Jerneja Vrabič
ZRC SAZU Institute of Ethnomusicology, Ljubljana

RECORDING SITES AND PLACES NAMED IN SELECT SLOVENE FOLKSONGS

This article explores the physical space encountered while reading works in the collection *Slovenske narodne pesmi* [*Slovene Folk Songs,* 1895–1923]. The analysis includes 148 humorous and mocking songs. The maps show recording sites and their variants, as well as the places mentioned in songs. The tools used were Excel, online maps and GIS applications.

Key words: folksong, space, Geographic information system (GIS), map

1 On the Collection, Worlds, Transitions and Method of Work

In 1887, Karel Štrekelj published a call in the *Ljubljanski zvon* newspaper for people to submit materials of national value. He wished to edit and publish to the best of his ability all of the »national treasure« that had ever been published, as well as what existed in manuscript collections. He was thus trying to encompass all the lands and places where, at the time, »people of our language« lived (Štrekelj 1887: 628; Matičetov 1969: 198). The task of editing the body of humorous songs fell to Jože Glonar, who, following Štrekelj's death, continued and eventually completed the collection *Slovenske narodne pesmi*.[1] Glonar gathered songs and their variants for the collection of humorous and mocking songs by seventy-eight different recorders; fifty-two records in the collection are by anonymous recorders.[2] Glonar considered chronology much more important than to the names of recorders and informers (*SNP IV*: *51 and *66).

For the most part, the songs were collected in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Recorders did not always note the place and time, and the names of informants; neither did they make peripheral notes on the context (e.g., whether the song was being sung at special occasions, at certain times, and the like). Furthermore, the records are wanting from the folklorist's perspective since the collection mostly comprises the lyrics only—in the section of humorous and mocking songs, the melody is outlined as a footnote to only one song. The commentary to this section states that »[s]ongs of such nature [...] are primarily intended for actual persons and places and are therefore incomprehensible in other places« (*SNP IV*: 683). This claim shows how two worlds are intertwined—the »real« or socio-geographical space in

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[1] Part of the collection comprising humorous and mocking songs, is also available online at Wikisource.

[2] The number of unknown recorders is somewhat questionable. For example, there is a footnote in the afterword to the section of children's songs claiming that the final song is one by the »national poet Kančnik«, whereas a footnote to the final song in the section reads: »Written down by an unknown person. – From VO. XVII. 8, 3. The song is of literary origin« (*SNP IV*: 480).

which the song operates, and the imaginary world presented in the song. Although the two worlds are separated ontologically, they have been intertwined constantly throughout history (Searle 1995: 144; 153–154), mutually influencing one another (Kozin 2002: 71).

Umberto Eco famously said that fictional worlds[3] are parasites of the real world (Eco 1994: 83), and Iser's idea of the wandering viewpoint that appears in the reading process and »gives us the illusion of depth and breadth, so that we have the impression that we are actually present in a real world« (Iser 1978: 116). The effect of the presence of space, which is in fact only in our minds, is achieved solely by the reader adopting the discursive perspectives, by textual focusing—that is, through a series of narrowed gazes (e.g., from the viewpoints of the narrator and literary characters) or the mutual interaction of specific modes of »access to the object intenden« (Iser 1978: 113). The transgression between the real and imaginary world is enabled through semiosis, meaning that the perception of actual spaces is:

> interpreted and provided with meaning (processed) by delivering memorized or imagined spatial schemes, whereas imagined spaces that are constructed in the reader's consciousness on the level of ideas by combining the meanings of linguistic units, can only develop into perceptive images by recalling the memories of perceiving actual spaces (Juvan 2006: 188; Škulj 2005: 351).

Space is a key dimension of reality, the other active factors being society and time.

The commentaries at times include information about where some of the recorders are from, but the points of literary interest map that could be used as a template has yet to be made (Sites of (re)Collection; the project Ein literarischer Atlas Europas).[4] One meticulous recorder of »folk treasure« was Franc Kramar (1890–1959). From Matena pri Igu, he criss-crossed a great deal of the current Slovene territory in search of folk songs, be it on foot, by bike, or by train. Between 1908 and 1914 he recorded almost 5,000 songs (together with their melodies) as part of the Austrian state project Das Volkslied in Österreich. Štrekelj's collection contains sixty-nine recordings by Franc Kramar. It was from his recordings that Glonar took the most songs (ten songs and six variants) for the section of humorous and mocking songs. The humorous and mocking songs section was heavily censored. The songs that were labeled humorous, obscene, or raucous disturbed Catholic circles of the time (Bakhtin 1984: 9), which dubbed them immoral.

