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## BOOK AS AN ART OBJECT IN 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY EUROPE: ON THE BASIS OF 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BOOKS IN SLOVENIAN LIBRARIES

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*In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, printed book becomes a unique designed art work. There is almost no distinction of printed elements in books from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and ones printed in the incunabula period as the thinking about book production was still under the influence of the manuscript tradition. But throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century and especially at the end of it, the basic thinking about books changed. The modified role of books in High Renaissance and Mannerism could be seen as a consequence of social and technical changes in society on the one hand and as a reason for the newly born and formatting reading culture on the other. Mass production was at that point primarily introduced to the Western World. In spite of all transformation that our society has been gone through in these past five centuries, some of the basic elements of printed books, which were acknowledged already in the period under study, are still used not only in printed media, but also in other accompanying production. There was a research made on books printed till 1600. Inserted graphic works which are all illustrations, secondary decoration and initials, were analyzed. All books embraced by the research are kept in two Slovenian libraries. However, as Slovenia had almost no printing production of its own in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the picture we get from the research can be regarded as an overview of printing production in Renaissance Europe.*

*Key words: early prints, High Renaissance, philosophy, aesthetics, illustration, book decoration*

### INTRODUCTION

In the National and University Library of Slovenia (further on referred to as NUK), in ecclesiastical libraries and in some other Slovenian libraries we keep a large number of manuscripts, incunabula and books

printed before the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Manuscripts and incunabula have already been analyzed, exhibited and catalogued by different authors<sup>1</sup>. The story of 16<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>1</sup> A full codicological description of manuscripts from different Slovenian monasteries was

prints is quite different. Except for a few attempts to catalogue stocks of smaller libraries and several thematic researches on protestant literature<sup>2</sup>, we still do not have a complete overview of the whole number of titles from that period, kept in Slovenia today. The NUK collection contains around 3000 books printed between 1501 and 1600, but the number quoted is not exact. We know that there are 135 titles in the National Museum in Ljubljana<sup>3</sup> and 224 units in the Franciscan monastery in Novo mesto<sup>4</sup>.

Just to remind us, in Italy where printing production was most intensive in Renaissance Europe, they have already collected bibliographical information on all Italian 16<sup>th</sup> century prints together with biographies of printers and publishers. The collected data have been gathered in a catalogue of

prints presented in and accessible from the Internet database<sup>5</sup>. Something similar was made in German libraries: prints have been catalogued and are now accessible via the Internet<sup>6</sup>. Compared to other European countries, we still seem to have a lot of work to do<sup>7</sup>. For this reason, it has been decided that data will be systematically collected and so, approximately four years ago when I was still working on my doctoral thesis, a pilot search was carried out in the Franciscan monastery in Novo mesto in which bibliographical data, illustrations and decorations and also bindings of 16<sup>th</sup>-century books kept in their library were analyzed<sup>8</sup>. Results were then used for the formulation and determination of the basic elements and categories included in the new Internet programme compiled in order to collect general information about 16<sup>th</sup>-century prints in Slovenia<sup>9</sup>. In this programme, a full codicological description is given for every

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given by Golob [18; 19]; Gspan and Badalič made a catalogue of Slovenian incunabula [20]; Vignjevič [43] and Rupert [32] studied illustrations in incunabula; Bregač researched incunabula kept in the Franciscan monastery in Novo mesto [9].

<sup>2</sup> Individual studies referring to the material kept in the National Museum in Ljubljana were made by Dular [11]; Simoniti made bibliography of philosophical texts and important studies about humanists in Slovenia [34; 35; 36]; Bahor [2] researched ecclesiastic libraries; Rupel [31], Berčič [3] and Glavan [15] studied protestant prints; some smaller studies were also made by other authors [23; 40].

<sup>3</sup> Old prints and the cultural background of Slovene society from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on were discussed by Dular [10].

<sup>4</sup> In the research about printers' devices, bibliographic data were also given for all 16<sup>th</sup> century prints [24].

