

## **Spatial Dimension of Transmission of Folk Tunes**

RAFAŁ MIŚTA

rafal.mista@wp.pl

*University of Warsaw*

As Savage [2017, *Measuring the cultural evolution of music: With case studies of British-American and Japanese folk, art, and popular music* (PhD thesis), Tokyo] has shown, the transcriptions of folk tunes can be helpful in understanding the evolution of orally transmitted music, especially, when computational and statistical methods are used. But many quantitative studies of folk music collections concern only analyses of musical scores with limited consideration of contextual information (e.g. geographic location of a notated performer).

The set of Oskar Kolberg's transcriptions of 19th-century tunes from the area of Poland is an example of a collection that allows for such extended investigations. Oskar Kolberg (1814–1890) was one of the first collectors of folk music, who was also interested in the diversity of melodic variants, and who wrote remarks about the location and the context of performance. Moreover, in the period he worked, the oral transmission was still the main way of learning melodies, what makes his collection even more interesting.

A simple matching the tunes notated by Kolberg with the geographical locations of their performers allows for studying the spatial dissemination of melodies and their variants with statistical methods. What pertains to the more general question: what is the influence of geographical distance on the evolution of transmitted cultural traits?

In this contribution, I would like to present my research on this issue. I will show the preliminary results of my analysis of chosen tunes from Kolberg collection, which relied on a comparison of distances between tune variants and geographical distances between locations of their sources (with Mantel statistics). Besides, the methodological and theoretical issues will be highlighted, as the interpretation of the results requires some assumptions about the evolution of orally transmitted music.