

THE BALLAD OF THE KILLER OF GIRLS IN FRANCE: A TALE OF THE TRAVEL OF SHOCKING STORIES OR THE TRAVEL OF PEOPLE?*

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Introduction

In the rich tradition of Slovene folk ballads, the ballad of the killer of girls in France does not command particular attention in and of itself. Indeed, because of the richness and variety of Slovene folk songs it is all the more surprising that Slovenes have preserved in song the memory of a faraway event to which they had no connection. It is also interesting that this ballad has been part of the folksong tradition of Slovenes in emigration since the Second World War.

This article will address the question of how this song appeared in Slovenia, in particular in one of the least developed parts of the Slovene territory, in the Slovenske Gorice region, and why only there, with the exception of two attestations in nearby Prekmurje.¹ What was special about this part of Slovenia that might explain the appearance in that region of a ballad about such a shocking event? The article will also date the ballad's appearance and consider its reception, an issue that is complicated by the fact that no transcription directly indicates the song's function. Finally, I will suggest a connection between the ballad's preservation among Slovene emigres and its use as a dirge in Slovenia.

With today's emphasis on intercultural communications, the ballad of the killer of girls in France raises the question of Slovene contacts with other lands and the reasons for these, and at the same time draws attention to relations between peoples in various European countries in the past. Does this song merely involve influences brought by

* Article and ballad [appendix 1] translated by Donald F. Reindl.

¹ The archive of the Institute of Ethnomusicology SRC SASA includes eight transcriptions of the song from Styria (GNI ZRC SAZU, GZ 22, 29, OSNP 35, 6,042, 6,675 [see appendices 2 and 3], 7,048, R 12,315 [see appendix 1], 15,366, 15,975), one transcription from Prekmurje (GNI 15,366), one sound recording made in 1959 in Chicago (GNI M 27,986), and an additional transcription made in Prekmurje and published in a book (Dravec 28, 299–300).

foreign travelers to this cultural nexus of Europe, or influences that Slovene travelers brought home when returning from other countries? So many centuries later, when diverse influences have become interwoven into Slovenia's cultural fabric, it is difficult to trace the individual threads. Perhaps these valuable fragments will create more questions than they answer and direct research in new directions.

The content and structure of the song: An answer or a question?

One reason this song about a cruel murderer in the faraway French city of Toulon found its way to Slovenia is certainly the content of the song. The ballad tells the story of a prestigious and apparently respectable butcher in his thirties who was also openly fond of girls. He lived alone in his house and was renowned for his excellent sausage. The song's introduction emphasizes that nobody knew what was hidden in his heart or realized that for ten years he had been skillfully luring girls to his house, raping them, murdering them, and turning their corpses into sausage.

The middle part of the ballad takes the form of direct narration of the discovery of the crime, revealing its full atrocity: two sisters from the countryside went to the market in town to sell milk and cheese. The famous butcher bought everything from them at the market, and the elder sister was to take the goods to his house. She did not come back for a long time, and a townsman passing by saw the perplexed and frightened girl waiting in vain for her sister. When the girl explained to him what had happened, he called the police. At the house of the butcher (*hudobnik* 'wicked man') the police found the dead body of the abducted girl lying on a straw mattress (*plevnica*). In addition, in the house they found a large vat of human flesh souring for sausage, and a heap of bones. They discovered that the prominent butcher had been responsible for the disappearance of many girls. The song relates that he raped and murdered eighty girls and used their bodies for sausage.

The extant variants of the song end in different ways. The majority of variants speak about the butcher's sentence, and about the fact that the murderer left the world in shame, cursed by those present, and that no mercy was shown to him. Some variants, especially older ones, conclude with an appeal that God grant us *boljša pamet* 'better wisdom'. The majority of variants also include a description of the punishment; some mention the *frajman* 'executioner' but differ in their

description of the butcher's death. A copy from a collection dating from the first half of the nineteenth century says that the *frajman* was a man "that hanged people,"² while a transcription from Norički Vrh near Gornja Radgona from the time following the First World War relates that the criminal ended up *z neusmiljeno francosko koso* 'under the merciless French scythe'³—that is, the guillotine. Because the word *frajman* was sometimes not understood by people, a meaningless connection was also occasionally made, as in the transcription from Skakovci in Prekmurje, which states that the murderer's merciless, *trajmonsko* heart went sour (Dravec 28).

In the majority of variants, the place of the event is more or less tied to the French city of Toulon, which also appears as *Tolan*, *Polum*, *Valon*, *Tolon*, *Taülon*, and *Tolim*. Only one variant—specifically, that transcribed in 1907 by the schoolteacher Gabrijel Majcen at Sveta Trojica in the Slovenske Gorice region—connects the event with Paris. The singers almost certainly knew nothing about the setting(s), apart from what was in the song, and were therefore easily able to change the name of the place.

The song cannot be connected to a particular time period because it offers no identifying features for this. Nor does the mention of the manner of death, which is sometimes useful in dating a song, help in this case: although the criminal was put to death in France, the description of the manner of death in the song also reflects Slovene folk conceptions about executions. Emperor Joseph II abolished beheadings in the Habsburg monarchy with decrees in 1781 and 1783; after this, those sentenced to death were hanged (Kumer 406). Although the guillotine is also mentioned (the "French scythe"), the descriptions of various methods of execution in the extant variants is more indicative of not understanding the concept of the *frajman* 'executioner' that appears in the song.

While the content explains why the song was interesting in a cultural region as far removed as Slovenia, the structure of the story itself creates new dilemmas. Specifically, together with the manner of

² GNI ZRC SAZU, O 12,315, Cven near Ljutomer, transcribed by Peter Skuhala; the author of the original transcription in *bohoričica* orthography was Arni Skuhala, born 1810.

³ GNI ZRC SAZU, *Naša moč* 97 (copy), no. 15,975; transcribed by Alojz Vogrinec.

narration, the structure of the story reveals traces of the origin of the ballad. The ballad is presented analytically: the very introduction states that it is the story of an exceptional deceiver and a mass murderer of girls. It is also clear here that it concerns an example meant to be a warning. This method of narration, which presents the story as confirmation of certain moral principles that transcend the event, points to the essence of the song.