<sup>5</sup> Information about Italian prints, printers, titles and authors of texts in the 16<sup>th</sup> century can be found on EDIT 16 [13].

<sup>6</sup> You can find the examples on VD 16 [42].

<sup>7</sup> **Studies about library funds can help us in measuring the cultural level of society in a specific historical period.** However, statements can only be superficial until preserved material is fully analyzed [35, 58].

<sup>8</sup> A catalogue of all prints kept in the Franciscan library in Novo mesto is now being prepared and will be published next year.

<sup>9</sup> With the help of the NUK computer center, a database was formed, in which every book has its own ID number with a blank form attached to it. After the forms are completed, accompanying pictures of integral parts of books are added.

book, describing not only bibliographical entities and printing particularities but also binding structures, materials, marginalia, proprietorial inscriptions and provenances of individual books, giving us information about their owners and readers<sup>10</sup>.

This programme was afterwards applied to the stock kept in the NUK, and while writing this contribution I was hoping to finish the research in the NUK: unfortunately, some titles remained still unchecked. Nevertheless, the first results could be obtained, and they are presented here. As there is not enough space in one article for exploring all different aspects of this extensive study, I will have to limit this contribution to only a few of them. Therefore, I will only try to present 16<sup>th</sup>-century imprints from our NUK stock as *art objects* in the light of two major philosophical tendencies. However, before we step into aesthetical theories, just a word or two about the application of the mentioned programme to the national library stock and the results it has given us.

#### EARLY PRINTS IN THE NUK

As I have already mentioned, there are around 3000 titles of 16<sup>th</sup>-century prints in

the NUK, bound either as separate books or gathered in units, only six of which were found to be printed on the territory today known as Slovenia (i. e. in Ljubljana). All six of them came from the same printing-office<sup>11</sup> and have a Protestant connotation. After closing this first printing-office it took another hundred years to establish a new one. But the population living in our region<sup>12</sup> was eager to read; as a result, we can find in the NUK (and other libraries in Slovenia) prints from different European countries (see Chart 1)<sup>13</sup> such as Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, England, Czech Republic and of course from Italy<sup>14</sup>. The NUK collection includes two

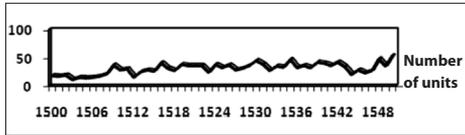
<sup>10</sup> Marginalia are not, of course, the only sources of evidence for the encounters of readers and writers, either inside or outside the covers of individual volumes. They are part of a circuit of production and consumption involving a wide range of agents and techniques. But contemporary annotations represent an extensive and still largely untapped archive of information about the lives of books and their place in the intellectual, spiritual, and social lives of their readers [33, 119–137].

<sup>11</sup> The first printing office in Ljubljana and Slovenia was established by Janž Mandelc, also Manlius or Mannel. His office was closed by Catholics, and he was deported from Ljubljana. Afterwards he worked in Hungary and Croatia [4, 42–48].

<sup>12</sup> We cannot talk about Slovene nation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as it only emerged with its first political programme later on. Štih points out that Slovenians were formed through a long process of historical development, and only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Slovene name appears in the native language for the first time together with some kind of a programme formed with the Protestant book production (Trubar) which sees Slovenians as a unit [38]. About Slovene Protestant book production see also a text about Reformation in Slovenia [30].

<sup>13</sup> Presence of books on some territory shows us how people responded to new spiritual currents in their time. Spiritual currents are crucial parts of social cultural image [35, 51].

