Mapping Detachment: Geolocations in Pandemic Diaries

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Autobiography Collection

Corpus of autobiographic writings



DIARIES LIFE STORIES MEMORIES LETTERS

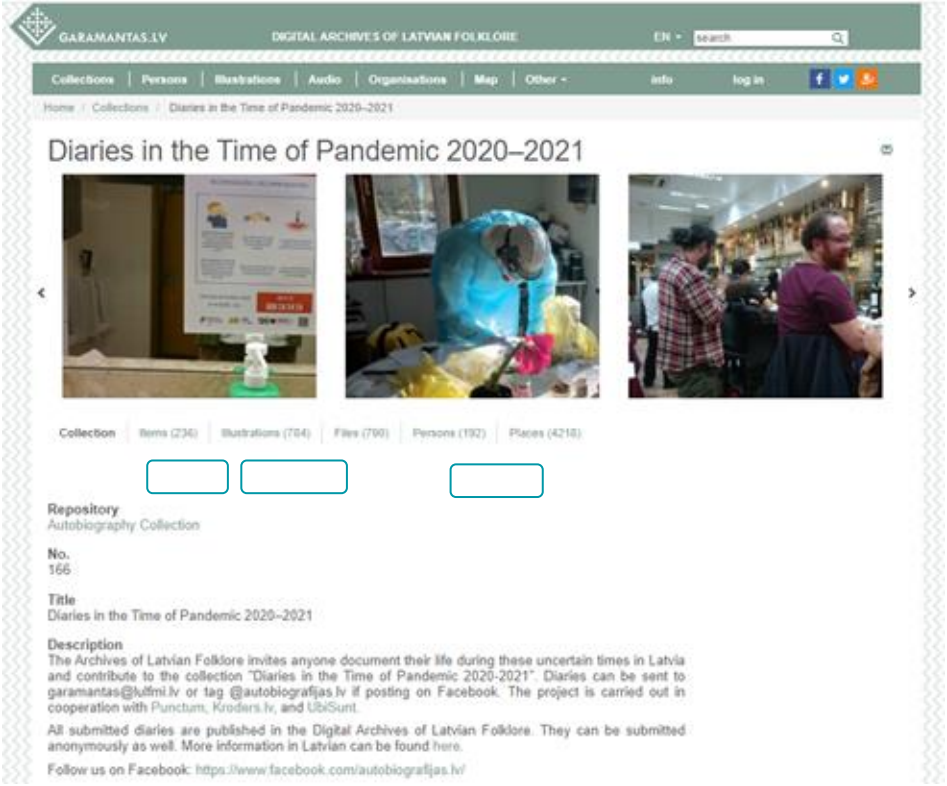
Established in 2018 at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia (ILFA).

Preserves personal accounts of people's lives and the times in which they lived: diaries, memoirs, life stories and letters.

Materials are made accessible through the digital archive garamantas.lv (https://autobiografijas.lv/en/)

