

# SONGS ABOUT THE LISBON EARTHQUAKE, OR THE SLOVENIAN RESPONSE TO STORIES ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE'S MISFORTUNE

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MARIJA KLOBČAR

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*This article focuses on the Slovenian songs about the devastating 1755 Lisbon earthquake and on the context revealed by these songs. It is based on two songs about this earthquake that were published in the first collection of Slovenian folk songs from the mid-nineteenth century. The songs draw attention to the impact of this event in the media and the reception of these types of songs among the Slovenians. Studying the genesis of both songs, it reveals the role of organists and also the mindset that comes to the fore in the song narrations. The traces lead to a song leaflet that brings Slovenian songs closer to the general European tradition, with certain basic differences: the Slovenian song published on the leaflet contains a prayer for the victims of the Lisbon earthquake, which means that it provides special spiritual assistance. The article also reveals the reasons why the songs about the Lisbon earthquake were excluded from the subsequent standard collections of Slovenian folk songs, although the memory of both the songs and the Lisbon earthquake was still attested at the end of the nineteenth century. The Slovenian songs about the Lisbon earthquake therefore not only show the Slovenian response to the misfortune of the unknown people of Lisbon, but also question the social role of folklore studies.*

*Keywords: Lisbon earthquake, Slovenian folk songs, song leaflets, folklore studies*

*Prispevek se osredotoča na slovenske pesmi o uničujočem lizbonskem potresu leta 1755 in na kontekst, ki ga razkrivajo. Izbaja iz objav dveh pesmi o tem potresu v prvi zbirki slovenskih ljudskih pesmi iz sredine 19. stoletja, ki opozarjata na odmevnost tega dogodka in sprejetost pesmi med Slovenci. Išče genezo obeh pesmi, pri čemer razkriva vlogo organistov, hkrati pa predstavlja tudi miselni svet, ki se razkriva skozi pesemske pripovedi. Sledi vodijo do pesemskega letaka, kar slovenske pesmi zbližuje s splošno evropsko tradicijo, ob tem pa se kažejo temeljne razlike: slovenska pesem, objavljena na letaku, namreč z molitvijo za žrtve lizbonskega potresa pomeni posebno duhovno pomoč. Prispevek razkriva tudi razloge, zakaj so bile pesmi o lizbonskem potresu izločene iz nadaljnjih normativnih zbirk slovenskih ljudskih pesmi, čeprav je spomin tako na pesmi kot na lizbonski potres izpričan še ob koncu 19. stoletja. S tem slovenske pesmi o lizbonskem potresu ne kažejo le slovenskega odziva na nesrečo neznanih prebivalcev Lizbone, temveč se sprašujejo tudi o družbeni vlogi folkloristike.*

*Ključne besede: lizbonski potres, slovenske ljudske pesmi, pesemski letaki, folkloristika*

## SONGS ABOUT THE LISBON EARTHQUAKE IN THE FIRST SLOVENIAN FOLKSONG COLLECTION

While reviewing older publications of Slovenian folksong heritage a few years ago, a song about the Lisbon earthquake captured my attention. I was surprised by the testimony of this recounting of that fatal event and by the fact that its impact also extended to Slovenia, where it was preserved for a long time. Alongside my general interest in songs with a novella-like character, I thought these songs deserved special treatment in addition to consideration of the issue of their inclusion in or exclusion from the folk-representative canon of Slovenian song creativity.

Despite relatively new findings on the oldest transcriptions of the Slovenian heroic song “Pegam and Lambergar” (Torkar 1993: 13), Slovenian folksong collection begins with the 1776 transcriptions (Vodušek 1970: vii) and expressly obtained the function of promoting ethnic identity in the nineteenth century. In the period when Slovenian intellectuals had very vibrant contacts with the collection efforts of other Slavic nations, the efforts of cultural nationalism that influenced folksong collection (Leerssen 2008) had special features: forming connections with these nations increased their overall power and steered them away from narrow nationalistic views. For Slovenians this was especially true at a time when the Pole Emil Korytko was in Ljubljana in political exile.

During his political confinement in Ljubljana, Korytko published the first collection of Slovenian folk songs, called *Slovenske pesmi krajnskiga naróda* (Slovenian Songs of the Carniolan People) in five volumes with the help of the Slovenian intellectuals known as the *Ljubljana Circle*, a member of which was also the greatest Slovenian poet, France Prešeren. Emil Korytko, who was in political exile in Ljubljana between 1837 and 1839, did not live to see the publication of *Slovenske pesmi krajnskiga naróda*, which also included the song “Lisbona potopljena” (Lisbon Sunken): in fact, he died just before he received the decree on his political amnesty.

In 1844 two songs about the Lisbon earthquake entitled “Lisbona potopljena” (Lisbon Sunken) were published in the fifth volume of Korytko’s collection.<sup>1</sup> Due to their foreign subject matter, the inclusion of these songs in the Slovenian national folksong collection seems a little surprising. It shows that due to Korytko’s plans the conception of folk songs was more open: the two songs were included in the collection in accordance with the broad concept of the editor, who planned to publish all Slovenian ethnological material. As the final goal, he planned to issue a monumental encyclopedia about the Slavs or the culture of the Slavic peoples, titled *Śłowiańszczyzna* (Smith 1986: 141–173). Korytko’s ethnological and folklore concept was very broad because it was marked by the study of philosophy in Lviv, or by the Polish ethnographic school.

The collection was therefore designed only as the beginning of a presentation of Slovenian culture and was limited only to the lyrics of folk songs; therefore the songs on the Lisbon earthquake had no accompanying explanation for which earthquake they referred to. However, from subsequent testimonies relating to these songs, it is quite clear that they refer to the devastating earthquake that took place on 1 November 1755 and claimed 60,000 (Halter 1995) to 100,000 lives and almost completely destroyed Lisbon (Vidrih 2006: 24–25). The two songs about the Lisbon earthquake were apparently created as part of the exceptional media impact of this event, which is reflected in them in various ways.

In the first song published in Korytko’s collection, the moral lesson is more pronounced than the description of the great disaster that struck Lisbon:

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<sup>1</sup> The first song was published with an obvious mistake in the title, which read “Lisbona potopljena” instead of “potopljena” (Lisbon Flooded; Korytko 1844: 26).