<sup>14</sup> In a document written in 1478 in Slovenia region, a new term for printed book (*liber stampatus*) appeared. The use of an Italian technical

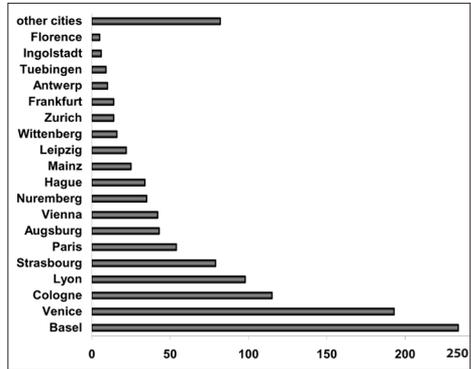


**Chart 1.** European production in the 16th century (the first 50 years) (the number of books steadily increased over the years)

copies of Francis Skaryna's *Malaia podorozhnaia knizhka* – one complete edition and a fragment of one of the final chapters (NUK R 19290) [7].

However, there are noticeable differences in the numbers of prints from different countries. Most of them (ca 21%) come from Switzerland, more specifically Basel. Although Venice takes the second place at the turn of the century, it leads by the number of prints in the first two decades<sup>15</sup>. Quite impressive is also the number of Cologne prints (and Lyon ones) and the ones from Strasbourg. Exact statistic data for the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century are shown in Chart 2.

Besides Protestant literature<sup>16</sup> and theological texts<sup>17</sup>, our stock involves a substantial number of philosophical and legal works, architectural manuals and belles-lettres,



**Chart 2.** Repartition of book production till the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century (the number of books from each city in the NUK)

numerous are travelogues and geographical books containing maps and descriptions of places throughout the world, including America – the new world. Quite popular in those days were also cosmographies, histories of the Roman Empire, books about mythology, etc. This magnitude and diversity of themes present in 16<sup>th</sup>-century books are excellent indicators of a notable reading culture<sup>18</sup> of the time, – not only in countries with well-developed printing production, but also in our region<sup>19</sup>. In this context, the

term for this novelty witnesses that early prints came to us mostly from Italy [35, 58; 5, 46]

<sup>15</sup> Altogether there were at least 2894 printers and publishers in 151 printing cities in Italy till the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century [6, 167–168].

<sup>16</sup> There are altogether a little less than 100 Protestant books in the NUK, written by Slovene authors. The ones written by foreign authors are not included in this number.

<sup>17</sup> Bibles, gospels, etc. present a high percentage of all printed texts in European production in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>18</sup> The interests of the educated reader extended well beyond the needs of the school, and covered practically all branches of literature cultivated by the humanists: their copies, editions, translations and commentaries of the ancient classics as well as their treatises on grammar and rhetoric, their letters, orations and poems that were often used as models of stylistic imitation, their works of historiography, and finally their moral treatises and dialogues [26, 83].

<sup>19</sup> Although only a scrap of former libraries survived till today, the numbers and themes present today are still impressive. Many books have

reading public played an important role as it raised and directed the standards of printing production and finally regulated the outcome of the trade by purchasing products or not. A passage referring to the reader often appears as a supplement to the text of a book. Sometimes it is added by the printer, like, for instance, in the case of a translation quoted below: “We now print those works separately, so that you (the reader) can attach it to whichever volume you judge fit”<sup>20</sup>.

By publishing this line, Froben issues an invitation to his reader to construct the book which best suits his own understanding of the text [22, 168]. For us, this is an evidence of the importance of market needs and requirements when the form and design of prints were in matter, but all together highly depended on a book’s content. In this manner, the printing production of the 16<sup>th</sup> century can be classified by its final purpose, or we can say by its potential buyers, in different ways.

