

CONTRIBUTIONS
CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions for Studying the Reformation in the Croatian Historic Lands¹

Stanko Jambrek
Biblijski institut, Zagreb
sjambrek@bizg.hr

The events of the European Reformation that changed and directed the course of European and world history had a significant influence on the social, and especially on the religious, events in the Croatian historic lands. Many reformers were involved in the events of the Reformation in the Croatian historic lands as well in Europe that directly and indirectly influenced the development of the Reformation in the Croatian historic lands; they were heralds of the word of God: preachers, pastors, writers, poets, musicians, composers, actors, producers, translators, printers and scientists of world-wide fame and influence. Humanists and reformers from the Croatian historic lands participated in the European Reformation while some of them gave a continuing contribution to European science and culture. In such a manner, for example, Matthias Flacius Illyricus significantly directed the historical course of the Lutheran tradition of the Reformation as a historian, theologian, philosopher and philologist. Markantun de Dominis put his stamp on the Catholic and the Anglican traditions, while Andrija Dudić influenced the Catholic, Reformed and Radical traditions of the Reformation.

The Croatian Protestants, along with significant impulses from European reformers and supporters, are meritorious for the first team work, although unfinished, on the translation of the Bible into the Croatian language as well as the first printed translation of the New Testament (in Glagolitic script, 1562-63 and in Cyrillic script, 1563) and the Old Testament books of the Prophets (in Glagolitic and Latin script, 1564). In addition to this, a translation of the New Testament can be added which was done by Mihael Bučić, a writer and preacher of

1 The term Croatian historic lands which will be used throughout this paper refers to the land which is currently recognized as Croatia, but which was under various other rulers throughout history.

the Calvinist tradition of the Reformation. He published said translation between 1571 and 1574, presumably in vernacular Croatian with the Kajkavian dialect.²

Along with the influential European reformers – Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Johann Brenz and Benedetto de Mantova – whose works have been translated and published in Croatian, there were other reformers who were active for a certain time during the 16th and 17th centuries as authors and translators; or whose actions were directed toward the Reformation in the Croatian historic lands. There were also reformers who originated from the Croatian historic lands but who were active outside of them.³ According to the data, they published more than four hundred, both smaller and more extensive, works, and they wrote many more. The handwritten inheritance of the reformers from the Croatian historic lands is unexplored, and there is only scarce information about particular works.

The works are published in several languages: Croatian (in Glagolitic, Cyrillic

- 2 Bučić, as it is known today, has written three books: *Novi zakon* (New Testament), *Katekizam or Kerstjanski navuk* (Catechism or Christian Doctrines), and the *Contra realem praesentiam Corporis Christi in Eucharistiae sacramento*. None of these works are preserved – it is assumed that they were burned during the Counter Reformation; their existence is confirmed by the record from the Synod of the Zagreb Diocese on March 8, 1574, where Mihael Bučić was convicted and excommunicated from the Catholic Church because he endeavored to spread Calvinist teaching in Slavonia and the surrounding areas by way of printed books (V. Klaić, 1980, V, 666).
- 3 Their names and surnames are announced in order to encourage research about their lives and activities. They are: Mihael Balošić (P. Michaelis Ballosich), Mihael Bučić, Mirko Ciger (Eszéki Szigeti Imre, Zigerius Imre), Juraj Cvečić, Antun Dalmatin (Antun Dalmata), Stjepan Deželvić (Deselvics István), Markantun de Dominis (Marko Antonije de Dominis Gospodnetić, Marcus Antonius de Dominis), Gašpar Dragonić (Dragoni Gáspár, Casparis Dragoni, Casparius Dragonius), Andrija Dudić (Dudith Andras, Andreas Dudithius, Andrea Duditio Sbardellato), Ivan Fabijančić, Grgur Franković (Frankovich Gergely), Matija Grbac (Matija Grbić, Matthias Gabritius Illyricus), Juraj Juričić (Juričić Jurij, Juraj Juritsich), Petar Kákonyi (Petrum Kakoni), Stjepan Kiš Segedinac (Stephen Kis of Seged, István Szegedi Kis, Stephanus Szegedinus, Stephano Szegedino Pannonio, Stephani Szegedini), Stjepan Klaseković (Štefan Klasekovič, Klaszekovics István, Stephanus Klaszekovich), Stipan Konzul (Stephanus Ißterreicher), Đuro Kulczar (Kulcsár György), Stjepan Lošić, Baldo Lupetina (Baldus Lupetinus), Grgur Mekinić (Gergur Mekinich Pythiraeus), Antun Senjanin, Pavao Skalić, Mihael Starin (Sztárai Mihály, Starai Mihal, Ztarj Mihály, Michael Sztárai, Michael Starinus, Michael Starino), Matija Škarica (Máté Skaricza, Matej Šarić Kevin, Matthaeus Scaricaeus, Matthaeo Scaricaeo Pannonio), Primož Trubar, Petar Pavao Vergerije, Ivan Krstitelj Vergerije (Giovan Battista Vergerio, Joannes Baptista Vergerius), Ivan Tulščak (Janž Tulščak, Iansh Tulszhak, Hans Tulschak), Ivan Ungnad (Hans Ungnad), Ilija Verešmarti, Mihael Verešmarti (Mihael Zmajevački, Mihály Verešmarti), Matija Vlačić Ilirik (Matthias Flacius Illyricus), Matija Vlačić, Jr. (Matthias Flacius, Jr.), Grgur Vlahović (Vlahović Gregor, Lahović Gregor), Miha Zvonarić (Zvonarics Mihály, Zvonarics Mihal, Zvonarich, Zvonaricz, Zvonarich, Zvonarits Mihaly, Zwonaricz, Zwonarits), Emerik Zvonarić (Emericus Zvonarics, Emerico Zwonaricio Sarvariensi), Juraj Zvonarić (Sarvari Zvonarits Gyoergy), Stjepan (Štefan, István) Zvonarić, and Matija Živčić (Matija Šivčić).