1. *Kakšhin strah zel svet prebaja,  
kadar Bog se rasferdi.  
Svoje šhtrafenge vun daje,  
S' nami rajtengo dersbi.  
Sa pregrehe naf šhtrafuje,  
Kar pa zhlovek ne spozna,  
Naf k' pokori napeljuje,  
Tudi nam odlog šhe da.*

What fear is afoot throughout the world  
When God becomes enraged,  
Dealing out his sentences,  
Demanding payment.  
He is punishing us for the sins  
Which a man does not realize  
Leads us to repentance,  
Giving us a reprieve.
2. *Li poglej kdo gospoduje,  
Vstani, kdor si len u serz'  
Ker fe semlja vsdviguje,  
Vsemi shalost si u perf'  
Sklen shivljenje porovnati,  
Dokler je šhe ura, zhaš.  
Bog, poglej, fe sna mashvati,  
Vezhno pokonzhati naf.*

Just look at who rules,  
Whoever is lazy in his heart, get up,  
As the Earth rises,  
Take the sadness in your chest.  
Decide to reform your life,  
While there is still time,  
See, God can take revenge,  
And destroy us forever.
3. *Gledaj mefto Lisabono,  
Mesto de mu para ni,  
Oziran s kraljevo krono  
Sdaj podfuto v blat' leshi.  
Bogatinzam blago, slati  
Ni na pomozh moglo prit',  
Vše shivljenje mora dati  
V svoji kervi kopan biti.*

Look at the city of Lisbon,  
The city beyond compare,  
Decorated with the royal crown  
Now lying buried in mud.  
The rich people's goods and gold  
Could not help them,  
Everybody had to forfeit their lives  
And bathe in their blood.
4. *Dete materi na perših,  
Mati s detetam vred,  
Kakšhin strah obzhtujo v serzih,  
K morjo skupaj grosno vmret'.  
Veter, ogenj in nefrezha  
Tamkej videti je blo,  
Vša Lisbona je gorezha,  
Po vsih krajih gre v semljo.*

The baby on the mother's breast,  
Mother together with baby,  
What fear they feel in their hearts,  
When they must die together terribly.  
Wind, fire, and horror  
Over there it could be seen,  
All Lisbon is burning,  
Everywhere going into the ground.
5. *Gofpa vidi svoje dete  
Tam po kervi plavati,  
Gospod vidi svojo dekl  
Tam v ogni jamrati,  
Všoki turni noj gradovi  
So fe tam pošipali,  
Na kraljevim plaz sidovi  
So fe s grobjam glihali.*

The lady sees her baby  
Swimming there through the blood,  
The gentleman sees his maid  
Moaning there in the fire,  
High towers and castles  
Collapsed there,  
On the royal market the walls  
Were leveled with heap of stones.

6. *Zhe so bli lih turni mozhni,  
S tem so prah perglihani,  
Zhe so bli ljudje mogozhni,  
Vfi so v nizh ponishani.  
Ti serditi kralj nebeshki,  
Mi sposnamo tvojo mozh,  
Vsemi k' seb dushe zhlovefshke,  
In dodel nam vezhno luzh*  
(Korytko 1844: 26–28).
- Although the towers were strong,  
They were like powder  
Although the people were powerful,  
They were humiliated to nothing.  
You angry king of heaven,  
We know your strength,  
Take to yourself the human souls,  
And grant us the eternal light.

The song does talk about the earthquake in Lisbon, but it seems that its main message is that God became enraged by human sins and therefore punished people. The Lisbon earthquake was used as an example that demonstrated the validity of the Christian doctrine: the great disaster that struck the people of Lisbon was used to call for a return to the true faith and repentance. This warning is all the more effective because, according to the song, Lisbon was an extremely rich city, a royal capital, but in the devastating earthquake it sank to the ground in blood and fire with all its riches: just as the magnificent towers turned into dust, the most powerful people were also ruined.

In the second song published in Korytko's collection, the devastating Lisbon earthquake is depicted with greater narrative attention to the developments, and also with much more empathy for the suffering of the people affected by this earthquake:

1. *Kakshin strah mi je imelo  
Le to mesto Lisabon?  
Vse se treflo, vkup letelo,  
Kraljev dvor in slati tron,  
V meft ljudje shalvat zazhnejo,  
Ne vedo, kam beshat, tezh.  
Komej skozi vrata grejo,  
Jel so eden drugmu rezh:*
2. *Ljubi Jezuf, kaj bo s nami,  
Sagotov bo fodni dan,  
Vderlo se bo vse pod nami,  
Oh joj, kaj sazhet je nam?  
Prinz Navare je na polji,  
S svojim poljkam on stoji,  
S vsim poljkam kakor v boji.  
Malo kter je stran prifshal.*
3. *V ofmih urah so hoteli  
Skufit te serzhni ljudje,*
- What fear had  
This city of Lisbon?  
Everything was scattering, flying together,  
The royal palace and golden throne.  
In the city, people begin to mourn  
They do not know where to flee, to run  
Just as they go through the door  
They begin to say to each other  
Sweet Jesus, what will happen to us,  
It is the judgment day for sure,  
Everything will collapse below us,  
Oh dear, what should we do?  
The Prince of Navarre is on the field,  
With his regiments he stands,  
With all the regiments as in battle  
Only a few of them escaped.  
After eight hours they wanted to  
Try, these courageous people,

- So šhli v meft' deb kaj vseli,  
 Aube kaj se jim sgodi!  
 Oh vender Bogu se smili!  
 Komaj notri pridejo,  
 Nov potrefi se storili,  
 Vsi se v semljo vderejo.*
4. *Tak ljudi je dvanajst tavshent  
 Se v semljo vderlo blo  
 In duhovnov devet taushent  
 Vse kmal k vezhnost je fhlo.  
 Vse kamele, konji, voli.  
 V magazinih kar je blo  
 V en minuti vse je doli  
 Prishlo kmalo pod zemljo.*
5. *O Maria mati boshja,  
 Ti naf vari pred peklam,  
 Sprof' per Bogu mozh oroshja  
 Soperfiat sivrashnikam.  
 Ti naf vari pred potrefsam,  
 Verni<sup>2</sup> boshje shibe prezsh,  
 Ti naf vodi prot nebesam,  
 Daj nam srezhno jih dosezh*  
 (Korytko 1849: 29–31)
- They went into town to get something,  
 Alas, what happens to them!  
 Oh, but God have mercy!  
 Just when they enter in there,  
 New tremors appear,  
 And they all sink into the ground.  
 Thus, twelve thousand people  
 Sank into the earth  
 And nine thousand priests  
 Soon went into eternity.  
 All the camels, horses, oxen.  
 Everything that was in the warehouses,  
 In one minute everything down here  
 Soon sank under the ground.  
 Oh, Mary, Mother of God,  
 Protect us from hell,  
 Ask God for strength of arms  
 To defend ourselves from the enemy.  
 Protect us from the earthquake,  
 Spare believers from the scourge of God,  
 Lead us to heaven,  
 Let us reach it safe and sound.

The second song about the Lisbon earthquake is therefore not an example of a preaching device that uses the disaster in Portugal as a powerful call to repentance: it offers a more realistic depiction of the earthquake with an extremely naturalistic description of the disaster, trying to comprehend the experience of the fatal events. The song concludes with an intercession to Mary to protect people from hell and fatal disasters, such as earthquakes.