The structure itself and the strongly emphasized moral principles reveal a tendency toward a didactic quality. The ballad not only emphasizes and condemns the crime itself, but also admonishes people against mendacity and double standards of morality. It presents a prominent, outwardly respectable man that has a *živinsko srce* 'beastly heart' as a negative example. The song connects a moral lesson with Christianity, although it is clear that general human values are at stake. Specifically, the majority of variants state that *njegovo živinsko srce kršanske lubezni ne ve* 'his beastly heart does not know Christian love'. In the variant from Kicar near Ptuj, transcribed in 1910, the moment when the crime is revealed is even described with the words: *...pravoverne kristjane strah je...* 'striking fear in the hearts of true Christians'.⁴ The formulation *pravoverni kristjani* 'true Christians' even points to the presence of other perspectives on the world, although this is not felt elsewhere in the song.

Alongside this structure, the manner of address is also interesting. Direct verbal contact with the listeners indicates a special type of song. At the beginning, the song addresses the listeners as *prijatli* 'friends' (*Prijatli, slišite moj glas* 'Friends, hearken unto my voice'), and later, when it distances itself from the crime, *zvoljeni* (i.e., *izvoljeni* 'people, chosen ones'—*oj zvoljeni, kaj se vam zdi* 'oh people, what do you make of this?'), and sometimes more directly in the form of address to a single individual *kristjan* 'Christian' (*kristjan, zdaj strahoto poglej* 'Christian, now behold the horror')⁵ or in the collective plural *kristjanovje*

⁴ GNI ZRC SAZU, 0 7,048, "O hudobniku (skrunilcu in morilcu deklet)" (About a Wicked Man [A Violator and Killer of Girls]); 12 September 1910 transcribed by Franc Kramar, sung by Neža Majcen.

⁵ GNI ZRC SAZU, 0 35, Sv. Trojica v Slovenskih Goricah, Styria, 15 August 1907, transcribed by Gabrijel Majcen, sung by Matija Vrbajak.

‘the Christian community’.⁶ Direct address to the listeners does not interrupt the narration, but the conclusion briefly admonishes or invites them to ask God for better wisdom on the basis of the story.

Transcriptions of the ballad in Slovenia: A connection with dirges?

Because of its recognizably foreign origin, and because of formal characteristics that do not rank the ballad of the killer of girls in the French city of Toulon among the narrative songs that the Institute of Ethnomusicology SRC SASA has been systematically issuing since 1970,⁷ it is only preserved as an insignificant part of Slovene tradition in the archive at the Institute of Ethnomusicology (GNI). It has also appeared in two publications from extreme northeast Slovenia. By mere chance, the archive at the Institute of Ethnomusicology also has an excerpt in the form of a sound recording, which originated among Slovene immigrants in North America.⁸

It is not completely clear when the first transcription of this song was made, but the transcription in *bohoričica* orthography indicates that it dates from at least the first half of the nineteenth century.⁹ It is found among material that individuals sent to Karel Štrekelj, the editor of the most extensive collection of Slovene folk songs, in the late 1880s and among the material used for his publication *Slovenske narodne pesmi*.¹⁰

⁶ GNI ZRC SAZU, GZ 29, “Slovo od posameznikov” (Farewell by Individuals), no. 7.

⁷ This collection is intended to encompass all types of Slovene narrative songs; the song types generally follow Štrekelj’s classification, and some types found later have been added (*Slovenske ljudske pesmi* I–IV).

⁸ The transcription among Slovene immigrants to North America was made by France Cigan, who recorded songs in Chicago and Toronto in 1959 among Slovenes that had settled in North America between 1920 and 1930. The ballad of the killer of girls in France was sung by Katarina Fujs and Marija Kolenko, and was preserved by Verona Antolin from Odranci. The tape recording was made by the housewife Gizela Hozjan. The place of origin of the song is given as Odranci in Prekmurje (GNI ZRC SAZU, M 27,986).

⁹ GNI ZRC SAZU, The bequest of Joža Glonar, 29, “Slovo od posameznikov” (Farewell by Individuals). In a handwritten songbook this song was titled “Pesem od osendesetih deklin” (A Song about Eighty Girls).

¹⁰ These songs are in the portion of Štreklj’s bequest designated as Glonar’s bequest in the archive of the Institute of Ethnomusicology, because it was

Among these songs were those that Štrekelj believed not to be of “national significance.” In line with the principles of the field at the time, many of these songs were relegated to an appendix at the end of individual thematic sections of the collection.¹¹ The song about the killer of girls in France, however, was not included in this appendix because Štrekelj believed it was not part of the Slovene folksong tradition, even though there were multiple transcriptions and it was easy to distinguish individual variants.

A considerable portion of the material in Štrekelj’s estate that remained unpublished is from Styria, in the eastern part of Slovenia. This material is special: it includes many handwritten songbooks and transcriptions by schoolteachers and organists,¹² including songbooks written by simple individuals who generally did so for their own use or because of personal inclination. What stands out most in this material are transcriptions of special dirges, referred to as *slovo* songs, that organists and other creative individuals composed for unusual or tragic deaths. The creation of these songs has a very extensive social background (cf. Klobčar 2002).

The fact that the ballad was transcribed among “mrličkimi pesmimi,” dirges published in three handwritten songbooks,¹³ means that the song was sung at wakes when the corpse was laid out on the bier. When there was a death, the villagers held a vigil at the side of the deceased for two nights. The deceased could not be left alone until the funeral. The people that kept vigil with the deceased remained for several hours. The vigil, or *vahtanje*, lasted the entire night and so there was

edited by Glonar after Štrekelj’s death. The label is thus only of technical significance.

¹¹ Karel Štrekelj (1859–1912), linguist and folklorist; between 1895 and 1911 he published fourteen fascicles of *Slovenske narodne pesmi*; he was a proponent of production theory.