and Latin scripts in the Chakavian and Kajkavian dialects), in Latin, German, Italian, Slovenian and Hungarian. Some of the works are published in several editions, especially those of Flacius, Dudić, Starin and Kiš. Among the latest are *How to Understand the Sacred Scripture*, a translation of an extraction of the *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* of Matthias Flacius Illyricus into English, published in the United States (Magdeburg Press, Saginaw, Michigan 2011); also a translation into Croatian and English of Flacius' work *Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi, & Antichristi* (*Kairos, Evangelical Journal of Theology* 1/2011).

In several years, on October 31, 2017, the world will mark the 500th anniversary of the announcement of the 95 *theses* of Martin Luther and the beginning of the Reformation. For that occasion the editors of *Kairos* will extend the opportunity and an invitation to research and publish contributions regarding the Reformation in the Croatian historic lands, as well as the contribution of Croatian reformers to the European Reformation. The addendums may include: original documents, letters of the reformers, biographies of particular reformers, partial or complete reprints of particular works, a translation of a work, detailed historical, theological, philological and other studies, bibliographies, reviews of books, songs (hymnals) and prayers (prayer books) of the reformers from the 16th and 17th centuries, historic charts, etc.

For this occasion, I have prepared two significant contributions: a translation and a reprint of a work. The first contribution is a translation from Latin of a work by Matthias Flacius Illyricus: *Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi, & Antichristi*. The second contribution is a transcript of the preserved remains of a text of the Lutheran prayer book in Croatian with the Kajkavian dialect.

1. A Short Review of the Faith of Jesus Christ and the Antichrist According to Matthias Flacius Illyricus (*Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi, & Antichristi, per Matth. Flacium Illyricum*)

The work was published by Flacius in Magdeburg in 1550 in the height of his struggle for the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures and for the freedom of the Church of Christ from the influence of world politics.⁴ It is divided in two

4 When he published this work, Flacius was only 30 years old. He began his activity as an author with the preface to the work *Ein Prophetische Buspredigt für die jenigen, So den erkanten und bekanten Christum mit dem Antichrist und seinem Hauffen verfolget haben oder noch verfolgen*, published in 1547, where he declared that the Pope was the Antichrist. During 1548, he published 10 editorial and author's works (8 in German and 2 in Latin); in 1549, he published 39 works (26 in German and 13 in Latin), while in 1550, he published 42 works (29 in German and 13 in Latin).

parts. In the first part, Flacius conveys the teachings of Christ, and in the other, the teachings of the Antichrist.

The teachings of Christ and those of the Antichrist occupy a significant place in Flacius' theological thought. In his struggle for the truth of the gospel and the word of God, Flacius points to the Antichrist and his teaching which opposes the pure word of God. The study and adoption of the truths of the Scriptures as well as the activities of Pope Paul III (1534-1549) and the Inquisition, especially the inquisitor Giovanni Della Casa, played a crucial role in forming Flacius' stand regarding the Antichrist. In 1542, the Inquisition put Flacius' relative, Baldo Lupetino, into custody, who preached from the Scriptures in the cathedral on the island of Cres (Cherzo) against Catholic practices which were in opposition to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

Wishing to help Lupetino, Flacius went to Venice in 1543 and carried a petition signed by the leaders of the Schmalcaldic League, the princes of Hesse and the Electoral Saxony to the Doge Pietro Lando for the liberation of Lupetino. He did not succeed despite the strong support from Saxony and Hesse. Still, there he was introduced first hand to the severity of the papal Inquisition.