Neither the first nor the second song provides any clues about who its author was and how it came to Slovenia. In addition, the transcriptions do not provide any information on what impact these songs had among the people. A transcription by Davorin Petelin testifies to this very aspect—that is, the popularity of the songs about the Lisbon earthquake in Slovenia: as a student in the 1875/76 school year, Petelin sent a transcription of a song very similar to the first song about the Lisbon earthquake published in Korytko's collection to Karel Štrekelj (the later editor of the collection *Slovenske narodne pesmi* [Slovenian Folksongs]). Petelin's song was even more complete and more extensive than the song in Korytko's publication because it comprised eight stanzas. The song was titled "Pesem od

<sup>2</sup> Probably a mistake: instead of *verni* it should have been *vernim*.

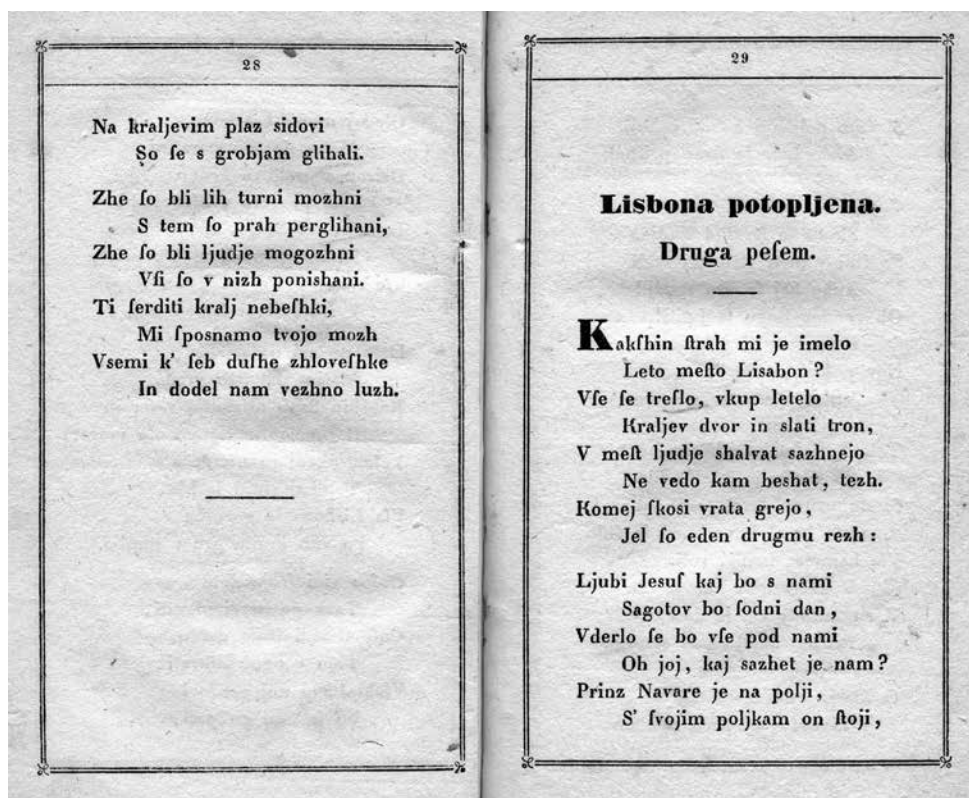


Figure 1: The end of the first and the beginning of the second song about the Lisbon earthquake published in 1844 in the fifth volume of Korytko's collection of Slovenian folk songs.

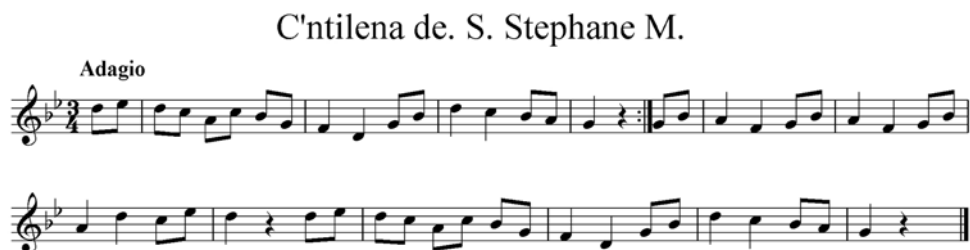


Figure 2: Like many other songs, a song about St. Stephen was sung "to the tune of Lisbon". In this way the tune of the song about Lisbon earthquake was preserved (Kramar 1926: 74).

Lizabone” (The Song about Lisbon) with the note “an old Carniolan<sup>3</sup> song.” In 1875 or 1876, the student Davorin Petelin therefore still found this song in central Slovenia; it was known as an old song typical of Carniola. Compared to the similar song published in Korytko’s collection, this song differs not only by its length: its language is updated, reflecting the song’s acceptance and vitality among the people, and the message of the song is less tied to a preaching model (Petelin 1875/1876).

The student Davorin Petelin therefore talks about “an old Carniolan song,” or a widely accepted and frequently sung song in the central Slovenian area. The song was transcribed even as late as the twentieth century in the far western part of Slovenian ethnic territory, the Littoral region, as a copy of one of the songs in Maver’s collection; the copy was made by the collector Ivan Kokošar. The song was still preserved even with nine stanzas, but the language was again somewhat more archaic (Kokošar s. a.: 9–10).<sup>4</sup> In addition to these transcriptions, there may be others that have not yet been discovered: in 1932, a third folk song about the Lisbon earthquake was mentioned alongside these two types of songs (Debeljak: 1932: 688), but so far it has not yet been found.

Just like the printed transcriptions, the manuscript copies of the songs do not contain any information on what earthquake they refer to nor do they provide any information on how the songs came to Slovenian territory. The answer to this is provided by older transcriptions, which also raise entirely new questions.

### THE SONGS ABOUT THE LISBON EARTHQUAKE IN ORGANISTS’ TRANSCRIPTIONS

Older transcriptions, which can be traced while studying the origin of the songs about the Lisbon earthquake, lead us to the area south of Ljubljana, to Inner and Lower Carniola and the activity of two organists. The song’s acceptance can be traced in the songbook of the organist Filip Jakob Repež from Stari Trg pri Ložu because the song is already performing a new role: in the songbook published in 1770 and reprinted five years later, Repež published a song intended for the procession for rain, in which he used the melody of one of the songs about the Lisbon earthquake. In the note added to the song, it is said that the song should be sung “to the tune of the well-known song about Lisbon”<sup>5</sup> (Repež 1775: 60).