#### AESTHETICS IN BOOK PRODUCTION: CLASSIFICATION OF PRINTS

##### Expensive vs. inexpensive editions

A nice passage about printers, the usefulness of prints, their elegance, importance and ar-

tistic value can be found in Vasari’s *Delle vite de piu eccellenti pittori, scultori et architettori* first printed in 1550 and afterwards enlarged and again printed in 1568<sup>21</sup>. For this contribution, a translation by Gaston du C. de Vere was used [41]. In the part about *Marc Antonio Bolognese and others* he describes graphic techniques, numerous printers and their works.<sup>22</sup> Afterwards he continues:

“Many others have occupied themselves with copper-plate engraving who, although they have not attained such perfection, have nonetheless benefited the world with their labours by bringing many scenes and other works of excellent masters into the light of day and thus giving the means of seeing the various inventions and manners of the painters to those who are not able to go to the places where the original works are, and conveying to the ultramontanes a knowledge of many things that they did not know.” [41, 93–94]

Vasari here emphasizes the importance of spreading knowledge and new ideas by bringing it to the public with print production (numbers of copies printed). He also makes a distinction between good and bad prints and points at the first division of printing production, which can be made regarding the quality of imprints. Prints

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been carried away to Austria, Hungary and so on, or were burned by the Turks [35, 54]; Dular [10, 224–232] presents to us what citizens of Ljubljana in the 17<sup>th</sup> century could buy and read.

<sup>20</sup> A letter entitled “Io. Frob. Typographus candido lectori S.D.”, printed by Froben in the year 1526 on the verso of the title page of one of Erasmus texts [22, 168].

<sup>21</sup> Although Vasari’s text is prejudiced and influenced by patriotism for the Florentine municipal state, it is still an interesting source for analyzing Italian Renaissance art, style and artists.

<sup>22</sup> In the first edition, Vasari describes only Florentine artists. Afterwards he prepared additional texts on artists from Venice and other Italian cities.

can be categorized as those designed for selected notabilities (of the best quality) and those for a wider public<sup>23</sup>. The first ones are normally highly decorated and illustrated editions ordered and financially supported by patrons or wealthy men. In comparison to them, the others have badly manufactured types and plates, their decoration is far more superficial and illustrations seem to be there just to meet the demands or, even worse, to fill empty spaces. The reason for this carelessness in printing production could probably be greediness which was the result of time-consuming activities and material context [28, 30–32]. Vasari continues:

“And although many plates have been badly executed through the avarice of the printers, eager more for gain than for honour, yet in certain others, besides those that have been mentioned, there may be seen something good” [41, 93–94].

Competition and greediness forced printers to print as much as they could for low prices<sup>24</sup>. This trend exceeded the Ital-



**Figures 1, 2.** Initial S; two designs, comparison between expensive (Augsburg, 1541; NUK 11024) and inexpensive editions (Loewen, 1558; NUK 892)

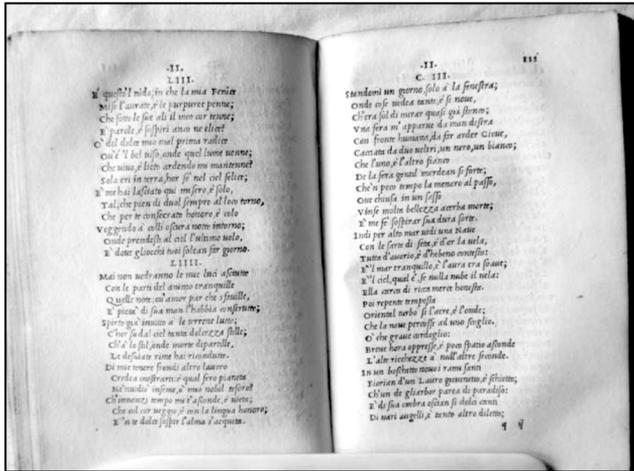
ian peninsula and found its new ground in Protestant printing centers where the number of copies in one edition did matter, but for another reason. The main purpose was to provide a sufficient amount of books to spread literacy among commons. An era of mass production began. As influences from Italy grew stronger, the production, for example, in Germany<sup>25</sup>, in some cases completely imitates Italian samples. It depicts all new, advanced forms like type characters or compositions of pages and formats, on the one hand, and on the other it also takes off with perfunctory impressions and desultory decoration that appeared as common practice in Italian production already in its early stage (see Figures 1, 2).

later, ballads, accounts of battles, festivals, funerals, lurid stories – these paid the bills [29, 282].

