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THE INFLUENCE OF CROATIAN MEDITERRANEAN AREA ON FOLK POETRY IN BELA KRAJINA

The Slovenian southmost region of Bela krajina, bordering with Croatia, has — according to the ethnological classification — Pannonian features. The author reveals the remains of its Mediterranean culture, preserved within the spiritual aspects of folk culture, and interprets them in relation to the region's history. Namely, the region was, among others, settled by Dalmatians who fled from their homes in the sixteenth century.

Keywords: folk poetry, Bela krajina, the Mediterranean

Introduction

It might seem illogical to deal with the folk poetry of Bela krajina when the topic of the conference is the Mediterranean. Although according to the ethnological systematization Bela krajina belongs to the Pannonian cultural area, ethnological and folkloristic research work clearly shows that these cultural areas are not isolated regions, but receive influences from adjacent regions. These influences are then adapted to the mainstream cultural pulse of an area, or of an ethnological region. Pannonian Bela krajina is therefore different and interesting also because Croatian fugitives from the Cetina river basin in Dalmatia, fleeing from the Turks, settled here in the 15th and the 16th century. These "Mediterranean" fugitives also settled in the neighbouring region around Karlovac which according to the ethnological systematization belongs to the Pannonian region. Lively connections between Bela krajina and the area around Karlovac further strengthened the elements of the imported Mediterranean culture, although throughout the centuries the latter gradually became "assimilated" by the mainstream Pannonian culture, which was also influenced by the elements from the Dinara region. By choosing Bela krajina, which does not belong to the area of the Mediterranean, I wished

to illustrate certain relative points in the ethnological systematization of the Slovenian ethnic territory. Since this systematization is dealt with in detail by Mojca Ravnik in her paper, I will only briefly repeat some of the facts in order to facilitate the understanding of certain theses in my paper.

Vilko Novak (1958) divided Slovenia into four ethnological areas: Mediterranean, Alpine, central Slovenian, and Pannonian. The area of the Mediterranean comprises the western part of Slovenia along the border with Italy, and Novak drew the boundary line between the Mediterranean and the next region approximately along the same borderline which separated Italy and the kingdom of Yugoslavia before World War II. As is well known, Italians drew the boundary line up to where the Roman empire, the so-called *limes*, used to extend. It marks the end of the Mediterranean in Novak's ethnological systematization. Novak did not base his systematization on this historical, political boundary line, of course, but on ethnological facts as were evident especially in material culture. If we look at folk architecture, for instance, the Mediterranean area in Slovenia extends to where we can still find characteristic stony Mediterranean houses with their unique tiled roofs, very similar to the houses in Greece, Italy, and in certain areas of Croatia and the area along the Soča river in the north.

Although the facts pertaining to the material and, in part, also the social culture undisputedly confirm Novak's division, it seems that folk spiritual culture, especially poetry and music, somewhat relativize the area of the Mediterranean in Slovenia; the spiritual culture of the northern part of this area, the region of the Zgornje Posočje (Upper Soča valley), is closer to the Alpine region and therefore also to its folk culture. People themselves resist the regional notion of Primorsko (literally "of the coast") which matches the Mediterranean region of Vilko Novak. In some of our recently published newspapers (i.e. in *Delo* of August 1, 1998) we could read discussions in favour and against the too extensive, historically based, notion of Primorsko. People living in Zgornje Posočje, Rovte, and in a part of Notranjska, all of whom are characterized as the inhabitants of Primorsko, feel that this notion of Primorsko is too extensive, that it denies the identity of all those who do not feel connected to Primorsko and thus the Mediterranean culture, but feel that their historic, emotional, and cultural identity is tied with either the central area of Slovenia, or with the region of the Alps. Their culture and their emotions are thus different from the culture and emotions of the population of Slovenian Istria. Yet geographically they now all belong to Primorsko, hence the revolt of the non-Mediterranean population in the newspapers. These newspaper articles plainly demonstrate that the present size of the Mediterranean in Slovenia is not only questionable in the scientific circles, but even more so among the people who connect their adherence to a specific area with their cultural belonging. For a large number of the Primorsko inhabitants their culture does not belong to the Mediterranean, which is further supported by ethnological and folkloristic research. Especially in the spiritual culture

of Zgornje Posočje these research findings have not disclosed any typical Mediterranean elements so characteristic of the coastal region of Slovenia. Folkloristic experts have been finding these elements in the Pannonian area, however, part of which is also Bela krajina. This paper will therefore draw attention to a few elements of this Mediterranean culture as are reflected in the folk poetry of Bela krajina.

According to Vilko Novak, the Pannonian cultural and ethnological region, part of which is also the area of Bela krajina, starts in Prekmurje and extends along the Slovenian-Croatian state border, encompasses a greater part of eastern Štajersko, Bizeljsko, Posavje, and the southernmost Slovenian region of Bela krajina. It has to be stressed that these ethnological regions are not sharply marked, which is especially true of those at the crossroads of different cultures and nations. But taken as a whole, ethnological regions are homogenous within. Certain digressions are evident in Bela krajina, where folk spiritual culture exhibits a mixture of elements from central Slovenia, Dinaric regions, partly the Mediterranean, with the predominantly Pannonian cultural elements. Although Bela krajina has not been strongly influenced by the Mediterranean, these cultural elements are still much more evident than in Zgornje Posočje, which according to the ethnological systematization belongs to the region of the Mediterranean. The exceptionality of Bela krajina lies in its geographical position and historic circumstances. In the geographical sense this region was separated from the rest of Slovenia, but was open toward the lowlands of Croatia Karlovac and its vicinity. This strongly influenced the life of the Bela krajina population, especially their culture. Intensive contacts and interconnections, common in such an ethnically and culturally diverse area, were even more prominent in the spiritual culture of Bela krajina. Croatian and partly also Serbian cultural influences are much stronger here than in any other Slovenian areas along the Croatian border. The reasons behind this lie in the region's historical context.