The second organist, Jožef Ambrožič, a schoolmaster in Dobrepolje in Lower Carniola, wrote his first manuscript songbook almost at the same time as the first organist: in 1771 (Kramar 1922: 96). Among other songs in it, a song about the Archangel Michael appeared, with a note to be sung “na vižo Lizabone” (“to the tune of Lisbon”; Kramar 1923: 11). The

<sup>3</sup> Carniola is one of the historical Slovenian regions.

<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank my colleague Marjeta Pisk for providing the information on the Littoral.

<sup>5</sup> *na vižo koker ta vsim dobru znano Peisem od Lizabone.*

songbook also contains a poem about St. Anthony of Padua, with a similar note: *viža od Lizabone* ('the tune of Lisbon'; Kramar 1923: 13), as well as a song about St. Stephen ("C'ntilena de S. Stephane"), next to which the tune was also published in addition to a note that it should be sung "to the tune of Lisbon" (Kramar 1926: 74).

Jožef Ambrozič also wrote the song "Od vse sorte Nadluh" (All Sorts of Troubles), where he added the note "Aria od Lizabone" (Aria about Lisbon; Kramar 1925: 82). In the fourth songbook written by the same author in 1775 (Kramar 1924: 31), the song was published, of which only the melody was used in previous cases. The folksong transcriber Franc Kramar, who reported on this song almost a century and a half later, also pointed to the event itself, the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. Upon the publication, he wrote: "This song was then in general called 'About Lisbon,' and almost the majority of Ambrozič and Repež's hymns were sung to its tune. Let now this interesting song follow, so that it is saved from oblivion:"<sup>6</sup>

*Od Lifsá Bonskiga Meista* (About the City of Lisbon)

*Višša od Lifsabone* (The tune of Lisbon)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. <i>Pofshlusajte vi greifsniki,<br/>zhit se ia spokorit vam,<br/>Gredo zhudeshi veliki,<br/>ne bo delezh sodni dan!<br/>ti potreshi, veitrij, vode,<br/>fo se sternile toku,<br/>od take Nafsrezhe, skode,<br/>nei se Nigdar shlishat blu!</i></p> <p>2. <i>O Kai je sen strah imeilu<br/>Letu Meistu Lifsabon,<br/>kse ie treshlu, vkup leteilu<br/>kralevi hoffi nu tron,<br/>Nu kar je drusih hifs billu,<br/>tu je vsemlo vderlu se,<br/>Morje se je Restegnili,<br/>na verh potopillu vfse.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Ludie szhagaina ne vejo<br/>od strahu kam beifsat, tezh,<br/>vender ven zhes vrata grejo,<br/>sazhno Eden h drugmu rez:</i></p> | <p>Listen, you sinners,<br/>It is time to repent,<br/>Great miracles are coming,<br/>Judgment day is not far!<br/>These earthquakes, wind, water,<br/>Have joined together, such that<br/>An accident, damage like this,<br/>We have never heard of!<br/>Oh what fear had<br/>This city of Lisbon,<br/>When everything shook and fell together,<br/>Royal court and the throne,<br/>And all other houses there<br/>Collapsed to the ground,<br/>The sea stretched<br/>And flooded everything on top.<br/>People in despair not knowing<br/>Where to flee and run in fear<br/>But go out through the door,<br/>Start saying to each other:</p> |
|--|---|

<sup>6</sup> *Ta pesem se je takrat sploh imenovala 'od Lizabone', in na napev te pesmi se je takratnih Ambrozičevih in Repeževih cerkv. pesmi skoraj največ pelo. Naj sledi vsa ta zanimiva pesem, da se tu otme pozabljenosti:*



- ô Moii Jesus, kai bo fnami,  
zsdei bo guifnu sodni dan!  
vfse fe bo vderlu pod nami,  
oh, joh! kai ie shazhet nam!?*
4. *Sunei Meista tam na strani  
vstrahu od delezh stoje,  
nu v velizhim klaguvainu  
kir sa nimi gre Morje;  
v vofmih urah fo otelli  
vagat preferzhni ludie,  
shli fo v meistu, deb kei vfseli,  
v tem kai se sgodillu je!,*
5. *Oh fallost, bogu fe vfmili,  
kumei v meistu pridejo,  
Novi potreshi so se strilli,  
de se vpsi vkup vderejo!  
Devet deset tausent notri  
ludi se je vderlu Reis,  
vshe stazhune, zherque, klostij,  
dua Hriba sta padla ches.*
6. *Vfse je Moglu hkonzhu priti  
v Leipem Meisti Lifsabon,  
oben nei Mogu oditi,  
Pomagat je blu sabston!  
Closhterskeh nun je dua tausent  
Toku pokonzhanih blu,  
Teh Duhounu Devet tausent  
Je tudi kuezhnosti shlu.*
7. *Ta potres she vfelei vezhi  
Pride zlu v vaffrico zhes,  
fo bli she vezhi nasrezhi,  
koker Lifsabona reif!  
prinzh Meraco tam na puli  
ifsoijm folkam stojj,  
vezh tausent v satorah tudi  
tamkei foldatu leschi.*
8. *Kar potres ih kmallu poshre  
trij Defet tausent ludi!  
Stuke, purfel, vse orishije,  
Mallu de bi proz odshlij;*
- Oh my Jesus, what will happen to us,  
Now it will surely be the judgment day!  
Everything will collapse under our feet,  
Oh, oh, what should we do?  
Outside the city there by the side  
They were standing in fear far away,  
And in great lamenting,  
Because the sea was following them;  
After eight hours they wanted to  
Venture, these courageous people,  
They went into the city to take something  
Look what happened!  
Oh sorrow, God have mercy,  
Just when they came to town,  
New earthquakes struck,  
So that they all sank into the ground!  
In there ninety thousand  
People sank, it's true,  
All the shops, churches, monasteries,  
Two hills fell over.  
Everything had to come to an end  
In the beautiful city of Lisbon,  
No one could leave,  
The help was in vain!  
Two thousand convent nuns,  
Were killed in this way,  
And nine thousand priests  
Also passed into eternity.  
This earthquake is still getting bigger  
It even spread across to Africa,  
Where the disaster was even greater  
Than in Lisbon, indeed!  
The Prince of Morocco there on the field  
Stands with his regiments,  
And in tents several thousand  
Soldiers lie.  
The earthquake soon swallows them up  
Thirty thousand people!  
Guns, gunpowder, all weapons  
Only a few that can avoid it.

