

## FEAR AND COURAGE IN TRADITIONAL SLOVENE MILITARY SONGS

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### Introduction

To date, traditional Slovene military songs have received attention both within a general scholarly overview of Slovene folk song heritage as well as individually. As part of a general overview—that is, in the collection *Slovenske narodne pesmi* (Slovene Folk Songs)—they were arranged and provided with critical commentary by Karel Štrekelj before the First World War (Štrekelj 1908–23: 3–217). Later, they were given special attention immediately before the Second World War (Čremošnik 1939: 345–54) and after Slovenia's independence, when they were published in the form of a monograph with commentaries (Kumer 1992).<sup>1</sup>

In addition to backgrounds in various state frameworks, these works reflect various periods and views on the creativity expressed through traditional military songs and the social reality they reflect. All three overviews define melancholy as a fundamental Slovene feature and seek the reasons for this. However, it turns out that these reasons are connected with the social circumstances under which these interpretations (and not the songs themselves) were created.

### The image of military service in transcriptions of traditional Slovene military songs

Štrekelj highlighted exceptional melancholy as a feature of traditional Slovene military songs in the first systematic scholarly edition of folk songs. He wrote that these songs included “an unexpected amount of sentimentalism and tears”<sup>2</sup> (Štrekelj 1908–23: 3). It is interesting that Štrekelj seeks the reasons for this in social conditions: “We must explain these circumstances primarily on the basis of the social conditions of our nation. We must take into account that in the past it was the poor people that had to give up their sons to military service; thus they often lost the only manpower at home for a long time. The many wars and never-ending battles were not as attractive to the common people as perhaps to the upper classes

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<sup>1</sup> Within this framework, the author does not discuss the collections of military songs that were published as songbooks because they contain material without commentaries. At the same time, these collections draw attention to the number of songs intended to embolden soldiers (Ahacel 1838; Marolt 1915; Andrejka 1916).

<sup>2</sup> Original: *nepričakovano mnogo jokavosti in solza*

and nobility, who were able to rise to the highest ranks and make a fortune in a relatively short period of time by taking part in them”<sup>3</sup> (Štrekelj 1908–23: 3).

Štrekelj’s assessment refers to the songs that were created after the introduction of universal military service; that is, after 1769, when compulsory recruitment was introduced, or after 1771, when recruitment districts were introduced (Švajncer 1992: 66). A large proportion of traditional Slovene military songs date from this period (Čremošnik 1939: 352), and some of them even explicitly or indirectly mention the introduction of new “patents” (Štrekelj 1900–03: 249–51, 1908–23: 26–53, 91, 153).

Fig. 1. Initially, universal military service was primarily an obligation of the poorer social classes. Štrekelj believed that this marked the character of Slovene military songs. *Confirmed recruits from Stara Fužina in Bohinj circa 1938; from the archives of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana.*



<sup>3</sup> Original: *To okolnost si moremo razlagati največ iz socialnih razmer našega naroda. Pomisliti nam je namreč, da je moral prej ravno ubožec dati svojega sina na vojsko, s čimer je bila vzeta na dolg čas večkrat edina delovna moč domu, in da mnoge vojske in večni boji tudi niso bili posebno vabljivi za navadnega prostaka, kakor morda za gospoda in plemenitnike, ki so se v njih povzpeli lahko v kratki dobi do visokih časti in do blaga.*

In Štrekelj's opinion, the orientation of traditional Slovene military songs, which he categorized as "songs based on social class" (Sln. *pesmi stanovske*), was the result of society's reaction to economic and, in certain places, existential problems caused by the new regulations. Later, Štrekelj's statement that because of military service people "often lost the only manpower at home for a long time" was strongly opposed by Gregor Čremošnik. He claimed that the men that represented the only manpower at home were exempt from military service (Čremošnik 1939: 352); in addition to priests, noblemen, privy councilors, intelligentsia, clerks, merchants, craftsmen, miners and ironworkers, woodcutters, and others, successors to farms were also exempt from military service (Švajncer 1992: 68). In his evaluation, Štrekelj was probably referring to the poorest class of peasants—that is, the tenant farmers—who did not have any land to protect their firstborn from being enlisted. He did not take into account the differences between the rights of firstborn peasants and the rights or obligations of their brothers. However, Štrekelj's statement that military service was not attractive to common soldiers because they did not have any chance of advancement is certainly not without basis (Štrekelj 1908–23: 3).

Although lifelong military service was later shortened,<sup>4</sup> the melancholy tone of songs remained. Some of the most melancholy songs originate from the 19th century, when lifelong military service was no longer in force—for example, "Fantič sem star komaj osemnajst let" (I'm a Lad of Only Eighteen Years). Judging from a variant of this song from Ilirska Bistrica (Štrekelj 1908–23: 109–10), the song was created between 1811 and 1845, when military service lasted fourteen years; some variants also mention eight years of service (Štrekelj 1908–23: 11–112). However, this was the duration in force between 1845 and 1866 (Čremošnik 1939: 354).