In the 16th century Croatian and in part Serbian fugitives fleeing the Turks settled also in the region of Bela krajina. Stopping along the way, they came to Bela krajina from the nearby Žumberak, from the area around Karlovac, but also from Lika and Kordun, and even from as far as Bosnia. The literature on this, especially from the viewpoint of history, is extensive. At the peak of this immigration as many as 800 fugitives and their families, called also the *uskoks*, came to Bela krajina under the directive of Lenković. Some time before that, in 1531, about a thousand fugitives from Cetinjska krajina in Dalmatia reached Kostel. While some of them returned to Croatia after several years, a part of them settled in the vicinity of Metlika. In 1538 the *Čiči* fugitives from the vicinity of Obrovac and a new fugitive stream from Cetinska krajina joined the ones from Srb,

Unec, and Glamoč, while Orthodox fugitives settled in Marindol, Bojanci, and Miliči at the end of the 16th century. The 17th century Austro-Venetian dispute about the wilful independence of the Senj *uskoks* resulted in the Austrian banishment of a part of them into the Croatian interior, while some of them settled in the Gorjanci area. When the fugitives settled in their new homes, they established new ties with the local population, but maintained contacts with Croatia and its border population. This also holds true for the Bela krajina Serbs, although they preserved many more contacts with the Croatian Serbs in Banija and Kordun, but until the 20th century remained somewhat isolated from their Slovenian neighbours. In the course of a single century Croatian fugitives became entirely assimilated into their Slovenian environment, but still preserved some of their cultural characteristics, for instance their language or elements of folk spiritual culture. This was due to the proximity of Croatia and constant contacts with it. Selfimposed isolation, due to the fact that Orthodox Serbs did not want to marry Slovenians, but looked for marriage partners among Serbs in Croatia, ensured the small Serbian minority in Bela krajina cultural survival until the present. Croatian Serbian spouses maintained a steady language and cultural influx to Bela krajina.

Although the exiled *uskoks* from Senj, and even more the fugitives from Dalmatia who had settled around Kostel, could have brought an abundance of cultural elements from the Mediterranean, they were not numerous enough to mediate the culture of the Mediterranean to a large extent. Moreover, their assimilation in the Slovenian environment was extremely rapid, even though they did preserve their contacts with their fellow countrymen from Žumberak in Croatia.

Dalmatian fugitives who settled in the Kostelsko area were much more numerous. Traces of their presence can still be seen in certain surnames, partly in folk vocabulary, in toponyms, and partly in folk songs. But due to unfavourable living conditions the majority of Dalmatians started to return to Croatia soon after they had settled in Bela krajina. They left for the nearby Gorski kotar, far-off Slavonia, even Voivodina, and some of them settled in the Karst area in the Slovenian Mediterranean region.

Croatian and Serbian fugitives who had stayed in Bela krajina and their descendants maintained more or less intensive contacts with the neighbouring Croatian regions and their inhabitants. Influences of the Mediterranean reached Bela krajina through the area of Karlovac Pokolpje (area along the Kolpa river). It is impossible to establish to what extent certain Croatian songs of Bela krajina were influenced by the fugitives from Dalmatia, or whether the cultural traces of the Mediterranean were but the result of long-lasting contacts between Slovenian Bela krajina and Croatian Pokolpje. Although there are no solid proofs in favour of the continuity of the Dalmatian fugitive heritage, which is nevertheless likely, both is probably true. At the beginning of the 19th century, when past migrations and new contacts had already considerably weakened traces of

the original "homeland" of individual songs, enthusiasts started to write down Croatian and partially Serbian songs as Slovenian. Lively contacts between Bela krajina and Croatia enabled a steady influx of older, traditional as well as more recent Croatian songs. Especially interesting and extremely valuable for folklorists are rare written records of *uskok* songs, and especially descriptions of their way of life in Janez V. Valvasor's *Slava vojvodine Kranjske* [The Glory of the Duchy of Kranj]. Reading the book we can see that quite a number of songs came to Slovenia from the Croatian coastal region and Istria. The book also contains the first written record of an *uskok* (Croatian) song in Slovenia, a religious song entitled *Hodmo spat, Boga zvat* [Let's go sleep, calling God], which had come to Slovenia from Istria.

The analysis of the motifs of folk songs

In order to illustrate possible Mediterranean elements in Bela krajina folk songs, 384 songs (without their variants) were selected. The motifs and the language of these songs all exhibit Croatian origin. I excluded Slovenian songs from Bela krajina which do not contain any Mediterranean elements. Of 384 Croatian and partially Serbian songs 85 are known in the Croatian coastal region, and some of them originated in that area. It has to be stressed that the majority of these 85 songs are now known in other Croatian regions, and not only in the Mediterranean. Some are even known in Bosnia or Serbia. Thus I have classified as the "Mediterranean" songs from Bela krajina all those whose variants I had discovered in the Mediterranean region of Croatia or Montenegro. Since it is impossible to analyze all of them, I selected only some of them and analyzed their motifs, language, and musical aspects.