Presented again will be three maps that were used in the presentation Landscape and Community in Humorous Slovene Folksongs at the SIEF international conference in April 2011 in Lisbon. Excel was used to catalog the songs.[5] I entered the recorders and song numbers song numbers and recording sites and their variant names, the third one to enter song and verse numbers, then verses and separate elements (e.g., places, material culture, men, women, animals, and the like).

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[3] Fictional worlds can be replaced by imaginary worlds.

[4] Several links to projects, the research within which integrates GIS, can be found on Wikiversity under the heading Literatura in prostor/Literature and Space.

[5] At the time I was unaware of software like Poliqarp or Greenstone Digital Library—two examples of free / open-code software working under the GNU General Public Licence (unfortunately both incompatible with Slovene as of now).

2 Chosen Songs on a Map

I started working on maps to show the places where songs and their variants were recorded. The Geopedia interactive online atlas was used to determine the coordinates, which were then entered into ArcGIS software. Currently, Geopedia interactively covers only Slovenia; therefore places outside Slovenia were added using ArcGIS software. For mapping and complex applications and requests, the Institute of Ethnomusicology cooperates with the Anton Melik Geographical Institute and/or the Institute of Anthropological and Spatial Studies,[6] which has licensed the ArcGIS software. The freely available QuantumGIS is supposed to be equivalent to this software, yet it requires some more preliminary study. Geographic information systems (GIS) may comprise both spatial and non-spatial data—separate layers need to be incorporated in the system, which can later be combined freely.

The maps show the current state border.[7] The first map shows where the songs published were recorded, and the second map the places mentioned in variants of certain songs. Since in the course of history place names tend to change, I used the current names to specify places on maps (e.g., I replaced the name Guštanj, which is used in the collection, with the name Ravne na Koroškem, and the name Marprug with Maribor).
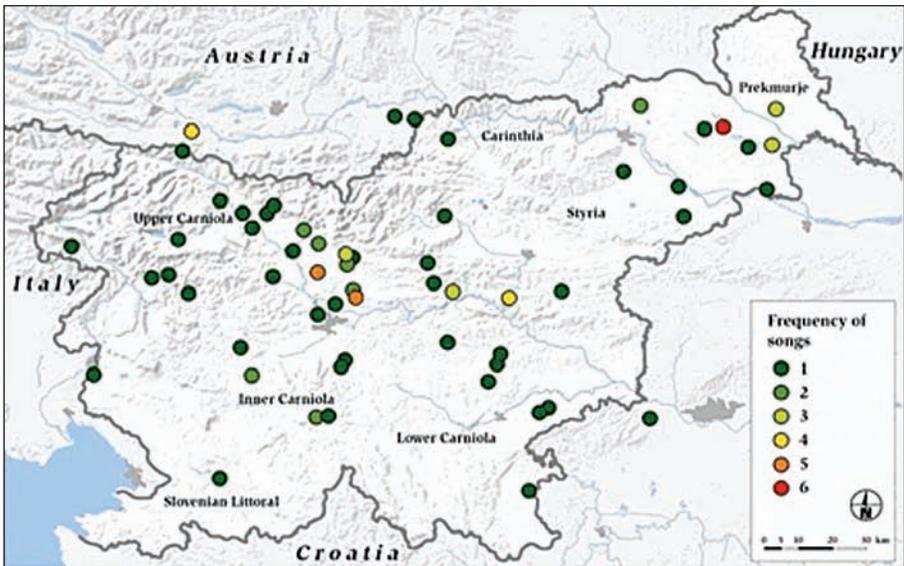

Figure 1: The map shows 89 % of places where songs were recorded.