On the other hand, it is the nineteenth century, with some of the songs created in this period and reports preserved from battlefields, that strongly opposes the notion of the melancholy orientation of traditional Slovene military songs. This idea is opposed primarily by songs connected to concrete historical events or military perils and conflicts that remained alive in popular consciousness. However, because of the views of the discipline itself in the collection *Slovenske ljudske pesmi*, these songs are kept in the background or listed as not completely original folk songs. In his section on military songs, Štrekelj separated most of these from the songs that he considered true folk songs and, similar to other genres, he listed them in his first appendix (*Dodatek I*). This differs from the other

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<sup>4</sup> After 1802, military service lasted for a minimum of ten and a maximum of fourteen years; between 1811 and 1845, it lasted a uniform fourteen years; afterwards it was shortened to eight and, in 1866, to three years (Čremošnik 1939: 352).

appendices because the songs here are transcribed in full (Štrekelj 1908–23: 192–210).<sup>5</sup>

According to Štrekelj, songs that encouraged the soldiers and at the same time expressed their affiliation to the community did not have a true folk character because they were primarily disseminated on leaflets. These include several songs about the French, such as “Stari Bog nam pomore zoper Francoza” (Eternal God Helps Us Beat the French), “Francozi prihajajo na Kranjsko” (The French are Coming to Carniola), “Vrh Ljubelja šance stavi” (A Rampart Was Built at Ljubelj), “Francozi v Ljubljani” (The French in Ljubljana), “Spod Francoza gredó povelja” (The Orders Come from the French), “Rajši gremo iz Ilirije, kakor da smo pod Francozom” (We’d Rather Leave Illyria than Remain Under the French), “Štajerska deželna bramba in Francozi” (The Styrian Provincial Defense and the French), and “Francoska vojska” (The French Army; Štrekelj 1908–23: 193–202), as well as songs about other wars that took place in the middle of the 19th century. These include the two wars in Italy, including the Battle at Custoza in 1848 and the second Austro-Italian War of 1859, and the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 (Kumer 1992: 18; Štrekelj 1908–23: 203–09). The most popular among them were the songs about Count Radetzky, which is proved by the fact that they have remained alive until the present day.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to his first appendix, Štrekelj also added a second appendix of military songs (Štrekelj 1908–23: 210–17), in which the second part (part B) refers to historically proven events or personalities, often with a clearly expressed socially critical comment. With these songs, Štrekelj was even more aware of the authorship of educated songwriters, whom he therefore did not consider folk, and so he published only the first stanzas or beginnings of such songs, for example:

<i>Oh lepših fantov ni na svetu, kakor smo fantje zibcinari, dolge marše dejlamo pa tud malo rostamo.</i>	Oh, there are no finer boys Than us in the seventeenth, We go on long marches, And sometimes take a break too.
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(Štrekelj 1908–23: 213)

A song with such a beginning certainly encouraged the soldiers, which is also why it was created. Štrekelj was aware of this and, because of this kind of authorship, he did not classify it among traditional Slovene

<sup>5</sup> Because Štrekelj agreed with Josef Pommer’s production principle for the collection, he eliminated songs for which the author was known or songs for which he traced creativity or encouragement from higher, educated circles. He eliminated some songs completely and he included others in the appendix for every major category.

<sup>6</sup> Even today, the bell-chiming tune called “Radecki” is still very popular; it was created based on the rhythm of the well-known “Radetzky March” (op. 228) by Johann Strauss Sr.

military songs. However, it is clear that this song was popular among the soldiers, at least among the members of a particular social group; based on the word *zibcinari*, the song undoubtedly refers to the 17th Carniolan Infantry Regiment.<sup>7</sup>

These kinds of songs cannot be considered illegitimate because they involve songs of clearly determined social groups, which also determines their popularity. Because of their permanent recruitment districts,<sup>8</sup> regiments became ethnically defined towards the end of the eighteenth century (Švajncer 1992: 67), which facilitated and at the same time constrained group singing. This is also evident from another song published in the appendix under the title “Pesem 87. polka” (The Song of the 87th Regiment):<sup>9</sup>

*Sem se vedno veselil,  
da bi enkrat vojak bil,  
zdaj si moram poskušat  
pri regimentu tukaj stat.*

I always looked forward  
To becoming a soldier some day,  
But now I have to try hard  
To stay here with my regiment.

(Štrekelj 1908–23: 213)

Although this example does not express bravery, both beginnings of these songs nonetheless point to the fact that Slovene soldiers knew more than just melancholy military songs. The problem is that the vitality of the songs that expressed bravery was connected mostly to personal experience; soldiers that had experienced the power of fear and courage, the horrors of war, and the taste of victory in dangerous situations and battles preserved these feelings in songs for the rest of their lives. These songs remained alive as long as the memory of them was alive; as long as the feelings of war in them were within living memory. When these feelings faded away, the songs disappeared or were lost.

Because these songs, more than any other, are connected with personal experience, their durability was nonetheless shorter despite the fact that they were alive and were widely sung. They were revived again in special circumstances, such as the beginning of the First World War. Matija Murko was aware of this when, during his visit in Ljubljana in 1916, he reminded the Committee for the Collection of Slovene Folk Songs<sup>10</sup> that “it would be useful to observe how folk songs live during the war, especially

<sup>7</sup> This regiment had its recruiting centers in the Upper, Lower, Inner, and White Carniola (Švajncer 1992: 100).

<sup>8</sup> Empress Maria Theresa established recruitment districts for all regiments in 1771 (Švajncer 1992: 66).

<sup>9</sup> The 87th Infantry Regiment had its recruitment district in Celje and its surroundings, the Pohorje massif, Ptuj, and Ormož (Švajncer 1992: 100).

<sup>10</sup> During this period the great national campaign to collect folk songs was still underway in all the hereditary lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; in Slovenia, the campaign was headed by this committee.

among the soldiers”<sup>11</sup> (Murko 1929: 45). Murko came to this conclusion on the basis of transcribers’ reports that reported the revival of an unknown tradition. “At the beginning of mobilization, teachers from the Savinja Valley, who arrived in Celje on carts with other men from their villages, told me that all of a sudden folk songs were revived that they had never heard before” (Murko 1929: 45).

