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USAGE OF SAINTHOOD IN THE REFORMATION CONTROVERSY: SAINTS AND WITNESSES OF TRUTH IN MATTHIAS FLACIUS ILLYRICUS

Die götzendiener sind nicht allein ihrer
vernunft / sondern auch ihrer
ausswendigen sinn beraubt / Weil sie
nicht mercken können / das die Götzen
nicht anderst denn klotz und steinen /
und keine lebendige Götter sind.

(Flacius, *Ein gemine protestation*, Diij)

Veneration of the saints was one of the main points of criticism directed at Roman Catholicism by the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. As early as 1520, Luther had strong objections to all ceremonies centered on the worship of the corporal remains of saints, as well as to mendacious legends and pilgrimages.¹ However, a closer look at how the problem has been treated in modern scholarly literature reveals its most important aspects have been somewhat neglected and that this sensitive issue has been approached primarily in terms of images and iconoclasm. The list of such literature is long and dominated by art historians who, sometimes in a manner not entirely unlike that of theologians, seek to penetrate to the very essence of images and thus explain the passions they aroused on both sides in the Reformation controversy. A number of historians have investigated individual cases or waves of iconoclasm and drawn conclusions about the social circumstances that led to these outbreaks of violence.²

It is striking, however, that this literature has failed almost entirely to highlight the difference in attitudes towards images, on one hand, and saints and their cults, on the other.³ These two issues are undoubtedly

closely related, but their theological, doctrinal, and practical implications differ considerably. After all, among the images most frequently defiled and destroyed publicly in Catholic churches were those depicting Christ. This was sometimes carried out in a systematic, selective, and ritualistic manner involving verbal humiliation. These acts were clearly not related to apostasy – on the contrary: for the iconoclasts, the destruction of images meant liberation of the true faith from the burden of dead matter shaped by human hand.

Theologically speaking, the issue of sanctity had much more serious consequences for the principal tenets of Christian faith than that of images. The idea that saints (and the Virgin Mary) could intercede with God on behalf of mortals and that, consequently, prayers should be directed to them, was seen as robbing Christ of his role as exclusive mediator between man and God and the savior of humanity. Relics, which since the early Middle Ages had been placed at altar and publicly venerated, began to acquire magical connotations, most particularly towards the end of the Middle Ages, and images of miracle working captured the imagination of the common man far more effectively than did sermons and the divine service. By this time, Saints had become such an essential part of Christianity that their veneration rarely demanded any particular explanation or defense. And while it is true that a number of Catholic authors adopted a critical line towards the issue of veneration, this criticism mostly concerned excesses in veneration, more particularly in relation to collections of relics, the amassing of miracles in hagiography and the veneration of dubious local personalities.⁴

Nonetheless, it ought to be made clear that the Lutheran reformers were willing to retain some sort of memory of the saints. And in Article XXI of the Augsburg Confession (1530) it was decreed that saints should be commemorated as virtuous men who were helped by their unswerving faith in times of need and seen as role models. However, they were directly denied the power of intercession on behalf of the living and it was decreed that all prayers and supplications should therefore be directed to God and God alone.⁵ In the view of the reformers, the Catholic veneration of saints was based exclusively upon the system of benefits and as such it would vanish quickly once the supplication was abolished for “nobody will honor them in vain or out of pure love.”⁶

Robert Kolb observed that the aim of the reformers was not merely to erase the memory of saints, but to restore it to what they believed to be its original purpose.⁷ To this end they attempted to purge the miraculous

from hagiography and make it imitable. Collections of examples from the lives of the saints by Hermann Bonus in 1539 and both Georg Major and Georg Spalatin in 1544 (both with prefaces by Luther) were compiled for this purpose. In the preface to Spalatin's work, Luther also pointed out that the study of the church fathers provided evidence to support the fact that the Protestant reformers were not a novelty, but a continuation in the long line of those defending the true faith against Satan.⁸

In this context of the search for authorities, a number of canonized Catholic saints managed to find a place among the witnesses of truth in the *Catalogus testium veritatis* of Matthias Flacius Illyricus.⁹ This was not hagiography; its aim was to document all the personalities in history who had principles that could be considered identical or close to those of Protestant values. However, as stated in the preface, it also aimed to show how true Christians had existed throughout, despite the fact that idolatry had frequently ruled the world, and that the tenets of the reformers were older than those of the papists.

In this work, Flacius managed to collect a remarkable number of quotations and to argue plausibly his point that the voices of prominent men criticizing and condemning the practice of the saint cult had existed throughout of the history of the Church. The Greek Church of Late Antiquity, iconoclastic emperors of Byzantium and the church fathers Jerome and Augustine are used in his argumentation against the veneration of saints. A quotation from the latter summarizes the main idea of the Protestant attitude towards sainthood and is quoted in *Catalogus*: "Our religion should not consist of the veneration of the dead," says Augustine in *De vera religione*, "for if they lived piously, they would not want to be adored, but would wish that we should adore the one who enlightened them so that they would not want to partake in his merit. Therefore, they should be honored for imitation, not adored for religion. If, however, they lived an evil life, they should not be adored, wherever they are... So we honor them with love, not with servitude, and we do not erect temples for them since they do not wish to be honored by us in that way because they knew that we are ourselves, if we live honestly, temples of the supreme God."¹⁰

What was Flacius's attitude towards the saints and how can it be placed in the framework of German Reformation? In order to answer this question we must go back to the years and circumstances in which his opinions were formed and investigate possible influences in his attitude and writings. This article will present the preliminary results within the

framework of my research on attitudes towards sainthood in the Reformation controversy.