The statistics concerning the genre of these songs is as follows: of 88 narrative songs 34 are known in the Croatian Mediterranean, or their variants were recorded in Hrvatsko primorje (Northern Croatian Littoral), Istria, or Dalmatia; of 54 ceremonial songs 4 were found in Bela krajina; of 37 dance songs 4 could be, although only conditionally, termed Mediterranean; of 12 drinking songs 3, of 17 children's song 1, of 14 rank songs 2, of 4 religious songs 1, and of 151 love songs 37 exhibit elements of the Mediterranean. How inaccurate such statistics can be is evident from a narrative song from Bela krajina about Ivan Senjanin (Vlatković) who finds himself in the role of prince Marko's wife's lover. This song was recorded in Bela krajina in 1850, but also has its variants in the vicinity of Dubrovnik (manuscript at the Zagreb Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research), and in Serbia (Karanović 1990). It is unlikely that the variant about prince Marko's unfaithful wife came to Bela krajina directly from Hrvatsko primorje, but was probably mediated by the Croats living in the vicinity of Karlovac. Yet the Croatian folk song collections which I had examined so far do not contain any variants from this region. It may be only a coincidence, or the variant from this area has not been published

yet. What is important is the fact that the variant from Bela krajina has no elements of chakavian dialect, but contains a number of elements from the Croatian kaikavian dialect region, which points to the vicinity of Karlovac. Since there is no data on where this variant from Bela krajina was recorded, it is impossible to establish if this song had been mediated to Slovenians by Serbs living in Bela krajina, who in turn had obtained it from the Croats or from Croatian Serbs.

At first sight it seems that the Mediterranean character of songs from Bela krajina can be most easily determined by analyzing its theme and motif. Yet comparative studies show that motifs and themes can be transmitted from nation to nation, thus belonging to the complex of songs with international motifs. Folklorists, of course, also have to consider the song's ethnic characteristics which show how a familiar motif was adapted to the cognitive and emotional world of an *ethnos*, its civilizational and life-style context. Many songs with identical or similar motifs can therefore be found in the Alpine, Mediterranean, and also Pannonian region. Even though certain themes could have originated in the Mediterranean, they may be spread throughout Europe at present. Some of these Mediterranean themes, especially classical Greek myths such as the myth of Oedipus, Orpheus, Orestes, etc., were brought to Slovenia by Germans. Aside from this more distant route the thesis that Slovenians received Greek themes and motifs from Croats and Serbs, who had in turn received them from the Roman *Vlahs*, which was proposed by Ivan Grafenauer (1952), is equally acceptable.

A theme which is more typical of the more recent period and of the Mediterranean is the **Saracen theme about the abduction of a beautiful maiden or wife**. Some songs with this motif are known also in Bela krajina, where they had come from Croatia. A somewhat exceptional case of such a song is a Slovenian folk song entitled *Lepa Vida* [Fair Vida], the motif of which stems from the Mediterranean (Grafenauer 1943). It is no longer known in the Mediterranean region of Slovenia, but was recorded elsewhere in Slovenia. The Mediterranean-Saracen theme has already disintegrated into some other songs, but was preserved in a modified manner in Bela krajina as well. Due to the complexity of connections between motifs and themes I refer only to the songs or motifs for which it can be said with reasonable certainty that either these songs or their variants came to Bela krajina from Hrvatsko primorje, or from Dalmatia. Some of the variants in Bela krajina have been greatly modified, for instance a narrative song entitled *Pala magla, pala magla pokraj Dunave* [The fog has fallen beside the Danube]. It is true that I found variants of this song in Vrlika in Dalmatia, and even more of them in Croatian Zagorje. The hypothesis that this song originated among the *uskoks*, and that the heritage of Dalmatian fugitives from the 16th century can still be found in Bela krajina, seems very attractive. One of the things that corroborates it is the fact that in Bela krajina this song is still sung in a *kolo*

[circle dance]. It is namely well known that the *kolo* had been brought to the Slovenian territory by the *uskoks*.

The song about **church sacrilege and the Senj uskoks** probably came to Bela krajina from Hrvatsko primorje and was brought by the Croats living in Pokolpje. Outside Slovenia it was known as early as the 18th century. It was published in the *Erlangen* manuscript, and also recorded in the vicinity of Požega. *Hrvatske narodne pjesme* [Croatian Folk Songs] (HNP VIII, 1939), the Croatian anthology of folk songs, also lists this song as was recorded in the 19th century in Konavle, Brač, and Makarska. It can also be assumed that it was known in the coastal region of Croatia, from where it spread to Bela krajina as well.

The song about **prince Marko and his elderly mother** (*Večeral je kraljevič Marko* [The prince Marko was having dinner]) is known in Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia. Since the variant from Bela krajina, recorded in the 19th century, has preserved the elements of chakavian dialect, I presume that the song came to Bela krajina from Hrvatsko primorje. It is also possible, however, that the population of Bela krajina learned this song from the Croats living in the vicinity of Karlovac in the period when this dialect was still used in the area.

