

Title: The Search for Love and Identity in Prešeren's "The Baptism on the Savica"
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In 1836 France Prešeren (1800–1849) published his historical romantic poem "Krst pri Savici" ("The Baptism on the Savica"), which has become the Slovenian national epic. More prominent than the national aspect of Slovenes' Christianisation in the 8th Century, however, are the poetic themes of intimacy. The main protagonists are the pagan leader Črtomir – who enters into battle against an army led by the Christian Valjhu, Duke of Carinthia – and the young maiden Bogomila, Črtomir's love. The poem describes Črtomir's search for Bogomila after the lost battle, and his baptism on the Savica falls, which he accepts out of love for her. A priest acquaints Črtomir with the Christian faith, whereas Bogomila renounces to her earthly love in order to fulfil her promise to God, if He were to spare Črtomir's life. She thereby ensures that Črtomir will enjoy her eternal love in the hereafter. Črtomir cannot entirely conceive of Bogomila's promise to God. With a pained heart, he bows down and pledges to become a priest.

The paper focuses on the two main protagonists' differing experiences of love and loyalty. It will present Črtomir's internal struggle as he is unable to defend pagan faith of his parents or to marry Bogomila. Črtomir's fate is reminiscent of the poet's own resignation after his unrequited love for Julija Primic. The paper will present interpretations of this "open" poem. The openness in the Eco's sense of multiplicity and plurality is related to the phenomenon of love in connection of Črtomir's religious conversion in the process of his individual and national identification. In doing so, it will consider how love is presented between desire or passion and renouncement in the "Songs of Songs," in *Tristan and Isolde*, and in similar literary works.