* * *

An extremely prolific polemical author, Flacius also achieved notoriety for being extremely uncompromising and problematic. Although a very prominent personality in his time, relatively little has been written on his ideas in comparison to other authors from the Lutheran circles.¹¹ The course of his life largely determined his distinctive ideas, but it would be both difficult and unfair to summarize his agitated life in a single paragraph. Moreover, biographies by Preger, Mirković, and Olson are widely accessible. Thus, I will limit myself here to a sketchy overview.

Flacius was born in Albona (Croat. Labin) in Istria in 1520, three years after Luther had posted his 95 theses on the doors of the castle church at Wittenberg. He was Slavic by birth, christened Vlachich Frankovich, and born into a family of landowners, possibly merchants.

In 1536, at the age of sixteen, Flacius was sent to Venice to continue his education as was customary for members of well-off Istrian families (Istria at the time was under Venetian dominion), and he stayed there for three years. He took a great interest in philology and acquired excellent knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, which he would later use to support himself as university professor in Germany. He soon moved in the direction of mysticism and contemplated joining a religious order, something his family strongly encouraged. In Istria and Labin, Franciscans were by far the most influential order, serving as priests, teachers, and advisors – a sort of rival institution to the town chapter; they were closely linked to the wealthy families of the town, members of which had joined the order, as a rule at least one for every generation. Flacius's uncle, Baldo Lupetina, the person who played a crucial role in his further orientation and about whom more will be said later, was a prominent Franciscan and had become guardian of a large monastery, San Francesco della Vigna in Venice, and subsequently the provincial of his order (Illyrian or Dalmatian province, to which both the monastery in Labin and that in Venice belonged). When Flacius announced his intention to join the Franciscans, Lupetina, who had already secretly embraced Protestantism, attempted cautiously to dissuade him and expose his views. Making use of his connections, Flacius, at the age of nineteen, arranged to continue

his education in Basel, at the Protestant university. He moved to Tübingen a year later, the year the Jesuit order was confirmed. In 1541, he moved to Wittenberg and became master and then professor of Hebrew and Greek, married and published his first writings in close cooperation with Luther and Melancton. Six years later, after Luther's death and the conflict with Wittenberg University over the Interim issue, he moved to Magdeburg, where he remained for eight years; later, he lived for four years in Jena and four years in Regensburg, during which time he once again visited Venice, Istria and Slovenia, where he cooperated predominantly with Slovenian Protestants on the publication of books in vernacular languages. Between 1566 and his death in 1575, Flacius lived variously in Antwerp, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Strassburg, Basel, and Speyer, while the last year of his life was spent traveling in Germany in an attempt to settle down. This ambulant life was mostly forced upon him by the hostilities engendered by his unswerving and at times fanatical adherence to his specific Lutheran ideals, arguably the only true Lutheran ideals, and by his inability to compromise; he married twice, had eighteen children, was outlived by twelve, lived with his family constantly on the verge of poverty and died at the age of 55 of apparent chronic exhaustion and illness. His total written output, which amounts to thousands of pages, consists not only of work in the fields of theology, doctrinal polemics and church history, but also of first editions of manuscripts by medieval authors, a number of which are known today for his merit.

This extraordinary reformer repeatedly addressed the issue of saints, revealing himself, as in other controversial questions, as more extreme and uncompromising than any of his associates in Germany. It is significant that his condemnation was not primarily concerned with images, nor did it seek to provoke outbursts of iconoclasm such as that by Karlstadt. Flacius's concern remained with the detrimental implications that the cult of saints had for the Christian faith and the salvation of man.

The preoccupation with the saints first became clearly evident after 1548. Its immediate, direct consequence was obviously the Interim, against which Flacius fought with all his polemic powers, issuing one pamphlet after another from his base at Magdeburg. In particular, he was appalled by the re-introduction of a number of Catholic practices as part of a seemingly ingenious solution to achieve surrender without defeat devised by Melancton and his circle: the statement that, in the so-called *adiaphora* or *things indifferent* (Germ. *Mitteldinge*), it was perfectly correct to obey the worldly superior – only, it remained to be clarified

which tenets of faith *were*, in fact, indifferent. In this, says Flacius, the Adiaphorists care only for what is useful and advantageous to them, even going as far as to make even the Ten Commandments an *adiaphoron*.¹²

Flacius argues, of course, that saints are by no means a *Mittelding*. They are not neutral, but pseudo-neutral: their veneration ridicules the faith and the Church. It is significant, however, that while he addresses the issue of images, he does not speak at all as an iconoclast in this early period. Rather, he follows in the footsteps of Luther, condemning only the excessive occurrence of tasteless images:

Images (as long as they do not cause idolatry or tell false and godless stories) could perhaps be tolerated in churches in so far as they embellish them to a certain extent and teach and remind the unknowing. But here also one should keep the measure, since it would be better to adorn the living temples of God with such riches than those made of stone.¹³

Later on, he states explicitly his wish to speak about the adornment of churches

not because I would deny that the placement of images in the church or outside of it were an *Adiaphoron*, but because I am of the opinion that the abuse of images, which again has begun to grow, is worthy of severe reprehension.¹⁴