¹² Organists played various roles in Slovenia. In places they were also teachers; in this case they were, in addition to the priest, the only educated persons in the village and enjoyed corresponding prestige. Oftentimes they were craftsmen, especially tailors. Working as an organist represented an important supplement to their incomes, and so they also composed songs for people on request.

¹³ The handwritten songbooks are from Hoče, from (Sv.) Lenarta v Slovenskih goricah, and from Cven near Ljutomer (GNI ZRC SAZU, GZ 29, GZ 22, GNI O 12,315).

plenty of time for prayer, conversation, and singing. Special farewell songs were sung by those close to the departed to take their leave. These instructive religious songs reflected the Christian perspective on death. (Kumer 9–26). In addition to dirges, this was an occasion for singing old, somber ballads. The arrangement in the songbooks clearly indicates the role of this song: without realizing it, the people gave the song about the killer of girls a role, and thus the significance of the ballad. That the song was widespread is also shown by the fact that it was among the first transcriptions included in the large collection of the Committee for the Collection of Slovene Folk Songs. In the collection that was created between 1906 and the First World War, comprising nearly 13,000 transcriptions, the song about the killer of girls is listed as number 35.¹⁴

Later transcriptions of the song—that is, transcriptions written approximately a century ago—came about as part of planned collection and transcribing efforts that encompassed all of the Austrian crown lands in the Habsburg monarchy. These include transcriptions made by researchers that collected songs between 1906 and 1913 in the majority of crown lands inhabited by Slovenes under the auspices of the Committee for the Collection of Slovene Folk Songs with Their Melodies.¹⁵ To determine the age of the song and thereby discover its origin, there are—in addition to the eight songs entered in the archives at the GNI—two interesting songs that were excluded from Štrekelj's material as not noteworthy and not recorded in that archive.

Certain transcribers also felt that the song was foreign. Its structural foreignness did not bother them, because it was difficult to identify. The song does not stand out because of its dactylic heptameter with anacrusis, but sestets are rare in Slovene folk songs. Although apparently nobody noticed that it stood out structurally, the unusual melody of the song was noted. In 1957 one of the last transcribers, Josip Dravec, wrote that the “melody has the character of newer songs, and its content is also that of recent decades.”¹⁶ His transcription and opinion were rendered at least a century after the first transcription, and this

¹⁴ GNI ZRC SAZU, Arhive of the OSNP, no. 35.

¹⁵ This was part of a special effort by Austria-Hungary that took place in all of the hereditary Austrian crownlands.

¹⁶ The song was recorded in the village of Skakovci in Prekmurje on 12 August 1950 (Dravec 367).

separation therefore reveals a stylistic judgment rather than an assessment of when the song originated.

The song as a reflection of foreign influences

Various hypotheses are possible regarding the origin of the song. Although it cannot be excluded that the story of a shocking event that occurred in a far-off land was made into a song in Slovenia, this is unlikely because of lack of apparent motivation and the common occupations of songwriters (organists and teachers). Variants of this song have also been found in organists' estates, yet it is difficult to link this particular, distant event with interest in Slovenia.

Here it is worth considering whether the song could have arisen in Slovenia as a reflection of some domestic event attributed to a foreigner. This possibility is all but excluded by the by the fact that the town of Toulon was quite unknown to Slovenes. Knowledge of this place would have demanded a corresponding geographical perspective, and therefore it is hard to believe that the creator of the song would have chosen it without an adequate reason. The fact that the place was truly foreign to Slovenes is also shown by its renaming in various versions, although it is not rendered unrecognizable.

Equally unlikely is the possibility that that song was brought to Slovenia by the French themselves during the time of Napoleon and the Illyrian Provinces. Evidence against this is the fact that Styria, where the song was known, did not become part of the territory of Illyria¹⁷ and that the time period during which the French Empire controlled the area was brief: France's territory of Illyria only existed from 1809 to 1813 (Šumrada 10). Even if the people of Styria had had direct contact with the French, such a possibility is excluded because of the language barrier and certainty that the French would not have represented themselves with a song that depicts them as badly as this ballad does.

Something did remain from the time of the French occupation of Slovene territory that was recorded in national memory: because of taxes (*fronki*), general military conscription, and other reasons, French authority was resented by the common people, and this attitude

¹⁷ Among Slovene-inhabited areas, the Illyrian Provinces included Carniola, western Carinthia, Gorizia-Gradisca, Trieste and the surrounding area, and Istria (Šumrada 110).

accompanied the adoption of songs that depicted the French in a poor light. In The “migration” of this song, the story itself, or travelers might, then, provide a connection with popular attitudes towards the French.

In seeking the origin of the song, it must be noted that the oldest transcription was found in an organist’s estate.¹⁸ In Styria, and less commonly elsewhere, in other Slovene areas, it was common for unexpected or tragic deaths to be set in songs that described the unusual event; at the same time the deceased took leave of his family and neighbors, or those he had lived among, through the song. These songs were intended as a leave-taking—hence known as a *slovo* ‘farewell’—and less frequently were written for requiem masses (Klobčar 7–21). Little is known about the composers of these songs. From what can be gathered from the archived bequests, they were generally organists and this formed part of their meager salaries. Individuals with a special relationship to the deceased that were most affected by the death, such as relatives, wrote some of the songs.¹⁹

The issue of foreign songs, such as that about the French killer of girls, leads not only to the question of the song’s origin, but of Styrian dirges in general. It may be coincidental that in their content, and to some extent in their structure as well, these songs are rather similar to the *Bänkelsang* (bench-singer’s song) and *Gassenhauer* (street song), both of which are variants of the broadside ballad.²⁰ Yet this connection is open to question because the critical structure of Slovene narrative songs came from German linguistic territory via Styria. Without a model, it would be difficult for the same song forms to appear in different linguistic environments, especially because their functions are different (Kumer 22). The connection between the ballad about the killer of girls in France and dirges lies not only in the fact that the transcriptions of these songs were found among dirges and *slovo* songs, but in the songs themselves: in both cases, the song concerns a dreadful or tragic event, and both types of

¹⁸ This is a collection from the Slovenske Gorice region, which Jozef Kreinz sent to Štrekelj (GNI ZRC SAZU, GZ 29).