<sup>23</sup> Vasari already suggested that prints are used by commons and not only by few selected individuals [41, 93–94]; an analysis of the structure of students enrolled at University of Vienna showed that in the years 1518–1609 there were 8% of students from the upper class, 68% of students from the middle class and 24% of ones from the lower class, of which 2/3 presented the poor [35, 127].

<sup>24</sup> While the typesetting slowly proceeded on the monuments of early printing, the same presses were turning out innumerable broadsheets, pamphlets, decrees, edicts, proclamations, prayers, calendars; and a few decades

<sup>25</sup> Vasari mentions *ultramontanes*. With this noun he is referring to German-speaking masters of art as he also does before and later in the same text [41, 93–94].



**Figures 3, 4.** Two editions of Petrarch; the first example was designed for scholars under the influence of Platonism (Venice, 1533; NUK 2124/ 7); the second edition, designed with illustrations, is an example of artistic expression influenced by Aristotelian philosophy (Venice, 1563; NUK 2181/ 6)

## BOOKS FOR SCHOLARS VS. OTHER VOLUMES

A second division of print production was introduced to reading public together with the invention of printing and could probably be seen as one of the consequences of mass production. The focus in this division is on the text itself and its contents, which separates the volumes and readers into two groups.<sup>26</sup> Part of the first group of readers of books had already been formed previously, in the manuscript era – these are scholars. After the invention of printing, this primary group continues existing and even extends at

the expense of educated printers, humanists and philosophers mostly interested in treatises and other pretentious literature. Some of them took a critical stance in judging the outcome and helping to produce peak products by substantial arguments on the correctness of translations, misspellings and type errors. Books designed and printed for and by this first group of readers were normally little or not at all decorated, their text was composed of impeccable characters<sup>27</sup>, so pages seem clean and neat. Decorative frames on title pages were normally abandoned. All unnecessary decorative elements were left out. In some cases, even the initials are reduced to a minimum or not used at all.

<sup>26</sup> The print revolution was, in fact, a reading revolution, a revolution not of technology but of dissemination and reception. Innovation is in readers, not publishers: the agent of change is not the press but its audience [29, 282-0283].

<sup>27</sup> The formulation of types in different languages is extremely important and judged already in that time [14, 269].

The second group of readers consists of all other people reading lighter texts with illustrations<sup>28</sup>. When designing pages for this sort of literature, printers imitated a formal design from the manuscript tradition by using all established forms of decorative elements as a normal and natural part of a book as a whole (see Figures 3, 4).

#### PARALLELS WITH RENAISSANCE PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES

This second division of prints could also be regarded as an expression of two major philosophical mainstreams present and discussed in Renaissance cultural and educated circles, first in Italy and afterwards also elsewhere in Europe, i. e. Aristotelian philosophy and Platonism<sup>29</sup>. And, as printers were presenting themselves as open-minded humanists<sup>30</sup> who did not only print but also read, studied, edited and selected texts, it would not be disputable to think that they had some knowledge of philosophy as well. In a letter to Aldus Manutius, written in 1507, Erasmus compared the great printers' efforts on behalf of classical learning – his

<sup>28</sup> Pictures were the literature of the laity (laicorum literatura) [12, 54].

<sup>29</sup> Platonism and Aristotelianism became the two most powerful philosophical influences upon Renaissance thought [8, 72].

<sup>30</sup> Their humanistic beliefs can easily be acknowledged by numerous printing devices filled with Greek mythology and accompanied with instructive mottos. Whether they used goddess Athena with an owl by her side or they decided to mark their works with ever evasive Fortuna, the message was still the same [23].

energetic retrieval and circulation of ancient texts in Latin and Greek – to the labours of Hercules.<sup>31</sup>

As Dante is thought to be the beginner of Renaissance aesthetics and (expression) theory of art (origin of Renaissance and of modern art theory) [8, 72] a short remark should be made on this passage from his *Divine Comedy*<sup>32</sup>. He conceived of art in Aristotelian terms, as analogous to nature and natural processes, as a daughter of nature. He says:

E se tu ben la tua Fisica note,  
Tu troverai non dopo molte carte  
Che l'arte vostra quella, quanto puote,  
Segue, come il maestro fa il discente,  
Si che vostr'arte a Dio quasi è nepote.