As a matter of fact, among the abuses, he particularly stresses the tastelessness or lack of decency in images, citing the case in which the Archbishop of Mainz allowed his concubine to be depicted as the Virgin Mary, as well as the presence of portraits of worldly lords in churches: "Objects move the senses," he explains: what one looks at, catches his attention and draws it away from the word of the preacher.¹⁵

Veneration of the saints, however, was another matter. Even the small changes were perilous and to be fought against by all means, for apparently insignificant ceremonies are just the first step in the entire return of Papism. It was particularly so with the uneducated, those more sensitive to external ceremonies than to doctrines:

In such dealings, it should be observed very carefully that the common man... is not able to distinguish between things in his judgment. Alone

with a small external ceremony the uncomprehending mob can be moved much more easily than with a clever and intelligent disputation.¹⁶

Thus, the Interim chapter about the Mass is intolerably opposed to the Evangelical faith for

immediately at the beginning... the priest should speak the *Confiteor*, in which he confesses to the Virgin Mary and to all the saints in the manner of the papists and thus turns them into idols, attributing to them the honor and power of God, namely the remission of sins and insight into our hearts.¹⁷

In particular, he is appalled by an utterance by Georg Maior, who allegedly defended himself by saying that they (the Adiaphorists) in fact never intended to say the *Confiteor*, reintroducing it only in order to appease the Emperor. When the choir starts with the *Introitum*, he said, the priest could read aloud together with the ministrant a clandestine Psalm, for nobody would hear it anyway through the noise. This ingenious solution was most likely endorsed by a few other *Klüglinge* among those who longed above all for the end of persecutions owing to Flacius' mentioning in the same paragraph of a certain Ambrosius of Dresden who gave similar advice to the priests in Halle, while Melancthon's diplomatic comment was that everybody knows what he should do. "This means," in Flacius's interpretation, "that one will... murmur a Psalm, another perhaps one of Aesop's fables, the third something out of Eulenspiegel, etc."¹⁸ For him, these are the deformers, not reformers of the Church.¹⁹

He expresses his opinion in this matter a number of times. On such occasion I would like to mention is contained in a booklet written in his native idiom of Istria, the Chakavian dialect of Croatian. This short piece, a pamphlet several pages long, was published in 1555 in Padua under a pseudonym and entitled *Rasgovarange megiu papistu i gednim Luteran* [Debate between a papist and a Lutheran]. As suggested in the title, it has the form of a dialogue between a papist and a Lutheran: the former attacking in rage and consternation, the latter expounding his doctrine in a composed and superior manner. It is evident that by that time Flacius had hardened his view on the issue of images and he summarizes his standpoint in one pregnant sentence:

Word of God is pure and radiant and it says that one should not bow or adore images; and you are willing, to the shame of the Lord, to venerate them and bow before them, lowering your hats and falling on your knees, with incense and candles.²⁰

Two years later, at the Colloquium of Worms held in 1557, he was to call upon those who would finally listen to the voice of conscience and demand with decision that the shameful idols and the signs of Antichrist be removed from the Lutheran churches.

Flacius seemingly developed his views over time from a partisan of tolerance towards moderate images in the line of Luther towards a more outspoken iconoclasm. While this is an interesting process in its own right, we must, however, leave it aside for lack of space. Instead, we will focus our attention on those passages in which he speaks of the saints, condemning their veneration systematically and from a number of perspectives.

His reasons for this condemnation are fourfold: (1) it is blasphemy to introduce other mediators between God and man apart from Christ; (2) veneration of the saints was not characteristic of the early church, but a popish invention; (3) it is superstitious and redolent of magical practices; and (4) it is a treacherous fraud played upon the unknowing by clergy and monks, with the purpose of extracting money. Let us look more closely at each of these arguments.

(1) As early as 1549 (Preface to *Zeichen am Himmel bei Braunschweig neulich gesehen*), Flacius had criticized the Catholics for their view on the saints as mediators interceding with God on behalf of man. According to the Catholic point of view, he said, a sinner should not immediately run to Christ all by himself, but should first look for a saint, such as St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Anne or some other, for it would be irreverent if a peasant rushed into the court alone and went straight to the prince, without first turning to the courtly junkers.²¹ This passage reappears in the Croatian booklet, where the Papist says:

First of all, tell me, would you dare to go straight before a king, without having somebody to take you there and plead in your name? Certainly not! And still you say that one should go straight to God and plead with him without any mediation of some saint?²²

To this the Lutheran answers:

You can hurl at me as many images of the world as you like, I have nothing to follow but the word of God, which teaches me always to go straight to the heavenly father and plead only Christ as my intercessor, knowing that I am not worthy of him and striving to submit to his will.²³

The metaphor of a peasant pleading with the king and not being allowed to approach him directly, except through the courtiers, was clearly in frequent use in argumentation and made a strong impact on Flacius, who probably considered such a worldly comparison outrageously blasphemous. He particularly chose to contrast this image of God as king, sitting on the throne and surrounded by guards and courtiers, with that of God as a strict, but merciful heavenly father.