In the case of transcriptions of military songs in the collection *Slovenske narodne pesmi*, a paradox is thus present that has so far not been observed; as long as the memory of a certain war was still alive, the songs of this war were alive and, at the same time, the traces of authorship were also alive in these songs. As seen from Štrekelj’s exclusion of these songs or their inclusion in the marginal appendix, the logics of personal experience opposed one of the basic definitions of folk song; that is, the demand to transfer songs from one generation to another. In this case, the problem was not only in the songs, but in the collectors’ or editor’s concept. The share of traditional Slovene military songs marked by bravery is thus even smaller than it otherwise would be.

### The role of honor in evaluating military service

Regardless of the editor’s concept in *Slovenske narodne pesmi*, which emphasized the melancholy image of traditional Slovene military songs, Slovene soldiers proved their bravery more through their role in military conflicts than through songs. Thus sufficient reports on the bravery of Slovene soldiers have been preserved from the middle of the nineteenth century, when song creativity still had sufficient possibilities for new songs to be preserved among the people. In 1848 and 1849, the soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the 17th Infantry Regiment received sixty-five medals for their bravery on Italian battlefields. Two of them were also awarded the Russian Cross of St. George (Švajncer 1992: 77). In the same war, the 47th Infantry Regiment received thirteen medals for bravery, an achievement unequalled by any other Austrian army regiment. By these criteria, the Styrians from Maribor and Celje were the best soldiers in the 1848–49 war against Italy (Švajncer 1992: 79). After the Battle at Custoza, the commander Baron D’Aspre removed his hat as a mark of respect before the soldiers of the 47th Slovene Styrian Infantry Regiment (Švajncer 1992: 78).

The bravery of Slovene soldiers, the majority of whom were gathered in the seventeenth Slovene and the 47th Lower Styrian Infantry Regiments, was also proven in the war against Italy in 1859 (Švajncer 1992:

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<sup>11</sup> Original: *Hitro na početku mobilizacije so mi pripovedovali učitelji iz Savinjske doline, ki so se pripeljali z moštvom svojih krajev na vozovih v Celje, da so naenkrat oživele narodne pesmi, katerih prej nikoli niso slišali.*

83–85). For the bravery of its soldiers and the decorations received, the 47th Infantry Regiment also earned a place in history in the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 (Švajncer 1992: 87–88). The volunteer enlistment for the war against Italy in the same year is interesting; at the booth in Ljubljana's Star Park (*Zvezda*), where a military band played in the summer, two hundred volunteers enlisted on the very first day and other volunteer enlistments also exceeded all expectations (Švajncer 1992: 90).

Based on this, it is difficult to understand Gregor Čremošnik's harsh criticism of Slovene military songs: "The introduction of universal military service had an enormous influence not only on the military, but also on the nation's psyche. This period impressed a special seal on our folk song that is not particularly attractive; that is, cowardly sentimentalism"<sup>12</sup> (Čremošnik 1939: 352). Čremošnik negates Štrekelj's explanation and seeks reasons for this orientation in military service that was lifelong or lasted until a soldier was disabled, but primarily believes it to be the result of "the unwarlike spirit of a large part of the nation's peasant class;"<sup>13</sup> this sometimes even "bordered on cowardice" (Čremošnik 1939: 352).

Recruitment customs also contradict this notion of the cowardice of Slovene soldiers. These customs strongly emphasized the connection between the military service and honor. The recruits' decorations served this goal, although their bouquets also expressed their connection with the girls. Outwardly, the honor of military service was most strongly highlighted by the custom in which the rejected newcomers had to turn over all the decorations worn on their heads to the accepted or "confirmed" recruits. The strength of these customs is also demonstrated by their durability; during the interwar period, after their conscription, recruits accepted for military service from the Rába Valley (known as *regrutke*) wore ribbons with the Hungarian tricolor until they were called up into the military, and in Orfalu (Sln. *Andovci*) those that were turned down even wore black ribbons (Kozar-Mukič 1984: 70).

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<sup>12</sup> Original: *Vpeljava splošne vojaške obveze je imela ogromen vpliv ne samo na vojaštvo, ampak tudi na psiho naroda. Ta doba je vtisnila naši narodni pesmi pečat posebne vrste, ki ni prav nič simpatičen, namreč mevžasto jokavost.*

<sup>13</sup> Original: *nebojevitega duha velikega dela kmečkega sloja naroda;. . . na meji bojazljivosti.*

Fig. 2. Among the simplest people, recruitment rituals primarily expressed the status of military service. *Recruits from Florjan pri Gornjem Gradu in 1914; from the archives of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana.*



Čremošnik's evaluation of the cowardice of Slovene soldiers, which was written right before the Second World War, not only presents an evaluation of traditional Slovene military songs, but also evaluates the behavior of Slovene soldiers in general.<sup>14</sup> Bits and pieces on the behavior of Slovene soldiers can also be found in folk songs, but in Štrekelj's collection these are only included in the appendix. One of these songs is about the frivolity of Slovene soldiers and officers, but in a humorous form; namely, being popular among the girls does not cause the loss of the soldiers' good reputation.

*Kanoner je en fest soldat,  
ki hodi k dekletom spat.  
Dekleta šprancerajo,  
se po soldakih ozirajo.*

The gunner is a handsome soldier  
That sleeps with the girls.  
The girls stroll past  
And flirt with the soldiers.<sup>15</sup>

(Štrekelj 1908–23: 212)

<sup>14</sup> In this regard, Slovene belles-lettres—which does not have a very high opinion of the image and behavior of Slovene soldiers (especially as far as the memoirs of Janez Trdina are concerned) —could be evaluated, but it is impossible to take this source into account non-critically.

<sup>15</sup> As with all of the songs in the second appendix, Štrekelj only published the first stanza.