In *Ein Prophetische Buspredigt für die jenigen, So den erkanten und bekanten Christum mit dem Antichrist und seinem hauffen verfolget haben, oder noch verfolgen*, which is one of his earliest published works (Magdeburg, 1547), Flacius analyzes the actions of the Pope and pronounces him to be the Antichrist. Flacius was convinced that the teaching of the Lutheran church was the pure word of God and he adopted it with all of his soul; he came to that conviction during his studies at the University in Wittenberg. "On the other hand," he wrote and published in 1549 in his *Entschuldigung Matthiae Flacij Illyrici, geschrieben an die Universitet zu Wittenberg der Mittelding halben*, "I concluded that the Pope is the real Antichrist, and, together with his errors, I have execrated and condemned the Pope as the Antichrist and his errors and abuses with my whole heart" (for more detail, see O. K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, Harrassowitz Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2002).

Flacius' works were soon listed in the Index of Prohibited Books (*Index librorum prohibitorum*⁵), and Petar Pavao Vergerije (Petrus Paulus Vergerius) proudly added "ex Istria" along with the name of Matthias Flacius Illyricus when he published the *Index* in his work *Catalogus Haereticorum* (Regio Monte Borussiae, 1556).

In the *Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi, & Antichristi* (A Short Review of

5 In the *Index of Prohibited Books* (*Index avtorvm et librorvm, qvi ab officio S. Rom. & vniuerfalis inquisitionis caueri ab amnibus & fingulis...*) from 1559, Flacius is listed as an author under the letter M, Mathias Flacius Illyricus.

the Faith of Jesus Christ and the Antichrist), particularly in the chapter about the teachings of Christ, Flacius highlights the basic biblical teaching about salvation in three stages: 1) the state of a person that is changed by God through the proclamation of the gospel, 2) forgiveness of sins and salvation in Jesus Christ, 3) after repentance, conversion and salvation, Christians are called to a transformed life, namely, holy living. In the second chapter, Flacius conveys the teachings of the Antichrist, condensed in the teaching of the contemporary Roman Catholic Church. The teachings of the Antichrist consist of all the teachings and practices taught by people that are not based solely on the Scriptures and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As strictly Antichrist teachings, he strongly emphasizes those regarding justification by deeds, mediators in salvation, the sale of indulgences and masses, purgatory, purification after baptism as well as by means of various aids, medicines and ways by which a person can work or pay to avoid hell and enter the kingdom of heaven.

Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi, & Antichristi, per Matth. Flacium Illyricum has been translated into English by Daniel Jambreč. The original version of the book is preserved in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, and it is available to the public in the Digitale Bibliothek: <http://test.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/pdf/1304701700bsb00035958.pdf>. A copy of the work is being kept in the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb, Croatia.

2. Mihael Balošić, *A Prayer Book*

Toward the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries, the Protestant movement became very significant in Međimurje (a province in the northern part of Croatia) and among the Croatian immigrants in Western Hungary (today's Eastern Austria). This is testified to by the books published in Croatian, in the Chakavian and Kajkavian dialects, as well as in Hungarian and Latin. Until the remarkable findings of the second part of the 20th century, the existence of some of these works was only assumed. Then, in 1969, the Slovenian researchers Marijan Smolik and Ivan Škafar discovered two Croatian hymnals *Duševne pesni* dating from 1609 and 1611 which were printed in Sveti Križ (German Deutschkreutz; Hungarian Sopronkeresztúr) near Sopron by a Croatian Protestant writer who was completely unknown at that time, Grgur Mekinić Pythiraeus.⁶

In addition to this, while researching the publications of Manlius's printing

6 For a more detailed account, see Marijan Smolik, "Grgur Mekinić in njegovi pesmarici," ČZN, V (XL), Maribor, 1969; Ivan Škafar, "Grgur Mekinić Pythiraeus, hrvatski protestantski pisatelj in začetki slovstva pri gradiščanskih Hrvatih," ČZN, V (XL), Maribor, 1969. The publishing house Kršćanska sadašnjost has printed the reprint of this hymnal, while Alojz Jembrih prepared the reprint and wrote the preface *Grgur Mekinić Pythiraeus i njegove pjesmarice*.

house, the Hungarian researcher Gedeon Borsa found six printed Protestant folios written in Croatian in the binder of the book *De agno pascali* by the Croatian writer Blaž Škrinjarić, and printed in Varaždin in 1587. In the calendar year of 1602, Borsa found fragments (only 23 folios) of the Croatian prayer book written in the Kajkavian dialect. Since the cover page of the book has not been found, and the name of P. Michaelis Ballosich is mentioned next to a particular song, the authorship of the book is credited to the unknown Protestant writer, Mihael Balošić. The fragments of the book include prayers for various occasions, therefore the book is known as a *prayer book (Molitvenik)*. It is most probable that it was printed in the Manlius's printing house in Sveti Križ near Sopron between 1597 and 1601.

Here we publish a portion of the text from the preserved folios of the *prayer book* according to the transcript of Gedeon Borsa and László Hadrovics in "Protestantische Werke in kajkavisch-kroatischer Sprache aus der Druckerei des Joannes Manlius," *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae XXVIII*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1892, pp. 67-90.

Translated by Ljubinka Jambreč