A variant of a Bela krajina song about the **last wish of a wounded hero** (*U toj črnoj gori* [In that black mountain]) is an echo of a song known throughout Croatia, thus also in the Croatian coastal region and in Dalmatia, from where the song could have spread to Bela krajina. This possibility, however, is somewhat doubtful, since the variants from Bela krajina are closer to the ones from Zagorje and the vicinity of Zagreb (Samobor), at least as far as the contents and the style of the song are concerned. The song is known in other regions of Slovenia as well, especially in the areas along the Croatian border (eastern Štajerska).

Less doubtful and questionable is the Bela krajina song about **the wishes of Dejan's mother** (*Visoko to sunce žareno, još su viša Carigrada vrata* [High is that glowing sun, still higher are the doors of Constantinople]). This is but a fragment of a longer song about Dejan who was destined already as a young child in his mother's arms that he was to free his nation from the Turks. A Croatian variant from the island of Dugi otok was published in 1910 (HNP V, 1909), while a more recent record comes from the island of Krk (1982, the Pavačić collection). The variant from Bela krajina was recorded in 1900 which indicates that the song was spread in Croatia already in the 19th century. In the second half of the 20th century the song was sung throughout former Yugoslavia, with a variant even as far away as Macedonia. It is certain that at the end of the 19th century the song came from the Croatian Mediterranean area, but we should not exclude the mediation of the "continental" area around Karlovac.

How to classify the genre of the song about **prince Marko and the fairies** is of secondary importance here. What is more important is that the

variant about *Pogorkinja*, a fairy which helps prince Marko to find a mountain stream, was known among the Serbs in Bela krajina already in the 19th century. Variants with a similar motif have been published in the Karadžić collection, and in 1863 *Danica* published a Bosnian variant as well. But the motifs of these two are different from the variant of Bela krajina Serbs, the contents of which is almost identical with the Mediterranean variants which were sung and written down along the whole Adriatic coast from Montenegro to Istria. The Serbs from Bela krajina probably obtained the Mediterranean variant from the Serbs in Kordun. What is more important here, however, is that the theme and the contents of the Bela krajina variant are similar to the ones from Hrvatsko primorje, or the "Mediterranean".

The song with the motif of a **fairy demanding human sacrifice** was already published by Karadžić. Its variant was written down in 1887 in the Serbian village of Marindol in Bela krajina (*Zazivala iznad Senja vila* [A fairy was calling above Senj]), but its singer was a Slovenian, which explains numerous Slovenian expressions in the song. It was impossible to discover any Croatian variants in older Croatian song collections, even though the song very probably came to Bela krajina from Croatia, like other songs which mention Senj and the Senj *uskoks* (i.e. *Danica je misece ženila* [Danica was marrying moons]), whose variants were written by Kuhač in Bakar. Despite the fact that other variants were recorded in Zagorje, the song from Bela krajina came from Hrvatsko primorje, which is evident from the elements of chakavian dialect.

Croatian as well as Serbian heritage knows the song about **a woman who is prettier than a fairy**. The variant from Bela krajina (*Peter se je v društvu hvalil* [Peter was bragging to his company]) probably originated in Hrvatsko primorje and Dalmatia, where several of its variants were found. Analyzing the variant from Bela krajina I would like to propose that the song came to Bela krajina with fugitives from the Cetina river basin in Dalmatia. Among other things, this hypothesis is based on language elements, for the song has been Slovenized to such extent that it cannot be classified as a Croatian variant any longer. The fact that the language of the song is entirely Slovenian, while its contents is not, proves that this song must have been sung by Slovenians for an extensive period; otherwise its language would not have been changed to such an extent. Research findings show that upon hearing a song from Croats the people of Bela krajina first sing it in the original language, and only later Slovenian expressions start to replace the original ones. These are followed by stylistic elements and then by the Slovenian grammatical structure which does not only replace the Croatian grammatical system, but also the basic Croatian metric structure. These changes in turn affect the changes in melody.

The song with the motif of a **fairy who replaces the wife and forces herself into the marriage** originated in Hrvatsko primorje as well. I had found parallels of the variant from Bela krajina (*Mjesec kala iza Carigrada*

[The moon is setting down behind Constantinople]) only in Zrinje and in the vicinity of Karlovac (HNP V, 1909, songs 22 and 23). The song probably reached Bela krajina from there, but the expression 'kalati' points to the area of Hrvatsko primorje.

Among the Bela krajina songs which had come from Croatia the widespread is the motif of a **young girl bewitched into a hind**. The Bela krajina variant (*Na vrhuncu sokol sedi* [At the top a falcon is sitting]) is but a shortened variant from Novi Vinodolski (HNP VII, 1929:407). From Hrvatsko primorje comes also the Bela krajina song about a wounded soldier (called "Peter Kovačević in Bela krajina") healed by a fairy. A very similar variant was also recorded in Karlobag (HNP V, 1909).

Let me just mention two **legendary songs**: the motif of the first (*Šetala se, šetala sveta deva Marija* [She was walking, saint Virgin Mary was walking]) from Predgrad in Bela krajina is very similar to a Croatian song from Sušak, recorded in the 19th century (HNP I, 1896:2). This same anthology also brings records of this song, whose variants were also known in Žumberak and elsewhere, from Zagorje. The song about the punishment and payment in the afterlife (*Šetaju se tri božji angeli mimo dvora milene Marije* [Three God's angels are walking past the palace of dear Mary]) speaks about how God had given the keys of heaven and hell to angels. The song mentions only a young woman who suffers in hell for having been married three times and had three babies she had treated badly. The closest variant of this motif was recorded in the 19th century in Istria, while the Bela krajina record is from 1935.