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[6] For example, Franci Petek created maps for *Slovenske ljudske pesmi V* (*Slovene Folk Songs V*), and Peter Pehani an interactive map Pritrkavanje (Bell chiming ...) and the maps used here.

[7] The Statistical office recognises twelve statistical regions and seven informal regions; although the names of regions are now settled, the borders between them are difficult to define, as they don't match the administrative and geographical division.
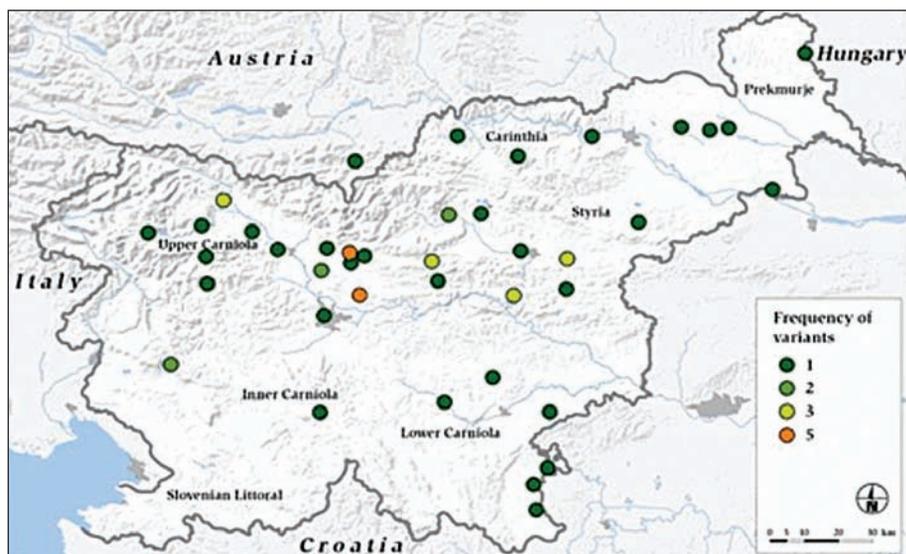
Figure 2: The map shows 95 % of places where variants were recorded.

The majority of the songs selected were recorded in Upper Carniola and Styria. It is interesting that songs and their variants from Carinthia were taken only from Scheinigg's (1889) records.[8] As variants are being mapped, the map of Slovenia is becoming increasingly covered.

3 Places in Songs

Since literary texts make us relate their worlds automatically to the »real« world—i.e., the world we live in (incidentally, imagined spaces are real spaces as well; Searle 1995: 153–154; Eco 1994: 97–108), I also began mapping the places mentioned in songs. If we compare map 3 with maps 1 and 2, we see that the spatial image is widened noticeably. It would be interesting to show the origins of individual songs and then indicate the places mentioned in them.

The most frequently mentioned place outside of today's Slovenia is Graz; some other places are Linz, Rome, Trieste, Vienna, and Zagreb. For the most part they are in the series of songs »Rokodelci brez orodja« [Craftsmen Without Tools], relating to people in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that went working in distant places (Tuma 1997: 12; Počkar 2005: 352). Graz and Vienna also appear in a series of songs entitled Kamnik; Zagreb is only featured in one song, from the series Krajevne slike [Local Pictures].

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[8] His collection *Narodne pesni koroških Slovencev* (*Folk Songs of Slovenes* from Carinthia, 1889) is available online at Archive.org.
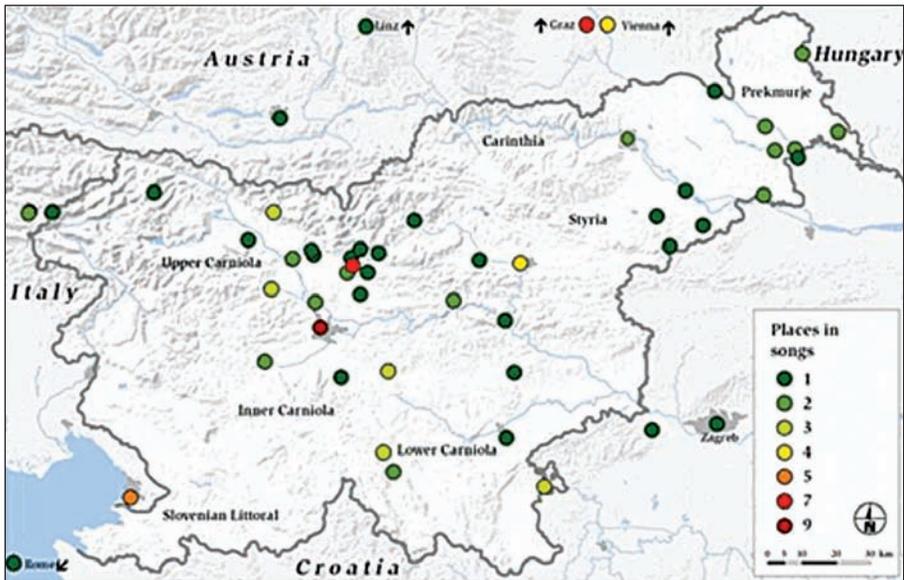
Figure 3: As many as 33% of places mentioned in songs I was unable to position on the map.

