



Photo FMI, Leo Torppa

Finnish folk music collector Erkki Ala-Könni

**Digital collection
catalogues as a research
material**



**UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPERE**

Basic information

- Erkki Ala-Könni (1911-1996)
- Collected from 1940's to 1980's
- “The Collector’s gaze” (Anttonen 2005)



Photo TFA (Tampere/4196)

Research material

- Content lists of the sound recordings
- Tampere Folklife Archives: 5347 recordings
- First handwritten manuscripts, available also in a digital database
= Collection catalogues



Photo TFA (Tampere/4196)



Photo: Tampere Folklife Archives (Veteli/0631a)

Classification

• "Traditional Music"

P Common and miscellaneous

P1 Signal

P2 Improvisation

P3 Ceremonial Music

P4 March Music

P5 Folk Dances

P6 Pastime Music

P7 Spiritual Music

P8 Other Folk Music

P9 Art-Performances

P10 Common and miscellaneous
(concerning instruments)

P11 Shepherds instruments

P12 Kantele (Finnish national instrument)

P13 Violin

P14 Clarinet

P15 Accordion

P16 Other instrument

P17 Folk ensemble

P18 Learning, teaching, competitions,
composing...

Collection catalogues in paper

A-K 1 [Tape-number] / 1941 [Year] 9,5 Parlograph

H a l s u a [Recording place in Finland]

Karvonen Viljo, born.1906 [Name and year of birth]

Busdriver, plays kantele [Profession and instrument]

| | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|---------------|-----|
| P5, 12 | 19 Haka-Jaskan polkka | [Polka] | 383 |
| P5, 12 | 20 Siliavalssi | [Waltz] | 395 |
| P5, 12 | 21 Sotiisi | [Schottische] | 409 |
| P5, 12 | 22 Keisarin polkka | [Polka] | 421 |



19 : T_Informantti

Karvonen, Viljo,s. 1906, autonkuljettaja, kantele.

| Case | A_Kplnro | B_Vuc | C | D_es_pa | E_M | F_M | G_Syr | H_s | J_l | K_s | L_ir | M_l | N_Ml | O | R_Esityksen_n | S_l | T_Informant | U_l | V_l |
|------|----------|-------|---|---------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|---|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-----|-------|
| 19 | 0001_019 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1906 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 12 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Jaaskan polkka. | lssit | taja, kantele. | AK | sitys |
| 20 | 0001_020 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1906 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 12 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Siliavalssi. | lssit | taja, kantele. | AK | sitys |
| 21 | 0001_021 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1906 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 12 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Sotiisi. | lssit | taja, kantele. | AK | sitys |
| 22 | 0001_022 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1906 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 12 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Keisarin polkka. | lssit | taja, kantele. | AK | sitys |
| 23 | 0001_023 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1891 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | ää(raha)polksa. | duot | viljelijä, viulu. | AK | sitys |
| 24 | 0001_024 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1891 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | in marssisotiisi. | duot | viljelijä, viulu. | AK | sitys |
| 25 | 0001_025 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1891 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Naputuspolkka. | duot | viljelijä, viulu. | AK | sitys |
| 26 | 0001_026 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1891 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Sotiisi. | duot | viljelijä, viulu. | AK | sitys |
| 27 | 0001_027 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1906 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Sotiisi. | lssit | taja, kantele. | AK | sitys |
| 28 | 0001_028 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1907 | 1 | 99 | 3 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | en alodusmarssi. | lssit | a, laulu, viulu | AK | sitys |
| 29 | 0001_029 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1907 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Siliavalssi. | lssit | a, laulu, viulu | AK | sitys |
| 30 | 0001_030 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1907 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | lonpojan sotiisi. | lssit | a, laulu, viulu | AK | sitys |
| 31 | 0001_031 | 1941 | H | Halsua | 7 | 1 | 1907 | 1 | 99 | 5 | 13 | 99 | 9999 | 1 | Kaksi polkkaa. | lssit | a, laulu, viulu | AK | sitys |

Gender

Classification as
a standard set
of numbers

As an Inspiration

- Erkki Ala-Könni:
 - "There are a lack of good recordings [...] with those we could "feed" the computers and after that get good results – results that we can't predict" (1981 / Kper Y08720)
- Alan Lomax:
 - "It still remains for us to learn how we can put our magnificent mass communications technology at the service of each and every branch of the human family". (1960 / Association for Cultural Equity)

Digital humanities

- Keywords: Computing, digital technologies, humanities
- Also for textual metadata in archival database?
- Data-mining, visualisations, mapping...