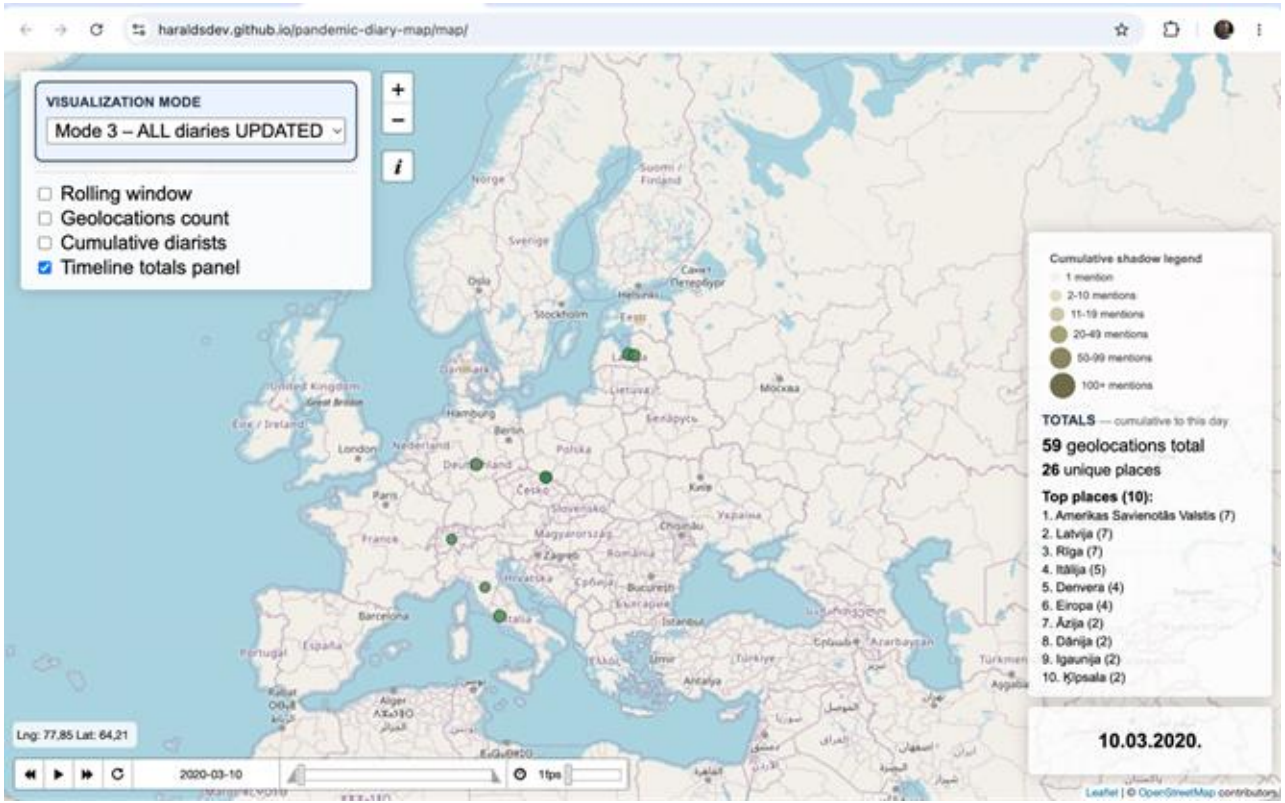
The Pandemic Diaries were collected as part of this tradition of documenting everyday life as it unfolds.

The Pandemic Diaries, 2020–2021



- An open call launched on **17 March 2020** invited people in Latvia to document their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **238 participants** contributed **2,333 diary entries**.
- Writers recorded changes in daily routines, relationships and movement while events were still unfolding.
- For this study, the diaries provide **3,758 manually identified geolocations**: "**present**" places the writer experienced and "**referenced**" places they mentioned from a distance.

Collection: garamantas.lv · **Corpus:** CLARIN-LV



Interactive map -> bit.ly/pandemic-map

- green points = ALL 3758 named geolocations

The task for human annotators and LLM models

For each geolocation, annotators decide whether the diarist is **present** in that place within the current time frame, or it is a “**referenced** place”.

code & detailed instructions for annotation: ->
https://github.com/haraldsDev/pandemic-diary-map

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Annotators have to consider the text of the current diary entry, narrative perspective and time frame.

1 – present | 0 – referenced place | NA – not applicable

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Human annotation: Present or Referenced Place

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Human annotation: Present or Referenced Place

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Of those 276 where all three human annotators agree – **136 are present** and **140 are referenced** places.

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Where does human ambiguity arise?