*If you read your Physics carefully  
you will find, within a few pages,  
that art follows [nature], as the  
disciple follows a master;  
so that art is like a grandchild of God.*<sup>33</sup>

Aristotelianism maintained that art has to start from experience of the sensitive

<sup>31</sup> The letter written by Erasmus to Aldo was entitled *Herakleioi ponoi: Whose are the labours?* While Erasmus was working with Froben, he described himself as a *castigator* – the term can mean the mere routine print-shop activity of proof correction and copyediting, but it can also extend to a sophisticated intervention in a text. Further on, he mentions that he has set up his own *officina* in the Froben printing house, through the teamwork of *famuli* and *castigators* [22, 158].

<sup>32</sup> *Divina Commedia*, written between 1308 and 1321; its first printed edition was published in 1472 [27].

<sup>33</sup> So art comes after nature, and nature is the work of God. God is therefore a supreme artist [8, 68–70].

world and from a scientific understanding based upon observation of empirical data. As a consequence, art imitates nature and learns from nature by decoding its internal processes.<sup>34</sup> Art, however, also reproduces and improves nature [8, 72]. Printing originated from and succeeded an old tradition of book production (handwritten codex); therefore, it probably seemed rather normal for printers to copy and imitate the elemental forms of manuscripts as the only suitable presentation of the written word.

This explains why the majority of printers were striving to copy a book in its “naturalistic form”. In this respect, all highly decorated and illustrated books, with “unnecessary” embellishment comparable to manuscript traditional book-decoration, could be seen as examples of the effect the Aristotelian theories had on Renaissance artists.

On the other hand, expressions of Platonism can only be seen in fewer examples designed for contemplative readers. In connection with the arts, Platonism suggested a theory of manic and erotic inspiration<sup>35</sup>. Plato designated happiness as a harmonious

integration of different orders of being at each moment of life. For him, harmony could only be achieved by curtailing the rights of the separate orders: by not permitting art to proceed beyond the point where it violates the capacity for orderly thought, and by not elaborating a system of thought which exceeds the power of artistic imagination. Plato teaches us to be suspicious of art – not because it is bad in itself, but because it endangers man<sup>36</sup>. Decoration and illustration filled with perfect compositions of human bodies, grisailles [16], Greek goddesses and grotesques can make our minds easily lose their way. To avoid such distractions, texts for contemplative reading are better off without it.

Although Aristotelianism prevailed over Platonism already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in a wider artistic sense, the latter could nevertheless be seen as a considerable intellectual force, with a strong influence throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This influence was based on individual appeal and was thus even deeper [8, 100]. Its results in book design may be seen even today in exact rules for designing our professional and scientific literature, where space is left only for necessary and

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<sup>34</sup> In Aristotelian philosophy, art, with its active creation and by imitating things – *mimesis* (μίμησις) – is approaching the perfect idea of a thing. A poet (artist) has to be more of a maker (poietes) of myths than versus, as the chief essence of the poet is in imitating (acts) [1, 27]. On the contrary, Plato is teaching us that by imitating the idea of the primary and only real thing—art (poetics)—we are stepping away even further [1, 17].

<sup>35</sup> Inspiration of love produces a *fantasia* and *fervor* in the artist, which inform his representations with an eternal, ideal and ultimately divine beauty [8, 72].

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<sup>36</sup> *Mimesis* is the uncontrolled process of depiction which is neither guided nor interrupted by reflection but unconsciously takes effect in the act of imitation or representation, without concern for the nature or value of what is imitated or represented. Art strengthens our tendency to yield to domination by irrational forces and is bound to exercise its most corrupting effect when we not only attend with sympathy to the artist’s conjuring tricks, but also adopt them ourselves [44, 8–19].

supplementary illustrations with no room for artistic expression.