According to Flacius, the introduction of additional intercessors besides Christ created new deities and implied that Christ had died in vain. He elaborated upon this point later in his work, particularly in the argumentative survey *De sectis, dissensionibus, contradictionibus, et confessionibus doctrinae religionis, scriptorum et doctorum Pontificiorum* [On the sects, dissensions, contradictions and confessions of the doctrine of papal religion, papal authors and doctors of the church], published in Basel in 1565, ten years after the pamphlet-like *Rasgovarange*. The second preface to this mature work, entitled *Adhortatio ad serenissimum Principem et inclytum Senatam Venetiarum* [Admonishment to the most venerable prince and to the distinguished Senate of Venice], contains Flacius's most outspoken statement against the veneration of saints, particularly with regard to the Venetian situation:

From these prayers, it is obvious that the dead saints do not pretend to be mere intercessors, but also real and omnipotent Gods. Namely, what can one plead from the eternal God that would be greater and better than the purification of the soul, justice, and eternal life, or the kingdom of heavens? And these people ask it directly from dead men... with the same idolatrous invocations, they publicly and entirely deny Christ his true office and transfer his distinctions and glory into miserable, sinful little men.²⁴

In Venice, he says, four Evangelists are depicted in mosaic on the portal of St. Marc's Cathedral, under which following inscriptions can be read: under Mathew, *Ablue cuncta re et mentis mala sancte Mattheae*

(Wash away all evil of deed and thought, saint Matthew) and under John, *Quo sine fine manes, perduc nos virgo Ioannes* (Lead us, virgin John, to where you abide without end). Such clear idolatry, says Flacius, is equally evident in the very popular prayers *Salve regina* and *Ave regina coelorum*, and likewise in a custom mentioned by Antoninus (Archbishop of Florence, 1389-1459), namely that of the writing under the image of St. Paul, *PER HUNC ITUR AD CHRISTUM* (through this, one goes to Christ) and under St. Dominic, *SED FACILIUS PER ISTUM* (but more easily through this one).²⁵

Apart from being pure idolatry, the cult of saints shows, in Flacius's opinion, a lack of understanding and taste. Quoting Luther, he says that "the papists pray without understanding, without feeling, and with contradiction".²⁶ Indeed, he adds sarcastically,

they frequently contradict themselves in prayer: instead of God, they invoke Peter, Dominic, Francis, Christophor, or even some hideous statue of a god from Lampsacum... and they say, You are our father, or Ave Maria; even though they know very well that Christophor, Francis and the statue are not God and that their name is not Mary. In the same way they also call upon and implore body of statues, bones, torn pieces of vestments and similar things, before which they fall on their knees in prayer. Thus they fight with themselves in a very ugly way when they call that body or picture Our Father; since their conscience must tell them that these are only a body stone, paint, a putrid bone or a dirty rag.²⁷

(2) The second argument against the cult of saints concerns the alleged novelty and inauthenticity of the practice. This acquired additional significance in view of the fact that it was precisely this novelty that Catholics so strongly objected to in the Protestant faith. In the Preface to the German edition of a booklet about the battle between the Pope and the Synod of Carthago (*Historia certaminum inter Romanos Episcopos & sextam Carthaginensem synodum Africanasque Ecclesias, de primatu seu potestate Papae*, 1554), Flacius points out that whoever reads the old and the new Church Fathers and has no intention of lying to his own conscience, must admit that the more ancient the authors, the less mention one finds of the friars, human regulations, ceremonies and church festivities, of the invocation of saints, veneration of relics and "other such fooleries".²⁸ This standpoint is elaborated in a number of later writings, notably in the mentioned work *De sectis*.

(3) The third argument, that which asserts that the veneration of saints is superstitious and characteristic of credulous masses, as well as strongly reminiscent of outlawed pagan practices and popular magic, is also used by other Protestant authors, but it is elaborated by Flacius in a way that shows far greater concern that this is a disease of the society at large. In particular, he is appalled by the abundance of different saints, which he terms a “huge chaos of diverse saviors”.²⁹ The following passage is somewhat longer, but worth quoting in full:

One nation, one town or a man has chosen for his idol and savior saint Francis, another Dominic, a third one Jacob and so forth: for example, in Rome they chiefly adore saint Peter, in Venice saint Rochus, in Milan saint Ambrose, in Assisi saint Francis, in Cologne the three kings and saint Ursula with her 11,000 attendants; in Hungary Ladislas; in Gaul saint Louis, and before him there was an unknown goddess, saint Genoveve, in England saint Thomas, in Vienna in Austria saint Stephen, in Augsburg saint Udalric, and so forth, that is, in each place some other mortal man. In these miserable little men mortals place all their hope and trust and did so particularly before, when they built temples, monasteries, altars and fraternities in their honor; they sacrificed to them Masses and divine offices, as they call them, lit candles to them, and built idols; every day and repeatedly they recited to them *Pater noster* and *Ave Maria*; they fasted for them and went on pilgrimages.