The very name of the (sub)series Kamnik could serve as an indication of the fact that Kamnik was the most mentioned Slovene town. Verse analysis has shown that Kamnik is indeed the most featured town (seventeen mentions), but only in eight songs, whereas Ljubljana which appears only eleven times, but in ten songs. Kamnik is featured in songs bearing the eponymous title, and also in a song from the series »Dekleta« [Girls]. Ljubljana, however, appears in three series: »Rokodelci brez orodja«, »Rezija« [Resia], and Kamnik.

The humorous songs do not tell much about Ljubljana as such (nor of other places). Some tailors, shoemakers, masons, carpenters, and others only visited the town from time to time, or spent a short period of time there. This can be assumed based on the songs from the series »Rokodelci brez orodja«, which mention workers who forgot some of their tools in Ljubljana, among them patterns, scissors, awls, an apron, a trowel, and a saw. Twice Ljubljana is compared to Graz (Slov. Gradec), the principal city of Austrian Styria (although Gradec could also mean a small town). The group of songs on Resia also features the white castle of Ljubljana, which is compared to the neck of a Resia girl.

4 Regions

The only regions mentioned are Lower Carniola and Styria. The Rečica Valley and Resia receive one mention each. The latter is also mentioned four times as a village (once in each of four songs).

Franc Kramar wrote down a song about cobblers (Š 8645) or shoemakers that mentions Lower Carniola and belongs to the series »Rokodelci brez orodja«. It sings of a cobbler who drank away his shoetrees there the year before last (stanza 8). The song also mentions Vienna (where the shoemaker keeps his box), Planina (where he wasted awls on wine), Rijeka (where he gets resin from a spruce tree), and Gorica (where he keeps his *knefter* or strap). This is one of the songs that could not be positioned on the first map since a note said it was recorded in Carniola.

Styria appears in two songs that belong to the Kamnik (sub)series. The songs were written down by Franc Kramar (Š 8561) in Vinje, Upper Carniola, and France Francetov (Š 8562) in Torovo pri Vodicah. None of the songs have any variants. In both, German-speaking persons are sent to Styria.[9] To judge by the song Ivan Lavrič recorded in Podlipovica pri Izlakah (Š 8595), and the song Makso Šnuderl recorded in Rimske Toplice (Š 8596), the Rečica Valley or Rečica was famed for its happy maidens, who, nevertheless, were such saucy strumpets that they terrified men. Both songs belong to the series »Dekleta«.

A song about Resia that was written down by an anonymous recorder claims that there were 109 houses in Resia, and only five girls (Š 8555). The song was published in the compendium *Goriški letnik* in 1864 (214–215). It claims that the wealthiest girls from Resia do not have a skirt to wear, and other songs mention for that their dowries are nothing but a sheep and a goat (Š 8553, 8554—this one also mentions a cow— and 8557). The surroundings in front of the house, however, are described in more detail: marjoram, beeches and elms growing in front of the house, in the house women acting like wether (i.e., castrated rams), also pushing and shoving and fighting. The songs that mention Resia claim that one needs to bring a broom to be able to sweep before oneself in order not to step into rubbish. As with Kamnik, all the songs that mention Resia are collected under the title »Rezija«.