Three main sources of disagreement in diary narratives

01 Past tense can describe a recent, still current experience.

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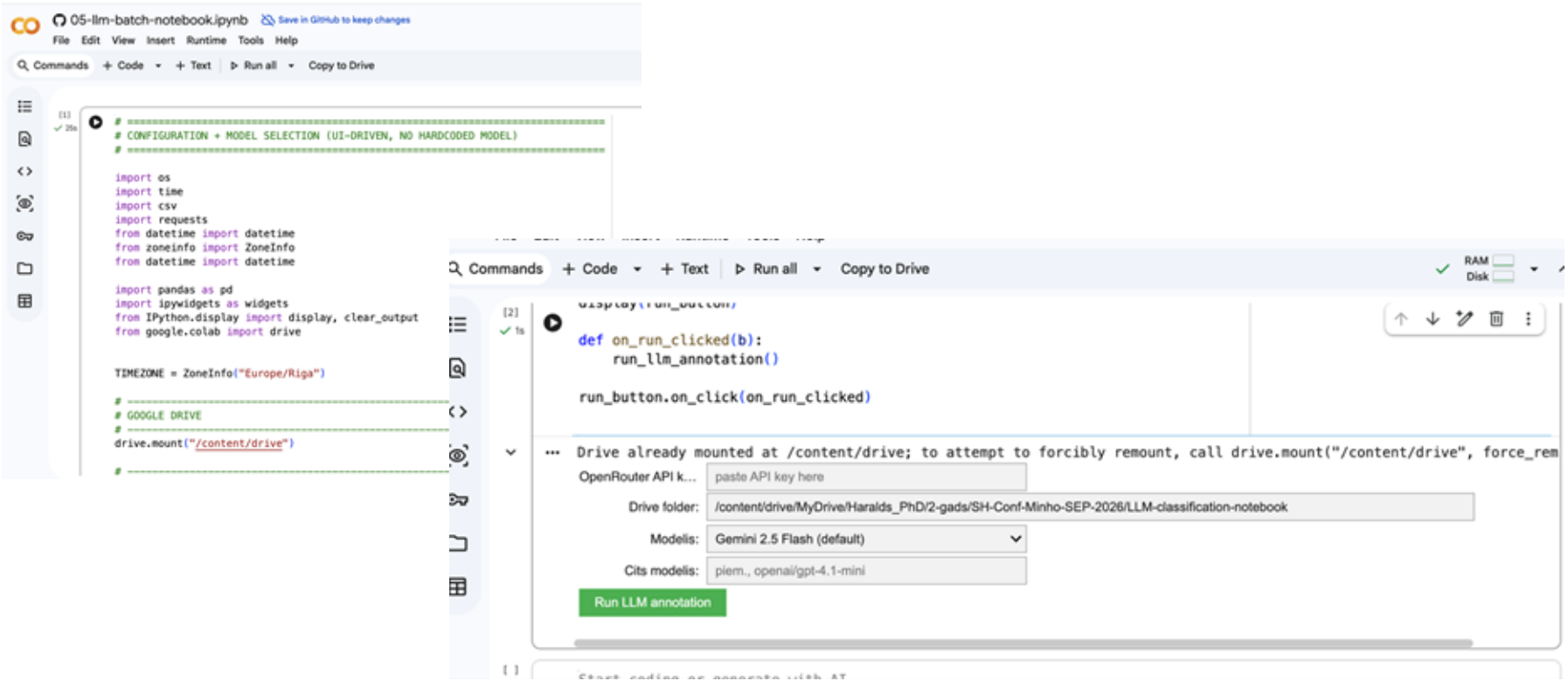
Three main sources of disagreement in diary narratives

01 Past tense can describe a recent, still current experience.

02 A single entry can move between lived events, memories, plans, dreams, fantasies.

03 Presence may be implied rather than stated.

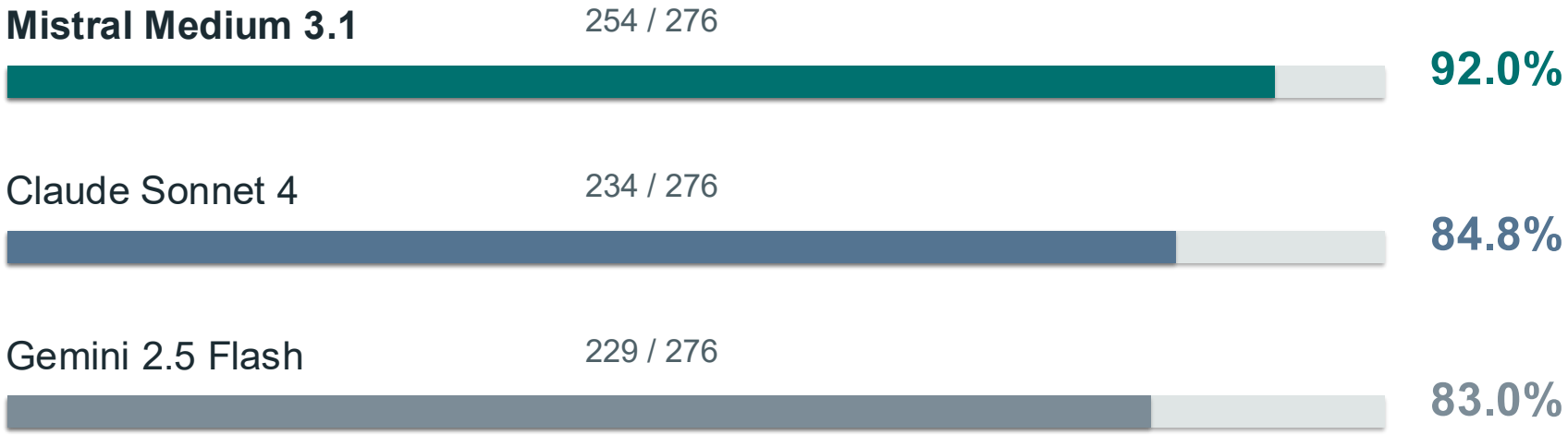
How notebook with LLMs API calls looks like (in Google Colab)