It would be endless and inscrutable to tell how many different male and female saints men individually destined to be their helpers and were changed according to their whims. One need only read the legends and examples of the saints, where numerous stories can easily be found telling of how now this, now that man adored and invoked now one saint, now another; dedicated himself now to this, now to that church, in order to decorate it with an altar, images, or gifts; and in this or that way cried in supplication to be taken in his grace, helped and saved from the midst of perils. Moreover, it not only happened that one person adored this saint, another that, but also that one honored a particular church, altar, and image above all others, venerated it, expected from it help in his troubles or asked other benefits from it. For example, one adored saint Mary in England, another adored her in Loreto, the third one in Racanato, the fourth adored the one in Venice that they call “lady of miracles”, the fifth one the beautiful Mary in Regensburg, the sixth one that in Polish Czestochowa, the seventh Mary in *Grienthal*, the eighth the one that is *in Solio (im Sal)* in Carinthia, the next person some other. It would take a whole day, if not a year, if I tried to enumerate this countless variety of idols. In this way, one place, saint, statue, or image is always seen by some papist as more distinguished than

another, which infinite number of things superstitious and stupid little men invented for themselves at their own will at all times in this Babylonian kingdom; and from which they pleaded all help and consolation. And this horrible idolatry goes on in some places with full rage even today.³⁰

It ought to be said that Flacius's description of circumstances in matters of saints was not overly exaggerated, though it might seem so. The variety and intensity of the cult of the saint had indeed reached the point where even many Catholic authors recognized it as overtly superstitious. Indeed, a number of features of the cult of the saints correlate with magical practices: invocation of a carrier of power that was trusted to change the course of natural events; use of objects with inherent virtues in ways corresponding to the magical practices, such as amulets, ligatures, and others that were supposed to work *ex opere operato*; and the use of these practices to influence immediate events in everyday life, mostly in the sense of protection and prevention of misfortune. In matters of illness or extremely perilous situations, such as a journey or child birth, "specialized" saints were invoked. "Thus saint Anthony tends pigs. Saint Martin and saint George wage war. Saint Apollonia heals toothache. Saint Nicholas brings aid in perils of the sea."³¹ These practices, related to the Catholic mass, included: "infinite vain repetitions and murmurings of various petty prayers, various consecrations or rather incantations of diverse herbs, vestments, wine, figs, wax, butter, salt, meat, cookies, roses, oil, and similar pagan, or rather magical, superstitions."³² This aspect was also criticized by a number of Catholic reformers, before and after the Protestant reformation, and it is significant that the Counter-Reformation, though using the same the cult of the saints as a means to counter Protestantism, took much greater care to discourage practices that were redolent of superstition and magic.

(4) Eventually, Flacius becomes appalled by the fact that the cults of saints have adopted the form of a business that brings money to various monasteries, bishoprics, and churches, all under the supreme direction of Rome and culminating in the sale of indulgences. "Each one among monks, nuns, and other innumerable impostors and seducers, advertises his own cult in a very loud voice, so as to cheat with such a trap simple laymen in order to extract money from them."³³ That is how, he says, they managed to build all the immense constructions of monasteries and churches. It is needs only that

some superstitious old women, or some malicious procuress, bribed by a greedy cleric or monk, exclaims of some picture, *La madona pianze, La madona pianze* (that is, the lady is crying, since the wall of the picture transpires with humidity) and immediately the miserable mob, without any understanding, thinking, or pondering about the truth, or considering the word and the mandates of God... runs to it as to a most real assistant of God.³⁴

It is interesting, Flacius says, that the Pope, who is otherwise quick in condemning all possible practices, either closes his eyes at the occasion of such profitable business, or immediately

confirms such a cult as Catholic and supports it by liberal bulls of indulgences and privileges, thus charming, fascinating, and astonishing miserable superstitious masses, mad with stupidity.³⁵

Oh, how pitiful and lamentable is the blindness and fascination of men; and how detestable and culpable is the heresy and malice of these pastors; or better wolves, since by means of false miracles and owing to their greed for riches, they hurl upon the miserable and imprudent people the vilest little images and idols, which they should adore and invoke in place of the living God.³⁶

A particular form of this business is pilgrimage, which, by the end of the Middle Ages, was already organized as genuine tourism, with votive images and pilgrimage badges purchased as souvenirs and amulets of protection, as well as special maps to be followed in order to visit all important sanctuaries, especially those in Rome on the occasion of jubilee. Flacius criticizes this custom from two points of view: from the theological point of view since it implies that God can not be venerated in spirit and in all places equally, and serves to obtain indulgences, which present one of the main theological problems for the Protestant reformers; and from the ethical point of view since pilgrimages are not only mere fashion and another method of extracting money from the credulous, but are frequently occasions for debauchery. In the *Rasgovarange*, the papist and the Lutheran touch this point as well:

Papist: What do you say about the journeys, isn't it good to go to faraway places to see where bodies of saints are resting, so that they might assist us in our tribulations? Christian (Lutheran): Saints never wanted such a thing.

On the contrary, while they were living, they condemned such journeys, since you have for your custom to travel so willingly in order to do obscene and wicked things in the name of devotion.³⁷

Moreover, the enrichment of churches and monasteries, which takes place at the expense of the credulous masses, has a negative moral impact upon these very masses whose faith is being exploited. Namely,

there is a contradiction in religion if it teaches that the saints were extremely modest and humble while they were on earth, and that they wanted to attribute all glory to God; and then it pretends that they are so greedy for glory and ambitious that they consider themselves worthy of temples and altars and want to be adored as intercessors and helpers; and finally they presume to have their corpses and their rotten bones, their dirty vestments and miserable rags and even their images venerated and adored. And if such honor is not paid to them, they rage against the mortals sending upon them the fire of saint Anthony or some other calamity.³⁸