Another folk song that was also included in the appendix only with its first stanza complements this jolly activity in a cheerful and non-accusing manner:

*Življenje lepo je vojaka,  
ki ne manjka mu tobaka  
če denarja kaj ima,  
vse veselje je doma.*

A soldier's life is nice,  
He's never short of tobacco;  
If he has a little money,  
There's nothing but joy at home.

(Štrekelj 1908–23: 214)

In his introduction to the category of military songs in *Slovenske narodne pesmi*, Štrekelj also touched upon the soldiers' behavior. "A newcomer first has to train himself in military matters; the first phase is especially difficult and this is why there is so much railing against the military service, especially because the newcomer cannot continue his previous lifestyle. Eventually, most of them get used to the inconveniences; the soldier replaces his girlfriend that he left at home with another, to whom he of course does not swear fidelity to the same extent and degree as the previous one"<sup>16</sup> (Štrekelj 1908–23: 4).

Military service thus also knew more light-hearted moments that did not contradict personal dignity, but there are only few traces of this left in folk songs. However, the discrepancy between folk songs and reality—which, in addition to reports from the battlefields, was also preserved by the image of recruitment—demands reconsideration of the evaluations found in the studies of military songs published to date. This includes the only special edition of traditional Slovene military songs; that is, the collection *Oj ta vojaški boben* (Oh That Army Drum). In line with the period in which it was created, this collection tried to justify the melancholy image of traditional Slovene military songs with the feelings of subordination to foreign authority, and to highlight the importance and role of national consciousness or the attitude towards authority in the folk song tradition connected with the military and warfare.

### **The attitude towards authority and foreign elements in traditional Slovene military songs**

The final preparations for publishing the collection *Oj ta vojaški boben* (Kumer 1992) were underway in 1991, when the Slovenes were also resorting to arms to attain independence. The volume's foreword thus concludes with the following thought by the author: "Something has

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<sup>16</sup> Original: *Došli novinec se mora najprej uriti v vojaških stvareh; prva doba je posebno težka, odtod toliko zmerjanja zoper vojaški stan, zlasti ker novinec ne more več nadaljevati prejšnjega življenja. Pa naposled se večina privadi tudi neugodnostim; za doma puščeno ljubico najde vojak drugo, ki je zvestosti kajpada ne prisega v taki meri in tako vroče kakor prvi.*

happened that nobody expected: Goliath had to withdraw his troops! The sword was guided by hatred, but the hand that fired the sling was guided by love stronger than evil. It is true, the Slovenes are not a nation that wishes to fight, but if anyone seeks to take away our homeland soaked with blood and sweat then we know how to clench our fists and fight back. If ever, we have shown that this year, both to ourselves and others" (Kumer 1992: 20).<sup>17</sup>

In connection with this feeling, it is also possible to understand the evaluation of traditional Slovene military songs in the book's introduction, which seeks reasons for this melancholy in the Slovene national character and especially in the foreign hegemony that lasted for one thousand years. "Perhaps Slovenes are really not a warlike nation by nature and we only grasp our weapons in extreme self-defense (as proven for example, by the anti-Turkish camps, the peasant uprisings, or the Second World War). Or perhaps the reason lies in the lack of tradition of our own statehood and the fact that we have never been given a chance to fully decide our own fate. It has always been decided by others outside our land. If we keep this in mind, we will be able to understand why our military songs contain so much sentimentalism"<sup>18</sup> (Kumer 1992: 12).

In order to evaluate this assessment, it is necessary to reach into the past, to the attitude towards authority. Judging from folk songs, Slovenes did not consider Habsburg rule or their emperor foreign. Thus, in folk songs the emperor is depicted favorably; his image is often even idealized. The views of the common people on the relationship between the emperor and the state or his role is best presented in the second stanza of one of the military songs published in Štrekelj's collection:

*Naš cesar na vahti stoji  
pa krono na rokah drži  
vse fantiče zbira,  
na vojsko pela,  
dekle, ostante doma!*

Our emperor watches over us  
And holds his crown in his hands.  
He summons all the young men  
And leads them to war;  
Girls, stay home!

(Štrekelj 1908–23: 91).

<sup>17</sup> Original: *Zgodilo se je, česar nihče ni pričakoval: Goljat se je moral umakniti! Meč je pač vodilo sovraštvo, roko, ki je sprožila fračo, pa ljubezen, ki je močnejša od zla. Res, Slovenci nismo bojaželjen narod, toda če nam hoče kdo vzeti domovino, s krvjo in znojem prepojeno, znamo stisniti pesti in udariti. Če kdaj, smo to dokazali letos, sebi in drugim.*

<sup>18</sup> Original: *Nemara Slovenci res nismo po naravi bojevit narod in zgrabimo za orožje samo v skrajni sili samoobrambe (kot dokazujejo npr. protiturški tabori, kmečki upori ali druga svetovna vojna). Ali pa je morda vzrok v pomanjkanju tradicije lastne državnosti in nam nikoli ni bilo dano v polni meri odločati o svoji usodi. Vedno so jo krojili drugi, zunaj naše zemlje. Če imamo to pred očmi, bomo razumeli, zakaj je v naših »vojaških« pesmih toliko solzavosti.*

Evaluating the emperor or understanding the national frameworks to which Slovenes belonged at that time thus belongs to the stereotypes that only begin to help us understand this unreal image. In connection with the emperor, sometimes even enlistment is not painful; this is otherwise rare in traditional Slovene military songs:

<i>O zdaj je prišel tisti čas,</i>	Oh now the time has come
<i>ko cesar k sebi vabi nas!</i>	When the emperor calls us to him!
<i>Juhe, juhe, zapojmo le,</i>	Let's sing hurrah
<i>saj ni za ubranit se!</i>	And not hold back!

