TOWARDS A GEOGRAPHY OF FICTION

The narratologically generic term «fictional space» combines functions of all spatial objects of fictional texts. A distinction is made between five spatial entities:

- **Settings** are places of action where the fictional characters are present and acting.
- **Projected Place** are places where characters are not present, but they dream of, remember, or long for this place.
- **Zones of Action** are several settings or projected places combined to form a zone.
- **Marker** is a place that is just mentioned, but not part of the categories above. Markers indicate the geographical range and horizon of a fictional space.
- **Routes** are paths along which characters move through the fictional space; connections between waypoints with features of a setting or of a projected place.

DATA ACQUISITION

The extensive data acquisition is carried out by literary scholars, who read and analyse the spatial dimension of writings. For this purpose an online data submission form had to be developed, especially tailored to the needs of literary studies. This submission form is connected directly to the database. It controls how the data are read and recorded into the specific data model. It is designed to allow intermediate storage, data modification and manages redundant entries. The submission form provides scholars with an overview through ‘action – reaction’ buttons; particular entry fields only appear when a specific button is pressed. To ensure an error-free entry, fields expecting numbers are marked and tested before sending the information to the database. Similar precautions have been made regarding coordinate fields – they are directly constructed through the geocoding tool. Any data entered into the form are automatically evaluated and transferred into the database.

INHERENT RULES OF SETTINGS

The ways settings are described are quite different from the real-world topography may have altered. The extensive data acquisition is carried out by literary scholars, who read and analyse the spatial dimension of writings. For this purpose an online data submission form had to be developed, especially tailored to the needs of literary studies. This submission form is connected directly to the database. It controls how the data are read and recorded into the specific data model. It is designed to allow intermediate storage, data modification and manages redundant entries. The submission form provides scholars with an overview through ‘action – reaction’ buttons; particular entry fields only appear when a specific button is pressed. To ensure an error-free entry, fields expecting numbers are marked and tested before sending the information to the database. Similar precautions have been made regarding coordinate fields – they are directly constructed through the geocoding tool. Any data entered into the form are automatically evaluated and transferred into the database.

**Inherent rules of settings**

1. Settings have uncertain, vague boundaries, neither physical / natural, nor administra-tive, man-made boundaries.
2. Settings are sometimes difficult to localise, their very nature is an indeterminate location.
3. Settings are fragmentary, fictional space is completed and developed by the imagination of the reader.
4. Settings can be transformed or remodelled by the author.
5. The extent of a setting can vary from a room inside a building to an international or global level.
6. The ‘real-world counterpart’ of a setting can be situated in any time epoch; in the meantime the real-world topography may have altered.

SINGLE OBJECT MAPS

Figure 1: Data model of the «Literary Atlas of Europe». The complex spatial data model tries to picture the fictional space in a way, that allows extensive, comparative spatial analysis and an appropriate automatically visualisation of the data.

Marked in green is the data model implementation of some of the special inherent rules of fictional space (listed on the right side).