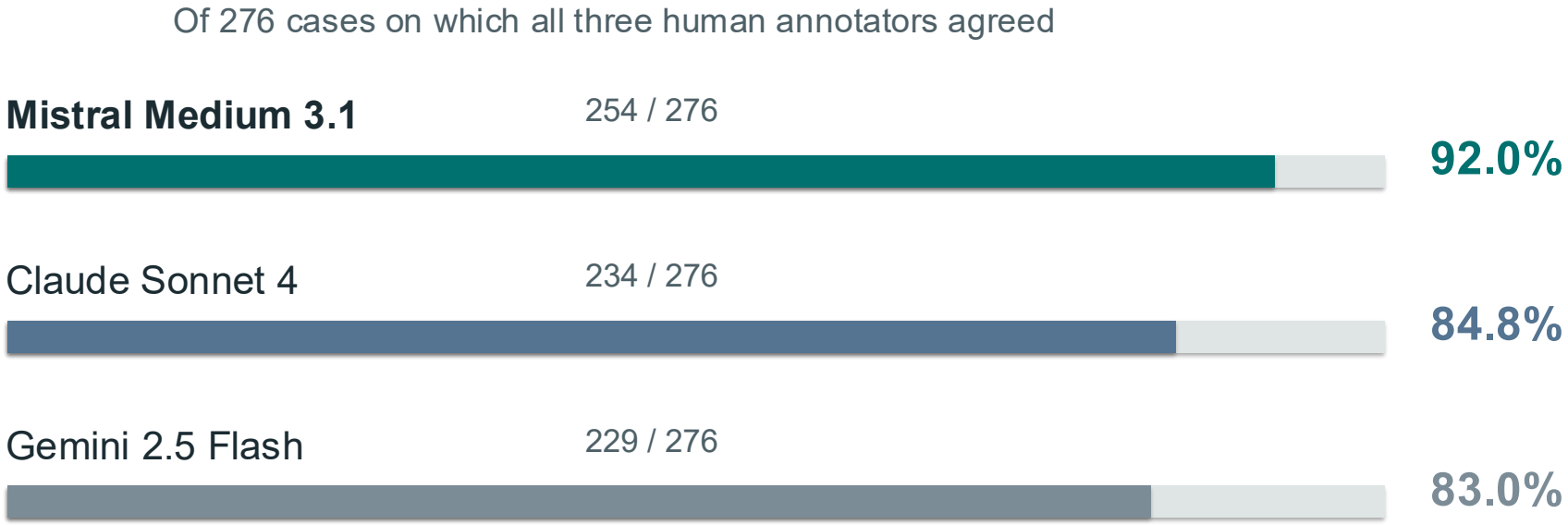
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Agreement with strict human consensus