I would like to mention two **love narrative songs**. The first speaks about a young man sentenced to work as a galley slave, who waters hawks with his tears. Longer variants of this song from Bela krajina (*Vozila se galijska po moru* [A galley was sailing on the sea]) were abundant throughout the Croatian and Serbian language area. Since the song from Bela krajina was shorter, its motif and contents are less developed than those of the longer variants. It is possible that this song originated somewhere in the area of the former Military Frontier, then spread also to Zagorje where it was recorded in the 19th century by F. Plohl. In a footnote Plohl confirmed that the origin of the song was indeed Military Frontier (Terseglav 1996:50). While variants from Kordun and Banija are the closest to the contents of the songs from Bela krajina, the language of the latter exhibits mixtures of jekavian, ijekavian, and ikavian pronunciations similar to the ones that used to be characteristic for the borderline area between Croatia and the Venetian Republic. This language mixture is equally similar in the variant from the vicinity of Slunj which was recorded by Tomaseo.

The song about the beautiful girl from Primorsko is doubtlessly Mediterranean by origin. When she brags about her beauty, her lord's servants take her to face her master. He wants to keep her at his side, but she wants to go home. After a night with her he decides to send her home,

but now she refuses to leave. This variant was recorded in Bela krajina in 1830, and almost three decades later *Novice* from Ljubljana published a variant from the island of Krk which had been recorded by Janez Trdina. A review of Croatian folk song anthologies revealed that variants of this song were known along the whole of the Adriatic coast, from Montenegro to Istria. The language of the variant from Bela krajina (*Primorka konja jaše* [A girl from Hrvatsko primorje is riding a horse]) suprisingly exhibits no more elements of chakavian dialect. This was presumably the fault of the unknown recorder who Slovenized the song.

A situation similar to the one in love songs occurs in **family ballads**. Since the majority of Croatian love songs have come to Bela krajina only recently, and most of them are known and widespread elsewhere and do not originate in Hrvatsko primorje, lyrical love songs are somewhat different. An exception is *Vrbniče nad moru* [Vrbnik above the sea] which is very popular in Bela krajina. It was made popular by different folklore groups which learned it from the Stari trg folklore group leader, a Croat from the area around the Kupa river in Croatia.

Ceremonial songs can be divided into the ones which are known by almost all Slavic peoples, be it by their original version or by their variants, and into those which are known only among Slovenians. Then there are those in Bela krajina which are known among Slovenians and Croats alike. These are songs sung on St. George's Day and on Midsummer Day. Here I will only mention those whose Mediterranean origin is almost certain. Milčetić (1917) drew attention to the fact that some **carols** from Bela krajina do not have variants solely in the chakavian dialect areas of Croatia, but also in the chakavian dialect region. Milčetić compared some Christmas and New Year's carols, which were published in Štrekelj's collection, with Croatian carols from Krk. Their themes, motifs (a young man on horseback, dressed in greenery), style (identical formulas) and versification (identical verse patterns) are almost identical. Above all these are two carols published in the Štrekelj collection (III, 1904-1907:no. 4743, 4745), starting with *Pomoz Bog, kak na Božič, tak po Božič* [God help us, as on Christmas, thus after Christmas], and *Dober dan gospodar, pred hišom vam zelen bor* [Hello master, a green pine is in front of your house]. According to Milčetić these two carols from Bela krajina look as if they had been copied from a variant from Dubašnica on the island of Krk. The same is true for a Bela krajina New Year's carol (Štrekelj III, 1904-1907:no. 4932), parts of which are again the same as in the carol from Dubašnica. Aside from this, variants from Istria have to be taken into consideration as well. Since Štrekelj had no data on where this carol (III, 1904-1907:no. 4932) was recorded, he classified it among the ones from Bela krajina. He based this decision on its language and similarities of formulas and phrases with other variants from Bela krajina. Štrekelj found this song in the legacy of Miklošič, who had gotten it from an informant from Istria. Furthermore, the above-mentioned carols from Bela krajina have their variants in Bakar as well. The Mediterranean origin of these

songs is thus unquestionable, what is of interest is the fact that identical carols can be found among the Serbs of Bela krajina. Fieldwork findings reveal that the most frequent carolers among them were the Žumberak Croats, who had brought yet other carols to Bela krajina.

Among other things, the Institute of Ethnomusicology (Glazbenonarodopisni inštitut, Ljubljana) archives contain some **dirges** of Croatian origin. Perhaps the most interesting is *Lepa moja mila rožica* [My beautiful and dear rose] from Špeharji (Glazbenonarodopisni inštitut, Ljubljana M 24.457), recorded in 1961. Despite the predominant ekavian pronunciation this death song preserved some elements of chakavian dialect. Since these elements could have been the result of the Primorsko origin of the song, or of the age of the song from the time when chakavian dialect still prevailed in Karlovac and its vicinity, this does not tell us anything about the origin of this song. What would be least likely, however, is that it could have originated from the time the *uskoks* settled in Bela krajina.

The language of the **wedding song** *Rasti, rasti trava deteljina* [Grow, grow clover] is already almost completely Slovenian. Its contents, on the other hand, is highly similar to Croatian variants from Kastav, Hrvatsko primorje, Dalmatia as well as those recorded among Croats in Austria.