There is an obvious contradiction between the love of poverty that the Church teaches and the rich adornment of churches; the rich can obtain salvation easier than the poor since they have money for all the indulgences, pilgrimages, alms, masses, works of supererogation of the monks, foundation of churches and so on; furthermore, it teaches avarice, since people will think: "If God, the saints, the holy religion and all our churchmen and monks desire gold so much, why should I not want such a divine thing and try to acquire it by all means?"³⁹

It can be observed that Flacius accords the issue of the saints a far more prominent place than other Lutheran authors. Moreover, through the issue of saints he addresses other important questions, namely those of superstition, the sacraments, pilgrimages, greed, hypocrisy and fraud in the name of religion. His preoccupation with the saints was clearly engendered by the Interim and Melancthon's doctrine on the *adiaphora*. However, I would argue that his interest in this issue was related to a considerable extent to his contacts with Venice. This can be induced from the fact that his most picturesque presentations of evils related to saintly cults refer to places and persons, making it clear that he was well acquainted and dissatisfied with Venetian circumstances. Further to this, one of his most telling works on the issue of saints, the aforementioned

De sectis, contains a long preface dedicated to the Venetian authorities. Flacius's particular preoccupation with Venice results from the circumstances of his youth, education, and conversion to Lutheranism, as well as from the intricate relations between Venice and German Lutherans at the time of writing.⁴⁰

It is important to note that Istria, at the time under Venetian rule, saw a great spread of Protestantism at the time of Flacius's adolescence: in June 1534, the Roman curia was informed that in the town of Pirano, on Venetian territory, most of the inhabitants were Lutherans, including the mayor; and three months later, Peter Paul Vergerius, at that time papal legate, observed that Trieste was infested with Protestantism owing to trade relations with Germany and that the "plague" was about to spread throughout the Istrian peninsula.⁴¹ However, it is possible that Flacius only came into closer contact with Lutheran teachings during his schooling in Venice, between 1536 and 1539.

The ecclesiastical situation in Italian cities at that time appears to have been critical to an extent that assisted conversions to Protestantism. Catholic critics lament most particularly the ignorance of the clergy who, for the most part, were ordained in exchange for money or personal services. Similarly, Bishops obtained their positions with payment and consequently were rarely present in their dioceses, again facilitating abuses of office by the lower clergy and religious orders. Monasteries and chapters were well known for their moral decay and attempts to bring about reform were met by vehement opposition. Occasionally, extreme cases would end in trial and execution, such as in the case of the sodomite priest and teacher from Venice who was charged with having abused many children under the age of ten and duly decapitated after degradation.⁴² There was a chronic shortage of good preachers, and if an eloquent and passionate preacher were to appear, it could happen that he was allowed to preach for quite some time before the authorities realized his teachings were redolent of "heresy".⁴³

As for Venice, it boasted a reputation of religious freedom. Admittedly, its authorities were primarily concerned with maintaining good relations with profitable trading partners, but it also created fertile ground for the flourishing of a number of different religious orientations and free publishing and distribution activity. Naturally, Rome exerted much pressure upon Venice and demanded that it prevent the spread of Protestantism in its territory, while the other side was greatly concerned with its own positions: in 1539, Melancthon wrote a letter to the Senate of Venice imploring

that measures be taken against the followers of Michael Servetus, Spanish Antitrinitarian.⁴⁴ But it was not until 1542, the year in which the Inquisition was installed in Venice, and 1544, the year in which the zealous nuntius Della Casa started his decisive battle against the “heretics”, that the civil authorities took serious measures in either direction. Even in 1545 the Venetian authorities were still wary of making any move that might enrage the English king,⁴⁵ while the joint intervention of the Emperor and the Pope against the Lutherans, which led to the outbreak of the Schmalkaldian war, was considered *un gran disturbo* by the Doge.⁴⁶ In an answer to the German Protestants living in Venice who saw their property endangered by the unfavorable circumstances in the Empire, the Venetian authorities stated that

after a long consideration...their city was free and safe for everybody and especially for the German nation, to which it always wished to offer every commodity and honor, and because of that they were not to be in any doubt, but to look forward to the utmost affability.⁴⁷

In 1546, the Venetians were engaging in negotiation with the Schmalkaldian Alliance through their agent, Baldessara Altieri, letting them know that “they will surely always receive pleasure rather than injury from their state and their forces”, and a letter by a Catholic informer reports that the news on the progress of Protestantism in Hungary was received “with extreme pleasure”.⁴⁸ One of the results of this situation of fine equilibrium was a vague feeling in the Protestant world that Venice was just a hair’s breadth from officially embracing its faith and that by all means it should be persuaded to denounce Rome finally and completely.

Venetian territory was also fertile soil for Protestants who went to spread their faith outside of their borders and who, due to their particular Venetian background, identified different areas of importance within the doctrine than the Germans. In 1541, Flacius was already in Wittenberg and had managed to come into contact with Luther. At that time his old guardian and advisor Baldo Lupetina was traveling and publicly preaching Lutheran doctrines in Italian and Croatian in which the abolition of masses for the saints and the veneration of relics featured prominently. Eventually he was denounced by a friar of Cherso, who confirmed the following in an oral interrogation in Venice: during the Lent of 1541, Lupetina preached in the parish church that man had no free will and that God had predestined

those for paradise and hell; that indulgences were useless and masses served just to rob people of their money; that purgatory did not exist and therefore all mediation of priests was useless. Sunday mass was to be celebrated only in the name of God, not the saints. He also attacked regulations including those governing fasting and confession. He said and did so much that (according to the testimony of the witness) “he turned the town upside down and soon everybody in Cherso will be heretics”; the court minutes, now kept at the Venetian State Archives, also names this “everybody”: doctor, lawyer, tailor, shoemaker, priest (!) etc; it was denounced that they possessed forbidden books, did not respect the sacraments, did not fast, and that master Polit, the tailor, broke up all images of saints in his house; the heretics met every day in the loggia on the main square and openly discussed, saying that only now they could start living a real Christian life, and that the priest would get no more money from them.⁴⁹