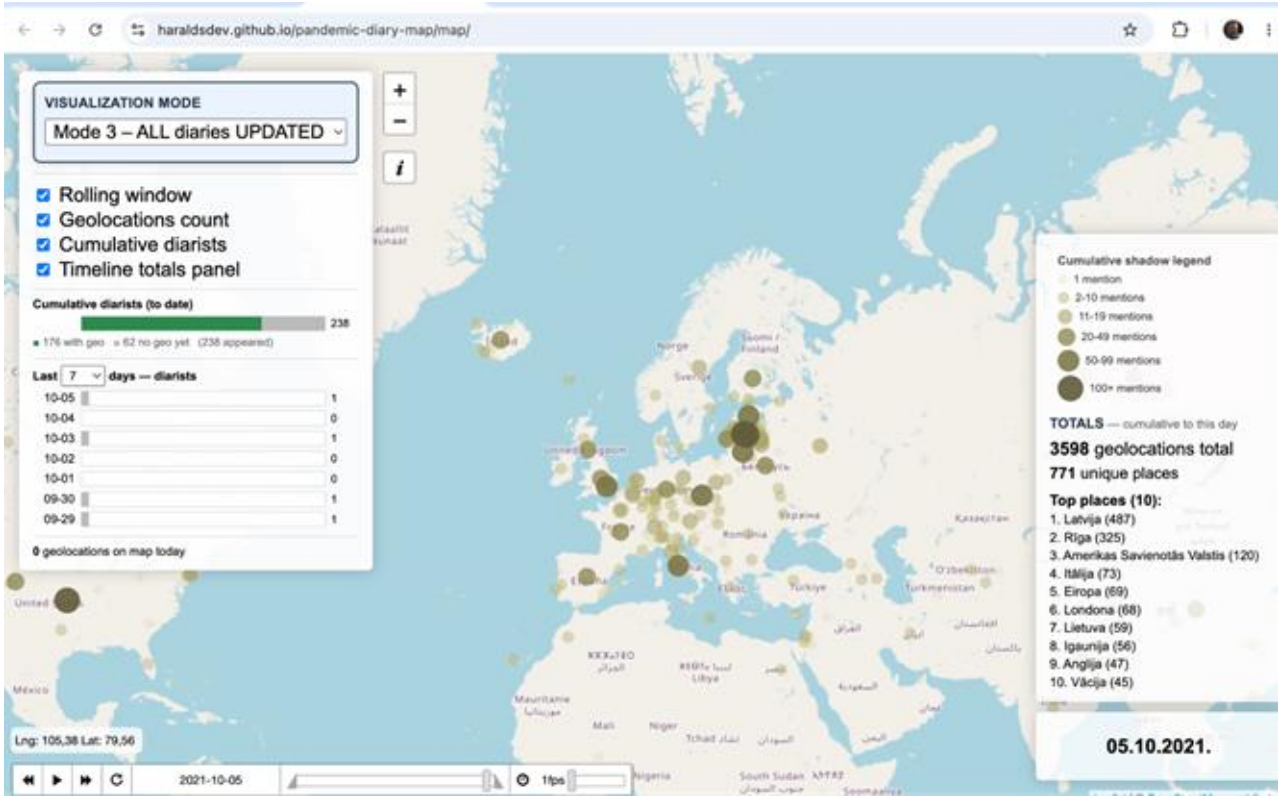
Of 276 cases on which all three human annotators agreed



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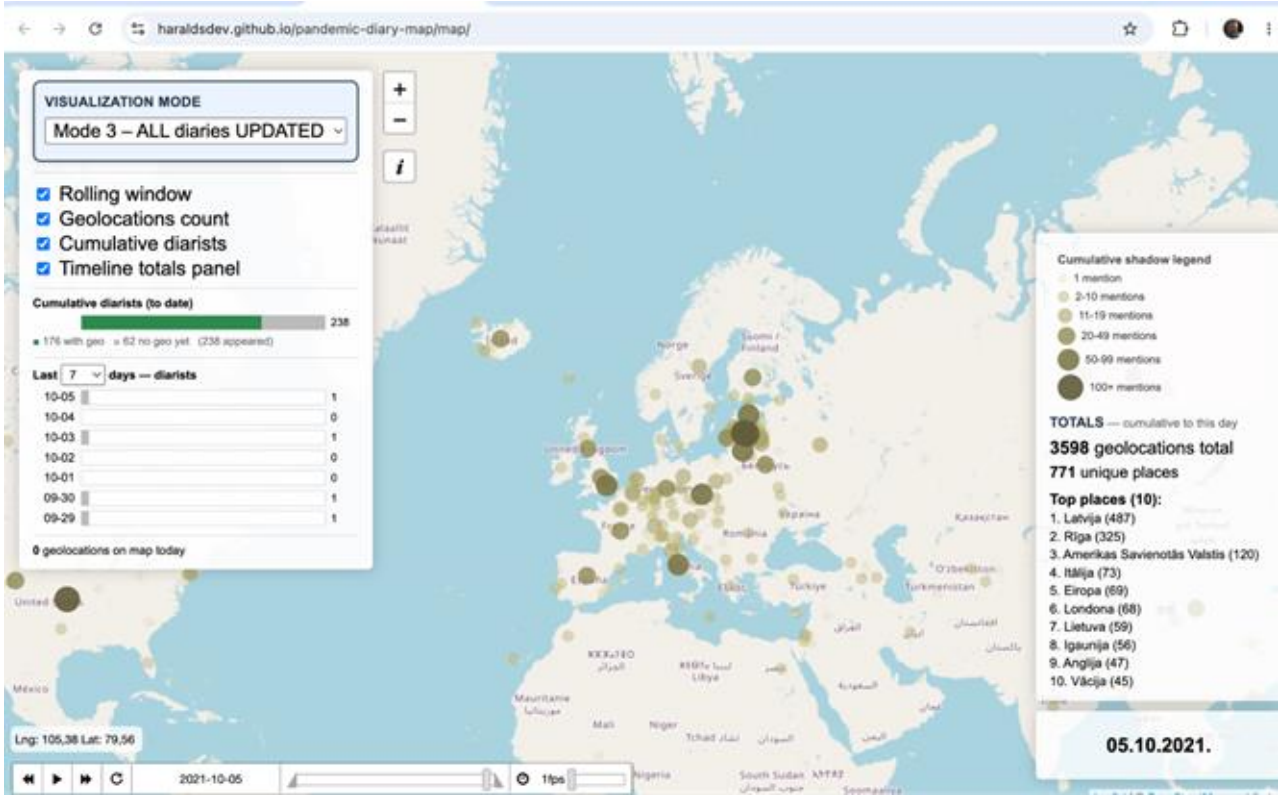


