

Title: Stereotypes of Jews in Slovenian Literature
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A general overview of stereotypes of Jews and other ethnic groups in Slovenian folk tradition, culture in general and particularly in literature from Primož Trubar (1508–1586) onwards shows that in the history of Slovenia, being part of the Middle-European cultural area, stereotypes of Jews are commonplace: Jews are portrayed as the enemies of Christianity (during the Middle Ages), as moneyhungry, moneylenders, etc.; Jewish women are often portrayed as used to privilege and materialistic. These stereotyped comic portrayals of Jews in literature are not in themselves a sure indication of their anti-Semitism. The aim of the paper is to analyze two poems – “Judovsko dekle” (The Jewish Girl) and “Od železne ceste” (From the Iron Road) by the greatest Slovenian poet France Prešeren (1800–1849), and novels and short stories by the greatest Slovenian writer Ivan Cankar (1876–1918). High artistic qualities raise both Prešeren and Cankar above typical features of humans to form effective and often dramatic stock characters for literary effect and to generate deeper existential and moral meaning in the reader. In his poem “Judovsko dekle” Prešeren indicates that affiliation to different social and religious groups and their burdensome cultural and psychical limitations does not form the boundary of love. On the other hand, in his unique characterization of a rising and falling man in his story “Krčmar Elija” (The Publican Elija) Cankar drew from the instantly recognizable nature of a stereotyped Jewish moneylender and his extremely materialistic wife Isis in order to connect the reader with compatriots of the village Osoje, portrayed as weak drunkards, immediately. Through a complex characterization of a Jew in a Slovenian village, Cankar’s prejudicial derision is oriented equally effectively against the spoiled Jew and his wife and against the shortsighted domestic villagers.

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