Fra Baldo was sentenced to life imprisonment among the first victims of the newly founded Inquisition. This event left a deep mark on Flacius and can be considered one of the events that brought his attention back to Venice after his having been preoccupied with German affairs for some years. While in 1546 Venetian authorities were still ignoring the persistent demands of Della Casa with the blunt response that they knew of no heresy in Venice and Morosini even declared he did not know the meaning of the word “Lutheran”,⁵⁰ a certain change of direction was noticeable in 1547 when the Venetian authorities began to cooperate with the nuntius.⁵¹ In that year a court was founded comprised of three secular and four ecclesiastical deputies⁵² and Della Casa prepared himself for a large crusade against his adversaries by applying to Rome for a special *breve* empowering him to pronounce sentences involving the spilling of blood, as well as capital sentences.⁵³ However, the secular deputies of the tribunal were still reluctant to opt for stricter measures in this respect. It was because of this reluctance that Fra Angelico da Crema, whose “heretical” preaching and bad behavior in the course of his trial in 1547 earned him from the Inquisition the sentence of degradation, the cutting of his tongue and burning at the stake, eventually got off with lifelong imprisonment in the dungeons of Forte, from where he escaped only two months later.⁵⁴

In the same year of 1547, the case against Baldo Lupetina was started anew following accusations by his fellow prisoners. He had continued to preach in prison, pushing his head through the small window of his cell

towards a larger, common cell: some of the prisoners just waited for the head to appear in order to beat it, though others listened. Thus the documents mention a certain Antonio of Florence, a murderer sentenced to death, whom Fra Baldo had converted to Protestantism immediately before the execution: the minutes report that Antonio “confessed only to God” and refused to kiss images of saints and say his *Ave Maria*.⁵⁵ This case bears similarities to that of Fra Angelico: the Inquisition proved very agile and pronounced a capital sentence as early as the end of 1547 or the beginning of 1548, after which the prisoner was handed over to a secular judge, who then allowed the case to fall more or less into oblivion. In 1555, however, the new Pontiff, Paul IV (Giampietro Carafa, 1555-1559), increased the pressure on the Venetian authorities with respect to Lutherans and demanded that Lupetina be burned alive. The conclusion of the case could thus be delayed only a little longer, though the Council of Ten was opposed to the execution and prisoner’s powerful friends pleaded on his behalf with the Doge. The sentence was eventually carried out by drowning in the lagoon in 1556.⁵⁶

For Lupetina’s case to achieve resonance in the Lutheran world it was important that he showed himself to be unswerving in the face of all adversities thus earning himself the reputation of a genuine martyr: he wrote letters to King Louis XII of France and Duchess Renée of Ferrara for assistance and continued preaching to his fellow-prisoners until the day of his execution; according to the accusations of the Inquisition cited by the tribunal in 1556 he had also continued to write Lutheran poems and satires. When he was called upon to recant before death, he chose to write a confession instead.⁵⁷

Another important event in those years of great importance to Flacius was the conversion to Protestantism of the most prominent Istrian figure of the time: Peter Paul Vergerius, a papal nuntius and subsequently (1535-1545) bishop of Capodistria (Slov. Koper, Lat. Iustinopolis, Caput Histriae). Initially Vergerius had been one of the leading opponents of Protestantism and, as such, enjoyed a special papal license to read Protestant writings; however, his reading them led to his conversion, though for some time he tried to allay growing suspicions of Lutheranism. In 1544, and again in 1545, Vergerius was denounced by the monks of Capodistria as a heretic and the Inquisition initiated a trial against him. Although the entire came close being hushed up on several occasions, there were repeated denouncements and Vergerius obviously did not cease in his

activity.⁵⁸ Thanks to his large number of influential friends and followers he managed to drag out the process, but was eventually forced to defend himself before Della Casa's tribunal.⁵⁹

Vergerius's written declaration on a number of set points has been preserved and provides revealing evidence of the character of his newly adopted faith.⁶⁰ The first two points are directly concerned with the veneration of saints: firstly, he was accused of denying the veracity of the legends of St. George and St. Christophor. He admitted to this, defending himself with references to Pope Paul III, among other authorities, who had deleted these legends from the breviary. The second point related to the same issue, though from a slightly different and more common perspective: Vergerius was accused of having defied the veneration of images by naming them idols: he defended himself, saying that it was only the ugly images that were inappropriate for churches that he had had mind and that he had used the term "idol" in a "classical" sense. Following accusations of possession of forbidden books and despising the monastic orders, the accusers returned to the issue of saints: the bishop had allegedly stated that St. Lucy, St. Agatha, and St. Apollonia did not grant any protection against particular illnesses and rebuked a monk who boasted of possessing a tooth of St. Apollonia as the only guaranteed remedy against toothache. Here Vergerius defended himself by referring to the conclusions of the Council of Cologne, which explicitly denounced the belief that each saint was allotted the curing of a particular disease. While the seventh point of accusation concerned Vergerius's alleged disrespect shown towards the books of St. Augustine and St. Paul, the eighth again returned to the issue of saints with the bishop being accused of not believing in the miracle stories of Loreto. He did not deny this, retelling the legend of Loreto in order to explain his doubts.⁶¹ We should also note Flacius's remarks in the *Rasgovarange*, where the Papist admonishes: "You should believe in Our Lady of Loreto and not criticize those who go there to see the most holy chamber, in which Our Lady was visited by an angel, and fed his son, and which was carried thence by angels." To this the Lutheran answers: "You should be ashamed to believe that enormous lie and fraud: angels have better things to do than to carry walls on their shoulders to Italy."⁶²

