

## History of Medicine

### MLADEN RUPEC, Professor of Dermatology and Venereology Physician and/or Lyrist?

*"Lass uns verlassen dieses Haus.  
Seine Leere ist alles was es hatte. Alles, was es hatte, gab es uns."  
(from the poem "Mundverkehrt", by M. Rupec)*

*"Let us leave this house.  
Her emptiness is all she had. All she had gave us."*

It is difficult to find a famous person among Croatian medicine representatives as polyvalent as Professor Rupec. We would like to lay claim to him as a Croatian, however, the German and European dermatovenereological literature will not let him go. Besides dermatovenereology, Professor Rupec has also been a prolific lyrist. He has written many poems that have been illustrated by his friends Ivan Lacković-Croata, Günther Blau, Heinrich Gross and Renate Brühl, and composed by Miroslav Miletić.

On October 18, 2008, the Microscopy and Ultrastructural Investigation of the Skin symposium on light and electron microscopy, dedicated to the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Professor Mladen Rupec, a great dermatovenereologist, researcher and scientist in the field of dermatopathology, was organized in Old Aula of the Philipps University of Marburg, Germany.

Professor Rupec was born in 1928 in Zagreb, Croatia. He is a distinguished expert, having bequeathed us his invaluable contribution to dermatohistopathology. He graduated from the Zagreb University School of Medicine, Zagreb, Croatia in 1954. During the 1954-1957 period, he was assistant and resident at University Department of Dermatology and Venereology in Zagreb, with Academician F. Kogoj (dermatovenereology). In 1960, he completed residency in dermatovene-

reology, especially dermatohistopathology. He was employed at the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts Institute until 1962. Then he was appointed scientific associate in dermatology and dermatohistopathology in Darmstadt, Germany, and afterwards at Philipps University of Marburg, Department of Dermatology, head Professor O. Braun-Falco. In Marburg, he was appointed Scientific Associate in 1969, Assistant Professor in Electron Microscopy of the Skin in 1970, Associate Professor of Dermatovenereology in 1971 and Professor in 1973. During the 1979-1993 period, he was head of the University Department of Dermatology and Histopathology with Electron Microscopy of the Skin in Marburg.

His specific scientific interest is focused on cytochemistry, histochemistry, immunofluorescence and immunohistology, which he introduced as a routine method at University Department of Dermatology in Marburg in 1980. His papers reporting studies of normal and pathologic skin, precancerous lesions and tumors, cell proliferation in fibroblasts, saprophytes and fungal skin infections, fine structure and metabolism disorders, etc., published in textbooks and scientific journals have provided valuable scientific contribution in the field. He was invited lecturer at scientific meetings and organizer of the International Symposium of Electron Microscopy.



**Figure 1.** Professor Mladen Rupec and Professor Jasna Lipozenčić.

During the Microscopic and Ultrastructural Investigations of the Skin Symposium, held on October 18, 2008, organized by his doctoral candidate Assistant Professor Hannelore Mittag with a rich scientific program, all lecturers pointed to Professor Rupec as a visionary and pioneer owing to his publications in dermatopathology, electron microscopy in particular. He was cited by eminent colleagues that presented his contribution in dermatopathology, especially electron microscopy, with dignity.

The Symposium took place in the ancient and wonderful *Alte Aula* (Old Aula) of the Philipps University in Marburg. The Symposium with many lecturers and a seminar with clinical interpretations and microscopic findings in dermatovenereology proved great success. In the first part of the Symposium, the place of electron microscopy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was highlighted. In the second part, different methods and criteria were presented in



**Figure 2.** Professor Mladen Rupec and Professor Dieter Metze (Münster).

Günther Blau, geboren 1922 in Wuppertal-Elberfeld. Maler, Zeichner und Bildhauer. Wichtiger Vertreter des magischen Realismus. Lebt als freischaffender Künstler in Cyriaxweimar bei Marburg an der Lahn.

Ivan Lacković-Croata, geboren 1932 in Batinska, Kroatien. Maler, Zeichner und Illustrator. Führender Vertreter der naiven Kunst. Lebt als freischaffender Künstler in Zagreb.

Mladen Rupec, geboren 1928 in Zagreb. Dr. med., Professor für Dermatologie an der Philipps-Universität in Marburg an der Lahn.

**Figure 3.** The signatures of three artists: Günther Blau, German artist; Ivan Lacković-Croata, Croatian naïve painter; and Mladen Rupec, Professor of Dermatology and Venereology, and poet.

seminars through clinical cases. The third part was focused on the actual topics in dermatopathology, with new diagnostic methods, with special reference to electron microscopy.

It was great honor and pleasure for me and Assistant Professor Branka Marinović to have been invited and present at this jubilee symposium, where we enjoyed and were proud of this great mean being our fellow-countryman. Although a

Mladen Rupec

Entriegelt ist die Zeit,  
dazwischen  
das lange Warten  
auf den Bahnhöfen  
der Erinnerung.

Ivan Lacković-Croata



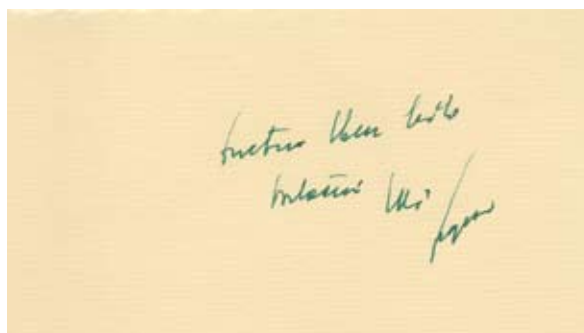
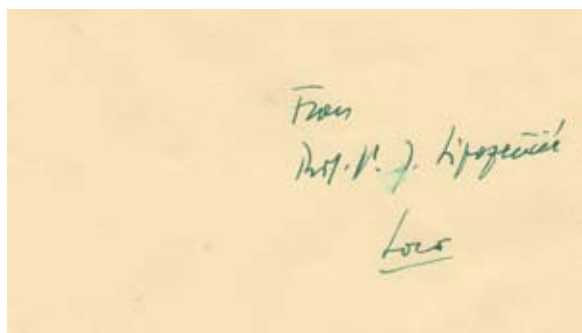
Renate Brühl



Miroslav Miletić



**Figure 4.** Lyrics of Mladen Rupec, illustrated by Ivan Lacković-Croata and Renate Brühl, and composed by Miroslav Miletić.



**Figure 5.** Personal correspondence with Professor Rupec.

foreigner there, Professor Rupec has made great scientific career at Philipps University Department of Dermatology in Marburg, and has become a respectful member of the community as if a native German. His professional legacy as a scientist, expert, poet and a great man has placed him

among the prominent German dermatopathologists, to the glory of Croatian dermatology and venereology.

Professor Jasna Lipozenčić, MD, PhD