- te komeille, koine, vulli,  
Magafsijn, vfse kar ie blu,  
vtei Minuti je vfse dolli  
noter pod femlo pershlu.*
9. *Vafsi, Hifshe, goisdij tudi,  
Hribie so vkup padali,  
fmihshlite, christiani lubi,  
kok so ludie jamrali!  
Fezh nu Meqvem obduei Meisti,  
fo se pogrosnile tam,  
kso imeili kmishi feisti,  
kiri ie blu glich opudan.*
10. *Dua nu fhest deseti tausent  
tam potres poshre ludi,  
toku fna buh ta sueit prasnit,  
  
kneifso berfs hpokuri shli!  
ô Maria, Mati Bofshia,  
stuj nam greifsnikam na stran,  
ti nam sprosi gnado boshio,  
Nu nas varij pret peklam!  
Nu nas fermei pret potrefsam,  
Prosi se nas stuarnika,  
Nedai vezh shlisat ufesam,  
Kar je blu in Affrica! Amen.  
(Kramar 1924: 75–76)*
- Those camels, horses, oxen,  
Warehouse, everything that was there  
In one minute everything collapsed,  
To the ground.  
Villages, houses, and forests,  
Hills collapsed,  
Think, dear Christians,  
How the people lamented!  
Fes and Meknes, both cities,  
were leveled there,  
When people were about to sit at the table,  
Because it was just noon then.  
Sixty-two thousand  
People were swallowed by the earthquake,  
This is how God knows how to empty  
this world,  
Because people did not repent quickly!  
Oh Mary, Mother of God,  
Stand beside us, sinners,  
Obtain for us the grace of God  
And protect us from hell!  
Defend us also from the earthquake,  
Ask our Creator on our behalf,  
Let our ears no longer hear  
What happened in Africa! Amen.

In the song, the Lower Carniolan dialect is clearly noticeable and orthographic inconsistency indicates that the writer was poorly educated. At the same time, the song is a remarkable document. It gives a poor description of the earthquake that struck Lisbon on 1 November 1755, but nonetheless provides essential information: the earthquake, tsunami, the horror of the people, who were convinced that the judgment day was coming, their escape from the city, and the moving sea, “which was following them.” When the people, who withdrew from the city, thought that the earthquake was over, they returned to the city to retrieve their property, but they were struck by a new seismic wave, which buried them. According to the song, ninety thousand people were killed, and with them also all the shops, churches, and monasteries were destroyed, because—as the song goes—two hills fell across the city. The earthquake also killed two thousand nuns in convents, as well as nine thousand priests.

The song continues with a description of the catastrophe in Africa: the disaster there was supposed to be even greater. The Moroccan prince was on the field with his people and the soldiers, who stayed in tents. In the earthquake, which occurred within a single minute, everything was destroyed, along with weapons and livestock. Thirty thousand people were believed to have died. The cities of Fes and Meknes were leveled in the earthquake just when people were about to sit down and have lunch. The information provided in the song obviously also refers to aftershocks, or a new earthquake that occurred on 18 November, which was even worse than the first one and completely destroyed the towns described (Meyers 1981: 1268).

The song is therefore also about the earthquake in Africa, which is not mentioned in the songs published in Korytko's collection of 1844. A closer look nevertheless finds parallels between this song and the second song about the Lisbon earthquake from this collection. In the song, which Korytko published as a folk song, some documentary data were lost or changed. Just a modest description of the catastrophe with the presentation of people's horror remained; however, the described arrival of people in the city, which took place after eight hours, does not mention whether these were people that escaped the city and returned to retrieve their possessions, or people from the surrounding area that came to steal the victims' possessions.

The transfer of songs into oral tradition and its transfer in oral tradition caused significant changes in both individual details and the basic data, such as the number of victims: ninety thousand victims turned into twelve thousand, only the number of dead nuns and priests stayed the same. However, the biggest difference between the song written in Ambrožič's collection and the song published in Korytko's collection is that the memory of the earthquake in Africa was lost: only the description of camels killed by the earthquake remained. The Prince of Morocco was replaced by the Prince of Navarre, a region in Spain that was under French rule at that time. The mention of the Prince of Navarre may refer to the aid that the nearby state offered in this grand-scale catastrophe.

The Lisbon earthquake caused a turning point in several aspects. Among other things, it marked the beginning of global solidarity and mutual assistance (Halter 2005), which may be indicated by the mention of the Prince of Navarre in the second folksong published in Korytko's collection. The awareness of the need for examining the causes and consequences of the earthquake triggered the development of new scientific disciplines such as seismography, geology, and sociology (Vidrih 2006: 25; Halter 2005). Nonetheless, this earthquake also introduced doubt about God's justice into the European mental space, which was also expressed in Voltaire and Goethe's writings (Gspan 1978: 171; Halter 2005). The Slovenian versions of the song about the Lisbon earthquake do not report anything about this doubt. The answer to this question—whether this is due to the changes caused by the oral transmission of the songs, or the fact that Slovenian songs about the Lisbon earthquake were simply different—is indicated by the oldest publication of this song in Slovenian territory.

THE LISBON EARTHQUAKE AND THE MESSAGE OF THE SONG LEAFLET:  
A SONG AS AN EXPRESSION OF SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE

In 1932, the Slovenian public got to know the original song about the Lisbon earthquake, which was printed on a leaflet. The leaflet has been preserved in the private library of the family of the Slovenian writer Ivan Tavčar, at Visoko Mansion near Škofja Loka (Gspan 1978: 171).

The song of the horror of the earthquake and flood that happened in the year 1765,<sup>7</sup> on the first of November in Portugal in this prestigious city of Lisbon.<sup>8</sup>

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. <i>Kajfen strah zeu sveit prebaje,</i><br/><i>Kader se Bog refserdi,</i><br/><i>Svoje shtrafinge vendaje,</i><br/><i>S' nami rajtengo derfhi,</i><br/><i>Nasho pregreho shrafuje,</i><br/><i>Ta zhlovek pak nespofna,</i><br/><i>K' pokuri nafs napeluje,</i><br/><i>Tudi enem odlog da.</i></p>           | <p>What fear fills the world<br/>When God becomes enraged,<br/>Giving out his sentences,<br/>Demanding payment.<br/>He is punishing us for our sins,<br/>Which a man does not realize,<br/>Leads us to repentance,<br/>Gives us some reprieve.</p>                          |
| <p>2. <i>V sdigni se jeklenu ferze,</i><br/><i>Kir se femla vsdiguje,</i><br/><i>Spusti shalost v' tvoje perfse,</i><br/><i>Sposnai, kdu gospoduje.</i><br/><i>Pried si vfemi pobulshanie,</i><br/><i>dokler je ura nu zhas,</i><br/><i>Vidish boshje mafshuanie,</i><br/><i>Koku Bog fna vkonzhat nafs.</i></p> | <p>Stand up, you steely heart,<br/>Because the earth is rising,<br/>Let sorrow enter your breast,<br/>Recognize who rules.<br/>Decide to reform,<br/>While there is still time<br/>You see God's revenge<br/>How God can destroy us.</p>                                    |
| <p>3. <i>Pogledaite Lisabona,</i><br/><i>Meiftu kir mu gliha ni,</i></p> <p><i>Szieranu s' Kralovo Krono,</i><br/><i>Sedei pak potfutu lesbi.</i><br/><i>Taku fna Bug obyfkati,</i><br/><i>Kdur pred greham ne besbi,</i><br/><i>Kdur nozhe nega spofnati,</i><br/><i>Vfelei pregresfhnu shivi.</i></p>          | <p>Look at Lisbon,<br/>The city to which nothing can be<br/>compared,<br/>Decorated with the royal crown,<br/>Now lying destroyed.<br/>Thus, God can visit<br/>Anyone who does not flee from sin,<br/>Anyone who refuses to recognize him,<br/>And always lives in sin.</p> |

<sup>7</sup> The mistake in the title is evident.