All 3 models match the annotators **more often on referenced places**, because models are stricter about calling a place present. But sometimes they name “referenced” a place that all 3 human annotators agree to be “present”.



Challenges / questions for discussion:

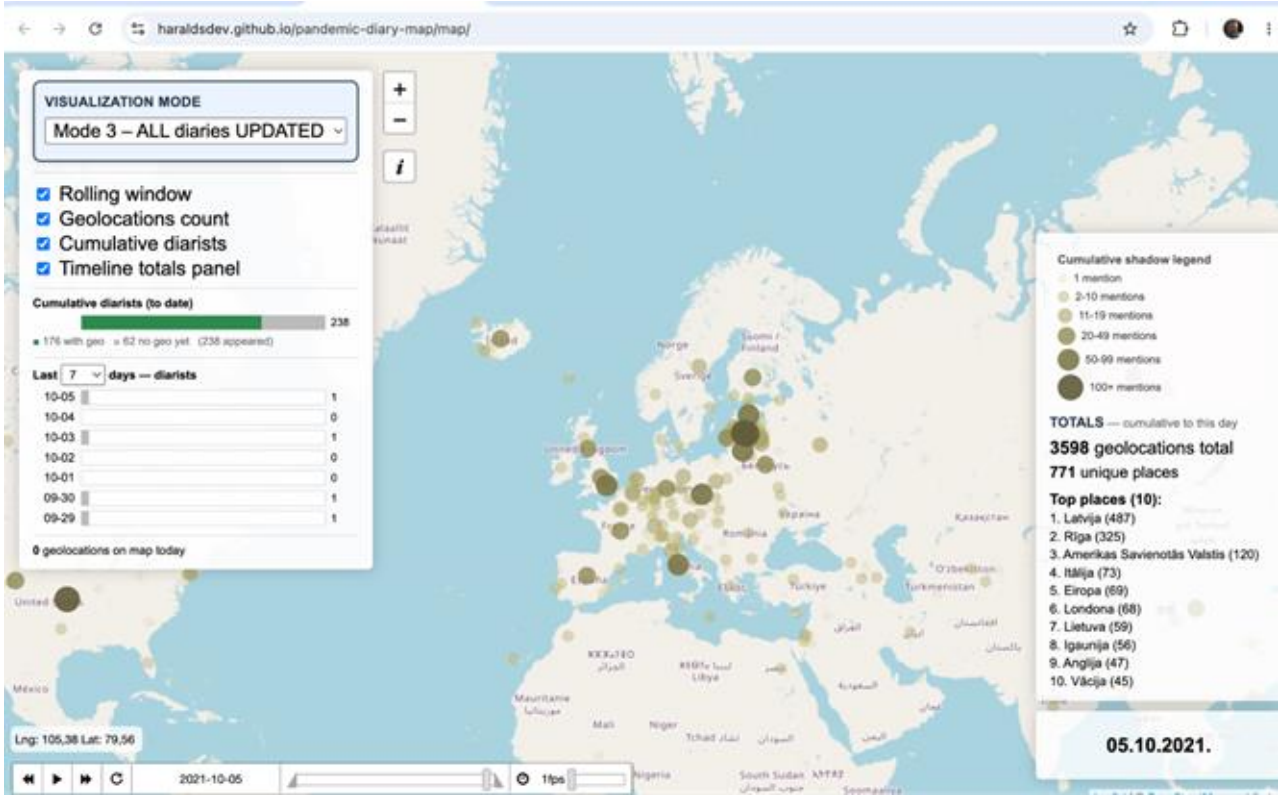