(Štrekelj 1908–23: 86)

This song exists in several variants and mentions Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria and the shortening of military service from fourteen to eight years, which occurred in 1845 (Čremošnik 1939: 352).

The feeling that military service means serving the emperor, the “father of nations,” and the emperor’s image thus nonetheless contributed to some extent to the formation of the attitude towards military service. For these reasons, the response to military service was not only lamentation about everything the recruits or soldiers would leave behind at home, but also an expression of honor. In the middle of the 19th century, when one of the folk song transcribers, Ivan Navratil from Metlika, was describing recruits’ departure for the military, he described this in the following way: “I could see very well that tears also started pouring down the cheeks of Matiček, a handsome, tall young man, when he looked at the window of the house next door, but he started shouting and singing immediately, so that people wouldn’t think he was a coward, and perhaps also to conceal the heartache he suffered, but was too embarrassed to show”<sup>19</sup> (Navratil 1858: 97).

Thus despite the prevailing impression of sentimentalism of traditional Slovene military songs, loyalty to the emperor and honor to a large extent shaped the attitude towards military service. The system of establishing regiments was also subordinated to a uniform national goal; in addition to the recruitment districts established in 1771, this strengthened the ethnic consciousness of the province (Švajncer 1992: 66). At this level, the attitude towards ethnic affiliation formed slowly; not at all as a logical successor to any resistance against the foreign.

This kind of attitude, in which it is not yet possible to talk about national consciousness, found expression as early as the period of France’s

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<sup>19</sup> Original: *Dobro sem vidil, da so se pocedile tudi Matičku, lepemu fantu visoke rasti, ko je pogledal proti oknu sosedove hiše, debele srage po licu, pa berž zauka in zapoje, da ne bi kdo mislil, da je kilavec (da se boji), pa menda tudi zato, da bi prikrl serčno žalost, ki ga je terla, pa ga je bilo sram, da bi jo kazal.*

Illyrian Provinces. This period is recorded in Slovene history as a time of strong resistance against foreign influences, strengthened by disappointment with the French authorities (Šumrada 1990: 11). In 1809, guerilla warfare attacks against the French started in some parts of Slovenia. The mobilization of the territorial reserve declared on 14 July 1809 (Švajncer 1992: 71) faced a strong reaction.<sup>20</sup> In the hatred of the French, which suited the state and the clergy, an opposition to foreign influences was primarily felt, but sometimes there were also very clear material targets, such as military cashboxes (Švajncer 1992: 70–72). Bravery that sometimes not only exceeded all the limits, but also expressed cruelty (cf. Švajncer 1992: 71), received its excuse in the stereotype of the French as the Other.

This stereotype is expressed directly in the song that Štekelj named *Francozi prihajajo na Kranjsko* (The French are Coming to Carniola) in his *Slovenske narodne pesmi*. The fifth stanza of this song's variant transcribed in Ihan states:

<p><i>Francoz ni ta prave vere, ja paršov s tuje dažele, vzev ga bo ta buažja strah, lih kokar vetar ta prah.</i></p>	<p>The Frenchman is not a true believer, He came from a foreign land, The fear of God will take him away, As the wind carries away the dust.</p>
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(Štekelj 1908–23: 194)

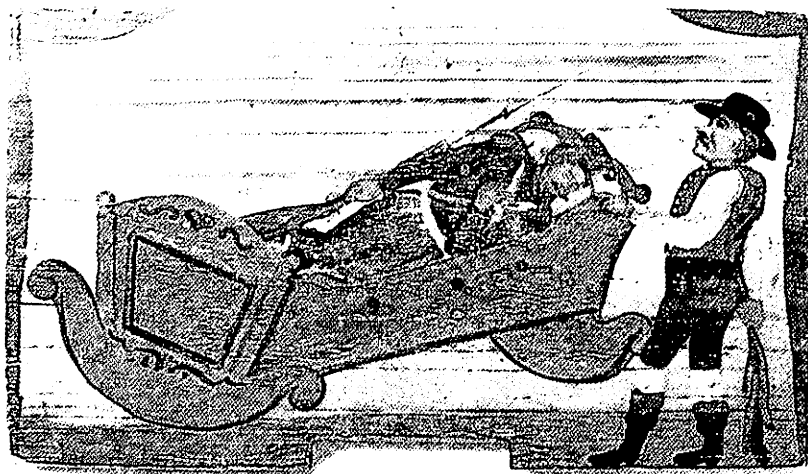
In the relationship towards the French, a resistance to anything foreign was thus at the forefront rather than national consciousness. In its first stanzas, one of the songs published in Štekelj's collection directly expresses loyalty to the Austrian Empire:

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| <p>1. <i>Kaj si je zmislil Bonapart?<br/>Junake hoče v žovd pobrat.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Nije vtegnuo popisati,<br/>začeo je fante zbirati.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Nam cegelce pošilajo,<br/>mi pa v Estrajh vhaajamo.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Kaj pa nam v Estrajh falil?<br/>Dobre volje smo do zdaj bli.</i></p> <p>5. <i>Rajši smo šli iz Ilirie,<br/>koker nositi suknje višnele.</i></p> <p>6. <i>Doma Francoz jedo in pijo,<br/>nam pa nobeden plačou na bo.</i></p> <p>7. <i>Rajši zapustimo dom mi,<br/>koker de b pod Francozam bli.</i></p> <p>8. <i>Le pijmo ga iz majolčice,<br/>k imamo koroške mojčice.</i></p> | <p>1. What's Bonaparte come up with?<br/>He wants the heroes for himself.</p> <p>2. He didn't have time to list them,<br/>He just started gathering them.</p> <p>3. They send us forms,<br/>But we flee to Austria.</p> <p>4. What's wrong with Austria?<br/>So far we've been happy.</p> <p>5. We preferred to leave Illyria<br/>Than to wear their blue coats.</p> <p>6. At home the French eat and drink,<br/>But nobody will pay us.</p> <p>7. We'd rather leave home<br/>Than be under the French.</p> <p>8. Let's drink out of our jugs,<br/>We that have the Carinthian girls.</p> |
|---|---|

(Štekelj 1908–23: 199)

<sup>20</sup> The Radomlja Valley (also known as *Črni Graben*) became well known for attacks on the French.