Women in Finnish folk music

- Collectings
1940 – 1956

(recordings
1-109)

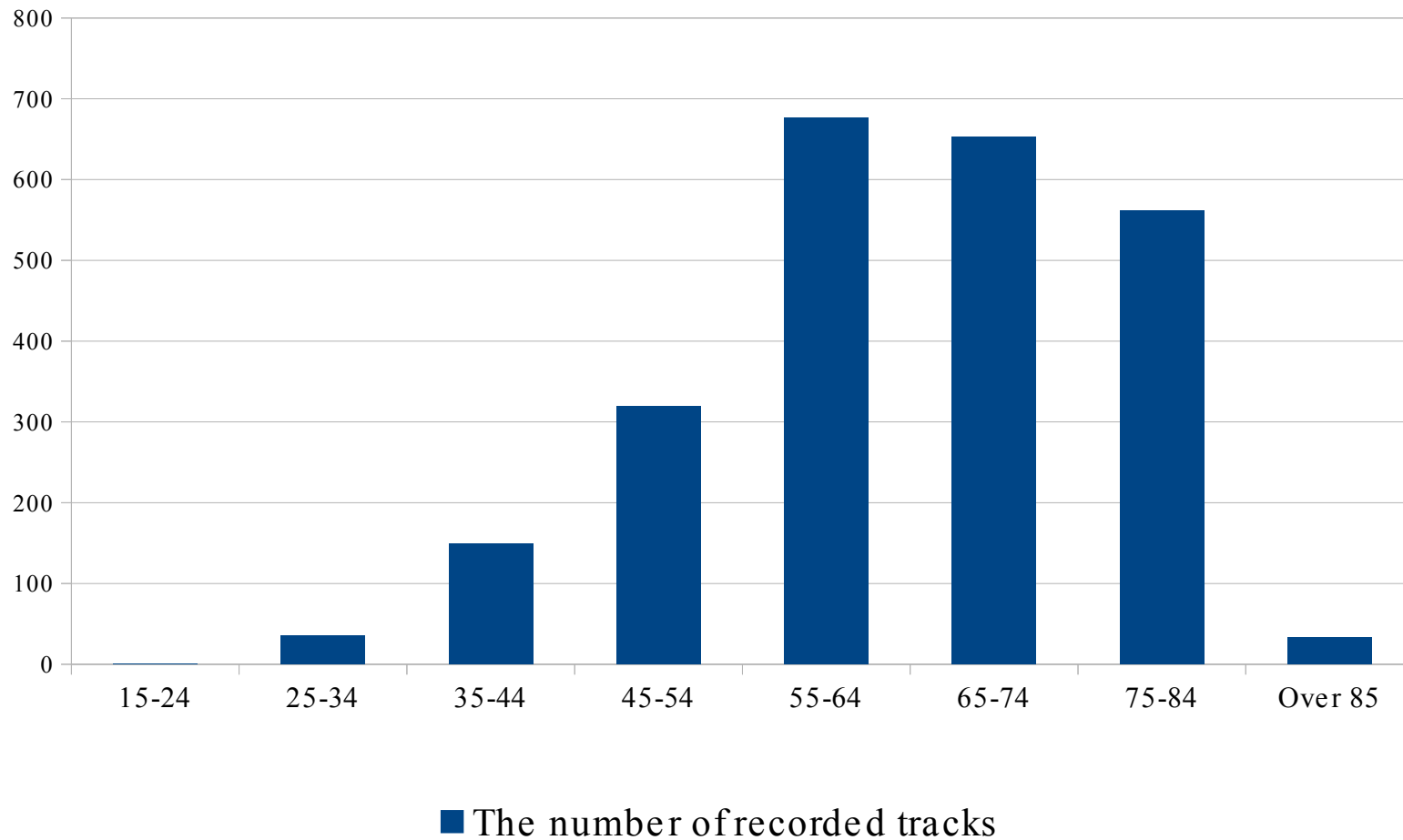
| Instrument | Men | Women | Unknown |
|----------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Shepherd instruments | 54 | 1 | 1 |
| Kantele | 52 | 11 | 0 |
| Violin | 1100 | 4 | 9 |
| Clarinet | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Accordion | 319 | 1 | 0 |
| Other instruments | 67 | 0 | 2 |



Photo: Tampere Folklife archives (Alavus/1143a)

