Gregorio Alasia da Sommaripa: Vocabolario Italiano-sloveno, 
altri testi italiano-sloveni e testi sloveni. Udine 

Kopitar described the seventeenth century as 'eine 
Zeit, wo unsere Literatur völlig schlummerte' (letter to 
Hanka dated 6 September 1831). The fact that this general-
ization can no longer be considered completely accurate is 
primarily due to the efforts of Kopitar himself in saving 
for posterity some of the remains of seventeenth-century 
Slovene. The Vocabolario italiano e Schiavo of Alasia da 
Sommaripa, which Kopitar acquired from the dealer Kupitsch 
about 1815 for Baron Zois, is a printed book which survives 
in only one copy. It is a unique source of evidence as to 
the nature of the Slovene spoken at the beginning of the 
seventeenth century in the region where it borders on 
Italian. The reprint, produced under the auspices of Mia-
dinska knjiga, Ljubljana, contains not only a facsimile of 
the original 221 printed pages but also a most useful essay 
on Alasia and his book by Lino Legiša (in Slovene and Ital-
ian parallel versions).

Alasia da Sommaripa was an Italian monk who came to 
Duino/Devín in 1601 at the instigation of the Count of 
Duino, Raimondo VI, to oversee the building of a new monas-
tery in the vicinity of Duino Castle. It was intended that 
the monastery would contain a school and that it would serve 
to strengthen the Catholic faith, countering Protestantism, 
among the Slovenes. In order to do this the monks naturally 
needed to have some command of the local language and it 
was to facilitate the task of learning Slovene (or simply 
la lingua schiava in his terminology) that Alasia wrote his 
Vocabolario. It is actually more than a dictionary, for it 
contains in addition to the vocabulary proper several pages 
of grammatical information, everyday conversations, litur-
gical texts and hymns.

Alasia learned Slovene from several sources: the 
Count's son Mattia, Slovenes with whom he came into contact, 
and also from books. His language is consequently not uni-
formly that of the Slovene littoral, but includes features 
from other dialects, from Croatian, and from the written 
works of Megiser, Dalmatin and Trubar. Nevertheless the 
basic local features are clear: infinitives are always 
short, e.g. perdonare=odpustiti; final l is y, e.g. biu for 
bil; ĝ + sometimes a, e.g. patec 'venerdi' (but pet 'cinque'), 
and so on.
The sole surviving copy passed from Zois's library to the Licealbibliothek in Ljubljana and thus into the National and University Library there. The fact that it has now been made generally available in facsimile benefits everyone concerned with the historical study of Slovene.

Gerald C. Stone
Oxford University