¹⁹ For example, “Uboj na vasovanju” (Murder While A-Courting)—one such song that gradually became a ballad—was written by the brother of the man killed (*Slovenske ljudske pesmi* IV, no. 219, 319).

²⁰ Zmaga Kumer has already demonstrated the connection between the *Bänkelsang* and the Styrian *slovo* (Kumer 22).

songs have a corresponding introduction and conclusion—and thus they are structurally similar as well.

Strictly speaking, the ballad of the killer of girls in France, like the *Bänkelsang* and *Krämerlied* (peddler's song), is a journalistic narration in verse (Beneš 30). Without doubt, because of its shocking content, this song is connected to characteristics of the *Bänkelsang*. The singers of the *Bänkelsang* made use of corresponding illustrations to present some shocking event or murder through song and dramatization, and at the end offered pamphlets for sale that illustrated the song. Although it is difficult to believe that *Bänkelsang* singers from foreign lands brought this song to remote parts of Styria, it is by more than coincidence that in this very part of Styria a special form of dirge was preserved—songs written as farewells to those that had suffered accidental or violent deaths.²¹

The pamphlets that accompanied the singing of the *Gassenhauer* are attested in Slovenia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Kumer 21–28) and point to the presence of *Bänkelsang* singers. In its content, the song about the killer of girls in France could be included among the repertoire of such singers.²² Because this song was transcribed in poorer areas, inhabited primarily by Slovene vinedressers, it is, however, unlikely that the song came to these areas in this manner—that is, directly from *Bänkelsang* performances—or that, if it came this way, it would have taken root or been preserved only there. The fact the song was known only in Styria, at least in the nineteenth century, is also confirmed by the ascertainment of the source of the Prekmurje variant: along with the last transcription from Prekmurje, the transcriber emphasized that the song had come to Prekmurje from Styria (Dravec 367).

It is even less likely that the song found its way to Styria solely through the pamphlets that the *Bänkelsang* singers sold, and was preserved only there,²³ because the lyrics were connected to the singing.

²¹ Bohuslav Beneš also connects the style of certain more recent burial songs in Bohemia with the *Krämerlied*, but he also sees here a connection with spiritual songs of popular origin (Beneš 25).

²² Kumer also established the possibility of connecting these songs with those of *Bänkelsang* singers (Kumer 1976: 124).

²³ Kumer expressed doubt that the song arose on the basis of the pamphlets sold by *Bänkelsang* singers (124).

Nonetheless, the possibility that the song was introduced in this way is not entirely to be excluded, because individuals that traveled around Europe also collected such pamphlets. In any case, because of its variants, which are not characteristic of the creativity in the *Krämerlied*, the song about the serial killer of girls surpassed the *Krämerlied* singers' innovativeness and the resonance of their songs.

In establishing the origin of this song, it is necessary to examine an additional possible foreign influence on Slovene territory. Until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—that is, until 1918—German influence was undeniably strong in Styria in all areas of life. There were also connections in the areas of civil and church administration. It is known that in Lower Austria around the year 1700, as part of efforts to re-Catholicize the population, Franciscans and Jesuits also taught the people by presenting stories of unusual fates such as those used by the *Bänkelsang* singers (cf. Cheesman 1994). Until 1918 the Slovene Jesuits belonged to the Austrian ecclesiastical province (Dolinar 309), and on the basis of this it can be concluded that Slovene pilgrimage areas also experienced this type of Counter-Reformation propaganda. This assumption is supported by the attested sale of leaflets with religious songs (Kumer 21).

The orientation of the content of the songs used for Franciscan and Jesuit propaganda in Austrian Styria is generally known (Moser 1981). It is clear that the song about the French killer differed substantially from these songs. It does not depict the evildoing as an example of a godless life followed by regret and just punishment. Indeed, the criminal appears to be an exemplary Christian who leads an apparently Christian life but conceals shocking crimes. The song does not speak about the spiritual transformation of the criminal, or even his need for such. In this case, faith and regret play no role, and it is temporal powers, the police, that are instrumental to the revelation of the crime and punishment. The song ends with an entreaty for people to appeal to God for better wisdom, so that their lives will be different. Its conclusion therefore also focuses on living a proper life on earth rather than on a reward in the afterlife. Some variants no longer have this conclusion, which does not signify a different role for the song, but rather that the conclusion of the song was lost because the story itself was sufficiently instructive.

Although the song was transcribed several times in the immediate vicinity of an important pilgrimage center administered by the Franciscans—near Sveta Trojica in the Slovenske Gorice region—on the basis of its content it is unlikely that people would have encountered it in these regions. The accentuation of moral and ethical, rather than religious, messages leaves little possibility that people would have learned to sing the song about the killer of girls in France on the initiative of the Jesuits or Franciscans.

The song as a reflection of departure abroad

In seeking to determine where the song originated—that is, in examining Slovene contacts with foreigners—one must also take into account Slovene encounters with foreign lands and with foreigners abroad. In the past, such encounters were possible for the common people chiefly through pilgrimages to distant regions, as well as through advanced apprenticeships under foreign master craftsmen and military experiences.

It is unlikely, if not impossible, that a song like that about the killer of girls was brought to the Slovenske Gorice region by those who served abroad in the military, including by mercenaries,²⁴ or that it would have been spread by the regular army, in which lifelong service was in effect until 1802.²⁵ That apprentices in various crafts abroad could have brought the song to Slovenia is doubtful since Slovenes went abroad within the Austrian half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as assistants to foreign master craftsmen, or as *frentarji*.²⁶ The nature of their travel was oriented toward work rather than socializing. Further, they came from a less developed area and were therefore fewer in number, making it unlikely they played a role in the transfer of the song.

Pilgrims had the greatest opportunity for contact with the culture and news of a foreign land. Pilgrimages were the most frequent popular

²⁴ The mercenary army system was in force until the introduction of general military conscription in 1771 (Kumer 14).