The language of folk songs

The language of the songs recorded in Bela krajina in the 19th century is quite different from the language of the songs recorded in the second half of the 20th century. While recent records tend to employ Slovenian idioms, the language of older records is much more similar to the one of the Croatian "originals". The only exceptions in the present are recent Croatian songs which have not been in Bela krajina for an extended period of time. It seems that those Croatian songs which have been sung in Bela krajina for a long time are among the most Slovenized of all. The entire song material of Bela krajina reveals an interesting symbiosis of Slovenian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian dialects. This is especially true of the songs which had come to Bela krajina from Bosnia. These songs contain a mixture of kaikavian, chakavian, and shtokavian dialects, with ekavian, ikavian, ijekavian, and jekavian pronunciations. Not one of them prevails upon the others. Somewhat exceptional are only the songs of the Bela krajina Serbs in which the shtokavian dialect predominates to a certain extent, but whose language is nevertheless inconsistent, since it is interlaced with other kaikavian and chakavian elements. At present it is doubtlessly inappropriate to speak about the Serbo-Croatian language, but the Bela krajina songs which had been adopted from Croats and Serbs do exhibit this very aspect, of course with strong Slovenian influences. Since this paper deals mainly with the theme of the Mediterranean, we are especially interested in the chakavian elements in the songs of Bela krajina. It has to

be stressed that the chakavian dialect in the song material of Bela krajina is not consistent, since the kaikavian and the shtokavian characteristics are mixed with Slovenian expressions and Slovenian phonetic particularities.

The majority of chakavian phonetic characteristics are found especially in Bela krajina epic-narrative songs, namely in their relics which the people from Bela krajina received from neighbouring Croats. Chakavian characteristics have been preserved exclusively in songs, but cannot be found in the living language of Slovenians or Serbs and probably never even existed in it. I stress these chakavian elements because they probably represent the remains of the "Mediterranean" in Bela krajina. Such a generalization, of course, is extremely risky; the development of the language and the history of Bela krajina and its neighbouring areas reveal that certain songs from Bela krajina do not contain solely the chakavian dialect from Primorsko. The majority of Bela krajina Croatian songs were recorded in the 19th century, thus in the period when at least part of the chakavian dialect was still alive in Karlovac and its vicinity. It is true that this was not the original chakavian dialect which had been spoken around Karlovac until the 16th century, but its more recent version, the so-called Bosnian chakavian dialect, which had been brought to this area by Catholic refugees in the 16th century. Their chakavian dialect had been preserved until the 20th century (Strohal 1936) when it was replaced by the kaikavian dialect. We can presume that many of the Croatian chakavian dialect songs came to Bela krajina from the area around Karlovac. Two exceptions might be Ošterc in Gorjanci and Kostel. The former had been settled by the *uskoks* from Senj, the latter by Dalmatians. The song material of both still exhibits traces of the Primorsko chakavian dialect. Furthermore, we should not neglect direct influences from Primorsko or the Mediterranean in central Bela krajina, for in the past Bela krajina belonged to the Military Frontier and its men served as soldiers there, especially in Hrvatsko primorje (Senj) from where they brought the songs of that region. Historians also stress the importance of merchant routes from Hrvatsko primorje, leading across Gorski kotar to Bela krajina. Last but not least, some of the Bela krajina *uskoks* had relatives among the *uskoks* from Hrvatsko primorje.

Neither Slovenized Croatian nor Serbian folk songs in Bela krajina contained the typical interrogative pronoun *ča*, which in Bela krajina had been replaced by *kaj* and *što*. The most dominant phonetical feature of chakavian dialect is the change of e>i (i.e. *devojka*>*divojka*) and a>o (*staza*>*stoza*, *dan*>*don*, *vanka*>*vonka*, etc.). Slovenian singers gradually, although not always, adapted their ikavian pronunciation to Slovenian phonetics, and many songs therefore contain a mixture of ekavian and ikavian elements. The same song can thus contain two kinds of pronunciations, "*divojka*" and "*devojka*", which is especially true of the songs which were recorded in the 19th century. Contemporary Bela krajina songs which originated in Croatia do not contain such ikavian pronunciation any longer. Similar mixtures occur in the songs of Bela

krajina Serbs. Since the living language of contemporary Serbs from Bela krajina knows only ekavian pronunciation, it is unclear whether the ikavian elements in their song repertory had been influenced by Croatian songs or whether they are the remains of the former Serbian shtokavian dialect with the ikavian pronunciation. It may be assumed that the former is more possible. In Bela krajina elements of ikavian pronunciation underwent the earliest and the most profound changes, since Slovenians as well as Serbs — both of which use ekavian pronunciation — "translated" them into ekavian pronunciation. It is evident from the available song material that Slovenian singers were more consistent than Serbian ones. When Slovenians borrowed more recent Croatian songs, they did not embrace the ijekavian pronunciation, but from time to time "reduced" it into the jekavian language. In general, however, Slovenians stick to ekavian pronunciation while Serbs, on the other hand, use all three forms of pronunciation. When Slovenian singers sing certain songs, it is sometimes impossible to establish whether this is really the case of ikavian pronunciation taken over from the chakavian dialect because the Slovenian contains the extreme contraction of the vowel *e*, which to listeners sounds as *i*.