#### BOOKS AS ART OBJECTS IN 16<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY EUROPE IN THE LIGHT OF THE RENAISSANCE CLASSIFICATION OF ART

In conclusion, we will try to determine whether books were recognized as *art objects* in 16<sup>th</sup>-century society. For this purpose, the right meaning of the term *art object* in the context of the period under discussion should also be addressed.

First of all, there was no single word in Italian or Latin in the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries that could be unequivocally translated as “artist”. Practitioners were almost always precisely defined by their trades: goldsmiths, woodworkers, and so on [37, 229–230]. We can imagine that printers were also termed as a class of practitioners<sup>37</sup>, but there were some of them (practitioners), as was a generally accepted view, classified as *artists* in the modern concept. On the other hand, the word *artista* in Italian Renaissance was synonymous with the word denoting craftsmen, used also when referring to painters<sup>38</sup>. If we look at the text of Vasari, we can see he installed printers among painters,

sculptors and architects which he meant to be “piu eccellenti”, i. e. most excellent [41]. His text represents a sort of an overview of Renaissance artists<sup>39</sup>; consecutively his reference to printers is an eloquent proof of a relative position printers had in Renaissance society.

Neither was the term *art object* recognized in Renaissance Italy. Nevertheless, this was a period when various attempts were made to define different forms of production and to distinguish among them; some were to be categorized on the same intellectual level as literature, others were to become essentially mechanical [37, 229–230]. Perhaps it would be correct to categorize as *art objects* only those items for which individual persons acknowledged as artists could be identified as authors<sup>40</sup>. Such a definition might justify the distinction between those designing and those making objects, between, in other words, artists and artisans. However, this definition of *art objects* is too narrow. It was not always necessary for an object to display an individual authorial voice to be seen as exhibiting art, to raise the object above the luxurious items [37, 231]. It was, above all, important for known and unknown artists to follow all the rules required when executing their works<sup>41</sup>, so that the completed works

<sup>37</sup> This conclusion can be suggested because many of printers started as goldsmiths who were categorized as creators with an innate imaginative talent, e. g. glass-makers [37, 229–230].

<sup>38</sup> The word *artifice* was used in Alberti's Italian text in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that painters to Alberti were not different from other makers – they all made art. The word embraced a desirable quality of human artifice [37, 231].

<sup>39</sup> In the text we can find Durer as well, so his work is not limited only to Italian Renaissance artists.

<sup>40</sup> This category would also include the objects for which a well-known artist had provided the designs [37, 229–230].

<sup>41</sup> Vasari emphasizes the exactness of achievements by following all the proper rules on numerous places in his text [41].

would be recognized as excellent, beautiful and elegant<sup>42</sup>.

In regard to two philosophical main-streams mentioned above, books can be recognized as *art objects* on the basis of two complexes of components. The presence of Aristotelianism in Renaissance culture is nowadays mostly known to us from many unique masterpieces painted in that time. Their good or sometimes not so good copies can be found in book illustrations and in secondary decorations of books (in bordures, initials and in frames), on frontispieces or elsewhere in books. On the other hand, the purity and elegance of imprints can also bear witness of an exceptional aesthetic achievement<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Artifacts are produced for many reasons, but when aspiration for producing “something aesthetically valuable, something beautiful” is the main reason for producing something or it is even the only reason, we are accustomed to call the artifacts in question *works of art*. The tradition determines that, at least for the past few centuries, we have reserved the terms *art* and *work of art* for those artifacts whose aesthetic value is particularly evident or which were manufactured with their aesthetic value particularly, or exclusively, in mind, or whose aesthetic character we choose to emphasize for historical or cultural reasons [8, 106].