<sup>8</sup> Peifem od grofe tega potrefsa inu potopa, kateru se je sgodilu v' tem Lejtu 1765, tega perviga Novembra v' Portugali v tem jmenitnem Meiftu LISABONA.

4. *Gradi, hišbe nu šidovi  
fo se tam potšipali,  
Turni nu pološt Kralovi  
so se grublam sgliali.  
Kai fen strah nu trepetanje  
Je tamkei videt billu:  
Kai fen jok nu klaguanje  
Se je tamkaj slišhalu.*
5. *Kar ta semla ni pošherla,  
Se je s' ognam šzeralu,  
Ktera hišha se ni poderla,  
Je s' vetram ferderbanu.  
Tudi morje grofovritnu,  
Od vetra peršilenu,  
Je potopilu serditu  
Velku hišh nevsmlenu.*
6. *Veslele peršhone sdrave,  
So potšute s' to semlo,  
Gospudi, nu šhlahtne frave  
Pod kamenjam konz jemlo,  
Tem bogatemo blagu flati,  
Ni moglu pomagati.  
Však je mogou leben dati,  
V' svoji kervi kopati.*
7. *Otrak na materneh perseh,  
Je mati s' otrakam vred,  
So obzhutli martro v šerzeh,  
Mogli grofšnu v' kupei vmret.  
Ogen, veter, nu nefrezhe,  
Strah nu šhalošt v' v'ših kotih.  
To Lisabona refmezhe,  
Po v'ših štraneh nu platih.*
8. *Tukai ozha svoje deite,  
Vidi v' karvi plavati,  
Tamkai gošpa svoje dekle,  
Slišhi v' ogni jamrati.  
Karvavo pezheni ludie  
Tamkai na kupeh lešhe,  
Kter pred oignam vjeti ozhjo,  
Ti le pak v' morju vtope.*
- Castles, houses, and walls  
Collapsed there,  
Towers and the royal palace  
Turned into ruins.  
What fear and trembling  
Was seen there:  
What weeping and lament  
Was heard over there.  
What was not swallowed by the earth,  
Was decorated with fire,  
Houses that did not collapse,  
Were destroyed in the wind.  
Even the terrible sea,  
Forced by the wind  
Wrathfully flooded  
Many houses mercilessly.  
Happy and healthy persons  
Are buried in this earth,  
Lords and noble ladies  
Are dying under the rocks,  
The rich ones' golden goods  
Could not help them.  
Everyone had to give his life,  
And bathe in his own blood.  
The baby on the mother's breast,  
Mother together with her baby,  
They felt pain in their hearts,  
When they had to die together terribly.  
Fire, wind, and disaster,  
Fear and sadness in all corners.  
Tear Lisbon apart,  
On all sides and parts.  
Here the father sees his baby  
Swimming in the blood,  
A lady over there hears her maid  
Moaning in the fire.  
People burned and bleeding,  
Are lying over there in piles,  
Those who want to escape the fire,  
Are just drowned in the sea.

9. *Gleite koku Bug mogozhni  
Velke gore ponifha,  
Nu de fo lih turni mozhni,  
K' temu prahu pergliha.  
O serditi Kral Nebeshki:  
Mi spofnamo tvojo muzh,  
Sanefsi dufhi zlovefhki,  
Podai nie to vezhno Luzh.  
KONZ.*

*Ovsmileni Gospud JESU Christe!  
mi te pohleunu profsimo:  
skus tvojo prebritko terpleinie,  
inu smertno britkufst,  
vsmili se zhes vse lete,  
kateri fo v' ti nefhrezhi smert sturili.  
Amen.  
(cited in Debeljak 1932: 688–689)*

See how almighty God  
Levels great mountains,  
And even though the towers are strong,  
He turns them into dust.  
Oh, the angry Heavenly King,  
We know your strength,  
Spare the human soul,  
Grant it the perpetual light.  
THE END.

O merciful Lord Jesus Christ!  
We ask you humbly:  
Through your bitter suffering  
And your bitter death,  
Have mercy on all those  
Who have died in this disaster.  
Amen.

In the leaflet, which has been preserved at Visoko Mansion, a poem was printed that was apparently the basis for creating the first song about the Lisbon earthquake in Korytko's collection. Linguistic awkwardness and spelling inconsistency of the song again indicate the poor education of the author. However, the prayer added to the song is worth special attention. In this case, it was not a prayer against unexpected death, as previously thought (Gspan 1978: 171), but a prayer for all victims of the earthquake, which completely changes the view of the role of this Slovenian song.

The Lisbon earthquake introduced doubt in God's justice to the European mental space, whereas the Slovenian song leaflet provided a prayer for all the victims. This is actually the feature that most distinguishes Slovenian variants of the songs about the Lisbon earthquake from the reactions of European intellectuals. At a time when, due to a major disaster, Europe called into question God's justice, both Slovenian songs about the Lisbon earthquake called for repentance and also asked God to protect people from disaster. The prayer added to the song on the leaflet had another important message: it provided spiritual help to all those that perished in the Lisbon earthquake.

The leaflet found at Visoko clearly shows how the news of the devastating earthquake spread, especially because the deadliest earthquake in recent European history was also the first global media event (Halter 2005). In this respect, a comparison with three songs (or song leaflets) that have been preserved in Central Europe is very informative. These are song responses to the tragic event, which differ both from the Slovenian song about

the earthquake and among themselves. They include a very documentary German record that largely focuses on the difficulties of victims finding a solution to free themselves (Richter 1972: 5–6);<sup>9</sup> a record from Tyrol, in which the author is a young Anna Catrina Schuechterin from Tschagguns (Montafon);<sup>10</sup> and record from Switzerland, which in addition to human casualties—it mentions more than one hundred thousand, just like the Tyrolean record—estimates the value of lost gold and silver.<sup>11</sup> All three records preserved have a distinct novella-like character: in the introduction they invite the audience to listen to the song about the devastating earthquake, and then they each go on to describe the disaster that struck Lisbon in their own way. What all three songs have in common is that they consider the Lisbon earthquake a divine punishment, and therefore invite listeners to reform and ask God for mercy.