²⁵ Lifelong military service, which was also general, was in force between 1771 and 1802, and the term of military service was later shortened (Kumer 14–15).

²⁶ The expression *frentar* (from Germ. *fremd* 'foreign') referred to a person that completed an advanced apprenticeship under a foreign master craftsman.

manner of encountering foreign lands, foreigners, and foreign cultures, and at the same time were significant in transmitting news.²⁷ Among the pilgrimage centers that Slovenes regularly visited were especially Aachen and Cologne in German ethnic territory—also known in Slovene as *Cahen* and *Kelmorajjn*. These pilgrimages, which were especially popular in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, served not only as religious events, but also made possible encounters with the hosts' lives and spiritual culture. For example, every seven years some 300 Slovene pilgrims traveled to Cologne and Aachen; according to some testimony they even numbered as many as 400 or 500 (Stabej 168).

Slovenes went on pilgrimages following old roads and paths for trade and transit, and thus there were sufficient opportunities to meet with other travelers. Reports of the singing of sacred and secular songs among Slovene pilgrims permit one to assume that Slovenes would have encountered the songs of other peoples en route. In Ipperwald a dance held every evening by the Slovene pilgrims formed part of the pilgrimage routine, and the Slovene dances were made especially appealing by the folk musicians (Stabej 162–92).

The most important stopping point along the way to Cologne was Andernach, where the pilgrims traveled along the right bank of the Rhine to Leutesdorf. This was an arrival and departure point for pilgrims, including Slovenes, traveling along the Rhine. From here Slovene pilgrimage processions continued with cross and flag to Cologne and Aachen (Stabej 164–73). It is known that Slovene pilgrims also stayed in Andernach for several months,²⁸ as guests following an old custom. Among other things, the pilgrims also brought home news from afar.

It is only a hypothesis, among other possibilities, that Slovene pilgrims—which included pilgrims from Styria, despite the most persistent prohibitions by the authorities—encountered the ballad of the

²⁷ In the early Middle Ages, Slovenes primarily went on pilgrimages to centers of Christianization—for example, to San Giovanni al Timavo near Duino (Sln. *Štivan*, *Devin*), to Salzburg and Aquileia (Sln. *Oglej*), and later also to Santiago de Compostela (from the tenth century onwards), to the graves of St. Martin in Tours, St. Francis in Assisi, St. Anthony in Padua, to Loreto, and from 1349 onwards to Aachen and Cologne (Petrič 280).

²⁸ In 1706 Slovene pilgrims stayed at Andernach from February to July, and during this time Jesuit teachers twice presented a play about Judith to them (Stabej 174).

French killer in this manner as news in verse. However, this possibility cannot be excluded because there was also considerable anti-French sentiment in this part of German territory. In 1689 the French nearly burned Andernach to the ground (Stabej 174), and it was at the same time that pilgrimages of Slovenes along the Rhine were most intense. As regular guests to this city, they themselves were also affected.

Neither the clergy nor the secular authorities were supportive of pilgrimages along the Rhine. In 1769 there were approximately 100 Slovene pilgrims in Aachen; however, the authorities banned the next scheduled pilgrimage along the Rhine seven years later. After this, such pilgrimages took place secretly and individually, no longer in processions, and were undertaken only by “vagrant persons oriented toward profligate living” (Stabej 151–76). By the nineteenth century, witnesses to the pilgrimages along the Rhine preserved memories of the distant paths and unusual events that they had experienced themselves or had only heard about.

Although the manner in which the ballad about the killer of girls came to a remote region of Styria in the end can only be surmised, this ballad draws attention to important possibilities for cultural contact in the past. It points to meeting points and contrasts, to comings and goings, and to a particular perspective Slovenes had on foreign places and peoples. The view of foreignness revealed in this ballad is at the same time an assessment of unusual news that people received as being expressly counter to general human values. This news together with judgments about it became part of tradition through song—and, as a component of tradition, this song also received its epilogue.

The Ballad of the French Killer: An accompaniment to Slovene migration abroad

Until the First World War, all of the transcriptions of the ballad about the French killer came from the region of eastern Styria. The last transcription before the First World War resulted as part of the most extensive survey to collect folk songs in the Slovene lands.²⁹ The song was sung by an itinerant seamstress that traveled around the villages in the area. Singing was an advantage, especially singing songs with unusual content that would attract interest. In this case, therefore, the song still

²⁹ GNI ZRC SAZU, O 7,048, Kramar's transcription from Kicar near Ptuj.

played the 'same role as the *Bänkelsang*. Only a transcription from after the First World War indicates that the song had extended elsewhere, to the more low-lying area to the north.³⁰

The infrequent transcriptions of the song after the Second World War bring to light a special story. They come from Prekmurje, a part of Slovenia that was separated from the rest of the Slovene lands in both civil and church administration, and also separated by an important natural barrier, the Mura River. The song was transcribed in Prekmurje itself only once, in 1950. The transcriber noted that its linguistic characteristics indicated that the song had arrived from the Styrian side of the Mura, and the transcriber ascribed both the content and the melody to the preceding decades.³¹

The other two Prekmurje transcriptions together with the places of transcription tell a special story about Slovenia in the post-war period. The first of these two transcriptions is from Žižki in Prekmurje, recorded in 1957 in Klagenfurt. The song was transcribed by the Salesian France Cigan, who left Yugoslavia (of which Slovenia was a part) after the Second World War for political reasons. Fr. Jožef Cigan sang this song and others to him during a visit.³² The completely dialect transcription of this song shows that, unlike certain other transcriptions from Prekmurje, it had been adopted for some time already, which is also evident in the notes to these songs. It appears that the song also spread via transcriptions: Jožef Cigan brought a handwritten songbook to Carinthia as an aid,³³ although the transcription demonstrates that he also knew how to sing the song himself.

The transcription of songs made abroad was the expression of a desire to use song to compensate for a homeland that was almost beyond reach after political emigration. For these reasons, once far abroad, the song about the killer of girls was no longer significant as a negative commentary on foreign lands, but because of its incorporation into

³⁰ This is a transcription from Norički Vrh near Gornja Radgona; *Naša moč* 1997 (15): 975.