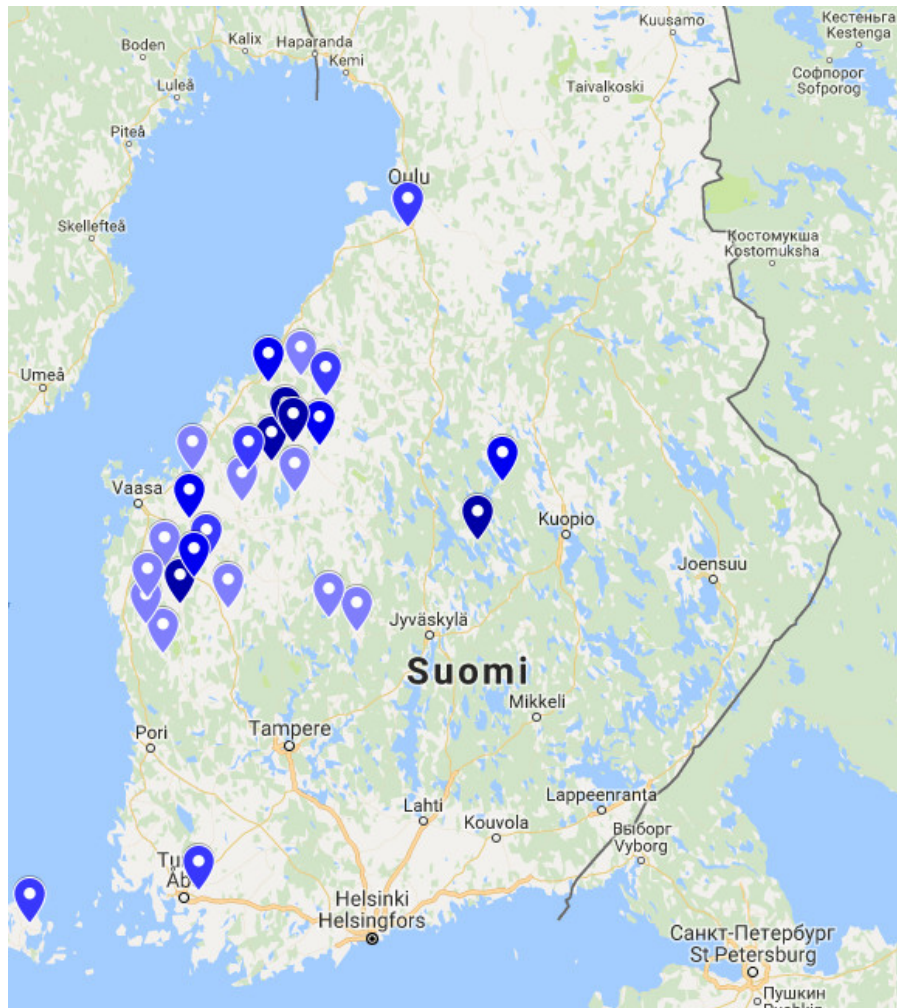


Age groups

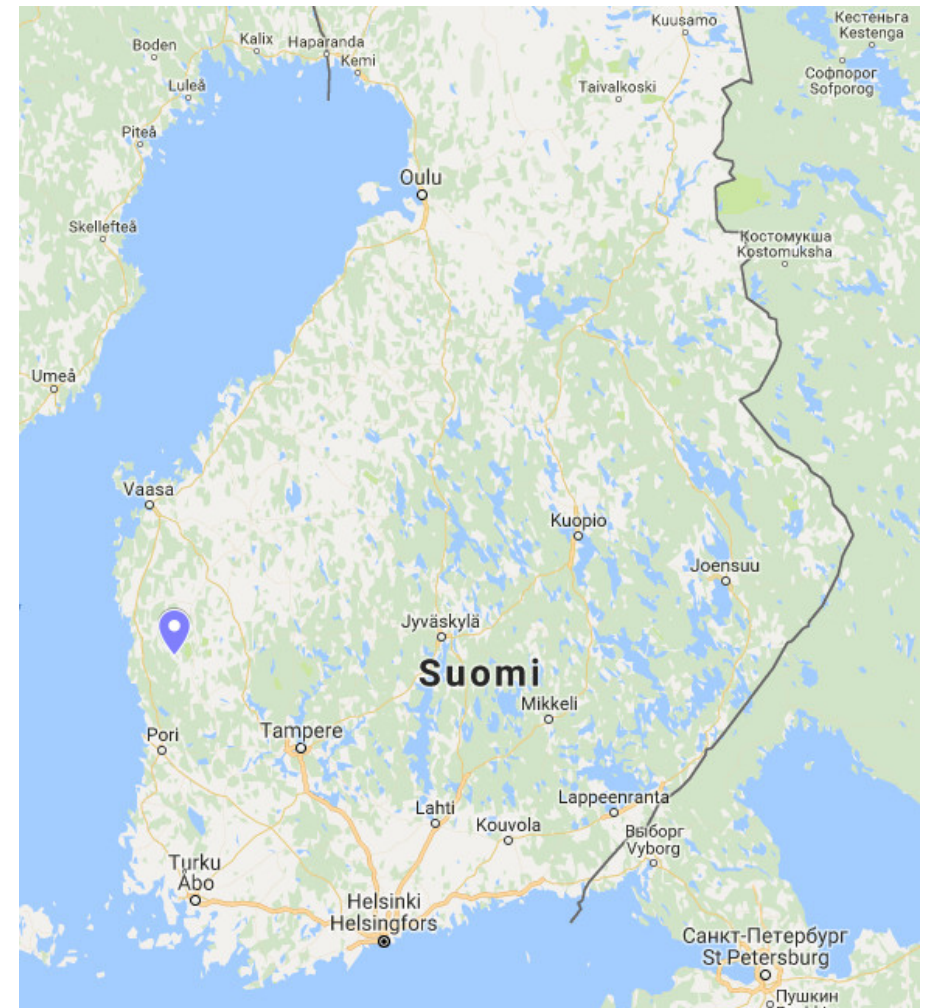


Place of Birth - 1940's

Instrument recordings from men

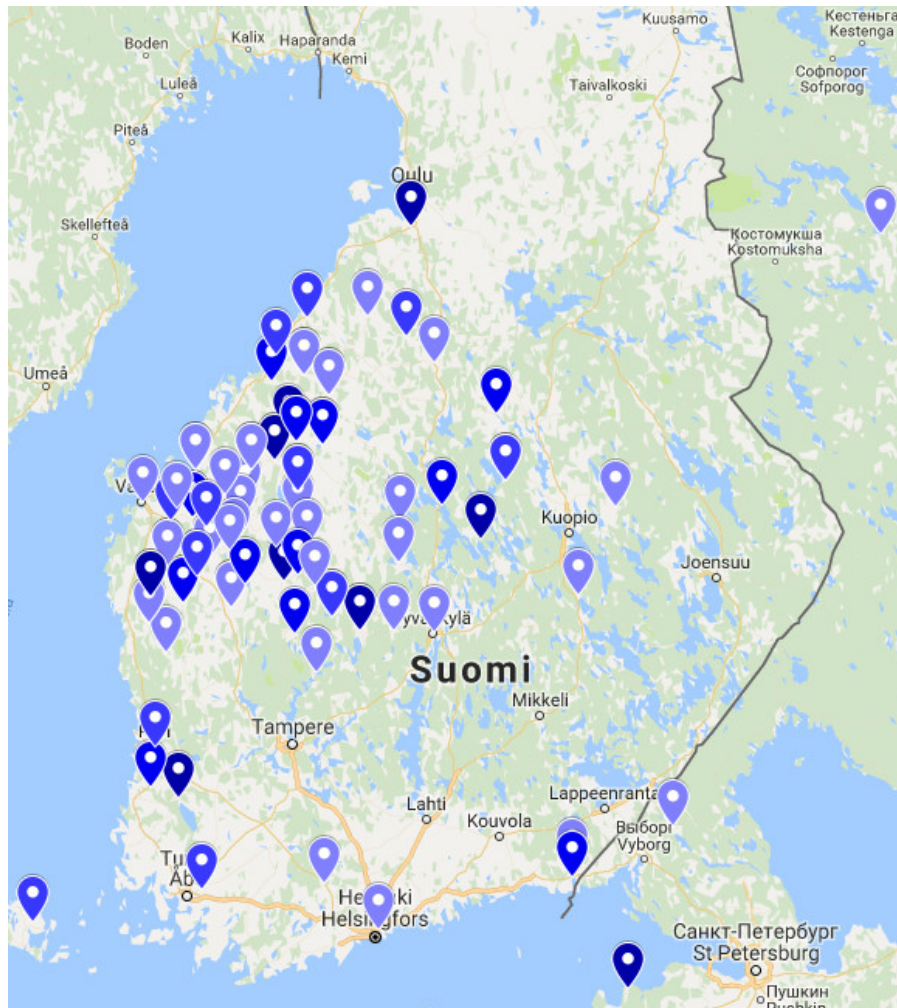


Instrument recordings from women

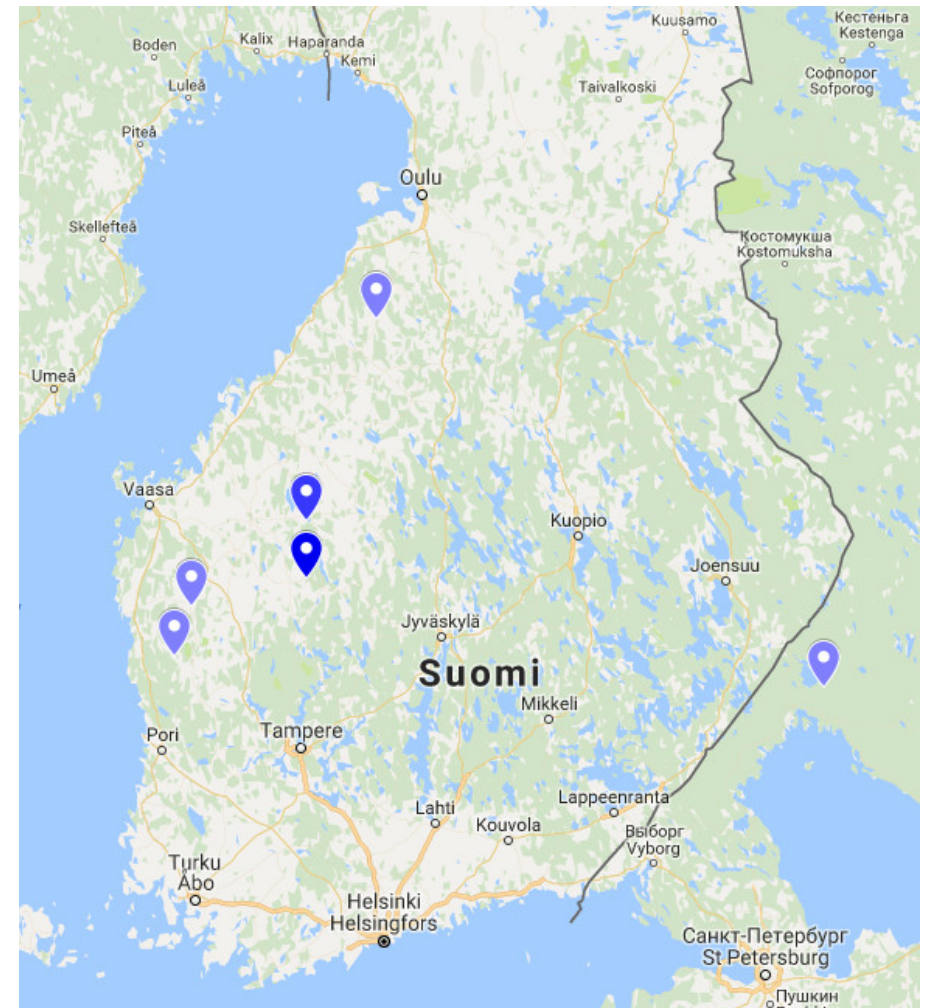


Place of Birth - 1950's

Instrument recordings from men



Instrument recordings from women



“Self-educated, no sheet music...”

- “Oral tradition”
- “Master-folk-musicians shouldn’t depend on sheet music”
- “Those who can read sheet music, go to the Art music -division”
- Recordings marked with -b booklore – if being played from sheet music
 - Over 1000 performances, no-one was marked with -b booklore...

Collector's gaze

- Gatekeeper: What was worth being recorded?
- "Folk Music Canon" : Did the ideals become a self-fulfilling prophecy?



TFA (Kaustinen/0584)

Classification – a stepping-stone?

- Classes (and subclasses) illustrate the collection more specifically than many of the computer programs
- Collector himself created the classes of "tradition"
- Classifications don't tell us about folk music itself – they define what the collector considered to be folk music

Conclusions

- "Collector's gaze" - what he was interested in?
- Graphical User Interface of the Archival database is usually not good enough for the Digital Humanities
- Analysis enables us to deal with more than 155 000 performances in an archive!

Requirements

- Certain technical resources
 - Open database
 - Computer-readable format
 - Placenames etc. In certain style

Classification track-by-track (as opposed to whole recordings) makes statistical analysis easier -
Collector was here ahead of his time!

Thank you!

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Archivist-in-chief (Folk Music Institute of Finland)

Photographs:

- FMI: Folk Music Institute (Kaustinen, Finland)
- TFA: Tampere Folklife archive (University of Tampere, Finland)



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