<sup>43</sup> Plato speaks of art when referring to music. According to Plato, the adjective *mousikós* denotes persons who are engaged in some kind of music art or lyric poetry. Frequently it denotes a friend of Muses in general and is enraptured with literature and erudition. If the adjective is used in reference to things, it denotes their elegance [25, 1117]. Elegance and beauty of imprints were noteworthy to Erasmus Desiderius as well [14, 269].

## CONCLUSIONS

In the above text, we have tried to establish a classification of prints designed and printed in the 16th century and kept in Slovenian libraries till today. With this classification it is easier to recognize the aesthetic value of early printed books; also, it is possible to determine whether or not 16th-century printed books can be seen as works of art, i. e. as art objects. As is shown in the text, there are some differences among books in general. Not all of them fit in the category of art objects. The classification is based on the end-user model. In the 16th century, there were not only readers from privileged classes, but we can also speak about book consumption by others. The model supposes four groups of readers (scholars, laymen, rich, commons). The analysis shows us a differentiation between books designed for noblemen and books designed for general consumption. Normally, the first ones were products of well-known artists and show a great artistic expression. These books are also made by the rules of Aristotelian aesthetic theories, whereas the second ones are rather artisans’ products. There are, however, some completely different books showing us the beginning of a new book aesthetics based on Platonism. Books designed in the Platonic spirit normally contain scientific and contemplative texts. They were highly appreciated at the time of their first edition, but today they are valued first of all because of the accuracy of translation and contents and are to be categorized as artisans’ products.

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## KNYGA KAIP MENO OBJEKTAS XVI A. EUROPOJE (REMIANTIS SLOVĒNIJOS BIBLIOTEKŲ LEIDINIAIS)

INES JERELE

Santrauka

Straipsnyje Slovēnijos nacionalinėje ir universiteto bibliotekoje saugomi XVI a. leidiniai pristatomi kaip meno objektai dviejų pagrindinių filosofijos srovių šviesoje. Bibliotekoje saugoma apie 3000 XVI a. leidinių. Jie atkeliavo iš skirtingų Europos šalių: Šveicarijos, Prancūzijos, Nyderlandų, Austrijos, Vokietijos žemių, Anglijos, Čekijos ir Italijos. Tik šeši iš jų išspausdinti dabartinės Slovēnijos teritorijoje.

Nors spaudos pramonė XVI a. nebuvo itin išplėtotą, knygų teminė aprėptis ir įvairovė rodo, kad šiame regione jau tuo metu skaitymo kultūra buvo aukšta. Skaitančioji visuomenė atliko svarbų vaidmenį: kėlė reikalavimus spaudos produkcijai ir taip reguliavo prekybos rezultatus (įsigydamą spaudos produkcijos arba ne). XVI a. spausdintą produkciją galima skirstyti į dvi rūšis pagal tikslą arba pagal jos potencialius pirkėjus.

Spaudiniai buvo kuriami rinktinei aristokratijai (geriausios kokybės) arba plačiai auditorijai. Juos taip pat galima skirstyti į dvi grupes pagal skaitytojų mokslinį pasirengimą. Pirmajai skaitytojų grupei (mokslinčiams) skirti spaudiniai mažai arba visai nepuošti, jų puslapiai švarūs ir tvarkingi, be nereikalingų puošybos elementų. Antrajai skaitytojų grupei (visiems kitiems) skirti leidiniai imituoja formalų rankraštinės knygos dizainą. Visokių formų puošybos detalės naudotos kaip įprasta ir natūrali knygos dalis. Šią antrąją spaudinių grupę galima traktuoti kaip dviejų pagrindinių Renesanso kultūros filosofijos srovių – aristotelizmo ir platonizmo – raišką. Šiuo požiūriu visos gausiai puoštos ir iliustruotos knygos atspindi Aristotelio meno teorijas, o nepuošti leidiniai, sukurti intelektualiam skaitytojui, – Platono meno teorijas.

Įteikta 2009 m. lapkričio mėn.