³¹ Transcribed in Skakovci 12 August 1950, sung by Antonija Flisar and her daughter Justina; the transcriber also recorded whose house the mother had learned the song at (Dravec 28).

³² France Cigan sent a copy of the songs to the Institute of Ethnomusicology in Ljubljana in October 1960.

³³ He had the songbook by Matjaž Koštric from Žižki as a model.

tradition it was primarily an image of the no longer uniform spiritual world that remained at home.

It was in a similar manner—that is, through an indirect transcription—that the final variant of the song about the killer of girls in France arrived in the archive of the Institute of Ethnomusicology. This is the only variant preserved as a sound recording, although it was not recorded in full. It is a recording made in Chicago by a Slovene emigrant from Prekmurje, Gisela Hozjan. The Salesian Cigan brought the recording back from his trip to the United States together with other recordings in 1959.³⁴ Like the other songs that were recorded there at that time, this ballad was also sung by two Slovene immigrants that had emigrated for economic reasons. Gizela Hozjan, who recorded the song, was also born in Chicago. The people of whom the recordings were made had emigrated to the United States during the economic crisis between 1920 and 1930.

In this variant the name of the place of the crime is completely unrecognizable; *Toulon* has become *Tolim*. At the same time, the structure is surprisingly well preserved. Certain details disclosing the consequences of the crime are even clearer. This variant of the song is interesting not only for its structural aspect, but also because of its function: it is interesting that this once foreign song, a song about a killer of girls in France, appeared across the world in Chicago, and among the songs that Slovene emigrants brought there as part of their heritage. Like the transcription made in Carinthia, here too the story with its accompanying moral lesson is eclipsed in importance by the fact that the song preserved a memory of home and of a time when the singing of such a song was part of social gatherings in their native villages.

Conclusion

With its obviously foreign origin and the fact that so far, apart from a few exceptions, it has not been included among Slovene folksongs, the ballad of the French killer raises a number of questions about the transmission of news, songs, and people in a time when at least the countryside was still marked by folk culture, and up to the present day. The extent of its presence, confirmed by the variants, negates the idea that remote regions in the pre-industrial age were completely

³⁴ GNI ZRC SAZU, 27,986.

isolated. The song draws attention to the fixedness of Slovene ethnic territory in the region of Central Europe, in a crossroads of various cultures and in a uniformity of moral norms.

An assessment of the origin of the ballad, however, allows only hypotheses for which no conclusion can be drawn. The idea that a song would have been composed in Slovenia about some shocking event abroad is doubtful. Two possibilities in particular seem more probable, both involving some kind of transfer. If the song was brought to Slovenia from abroad, this hypothesis also allows two avenues: it could have been brought by *Bänkelsang* singers (more probable) or it could have arrived as a form of religious propaganda (more likely), which was common in the province of Styria, to which this region belonged until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It seems impossible that this song would have been brought to Slovenia by the French during the time of Napoleon.

It is very likely that there is a connection between songs like this one and the custom in that part of Styria of composing songs in memory of those killed in accidents or murdered. One additional possibility for the song's origin is that because it is a ballad about a French killer, it could have been brought to Slovenia by Slovenes that traveled abroad. The first extant transcription of the song dates from the first half of the nineteenth century, and it cannot be excluded that the song was brought home by people that had gone abroad on pilgrimages. The significance of making pilgrimages along the Rhine and the relations among the various peoples that mingled on these routes lends further credence to this idea.

The origin of the song will therefore remain obscure, but it highlights many indirect or direct connections between Slovenes and the world. It also draws attention to cases of cultural intersections for which the origin cannot be ascertained, though their resonance is felt. Not only are contacts between different cultures revealed, but also the relationship to what is foreign and to contacts themselves.

Appendix 1: The ballad of the killer of girls in France, as transcribed in the first half of the nineteenth century by Arni Skuhala from Cven near Ljutomer. The song is titled "Pesem od enega lüdi morca" (A Song about a Murderer; GNI ZRC SAZU, no. 12,315).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Prijatelji, slišite moj glas
vam v srce položim ga jaz!
Poglemo francosko sredino,
kaj strašnega tam se zgodilo!</p> <p>V najhujših čemerih stvari
ne storjo, kaj človek stori.</p> | <p>Friends, hearken unto my voice,
Which I direct to your heart!
Look at this scene in France,
What a horrible thing happened
there!</p> <p>The greatest wrath cannot
compare
With what a man can do.</p> |
| <p>2. Od enega čem vam zapet,
ba star okol trideset let,
no kinči ga lepa postava,
prijazen no svet se zdržava,
pa njegvo živinsko srce
keršanske lübezeni ne ve.</p> | <p>I will sing to you about a man
Who was about thirty years old,
He had a handsome form,
He seemed pious and kind,
But his beastly heart
Did not know Christian love.</p> |
| <p>3. Tolun se to mesto veli,
gde toti hujdobnik živi.
Meštrija velk hasek jim dava,
s tem, da on klobase prodava.
Pa nišer ni misla si to,
kaj v jegoven srci bilo.</p> | <p>Tolun is the name of the town
where this villain lived.
His business brought him great
profit
Through sales of sausage.
But nobody could guess
What was hidden in his heart.</p> |
| <p>4. On ima je lasten svoj hram,
no v jem je stanüva on sam.
Po placi on večkrat potuje,
no mladih deklin pregleduje,
no kera se njemi zezdi,
njo on v svojo mrežo vlovi.</p> | <p>He had his own house,
Where he lived by himself.
He often went to the market
To see the young girls,
And those that pleased him
He snared in his net.</p> |