Fig. 3. The relationship to the French, which is preserved in Slovene folk songs and beehive panels, primarily reflected opposition to the foreign and otherness. "A farmer rocks a Frenchman," a beehive panel from Laniše near Kamnik; from the archives of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana.



In this regard—that is, in connection with folk songs—the thinking of one's own nation can be observed only as late as the period of revolutionary tumult in 1848.<sup>21</sup> Ivan Navratil wrote the following about this: "Much later on (not until ten years ago) I experienced what power a beautiful folk song has as band music, that is, if it is played by a band and turned into a march, a lively melody, and so on. I remember well how everyone in Ljubljana was excited when the Band of the National Guard Unit of Carniola came to Ljubljana from Kranj and played to us for the first time a beautiful march arranged from the traditional military song 'Four Dressed in Yellow Came to Me.' Such music awakens all your nerves and penetrates all your veins. Your heart pounds with joy because it feels the familiar voices of home."<sup>22</sup> Navratil also tries to explain the meaning of folk

<sup>21</sup> The Croats followed the Polish example of emphasizing nationality in songs even earlier, as part of the awakening of the South Slavic nations (Blažeković 1998: 67–68).

<sup>22</sup> Original: *Pozneje veliko pozneje (še le pred desetimi leti) pa sem skusil, koliko moč ima lepa narodna pesem v godbi, t. j. ako se prestavi na godbo in se napravi iz nje n. pr. Popotnica, poskočnica itd. Dobro pomnim, kako smo bili v Ljubljani ondaj vsi v ognju, ko je prišla banda narodne straže Kranjske (iz Kranja) v Ljubljano in nam zaigrala prvič prelepo popotnico, narejeno iz imenovane narodne vojaške: Prišli so k meni / Štirje rumeni. Vse živce ti oživi, vse žile ti prešine taka godba, serce ti poskakuje od veselja, ker čuti domače – znane glasove.*

songs in their new roles: "Folk songs alone have great influence on one's heart; the influence is even greater if they are accompanied by music, in addition to singing aloud. With this kind of music, everyone sings the songs quietly to himself. On special occasions this kind of music excites everyone that has strings in his heart to sing spontaneously with all his might, as if a wild river had broken through its dam. This is what happened the other day in Ljubljana, when the Carniolans played their march. Everyone around me started singing; quietly at first, but gradually they began singing at the top of their voices, so that the streets echoed with 'Four Dressed in Yellow Came to Me'"<sup>23</sup> (Navratil 1858: 110–11).

In the middle of the nineteenth century, folk songs in their new roles (i.e., as adaptations for band music), reflected and simultaneously helped shape the process of national identification. The awakening of national self-awareness that Navratil also presented by describing his experience of the *Slaven-Ball* (Slavic Dance) quadrille (op. 88) by Johann Strauss Jr. in Vienna in 1851 quickly reached the level of folk song adaptation during the period of revolutionary tumult. From the middle of the 19th century onwards, it also penetrated to other creative levels, and intertwined with folk songs (cf. Šivic 2003).

In rare cases, national self-awareness returned to folk songs, as in the case of the song "Leži leži ravno polje" (There Lies the Plain) by Anton Martin Slomšek, which was published in the collection *Drobtinice za novo leto* (New Year's Trifles) in 1851 under the title "Popotnica vojaška" (Military March; Slomšek 1851). Although Štrekelj did not list it under folk songs, but only in the appendix, its variants prove it was popular among the people. The image of national elements is preserved in folk songs and connected with bravery, although considerable differences sometimes appear in comparison to the original:

*Pred nami pada vse naokrog,  
Za nas skrbi ta ljubi Bog,  
Že križem krogle švigajo,  
Slovenci še bolj vžigajo.*

Everyone is falling all around us,  
The dear Lord watches out for us,  
Bullets rain down from every side,  
The Slovenes shoot even more.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Original: *Narodna pesem sama na sebi ima do serca veliko moč; še večjo pa z godbo vred, če se ne popeva tudi na glas; saj si popeva vsak o taki godbi narodno pesem sam s seboj natihoma, - o posebnih priložnostih ti pa vžge taka godba ko bi trenil vse, ki imajo v sercu strune zato, da tako zapoje nehotoma na vso moč, kakor da bi prederla silna voda svoj jez. Tako se je zgodilo tudi ondaj v beli Ljubljani, ko so zapiskali Kranjci imenovano popotnico. Vse okoli je počelo peti najprej bolj natihoma, potem pa na ves glas, da je odmevalo: Prišli so k meni / Štirje rumeni itd.*

<sup>24</sup> The folk variant joined the sixth and seventh stanzas of Slomšek's original (Institute of Ethnomusicology, SRC SASA, M 44.631).

