First Slovene Book

The publication of first Slovene book is one of the most important cultural events in the Slovene history. This event placed Slovenes as the second cultural nations of Europe, with that the emancipation process of Slovenes as a nation began.

In the 16 century the reformation took over the Slovene country, giving Slovenes literature. The establishment of the Protestant Church in Germany and the new movement inspired by Martin Luther soon reached Slovenia. New ideas about how the Catholic Church should be reformed were brought to Slovenia by students of German universities such as the important Slovene men of letters Primož Trubar, Jurij Dalmatin and Adam Bohorič.

In 1550, the Protestant reformer Primož Trubar (1508-1586) published first two Slovene books "Catechismus" and "Abecedarium". Excommunicated from the Catholic Church he was forced to leave Slovenia and he moved to Germany in 1547. There the first two books ever written in the Slovene language were written in Rothenburg in 1550 and printed the same year in Tuebingen. The theological image of "Catechismus", which is also the first Slovene music print due to its inclusion of songs and musical notes, proves the authors support for various Lutheran and other religions.

These first two books were printed in Gothic alphabet. As the Slovene word was not written until then Trubar had to decide in which language he would write due to the large number of Slovene dialogues. HE decided for his Kranjsko dialogue from the Central Dolenjsko region of Slovenia. The Dolenjsko dialogue thus became the first basis of Slovene literature and remained this for more than 200 years before the Gorenjsko dialogue started to supersede it.

In "Catechismus" Trubar for the first time labelled his compatriots by the current name "Slovenci" (Slovenes), while he signed himself with the pseudonym Philopatridus Illyricus (The patriot from Ilirsko). In the "Abecedarium" Trubar labelled himself as the "friend of all Slovenes", his stated aim was: to write books in a language, which could easily be understood by all Slovenes.

Trubar had a first Slovene book printed, thus making history as the father of Slovene literature. Moreover, he is credited with the idea that Slovenes are a nation, which represents the beginning of gradual national awareness-raising. Not only does Trubar's work mark the beginning of Slovene literature in the narrow sense, but signifies the advent of original prose, poetry, philosophic thought, writing about political tasks as well as theological discussion and popularisation of the name Slovenes.

Naturally this work of the Protestants was also part of a much longer and older historical process, which can be traced right back to the 6th century and the founding of the state of Carantanian Slovenians (Carantania), the most important political formulation in the centuries-long process of Slovene nation-building.

The other two most important Protestant works are the Bible translated into Slovene by Jurij Dalmatin and the Slovenian Grammar by Adam Bohorič, both published in 1584.