Listed are some verses of the Bela krajina Croatian songs which have preserved the ikavian pronunciation:

Cviče mi polje pokrilo, samo mi staza ostala...	Flowers have covered the fields only the path is left...
Ona je opitala lipo...	She asked nicely...
Što me gledaš s prozora divojka...	Why do you watch me from the window, girl...
Pa nažanje snopak diteljine...	Clover was reaped...
Tužna pismu prepivati...	Sad she sang a song...

The older the song records are, the more words with the ikavian pronunciation they contain; these also appear in songs with the predominantly kaikavian dialect, while the fewest elements of the ikavian pronunciation are in the songs in the shtokavian dialect. Yet there is not one song in which the ikavian pronunciation was consistent. The same song might thus contain the following verse:

divojčica rublje prala the girl was washing linen

while the following stanza goes like this:

dobro jutro, *devojkica* good morning, girl.

Aside from all this it is important to stress that chakavian dialect appears only in the songs recorded in localities which had once been settled by Croatian refugees.

Musical aspects of the Bela krajina songs

Since almost one half of the songs dealt with in this paper were recorded in the 19th century, when most recorders did not include melodies in their notes, these songs are unknown today. The musical aspect of the songs from Bela krajina is therefore not uniform. Most tunes stem from the second half of the 20th century, when the Institute of Ethnomusicology started planned recordings in Bela krajina. By this time the melodies of different Bela krajina songs, however, changed considerably. Most of the present folk music of Bela krajina is no different from the music of other regions of Slovenia. The sole exceptions are the songs of the Bela krajina Serbs which, especially vocally, follow the Dinaric tradition, even when singers sing songs which were taken over from Slovenians or Croats. They adapt these melodies to their own traditional singing abilities and to the melos of Bosnian and Croatian Serbs. Slovenians act in a similar manner: they adapt the songs or melodies taken over from Croats to Slovenian music tradition and taste. The melodies from the Croatian coastal region, or from the Mediterranean, have been adapted in much the same manner. There are also several melodies in which Slovenian singers strive to follow the "original" melody of the Hrvatsko primorje region or of Dalmatian songs as faithfully as possible. Since the melodies of Hrvatsko primorje and Istria are utterly alien to Slovenian music tradition, a listener is very much surprised at such songs. At least three very popular songs of Bela krajina doubtlessly stand out with their Mediterranean melodies: *Vrbniče nad moru* [Vrbnik above the sea], *Široko more i Dunav* [Broad sea and the Danube], and *Izrasla je rumena jabuka* [A red apple has grown]. The characteristic Quarnero and Istria melodies of the songs are further supplemented by the distinctive non-Slovenian refrain or music phrase *ni na ni ne na*, the musical side of which is known among the Italians as well. It was probably the Italians who had "initiated" such melodies in Istria and in the Gulf of Quarnero. The above-mentioned songs stand out from the previously mentioned manner of adapting to Slovenian music. This makes them rather atypical for Bela krajina, a region which has certainly been open to Croatian influences as well.

Our research findings established the answer to the question of how and from where the atypical music of the Mediterranean came to Bela krajina. These were the songs which after World War II were popularized and established in Bela krajina by the Bela krajina folklore groups. This was initiated by the folklore group of Stari trg which had run out of dance songs for different performances. The songs were offered by the group leader, a Croat who had married into Stari trg. She also incorporated other Croatian songs into the group programme. Other Bela krajina folklore

groups started to imitate the one from Stari trg, thinking that this was the original Bela krajina heritage which could make them different from the rest of other numerous Slovenian folk groups. This situation has partially remained even in the present. While it is not unusual that Croatian songs were taken over by Bela krajina singers, the emergence of the so-called Mediterranean melodies is a curiosity which is new and not spontaneous. Since it is very alien to the music tradition of the inhabitants of Bela krajina, they have not taken it up. While Bela krajina did accept many a "Mediterranean" song, be it its contents, motifs or language, it did not embrace the Mediterranean melodies.

The Mediterranean melodies are not even known in the Kostelsko region which had been settled by Dalmatian fugitives in the 16th century. The people of Kostelsko took over some Croatian songs from the neighbouring Gorski kotar, while the remains of the Dalmatian melodies might be found in the so-called *dijačenje* (*djačiti, jačiti, jačke* songs) which is characterized by a stretched, almost recitative melody much similar to a "litany." This manner of singing, and the notion connected with it, can also be found among Croatian immigrants in Austria. This further corroborates the assumption that this is the heritage of the *uskoks* in Kostelsko.

Some ethnomusicologists (Vodušek 1980) are of the opinion that due to its structure folk music is the most suitable domain for the research of acculturation and boundaries between individual ethnic groups. This denotes that each ethnic group possesses its unique language of music which is adapted to the environment, needs, taste, and tradition of that group. This aspect could therefore be equally applied to the research of influences of the Mediterranean in Bela krajina. Yet this is not the case. Neither the music of the Mediterranean was defined, nor at least individual elements which could be unconditionally termed Mediterranean were classified, even though they had already been vaguely described by various national ethnomusicologies. In the case of Bela krajina it is not possible to speak about the music of the Mediterranean even in a general sense since according to the ethnological systematization Bela krajina is a part of the Pannonian area in which elements from the Mediterranean are but an exception. Due to its geographical and historical situation Bela krajina contains more elements of folk poetry from the Mediterranean than the area which had been declared Mediterranean, that is the region of the Zgornje Posočje (Kobarid, Bovec, Tolmin).