Despite these conclusions that bring these songs closer to the preaching models, the foreign examples differ significantly from the Slovenian ones not only in the presentation of the content, but especially in the function of the song messages. These examples have a notable novella-like emphasis, which shows that the songs were presented as songs about terrifying events—that is, as broadside ballads. In contrast, for the Slovenian songs organists played an important role in spreading and preserving, or perhaps even producing, these songs. This is shown by both the preservation of these songs by organists Repež and Ambrožič and by the use of this song's tune as the basis for new creativity. Moreover, this finding also raises the question of the role of organists in the Slovenian production of songs with a novella character.

Alongside the preserved Slovenian song leaflet and the prayer accompanying the song, the role of Slovenian organists raises another important question: was the attitude expressed in this prayer a Slovenian special feature, or was it just one of the responses to the disaster in Portugal, which was not linked to nationality, but has been preserved only in Slovenia? The search for this answer reveals not only the consequences of the Lisbon earthquake, but also the attitude to the world at large or its changing.

<sup>9</sup> The copy is kept by the German Folksong Archive (*Deutsches Volksliedarchiv*, in the following text used as abbreviation: DVA) in Freiburg, B 18652. I would like to thank the librarian at the archive, Barbara Boock, for providing the archival copies.

<sup>10</sup> DVA, Bla 552, copy of Paul Beck's quotation in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* in Berlin 1906, Nr. 4, p. 55 (*Forschung u. Mitteilungen zur Geschichte Tirols. u. Vorarlbergs*).

<sup>11</sup> DVA, A 62063; originally in the Swiss Archive for Folklore Studies (SVA), 14 361, p. 24.

“THE SONG ABOUT LISBON” AND SLOVENIAN FOLKLORE STUDIES,  
OR THE SLOVENIAN RECEPTION OF THE LISBON EARTHQUAKE  
AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The overview of Slovenian songs about the Lisbon earthquake, compared to the responses of European intellectuals, thus indicates important changes in the attitude towards the world. It is exactly these songs and their subsequent fate that offer important conclusions at another level: the ideological changes that affected Europe (Gspan 1978: 171; Halter 2005) were followed by changes in the attitudes towards the songs that were related to foreign people and other nations.

After the death of Emil Korytko, the editor of the first collection of Slovenian folksongs, the songs about Lisbon were no longer found in standard folksong collections, although they were still largely preserved in transcriptions (Petelin 1875; Kokošar [no year]). Namely, in the second half of the nineteenth century the Slovenian concept of assessing and editing folksongs became stricter: because of the interconnections between the Slovenian and German cultures, which was primarily facilitated by the incorporation of Slovenian ethnic territory into the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the opposition to foreign influences was one of the fundamental requirements of efforts in folklore studies. In the second half of the nineteenth century, this requirement was further enhanced due to ethnic tensions. The comprehensive collection of Slovenian folksongs, *Slovenske narodne pesmi*, whose first part edited by the Slavic studies professor Karel Štrekelj was published in 1895 in Graz (Štrekelj 1895), was very consistent in eliminating songs with a clear foreign influence. The song “Lisbon Flooded” thus cannot be found in Štrekelj’s collection.<sup>12</sup>

On 14 April of the same year (1895), Ljubljana was struck by an earthquake, which mostly caused property damage (Vidrih 2006: 22–24). However, although this earthquake could not be compared with the impact of the Lisbon earthquake, it evoked memories of it: in the newspaper *Slovenski narod* (Slovenian Nation), the Slovenian poet and writer Josip Stritar published the poem “Slovenska Lizbona” (The Slovenian Lisbon), which he also translated into German and published it the Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* a day earlier—that is, on 24 April. The poem brought considerable financial support to Ljubljana, which was also the purpose of these publications. It was also published in Croatian and Czech translation (Nepodpisano 1895: 385–387). However, Stritar’s poem also shows that the Lisbon earthquake was still present in the consciousness of the Slovenians.

<sup>12</sup> On this basis, the two songs about Lisbon were also excluded from the contemporary basic collection of Slovenian folksongs, as part of which five volumes of narrative songs have been published so far (SLP I–V, 1970–2007). This collection has complemented Štrekelj’s previous collection of Slovenian folksongs, but the songs about the Lisbon earthquake were not included in it, although they were known to the editors (Kumer 1976: 124). Exclusion of these songs demonstrates the durability of established folklore viewpoints, which considered the validation of national identity to be the goal of folklore studies.



Stritar's poem "The Slovenian Lisbon" highlighted another aspect: the earthquake itself and its parallels with the Lisbon earthquake were intended to make Ljubljana famous. Stritar expressed this very directly in the fifth verse:

<i>Ljubljana, prej po svetu malo znana,</i>	Ljubljana, little known in the world in the past,
<i>Imenovana redko med narodi!</i>	Rarely spoken of among nations!
<i>Zdaj, opustošena in razdejana,</i>	Now, devastated and destroyed,
<i>Zaslula boš povsod po ti nezgodi.</i>	You'll become famous everywhere for this disaster.
<i>Lizbono bodo te slovensko zvali,</i>	You'll be called the Slovenian Lisbon,
<i>Rodovi pozni še te milovali</i>	And pitied by future generations. (Stritar 1895: 22)

Thanks to Josip Stritar, this poem was also printed on a leaflet (Dolenc 1982: 115), in which he relied on the tradition of publishing these types of songs on leaflets. The poetic response to the Ljubljana earthquake thus symbolically concluded the story of the devastating 1775 Lisbon earthquake and the special Slovenian response to it. This is a story that, despite the geographic distance, left deep traces among Slovenians and in its own way provided a perspective not only on the completely unknown inhabitants of large and wealthy Lisbon, but also on the views of Slovenian folklore studies and in its assessment of the songs about the fate of distant nations.