5 Diffilcuties in Mapping

Due to a lack of information and records, some places were impossible to identify on a map. The origin of four songs (Š 8608, 8610, 8612, and 8622) remains shrouded in archival darkness; they have neither recording site nor the name of the recorder. Many unknown places appear in song lyrics (33 %), which is mostly due to two reasons. First, song lyrics are not (strictly) related to reality, and second, many places and villages in Slovenia and elsewhere bear the same name. Indeed, in the introductory text Karel Štrekelj emphasized the fact that the songs presented were written neither in the standard Slovene language of the time nor in a dialect (*SNP I*: VIII–IX), which would make it easier to specify the actual place.

Song 8669 is labeled Vrhovska but by its text places it in the region of Zagorje, Croatia. (*SNP IV*: 735). We encounter a problem with song 8621 if we are to make conclusions based solely on the recorder Matija Rode and his travels, as we cannot tell whether to position Javorje in the municipality Gorenja vas-Poljane or the municipality Šmartno pri Litiji, in Javorje pri Blagovici or in Javorje pri Gabrovki (*SNP IV*: 712).

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[9] In the songs, Kamnik boasts to be the place where they could learn German.

In the case of a song about Kamnik (Š 8558), which was recorded in Domžale, a footnote claims that the quip was written down in a more or less concise form by Anton Kovačič near Lemberg in Styria (*SNP IV*: 691). It is not known whether this refers to Lemberg pri Novi Cerkvi or Lemberg pri Šmarju, both of which are located in Styria.

A variant on the song about girls (Š 8578) was also recorded in Juršiči pri Št. Petru. It can be set in the territory of today's Austria as a footnote claims that the variant written down by H. Sevar refers to Klagenfurt girls (*SNP IV*: 698).

The variant of song 8625 (*SNP IV*: 713), written down by France Stele (1886–1972), was defined based on the recorder's thorough knowledge of Kamnik and its surroundings. The record mentioned was therefore most likely written down in Podgorje in the municipality of Kamnik.

Sometimes we cannot be certain whether names were written down as heard or the singers changed them—that is, whether there were »mistakes« in the record or maybe also in pronunciation (e.g., Vuptuj, mesto Bečanjsko, Hernabjci, etc.). The following places are not marked on the maps because of uncertainties: Krapina (in today's Slovenia or Croatia?), Križovci (Križovci near Petišovci or perhaps Križevci pri Ljutomeru or even Križevci in Croatia?), Vildon (should it perhaps be Wildon?). Regions and areas, such as Lower Carniola, Styria, the Rečica Valley, and Resia, are also not noted on the maps.

Some of the notes in the records inserted are also questionable. The variant of song 8673 that was recorded in Fram was (supposedly) written down by Tereza Pošepl. The record claims that the variant originated in Središče, yet in the collection of Tereza Pošepl, which is held in the archive of Institute of Ethnomusicology as part of Glonar's archive (GZ, folder 44), there are no notes for any of the songs on their recording site and the informer.

Institute of Ethnomusicology has been participating in the digitalization of archival materials for quite a while (e.g., Etno Muza). In the process, we have been challenged by the problem of how to present the materials in a user-friendly way so as to generate new perceptions of the relations between informants, collectors, and the texts. GIS technology is an efficient tool for evaluating and processing materials of significance to the cultural heritage. Of key importance, however, is a qualitative database, which must be developed, updated, and maintained. Developing such a database takes time and requires many people to enter and process data.

6 Summary

The visualization of data by mapping or GIS-applications provides us with an interesting new image of old records. The names of towns, villages, and regions (and parishes) appear in 232 verses. The most mentions relate to Kamnik, as compared to Vienna, and Ljubljana, which is similar to Graz. Places outside the current Slovene borders are mostly mentioned in songs of the series »Rokodelci brez orodja«. The issue of people of various trades having to move from place to place in the nineteenth century, when the songs originate, was covered in detail by Henrik Tuma, whose

father was a shoemaker. The places mentioned in this series are Trieste, Graz, Vienna, Klagenfurt, Rome, and Linz. Songs mostly mention places situated nearby the recording site. This can be used to prove that we more often make fun of others than of ourselves.

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