5. Te, keré je sprava v svoj hram,
 oj groza, kej zgodlo se tam:
 nedužnosti se je znebila,
 potem življenje zgübila,
 on njo razmesara celo,
 v klobase ponüca meso.
 Those that he took to his home—
 O horror, what happened there!
 They first lost their innocence,
 And then they lost their lives.
 Then he cut them up
 And used their flesh for sausages.
6. To dela on še deset je let,
 pa nišer ni priša na sled,
 če glih so deklince falile,
 zapstonj ba pozved no oznanjile.
 Ta gda mera spunjena je,
 te more na svetlo prit vse.
 He did this for ten years,
 And nobody found him out,
 Although girls were disappearing,
 They were sought in vain.
 But when the measure is filled,
 Everything must come to light.
7. Ednok sta deklinci dve
 z dežele na trštvo ta šle,
 sta slatko prijaznost imele,
 kak rože nadužno živele,
 na trštvo, kak návada že,
 sir, mleko prineseta obe.
 Once a pair of girls
 Traveled to the market.
 They were friendly and sweet,
 And innocent as flowers,
 At the market where they used to
 Bring their cheese and milk.
8. Hujdobnik dve že zagledi,
 vse küpi no dobro plati.
 Ta starša more v hram nesti,
 ta mlajša jo čaka na cesti,
 pa čakala njo je zapstunj,
 prijatelce ni blo več vun.
 The villain caught sight of them,
 Bought all their wares and paid
 well.
 The elder took the wares to his
 house,
 While the younger waited on the
 street,
 But she waited in vain,
 Her friend never came back out.
9. Zdaj neki gospod mimo gre,
 no vidi njoj žmetno srce,
 on pita njo, kaj to pomeni,
 zdaj ona razložo vse njemi,
 kak vidla je sestvo v hram it,
 pa ne jo več vidla vün prit.
 A townsman passing by
 Noticed her heavy heart,
 And asked her what was wrong.
 She explained everything to him,
 How she saw her sister enter the
 house,
 But did not see her come out.

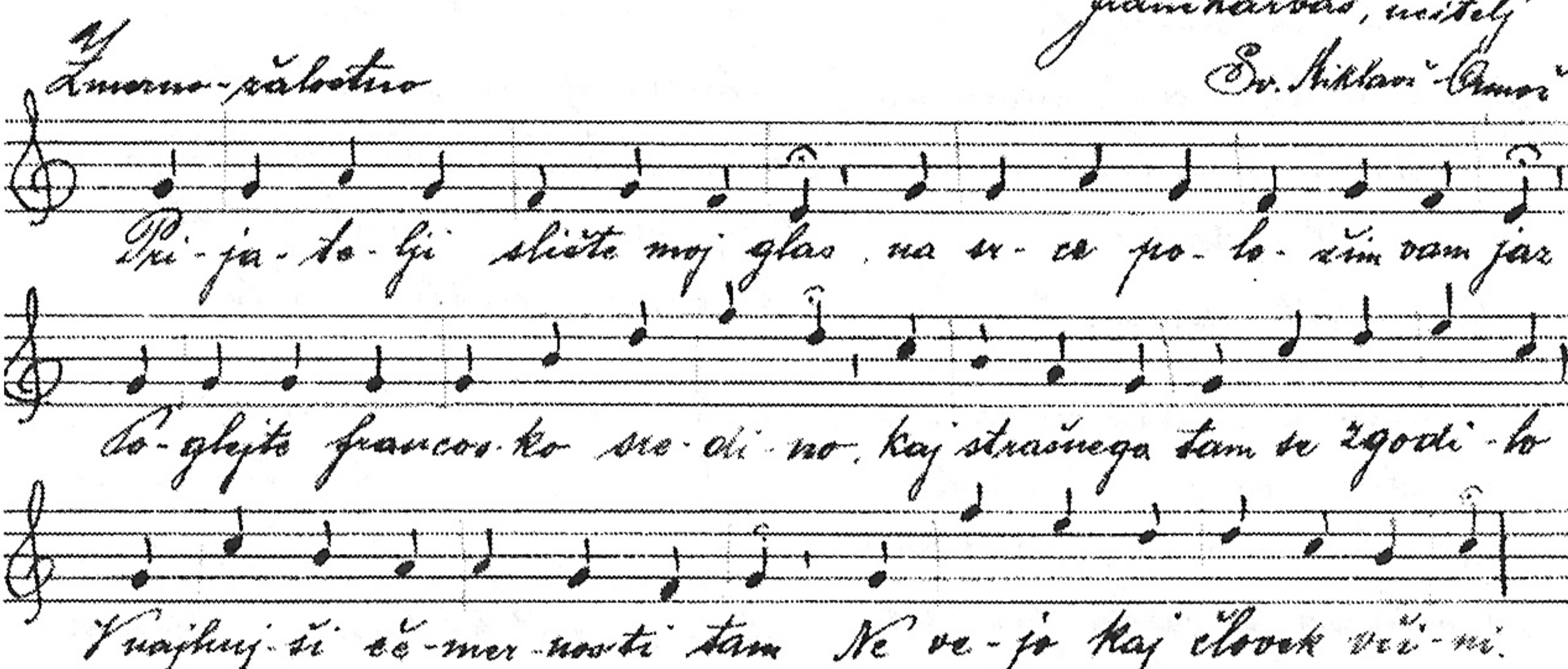
10. Gospod' zdaj k tem višišem gre,
ko vzeme šandare kres se,
v hram gre, no hujdobnika zveže,
no celi hrami dobro preiše,
Te v skrivnoj pivnici je blo
že mrtvo dekliško telo.
- The gentleman had a suspicion,
And took the police with him.
They went inside, bound the
villain,
And thoroughly searched his
house.
In a hidden cellar they found
The dead girl's corpse.
11. Zdaj dale še išejo le,
kristjan, strahovitno pogle:
zad puno človečjiga mesa,
kerga za klobase je kvasa,
kup v koti človečjih kosti!
Oh zvoleni, kaj se vam zdi?
this?
- They continued searching,
Christian, behold the horror!
A vat filled with human flesh,
Souring to make his sausage,
A heap of human bones in the
corner.
Oh people, what do you make of
this?
12. Pa v prvem sodniši on že
vse svoje pregrehe pove:
več osemdeset tak nedužnih,
je skoz njega postalo sužnih,
odvzeja nedužnost srca
no tüdi življenja tela.
- In court straight away
He confessed all his sins:
More than eighty innocents
Were enslaved because of him.
He stripped them of their
innocence
And then he took their lives.
13. Pa k zadjemi se zgodi,
kaj se hudobija plati.
Kaj v njegovem srci blo skrito,
na višalah zdaj je odkrito,
zdaj skusi si njegovo telo
frajmonsko nesmilno roko.
- Finally it came to pass
That wickedness met its reward.
That which was hidden in his
heart
Was revealed on the gallows,
And his body then felt
The executioner's merciless hand.
14. V sramoti je püsta ti svet
od okoli stoječih preklet,
zavolo hujdobnega djanja
ž jim ne meja pomilovanja.
Zato pa Boga prosmo mi,
kaj dobro nam pamet deli.
- In shame he left this world,
Cursed by those around him.
Because of his evil deeds
They showed him no mercy.
Let us therefore beg God
To grant us better wisdom.