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## PESMI O LIZBONSKEM POTRESU ALI SLOVENSKI ODZIV NA ZGODBO O NESREČI DRUGEGA

*Zbiranje slovenskih ljudskih pesmi je dobilo v 19. stoletju izrazito nacionalnopromocijski značaj in je bilo namenjeno predstavitvi tistega izročila, v katerem so zapisovalci in uredniki prepoznali nacionalno izvornost. V prvi zbirki slovenskih ljudskih pesmi, Slovenske pesmi krajniskiga naróda, ki jo je s pomočjo slovenskih sodelavcev pripravil poljski emigrant Emil Korytko, pa sta bili leta 1844 objavljeni dve pesmi z naslovom Lisbona potopljena. Uvrstitev teh pesmi v nacionalno zbirko, ki je za Slovence zaradi tuje pesemske snovi presenetljiva, kaže na širši koncept urednika in na pomen te pesmi v slovenskem izročilu.*

*Pesmi se nanašata na siloviti potres 1. novembra leta 1755, ki je skoraj v celoti porušil Lizbono. Nastali sta kot del izjemne medijske odmevnosti tega dogodka, kar pa se v njiju kaže na različne načine. V prvi pesmi potres v Lizboni pesniku služi kot zgled, eksempel, na podlagi katerega dokazuje veljavnost krščanskega nauka in kliče k spreobrnjenju in pokori. Druga pesem je pozornjša do samega dogajanja; dogodek predstavlja z večjo empatijo za trpljenje ljudi in ga sklene s priprošnjo Mariji. Iz zapisov ni mogoče razbrati geneze pesmi, njuno odmevnost pa dokazujejo zapisi posameznih variant s konca 19. in celo z začetka 20. stoletja. Ne objave ne rokopisi teh pesmi pa ne vsebujejo podatkov o tem, za kateri potres v Lizboni gre in kako sta pesmi prišli na Slovensko.*

*Odgovore na to ponujajo starejši zapisi. V pesmarici Filipa Jakoba Repeža, ki je prvič izšla leta 1770, je v pesmi, namenjeni prošnji procesiji za dež, uporabljena melodija pesmi o lizbonskem*

potresu. Repežev sodobnik Jožef Ambrožič, organist v Dobropolju na Dolenjskem, pa je v svojih zapisih pri štirih pesmih navedel, da se pojejo »na vižo Lizabone«. Zapisovalec ljudskih pesmi Franc Kramar, ki je na začetku dvajsetega stoletja poročal o Ambrožičevem delu, je opozoril tudi na kontekst izvirne pesmi, torej na potres v Lizboni leta 1755. Objavil je tudi izvirno pesem in podatke o sami katastrofi.

Za razumevanje slovenskih pesmi o lizbonskem potresu je pomemben tudi širši evropski kontekst. Pregled dogajanja tem prostoru namreč kaže, da je siloviti potres v Lizboni prinesel prelom v več pogledih: pomenil je začetek globalne solidarnosti in medsebojne pomoči, zavedanje potrebe po preučevanju vzrokov in posledic potresa pa je sprožilo razvoj novih znanstvenih disciplin, kot so seizmografija, geologija, sociologija in drugih. Hkrati je v evropski miselni prostor vnesel dvom o božji pravičnosti, ki sta ga v svojih zapisih izrazila tudi Voltaire in Goethe.

Znane slovenske variante pesmi o lizbonskem potresu o tem dvomu ne sporočajo ničesar. Razloge za to razkriva najdba slovenske predloge oziroma izvirnika, letaka, objavljenega leta 1932, ki se je ohranil na dvorcu Visoko pri Škofji Loki. Primerjava kaže, da je bila na letaku natisnjena pesem, ki je bila osnova za nastanek prve pesmi o lizbonskem potresu v Korytkovi zbirki. Pesmi je dodana molitev za vse žrtve potresa.

Medtem ko je torej lizbonski potres v evropski miselni prostor vnesel dvom o božji pravičnosti, je slovenski pesemski letak prinesel molitev za vse žrtve. Ta značilnost slovenske variante pesmi o potresu v Lizboni najbolj ločuje od odziva evropskih razumnikov: v času, ko je Evropa zaradi velike nesreče podvomila o božji pravičnosti, sta obe slovenski pesmi o lizbonskem potresu klicali k spreobrnitvi. Molitev je pomenila tudi duhovno pomoč vsem tistim, ki so umrli nenadne smrti. V tem se slovenski letak ločuje tudi od vsebine te pesmi na drugih pesemskih letakov, najdenih v srednjeevropskem prostoru, zasnovanih kot poulične ali sejmarske pesmi.

Primerjava s tujimi primeri kaže, da so imeli pri širjenju in ohranjanju ali morda tudi pri ustvarjanju slovenskih pesmi o tem dogodku pomembno vlogo organisti. Vloga organistov pa ob ohranjenem slovenskem pesemskem letaku oziroma ob molitvi, ki je pesmi dodana, odpira še eno pomembno vprašanje: ali je šlo v tem primeru za slovensko posebnost ali pa je šlo morda za enega od odzivov na veliko nesrečo na Portugalskem, povsem nasprotnega od dvoma, ki je tedaj zaznamoval evropske razumnike. Iskanje tega odgovora pa ne razkriva le posledic potresa v Lizboni, temveč odnos do sveta nasploh oziroma njegovo spreminjanje.

Spreminjal pa se ni le odnos do sveta, temveč tudi odnos do pesmi, ki so se nanašale na ustvarjalnost, povezano z drugimi narodi. Po smrti Emila Korytka, urednika prve zbirke slovenskih ljudskih pesmi, pesmi o Lizboni na Slovenskem ni več zaslediti v tiskani obliki, temveč le še v prepisih. V drugi polovici 19. stoletja se je na Slovenskem namreč koncept presojanja oziroma urejanja ljudskih pesmi zaostрил: zaradi prepletenosti slovenske kulture z nemško je bilo nasprotovanje tujim vplivom ena od temeljnih zahtev folklorističnih prizadevanj. Ta zahteva se je v drugi polovici 19. stoletja zaradi nacionalnih nasprotovanj stopnjevala. Velika zbirka slovenskih ljudskih pesmi, Slovenske narodne pesmi, ki jo je leta 1895 začel izdajati Karel Štrekelj, je bila pri izločanju pesmi s prepoznavnim tujim vplivom zelo dosledna. V Štreklevi zbirki tako pesem Lizbona potopljen zaman iščemo. Na lizbonski potres in na spomin nanj pa je prav v

*letu izida prvega zvezka Štrekljeve zbirke opozoril slovenski pesnik in pisatelj Josip Stritar, ki je v časopisu Slovenski narod objavil pesem »Slovenska Lizbona«, predstavljenem tudi v tujini. Primerjava ljubljanskega potresa z lizbonskim je v Stritarjevi pesmi Ljubljani prinesla precejšnjo finančno pomoč. Pesem hkrati dokazuje, da je bil lizbonski potres v tem času v zavesti Slovencev še vedno navzoč. Stritar je poskrbel tudi za natis te pesmi na letaku, s čimer se je naslonil na tradicijo objavljanja pesmi te vrste na letakih. Pesemski odziv na ljubljanski potres je tako simbolično sklenil zgodbo o potresu, ki ga je leta 1775 sprožila velika katastrofa v Lizboni, in zgodbo o slovenskem odzivu nanj.*

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Assist. Prof. Marija Klobčar, ZRC SAZU, Institute of Ethnomusicology  
Novi trg 2, SI-1000 Ljubljana, marija.klobcar@zrc-sazu.si