Conclusion

Despite a possibly different situation described in this paper it has to be admitted that the search for Mediterranean elements in the Pannonian culture of Bela krajina might have been somewhat forced. But not unintentionally. With the case of Bela krajina, a region which does not

even have a common border with the Mediterranean, I wished to point out how fluid and unstable certain divisions and regionalizations might be. Folk culture of a region is namely influenced and affected by a number of factors. The fact that certain Mediterranean elements can be found in Bela krajina has to be attributed chiefly to the region's history. There is also another reason for this search of Mediterranean elements in Bela krajina: I would like to prove that Bela krajina, at least as far as its folk poetry is concerned, is much more Mediterranean than the Zgornje Posočje which, according to Vilko Novak's classification, still belongs to the Mediterranean. That which is understood as folk poetry and music of the Mediterranean is in Slovenia reflected only in the Slovenian part of Istria, in the Karst region, and in the area of Goriško. Ethnomusicologically speaking, the Zgornje Posočje is no longer Mediterranean, and the songs of this region are closer to the Alpine and the central Slovenian regions. With a number of new houses and different urban concepts the Zgornje Posočje is gradually losing its Mediterranean character in architecture as well. If we take into account also the changes in some of the traditional branches of economy and in some aspects of its social culture, it is necessary to raise the question of the "shrinking" of the Slovenian Mediterranean area. It will probably have to be redefined and marked once again. It is true that the Roman limes used to be the borderline between the Mediterranean and the rest of Europe, but such demarcation is questionable in the present.

Let me conclude the paper with an anecdote: I once asked an Istrian lady from the vicinity of Koper where she thought the Mediterranean ended. Her answer was quick and direct: "Where olive and fig trees no longer grow." According to her rural, fruit-growing, meteorological experience the area of Slovenian Mediterranean would end at the edge of the Karst area. We do know that the spiritual area of the Mediterranean is much broader, yet I am of the opinion that it is not as extensive as Slovenian ethnology maintains.

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UTJECAJ HRVATSKE MEDITERANSKE ZONE NA NARODNU POEZIJU U BELOJ KRAJINI

SAŽETAK

Slovenski etnolog Vilko Novak etnološki je podijelio prostor Slovenije na sredozemno, alpsko, srednjoslovensko i panonsko područje. Prema toj razdiobi Bela krajina pripada panonskom etnološkom području, iako se u narodnoj duhovnoj kulturi te pokrajine prepleću srednjoslovenski, dinarski i mediteranski elementi. Mediteranski su utjecaji najslabiji. Kulturna heterogenost Bele krajine zemljopisno je i povijesno uvjetovana. Do ovoga stoljeća pokrajina je bila djelomično odvojena od ostale Slovenije, ali otvorena prema nizinskom svijetu karlovačke okolice u Hrvatskoj, što je znatno utjecalo na sveukupni život Belokranjaca i na njihovu narodnu kulturu. Dodiri s hrvatskom i dijelom srpskom kulturom pojačani su u 16. i 17. stoljeću, kada se u Belu krajinu počinju naseljavati južnoslavenski prebjeci koji su se pred Turcima iseljavali ponajviše iz područja Like, Dalmacije i Bosne. Manje skupine, posebice hrvatskih prebjega, postupno su se asimilirale u slovensko okružje, dok je manja skupina pravoslavnih prebjega očuvala svoju kulturu do današnjih dana. Tako su hrvatski i srpski doseljenici utjecali na slovensku narodnu kulturu Bele krajine.

Autor predstavlja *mediteranizme* u sloveniziranim i u novijim hrvatskim i srpskim pjesmama Bele krajine, u njihovoj tematici, jeziku, stilskom i glazbenom izričaju. Posebice upozorava na one teme u narodnim pjesmama koje je moguće pratiti na hrvatskom mediteranskom prostoru. U analizi jezika naglašava elemente čakavštine u belokranjskim pjesmama s obzirom da je upravo čakavština jedno od glavnih obilježja hrvatskog Sredozemlja. Pritom nije uvijek jasno radi li se o neposrednim mediteranskim utjecajima, jer se stara i nova čakavština upotrebljavala i na karlovačkom području, a koje je utjecalo na kulturu Bele krajine. Glazbena je analiza pokazala da je najmanje mediteranizama upravo u belokranjskim glazbenim oblicima. Rijetki primjeri kvarnersko-istarske melodike prenijeti su u Belu krajinu u novijem vremenu i mogu se pratiti samo u izvođenjima folklornih skupina.

Iako su *mediteranizmi* rijetko zastupljeni u narodnom pjesništvu Bele krajine, ipak su brojniji nego, primjerice, u gornjem Posočju na sjeverozapadu Slovenije, koje po etnološkoj klasifikaciji pripada upravo slovenskom sredozemnom području. Autor stoga upitnim postavlja širinu etnološki određenog slovenskog mediteranskog područja, s obzirom da današnje gornje Posočje u svojoj duhovnoj, dijelom i društvenoj kulturi, ne

sadrži (više) karakteristična obilježja sredozemne kulture, već prevladavaju srednjoslovenski i alpski utjecaji.

Ključne riječi: usmena poezija, Bela krajina, Mediteran