Appendix 2: The ballad of the killer of girls in France, entitled "A Song about Eighty Girls"; this version was transcribed in 1908 at (Sv.) Miklavž pri Ormožu by the teacher Franc Karbaš (GNI ZRC SAZU, Arhive of the OSNP, no. 6,675).

6675 *Pesem od psemdeset dikhlin.*

Franc Karbaš, učitelj
Sv. Miklavž pri Ormožu

Ljubeznivo



Pri-ja-to-ji slišite moj glas, na se-ce po-lo-xim vam jar
 to-glejte francos-ko sre-di-no, kaj strašnega tam se zgodi-to
 V najhuj-ši se-mer-nosti tam Ne ve-jo kaj človek vi-ri.

1. Dalon se ton mesto veli 3. Tam moja je lasten svoj kram
 če tiati hujdebna rivi In njom je stanoval sam
 Moštrija volka se mu stava On večkrat po placi potuje
 če draga klobas prodava Si mlade dikhline ogleduje
 Pa nise nej veda zato Se kova se njemu serdi
 kaj v njegovem vici bitu. Se tište on o mrtvi plove

4. Ta koro je spucava s svoj kram 5. Ton dela je on stent let
 Oh, glasa kaj zgodilo se s njo Pa nise nej priča na stid
 Neduknosti se je knebila Če gluh so stitine sfatite
 Potem pa riviljanje zqibila Zantoj so ble vse vnanila
 Je njom par mesara citou Keta vica dopuzana je
 Klobase ponuca mesou Se nora dux volka bja d'ova

slovenskih narodnih pesmi.

Opomba. Pišite samo na prvo in tretjo stran!

Appendix 3: The region in eastern Slovenia where the song about the serial killer of girls in France was recorded (Geografski inštitut Antona Melika ZRC SAZU).

- 6675
6. Enonk sta dikhinici dvoji
 2 plevle na trator sta stoi
 Sta z malega prijavnosti mele
 Kak ponca medurino rivo
 Na trator kak navada je
 Lici mleiko prinesli obei.
7. Hujdobnik zdaj nje razgledi
 Kak kipi in dobro plati
 Na stariša je mogla v hram vesti
 Ta mlajša jo čaka pri cesti
 Pa čakala jo je zastoj
 Prijatelec na blon vec oim.
8. En gospod mi mijsno tam gre
 In vidi v njoj zmetno sree
 Jo vpraša, kaj ton pomoim
 Ona njemu vse tenko raveli
 Sem vidla kak sestro v hram iti
 Pa nej sem je vidla oim priti.
9. Ta gospod zdaj k riasim gre
 Ino vzame stondare kre se
 Hram grejo. hujdobnika averajo
 In ocili hram dobro preiscujo.
 Vtoj stivni pionici je blon
 Te matve dikhine telon.
10. In otale preiscujo se
 Kristjan strahovito proglej
 Eua kad je človeškega mesa
 Kero on pa klobase je kvasa
 Kijo v konti človeških kosti
 Oh rolemi kaj se vam pidi
11. Ti prvi sodnici on tam
 Vse svoje progrike proci
 Tsch osmdeset medurink
 Je gratalo stou njega suanik
 In vral je medurnosti srea
 Potem pa zoljenje tela.

Odbor za nabiranje
 slovenskih narodnih pesmi.

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POVZETEK**BALADA O MORILCU DEKLET NA FRANCOSKEM – PRIPOVED
O POTOVANJU VZNEMIRLJIVIH ZGODB ALI PRIPOVED O
POTOVANJU LJUDI?**

V severovzhodnem delu Slovenije je bila v prvi polovici 19. stoletja zapisana zanimiva pesem, ki nedvomno izpričuje tuj izvor: gre za pesem o množičnem morilcu v mestu Toulon v Franciji. Najdena je bila med pesmimi, ki so jih v tem delu Slovenije zlagali in peli ob nenadnih ali nenavadnih smrtih, in v drugih zapisih.

Vprašanje, kako je balada prišla k nam, odpira vprašanje stikov slovenskega območja z drugimi narodi ali s tujimi deželami. Za prenos pesmi je možnih več domnev. Balada vsebinsko in oblikovno spominja na pesmi pouličnih oziroma sejmarskih pevcev, ki so k nam prihajali od drugod. Ker pa je najdena v revnih odročnih krajih, je malo verjetno, da bi tja zašla na ta način. Lahko bi bila del verske propagande, povezane z božjepotnimi središči pri nas, zelo malo verjetnosti pa ponuja razlaga, da je nastala kot prevod tujega letaka.

Še najverjetnejša se zdi možnost, povezana z romanji na tuje. Ljudje s tega dela Slovenije so imeli stike s tujino predvsem kot romarji v Porenje. Tam so se srečevali z romarji iz drugih dežel, z njihovim izročilom in z vznemirljivimi novicami, kot gostje Nemcev pa so spoznavali tudi njihov odnos do drugih narodov.

Čeprav vprašanje izvora pesmi ostaja odprto, balada ponuja nov razmislek o stičiščih med narodi v preteklosti in nov pogled na lastno dediščino.