

Conference:
5th International Symposium Matthias Flacius Illyricus
Labin, 13 – 14 April 2023
A Report

The *5th International Symposium Matthias Flacius Illyricus* was held in Labin on 13 and 14 April 2023. The conference was organized by the City of Labin and the Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb. The speakers were Daniel Mohorović, Aleksandra Brnetić, Jutta Weber-Bock, Luka Ilić, Marina Schumann, Luka Boršić, Ivana Skuhala Karasman, Sandra Vignjević, Gunther Wenz, Ljudevit Maračić, Tulio Vorano and Armin Wenz.

The first day of the conference began with the poem “A letter to Flacius – Verses for the 500th anniversary of his birth”, written and read by Daniel Mohorović. The second speaker was Aleksandra Brnetić, who presented “How Matthias Flacius Illyricus Returned to Wittenberg and Magdeburg – Two Travel Reports”. On September 9, 2020, in Wittenberg, a memorial plaque was unveiled on the house where Flacius had lived and worked. Two years later in Magdeburg, an info-panel was unveiled on November 16, 2022. In this way, the city of Magdeburg paid tribute to Matthias Flacius Illyricus. The third speaker, writer Jutta Weber-Bock, read excerpts from her most recent historical novel *Gottes Gewissen*, which is based on the life of Matthias Flacius Illyricus.

The first session titled “Official and private relations” began with Luka Ilić’s presentation “‘All family matters I usually leave to my wife’: Flacius’ family life”. The aim of the presentation, focused on Flacius’ family, was to list all of Flacius’ children from his two marriages, the first with Elisabeth Faust and the second with Magdalena Ilbec. Furthermore, the detailed analysis of the original texts provided insight into Flacius’ family life and made possible the reconstruction of his family tree and the identification of several of his descendants. Marina Schumann was the second and final speaker in this session. In her presentation, entitled “Flacius and His Printing Houses: Choosing the Right Publisher in Reformation Germany”, she presented Flacius’ strategies for choosing the right printing house. Her presentation focused particularly on Flacius’ choice of printing houses after he left Magdeburg. Until now, more than thirty different printers of Flacius’ works have been identified. Two of them, Oporin in Basel, and Rebart in Jena, played an important role in the publication of the *Magdeburg Centuries*. Schumann also tried to address how attractive or

risky it was for publishers to print Matthias Flacius works and whether any of them suffered consequences because of that.

The last session on the first day of the conference was titled “The *Catalogus* and anti-Roman polemics”. The first presentation in this session was Ivana Skuhala Karasman and Luka Boršič’s “What Could Flacius Learn about Prophetesses from Ancient Sources?”. The aim of the presentation was to address what Flacius could, as a philosopher and an excellent classical scholar, have learnt about prophetesses from ancient philosophical and literary works. In his *Catalogus testium veritatis*, Flacius mentions only seven women: a certain Sibylla, Anna Comnena, Hildegard of Bingen, Elisabeth of Schönau, Catharine of Sienna, Bridget of Sweden, and Mechthild of Hackeborn. All these women, except Anna Comnena, Flacius called prophetesses. His main sources for the notion of prophetesses were the works of Homer, Plato, and Vergil, with which he got acquainted during his studies at the University of Tübingen, the centre of Renaissance humanism in Germany. The hypothesis was that his inclusion of prophetesses in the *Catalogus* depended on and was related to his classical education. The last presentation of the first day was “Matthias Flacius Illyricus on Catholic Reform, the Ungodly, and the Antichrist in the Holy Roman Empire” held by Sandra Vignjević. The presentation was on Flacius’ contribution to the struggle of Lutheran theologians and estates for their rights in the Holy Roman Empire. In the preface to the *Decree of Emperor Charles V*, Flacius wrote that the emperor’s intention was to destroy Luther’s legacy. Furthermore, he considered that the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire should not have acted and prescribed sanctions against Luther’s teaching.

On the second day of conference, the first speaker was Gunther Wenz, with the presentation entitled “‘Bistu een Occedenter oyder Substansioner?’ On some fundamental concepts in the so-called dispute over original sin between Vlačić and his opponents”. Flacius claimed that *peccatum originale* as the original, cardinal sin became the essence of fallen man, which is why he was perverted from God’s image (*imago Dei*) into Satan’s image (*imago Satanae*). This thesis of Flacius led to polemics in spiritual and secular circles, as well as among the common people. The second speaker was Ljudevit Maračić. The title of his presentation was “Baldo Lupetina and Matthias Flacius Illyricus: Interrelations and Mutual Influences”. In his presentation, Maračić focused on kinship bonds and mutual ideological influences between Baldo Lupetina and Flacius. Conventual Franciscan Baldo Lupetina, who accepted Lutheran views early and was one of the most ardent advocates of Reformation ideas in our region was the uncle of Flacius. The next speaker was Tullio Varano. His presentation was entitled “Mirković’s Unfounded ‘Truths’ about Flacius”. Varano has identified

a series of illogical conclusions, contradictions, unfounded claims, and falsities in Mijo Mirković's book *Matija Vlačić Ilirik* published in 1960. For example, Mirković claimed that Flacius' mother was Iacoba Lupetina instead of Iacoba Luciani, and that he had three brothers instead of two. Vorano concluded that Mirković often manipulated the sources, and that his monograph on Flacius is more a cultural-historical novel than scientific work. The conference ended with the presentation of Armon Wenz entitled "Beobachtungen zur Rezeption der Hermeneutik des Flacius Illyricus in der *Philologia Sacra* von Salomon Glassius (1593 – 1656)". In his presentation, Wenz examined the connection between Flacius and Glassius in a comparative manner. A question arose how and why Glassius refers to Flacius in his work from 1623, *Philologia Sacra*. Glassius takes up Flacius' insights and integrates them into his work. He also called Flacius' *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* published in 1567 *clavis Scripturae vere aurea*.

At the end of the conference, the book *Matthias Flacius Illyricus. Biographical Contexts, Theological Impact, Historical Reception* (2019) was presented by Luka Ilić. The publisher of this book was Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, and the editors Irene Dingel, Johannes Hund and Luka Ilić. This book contains sixteen presentations from the previous Flacius conference held in Labin, in 2015.

The fifth conference on Matthias Flacius Illyricus contributed to illuminating the life and work of this great Croatian philosopher and theologian. This conference was also an opportunity to intensify research on Flacius as well as to establish contacts and ideas for future collaborations. It was also a nice synergy between an institution of regional government – the City of Labin, and the leading philosophical institution in Croatia – the Institute of Philosophy.

Ivana Skuhala Karasman