The national self-awareness connected with the efforts to implement the United Slovenia national program thus marked the period following the March Revolution (Prunk 1993: 314) or the second half of the 19th century, whereas during this time new songs only rarely reached such popularity for them to be defined as folk within the framework of general understanding (Terseglav 2001). For these reasons, it is impossible to agree with the explanations that the melancholy of traditional Slovene military songs originates from the feeling of subordination to the foreign, or the feeling that Slovenes were not fighting for their own country, but for a foreign one instead (Kumer 1992: 12). These feelings belonged to a later period that also carried with it new decisions—that is, the First<sup>25</sup> and Second World Wars. However, these assessments of folk songs do not address the creativity of this later period.

### Everyday customs as explanation for the orientation of traditional Slovene military songs

It appears that understanding the melancholy orientation of traditional Slovene military songs requires reaching into everyday life or behind the backdrop of war. Namely, the relationship towards singing was transferred from everyday life into extraordinary situations either in the barracks or on the front. This was most strongly manifested in the contrast between the customs of soldiers of different nationalities. During the First World War, when the Phonogram Archive of the Viennese Academy of Sciences organized the recording of military songs in the barracks, the recorder Leo Hajek, a physicist by training (Lechleitner 2000: 24), noticed a basic discrepancy in the singing of military songs. “Our soldiers [the Austrians] sing mostly when they are marching, but other nations such as the South Slavs prefer to sing after they complete their tasks, while resting; this generally finds a stronger expression in the epic rhythm and this is why we often find melancholy songs with ballad features”<sup>26</sup> (Hajek 1916).

Slovenes’ custom of singing after completing their work was thus transferred to the front and its rear area. Hajek’s observation—which so far has not been taken into consideration, except for a mention made by Matija Murko—is extremely important. The image of Slovene folk songs connected with military service and warfare became what it is not because

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<sup>25</sup> In Judenburg, where Hajek recorded the singing of soldiers of various nationalities in 1916, the biggest mutiny by Slovene soldiers in the Austrian-Hungarian army took place in May 1918 (Guštin 1990).

<sup>26</sup> Original: *Singen unsere Soldaten wohl meist während des Marsches, so gibt es doch einzelne Volksstämme, wie die Südslawen, die lieber nach getaner Arbeit, während der Ruhe singen, was sich natürlich im breiteren, man könnte sagen, mehr epischen Rhythmus ausprägt, so dass man da vielfach auf schwermütige Lieder, oft von balladenartigem Charakter stösst.*

of a lack of courage, but because it preserves the singing customs of the home environment. The fact that the Slovene soldiers preferred to sing when the everyday pulse of military life had calmed down a little also explains the content of these songs; in such an atmosphere, when the soldiers used songs to return to their home villages, the thought of their homes was also clearer and their yearning even more expressive.

Fig. 4. Slovene young men preferred to sing when their work was over. Because relaxed ballad-style songs suited these occasions, this best explains the melancholy orientation of Slovene military songs. *Slovenes among soldiers in Graz in 1913; from the archives of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana.*



In seeking to explain the melancholy orientation of Slovene military songs, Hajek's observation must, however, be complemented by further examination of the everyday life that has also been overlooked so far. Hajek concentrates on singing within the framework of military service or warfare at the front, but in this case the focus is directed to observing the role of military songs during peacetime. Military songs were also sung on other occasions, and not only as part of military service or against the backdrop of wars.

In the songs sung by the recruits when leaving for the army or by soldiers leaving for the front, taking leave of their girlfriends, homes, and families was at the forefront. These songs were suitable for serenading; before young men went to sing under a girl's window, they sang these songs



in the village. Through these songs, they recalled extremely strong emotional moments to the girls' minds and the recalling of these memories had a special purpose; that is, with the rekindling of emotionally deep moments, many girls opened their windows. Reworking these songs often made them lose their original framework, and gradually they turned into love songs;<sup>27</sup> the songs that preserved a military image, however, undoubtedly strengthened the impression of the melancholy of this type of folk song heritage.

In the collection *Slovenske narodne pesmi*, Štrekelj mostly classified the songs connected with farewell as love songs (Štrekelj 1900–03: 201–315), regardless of whether the circumstances could still be discerned or not. Today the majority of these are understood as military songs (Kumer 1992), but in some of them these traces have already disappeared. People are still singing many of these songs, demonstrating their surprisingly durable popularity; this is also proven by the records in the archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology. For these reasons, the exceptional number of songs connected with farewell thus increases and consolidates the impression of the melancholy orientation of traditional Slovene military songs.

The image of Slovene military songs therefore became what it is not because of the dominance of fear or lack of courage. In addition to social reasons already observed by Štrekelj, the reason for this development lies primarily in fixed basic behavior and the fact that everyday customs such as singing after work was over were transferred into an unusual living environment; that is, into the barracks and at the front. At the same time, the songs that marked the wartime or preparations for war—that is, recruits' farewells—were also preserved in peacetime, especially in serenading.

The melancholy tone of traditional Slovene military songs thus does not contradict the basic values that were typical of the Slovene relationship towards socially accepted behavior. These findings were, however, fully problematized by a period that sharpened various understandings of values; that is, the Second World War. Slovenes' political and military orientations differed, but they were united and separated by the

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<sup>27</sup> Although in peacetime songs were also sung in the rear area, the lyrics of which preserved the direct memory of military conflicts, the preservation of this heritage was primarily concentrated in smaller circles, especially in environments where only men gathered, such as when drinking. To a large extent, the transformation of such songs also took place in this setting. With the loss of a concrete historical background, these songs were transformed into drinking songs or toasts, and were thus excluded from the framework of military songs as well as studies of the orientation of traditional Slovene military songs.

same songs as an expression of fear and courage: inseparable, but a nation nonetheless divided into separate camps for the first time.

