid of the method of object biography.

In my dissertation, I deal with the historical context of the field research expedition of

Paul Kretschmer (1866-1956), a linguist and professor at the University of Vienna. One part of my work discusses the implementation of audio-visual media in his field research.

In 1901, Kretschmer travelled with his wife to the island of Lesbos in order to study the local dialect. The Viennese professor used the latest technological means of his time for the documentation of the lesbian dialect, namely a phonograph (*Archivphonograph-Type 1*) (Fig. 1), which was newly produced by the Phonogrammarchiv-Commission (today Phonogrammarchiv) of the former Royal Academy of Sciences (Vienna). In addition, he was equipped with a camera.

All our information about the use of the *Archivphonograph* in his fieldwork is mainly based on his report to the Academy of Sciences, where all his negative experiences with the apparatus are described. However, my research on the unpublished photos, letters and diaries of the expedition (Kretschmer's estate in the Austrian National Library) has uncovered the unknown and diverse *faces* of the *Archivphonograph*. Kretschmer presented the machine to different people at various times and places, according to the current goals he wanted to achieve. My presentation seeks to analyse the several transformations and multiple status of the apparatus in Kretschmer's mission in the case of three different periods: 1) preparing and planning the expedition in Vienna, 2) conducting the expedition and interacting with the local society in Lesbos, 3) returning to Vienna and delivering of three Greek sound recordings as a result of his fieldwork.