

Review of: "The Baptism on the Savica – The Slovene National Epic With a Question Mark"

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Professor Marko Juvan offers a valuable and up-to-date reading of the Slovene national epic in his article "The Baptism on the Savica – The Slovene National Epic With a Question Mark". The value of his article lies, first and foremost, in the type of reading deployed, which aims to embed the production and canonization of the national epic not only in the broader Slovene literary context but also in the European cultural and literary space. In my view, this approach marks an important step in studying the processes of 'nation-building' in East-Central Europe, given that a) it provides several comparisons with other national epics from the region and b) it emphasizes the import and impact of Western and canonical forms and literary products (Homer, Vergil, Byron) for Slovenian writers during the nineteenth century.

It is precisely this double contextual importance that makes me raise a question. One of Juvan's observations is that "it is the *form* of representation, with its intertextual adoption of the classical, medieval, and early modern epic tradition, that qualifies Prešeren's *Baptism* as a national epic". I was wondering – and this is just a hypothesis – whether the emergence of the national epic can be seen, like the case of the novel as discussed by Franco Moretti, as a form of compromise between Western form (or maybe, in this context, we can refer to "forms" in the plural) and local material (the story of Črtomir and Bogomila).

Except for this hypothetical question, I consider Juvan's article of high value due to its updated methodology and substantive content. The use of genre theory and cultural sainthood proves to be the most appropriate methodological framework for the purpose of the present article. Besides that, the article is well documented and structured and of great relevance for scholars in the field of Slovene literature and world literature alike.