SRC SASA Institute of Ethnomusicology

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## POVZETEK

### STRAH IN POGUM V SLOVENSKIH LJUDSKIH VOJAŠKIH PESMIH

*Vojaške pesmi že v prvi sistematični objavi, v zbirki Slovenske narodne pesmi, zaradi tedanjih načel folkloristike vsebujejo bolj otožno naravnane pesmi, pesmi z junaškim značajem pa so bile odrinjene v ozadje ali pa so bile popolnoma izločene. Karel Štrekelj je namreč pesmi, ki so vsebovale sledi bližnjih vojn, izločal, ker je v njih čutil ustvarjalnost, ki se je širila predvsem z letaki. To so bile pesmi, vezane na lasno izkustvo vojakov, ki so se s tem presoji stroke izmikale: še preden jim je stroka priznala legitimnost ljudskih pesmi in jih enakovredno uvrstila med druge vojaške pesmi, so jih ljudje pozabili, nadomeščale pa so jih nove, aktualnejše. Delež junaških pesmi je bil torej zaradi konceptov stroke še manjši, kot bi bil sicer.*

*Ob tem pa je Štrekelj realno ocenil razloge za naravnost pesemskega gradiva, ki ga je sprejel v zbirko: razlog za otožnost je namreč videl v socialnih razmerah najšibkejšega sloja na podeželju. Ob uvedbi obvezne vojaške službe se je namreč najrevnejšemu kmečkemu sloju godila krivica, saj kajzarji in bajtarji niso imeli zemlje, ki bi prvorojence varovala pred vpoklicom k vojakom. Štrekelj pa ni upošteval tega, da so bili razlogi za otožnost lahko tudi povsem osebni: tudi pri kmetih so bili iz vojaške službe izvzeti samo prvorojenci. Melanholični odnos do vojaščine naj bi po Štrekljevem mnenju utrjevalo še dejstvo, da preprosti ljudje niso skoraj imeli možnosti za napredovanje v vojaški službi.*

*Štrekljeve razloge za otožnost slovenskih ljudskih vojaških pesmi je pred drugo svetovno vojno Gregor Čremošnik povsem zanikal in dokazoval, da so te pesmi jokave zaradi »mevžastega značaja« Slovencev. Čremošnikovi oceni odločno oporekajo poročila z bojišč iz devetnajstega stoletja: medtem ko so pesmi, nastale v teh okoliščinah, otožne, poročila izpričujejo pogum in številna junaštva slovenskih vojakov. Čast je bila namreč med Slovenci ena najpomembnejših vrednot. Da je bila vojaška služba povezana s častjo, z ugledom, dokazujejo tudi navade ob naboru: zavrtnjeni naborniki so namreč sprejetim izročili svoj okras kot temeljni izraz časti.*

*Razlago Zmage Kumer, da je otožna naravnost slovenskih ljudskih vojaških pesmi posledica podrejenosti tuji oblasti, je moč razumeti kot opravičilo. Ta razlaga namreč spremlja izid prve zbirke slovenskih ljudskih vojaških pesmi, ki je časovno sovpadel z oblikovanjem nove slovenske države. Podrobnejši pregled slovenskih ljudskih vojaških pesmi pa kaže, da je večina nastala v času pred oblikovanjem slovenske nacionalne zavesti, v času, ko o tem vprašanju vsaj preprosti ljudje še niso razmišljali. Nasprotovanje tujemu, kot na primer nasprotovanje Francozom, namreč še ni bilo izraz hotenja po nacionalni suverenosti.*

*Razlog za otožno naravnost slovenskih ljudskih pesmi, povezanih z vojno in vojskovanjem, torej zahteva nov razmislek. Najbolj utemeljene razloge je moč najti v vsakdanjih življenjskih navadah Slovencev in v prenosu teh navad v vojaško življenje. Po pričevanju dr. Lea Hajeka, ki je za dunajski Phonogrammarchiv v prvi svetovni vojni snemal petje vojakov raznih narodov avstroogrske monarhije, je bil med petjem vojakov južnoslovanskih narodov in petjem pripadnikov drugih narodov temeljni razloček: južnoslovanski narodi, s tem tudi Slovenci, ki so v mirnem času najraje peli po opravljenem delu, so tudi kot vojaki najraje peli po končanih obveznostih, pri počitku. Temu po njegovem mnenju najbolj ustrezajo mirnejše pesmi baladnega značaja.*

*Hkrati opazovanje vsakdanjega življenja ponuja še en razlog za ohranjanje otožne podobe slovenskih ljudskih vojaških pesmi, ki doslej ni bil opažen: vojaške pesmi so namreč peli in ohranjali tudi v zaledju. Najpogosteje so peli pesmi, s katerimi so se poslavljalji rekruti: te pesmi so namreč zaradi njihove sporočilnosti oziroma čustvenega naboja peli ob vasovanju. Čeprav so nekatere od njih povsem izgubile okvir, v katerem so nastale, in se sčasoma prevrščale v ljubezenske, se je ta vrst pesmi iz navedenih razlogov ohranjala bistveno dlje, kot bi se sicer, in s tem povečevala vtis o otožni podobi slovenske vojaške ljudske pesemske dediščine.*

*Otožnost slovenskih ljudskih vojaških pesmi torej ni odsev strahu ali izraz pomanjkanja poguma. Je izraz prepleta vsakdanjih življenjskih navad in življenja v vojašnicah ali na fronti. Odsev suverenega pogleda, ki*

*je v času stisk ohranil ne le pevske navade, temveč tudi temeljno držo vsakdanjosti. V tej drži je bilo petje izraz sprostitve, ki je sledila vestno in častno opravljenemu delu.*

