

Alojz JEMBRIH

Stipan Konzul and the “Bible Institute” in Urach

Discussions and Material on Croatian Literary Production in Urach (1561.-1565.) and Regensburg (1568.). Contribution to the History of the Croatian Language and the Literature of Protestantism.

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ABRIDGED

This literary historic study on Stipan Konzul and the “Bible Institute” in Urach, which was written by an excellent connoisseur of Croatian Protestantism, Alojz Jembrih, describes the activities of the Croatian Protestant priest, author and translator, Stipan Konzul Istranin (1521-1579?). The book exclusively investigates Konzul’s activities in the Urach Protestant press (1561-1565) – including his stay in Regensburg (till 1568) and Željezno and the surrounding area (till around 1579). It is based on conserved original material, stored in the middle European libraries and archives (Tübingen, Stuttgart, and elsewhere). Even though a good part of this material has already been published (Kostrenčić, Bučar and others), in his book, Jembrih brings valuable replicas and copies of materials that have not yet been published or materials that are hard to get, of which, from the Tübingen materials, the collection of testimonies about the validity of the Urach translations of the glagolitic New Testament should be specially mentioned.

After the foreword, in which the author concludes that the “*glagolitica protestantica croatica*” is an important part of the national continuity and identity, comes the first part of the book, “The First Swing,” which is comprised of three chapters. In the

first chapter, the author describes the business of Petar Pavao Vergerije and Primož Trubar regarding the Slovenian and Croatian translation of the Bible. The second chapter talks about the pre-production glagolitic (1560) and cyrilic (1561) print, and about Konzul’s handwritten translation of a fragment (John 9 and Acts 1) from the New Testament (1560). The third chapter considers the demonstrative glagolitic alphabet printed in Europe before Konzul’s Nürnberg pre-production print.

The body of Jembrih’s book is the second part of the work, “The Philological Horizon,” in which a detailed report on Konzul’s activities in the Urach press is given. It is divided into eight chapters. In the first chapter, (“From Encouragement and Preparing to the Success in the Urach Press”), the author considers inequalities in the scientific literature about the true nature of the Urach press (Press, library, Bible Translation Institute, or even the first Bible society in history). Then the theme of the creation and characteristics of glagolitic and cyrilic catechisms from 1561 is elaborated. In the second chapter, (“The Conflict Over the Croatian Translation of the New Testament /1562/63/”) and third, (“Testimonies About the Linguistic Accuracy of the Glagolitic New Testament (1562)”)

Trubar's and Konzul's preparation is described and Konzul's work on the oldest Croatian translation of the Bible, with associates from Croatia (Antun Dalmatin, Juraj Cvečić, Juraj Juričić, and others). The difficulties that arose in the press after the occurrence of tensions between Trubar and Konzul are also analyzed.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of the second part describe some of the works published in the Urach press (the latinic *Catechism* from 1564 compared to the glagolitic *Catechism* from 1562, as well as the *Goverenje vele prudno/Beneficium Christi*, glagolitic edition from 1563 and latinic from 1565).

The important seventh chapter talks about "The Name of the Language in the Printed Urach Croatian Editions (1561-1565)," where this language is explicitly and consequently called Croatian (croatische, harvacki, and other), even when the works were printed in the cyrillic alphabet ("im crobatischer Sprach mit cyrulischen Buchstaben gedruckt", *Postilla* 1563). This original name of the language testifies about the linguistic and cultural independence of Croats in the period of the Reformation. The last chapter of this part, "*Croatica Protestantica* in Correspondence of Slavists in the 19th and 20th Century," brings a couple of letters from the correspondence of Franc Kidrič, Franjo Fancev and Ivan Kostrenčić with Vatroslav Jagić, that give insight into their work with Protestant books and the Croatian language.

The third part of Jembrih's book, "Among His Own," considers Konzul's work after the cease of activities of the Urach press, when he lives in Regensburg, and then in Željezno and the surrounding area, among the Croats in Gradišće. In the

second chapter, he describes Konzul's and Dalmatin's *Postilla* from 1568, and the last chapter brings Konzul's correspondence from 1567/68.

The fourth part of the book brings a short pictorial review on the mention of the character and work of Stipan Konzul in Buzetin in the present day.

Jembrih's book about Konzul is a respectable compendium of relevant material about Ungnad's press enterprise in Urach that will serve as a starting point for further research about the language and writing of Croatian reformers of the Urach circle. The book is a collection of related literal historic discussions about the activities of the Urach press, Urach translators and associates, as well as some more important Urach editions. Jembrih's discussions, with the unarguable scientific note of a precise literal historian and philologist, occasionally give off an essayistic and even polemic color, especially in places where the author elaborates upon the identity and importance of the Croatian language. Even though writings in such a collection are connected by specific and encompassed themes, the book is also open for further improvement, since there are still more important Croatian Protestant editions that are not available in copies nor are they expertly elaborated upon. Also, a more complete review of Konzul's "pre-Urach" period is missing, which is, after all, the task of "classic" Protestant historians.

With contributions and illustrations, a remark about the archives and libraries that gave the published material, a biography of the author, and a list of relevant sources and literature, as well as a list of personal names, is added to the book.

Ruben Knežević