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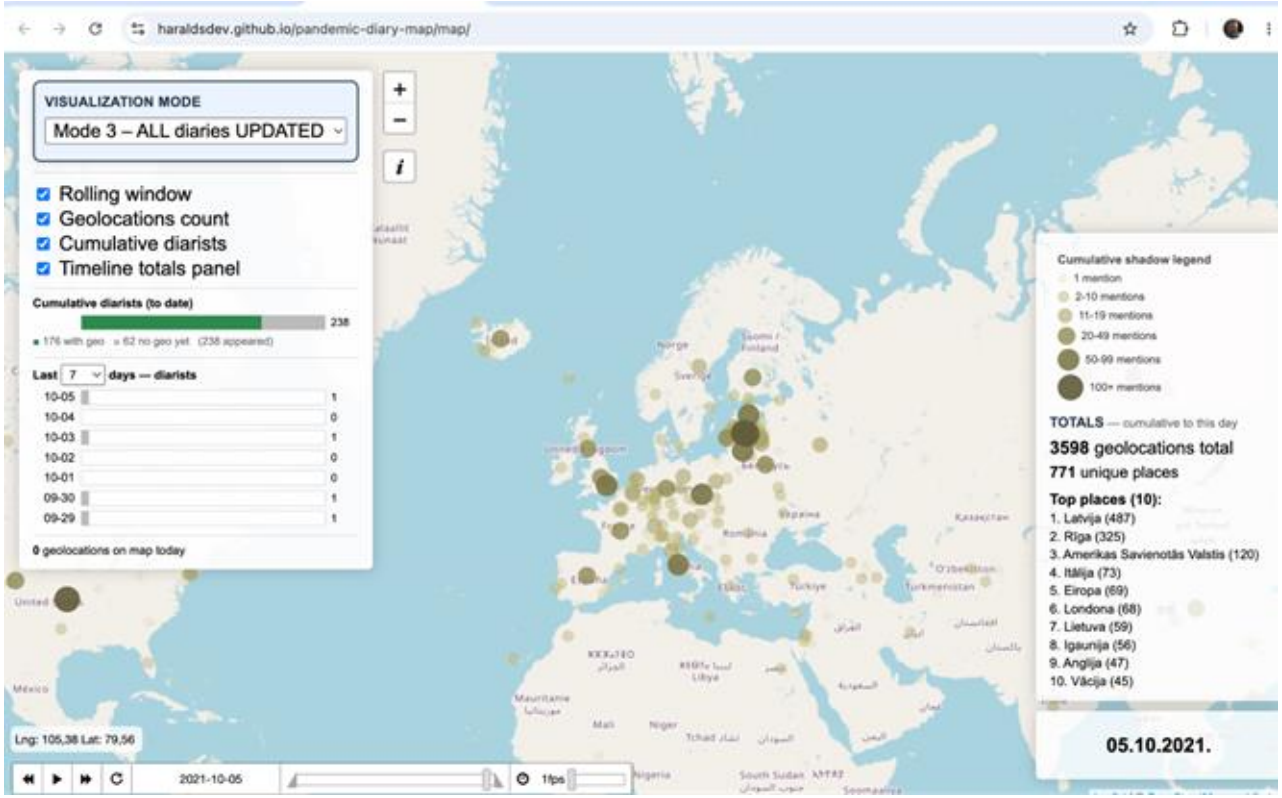


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4. **Integrity of the data points** – do different people naming the same locations add up to collective experience of the same space and place?

Thank you!