It is extremely interesting to note that most of the accusations on which this long and weary process was built dealt with offences against the veneration of the saints and not theological irregularities, properly

speaking. Clearly, many of the accusations that had reached Venice (coming mostly from Capodistria) were concerned only with these minor issues and as such were the consequences of the personal animosities between the friars of the town and the bishop.⁶³

Vergerius' supporters had not been idle, and after the new testimonies of 1546 things began to move in the bishop's favor. However, another accusation reached Rome at that time. It was written by a certain Ambrosio di Loschi and contained in its first charges the denial of the intercession of saints and of the efficiency of vows made to them;⁶⁴ on the matter of the bishop's preaching activity, the accuser recalled the occasion on which Vergerius preached against the veneration of saints in Barbana, in the diocese of Pola, which was under the episcopal jurisdiction of his brother, Giambattista Vergerius.⁶⁵ It is no wonder then that at the end of the trial the bishop focused the attention of the tribunal on the fact that apparently nothing more serious could be proven against him than his having spoken against the legends of St. Christophor and St. George.⁶⁶

In 1547 new accusations reached the papal curia in Rome, including those of Luigi Lippomanno and Grechetto. Finally, in 1548, the circle began to tighten around Vergerius with books of a "heretic" nature were connected with him in two cases. The latter of these being that of his brother Giambattista, who died having refused the last ointment and among whose books incriminating writings were found. After this Vergerius fled to the territory of the Empire, publicly disclosing himself as a Protestant.

Vergerius's conversion had enormous resonance in the Protestant world, all the more so because 1548 was the year of the Interim controversy. Vergerius was a fearless and untiring promoter of Protestant ideas and extremely prolific as a writer, translator, and publisher; he could also boast of excellent contacts with powerful personages in Italian cities, Switzerland, and Germany. Despite being someone with an allegedly difficult and proud character, who did not appeal as a friend or as a close collaborator, and who, according to the testimony of a contemporary, Johannes Brenz, was "not very versed in theology",⁶⁷ he nonetheless enjoyed Flacius's high esteem for his contributions to their common cause. This aspect is noticeable from a number of references. Towards the end of the book entitled *Widder den auszug des Leipsischen Interims, oder das kleine Interim* (1549), Flacius mentions receiving a letter from Vergerius, continuing with evident thrill:

He had been a papal legate in Wittenberg some twelve years ago, but is now persecuted by the Pope, even damned and excommunicated because he taught his churches rightly about the Christian faith. Currently he resides in Grisoni, in the Italian mountains, about two days journey from Milan, and there he writes and prints things against the Pope. He has also sent me one of his books, in which he describes how the papal emissaries in Capodistria raged like devils after his ban and were cruel in persecutions. He also let me know that he prefers to be a pauper in the house of Lord than rich in the houses of the godless.... isn't it amazing that a learned bishop, who was supported by the Pope and who was a great lord, leaves his riches, titles, and all the rest of it because of our Lord Jesus Christ and is willing to reduce himself to poverty... and the Germans, who for such a long time had a clear and pure Christian religion, confessed to it and boasted about it, now renounce it, sell it, and falsify it?⁶⁸

This brief remark appears to express concisely Flacius's entire attitude towards the Protestantism of his time. Unlike the Germans, who were increasingly willing to sacrifice their principles to make their lives easier, there were still individuals who did not vacillate when it came to making a real sacrifice for Christ. Lupetina and Vergerius thus appeared to Flacius to be the martyrs of the true church, as his brothers in faith by dint of their unwillingness to compromise with hateful Papism.⁶⁹ His new engagement in Italian affairs could also be seen in the publication of the booklet *Eine erschreckende Historie von einem den die Feinde Evangelii inn Welsch Land gezwungen haben den erkanten christum zu verleugnen* (Magdeburg, 1549), in which he also mentioned Vergerius's conversion to Protestantism.⁷⁰ The story of Francesco Spiera, though it may appear somewhat odd to the modern mind, evidently found enormous resonance at the time – first locally, but also in international circles, following the literary treatment of Flacius and Vergerius. Spiera was a lawyer from Citadella near Padua and an adherent to the Calvinist faith who had won over a number of his students to Protestantism. In 1548, however, he was seized by the Inquisition and forced to deny his convictions. From that moment on he suffered great spiritual pain, becoming severely ill. He likewise took this to be the beginning of the eternal tortures of the damned. Vergerius visited him on his deathbed, and this shocking spectacle, as he later wrote, became crucial for his own salvation and Spiera's death determined his own definitive break with Catholicism. This event and Vergerius' conversion clearly revived Flacius's relations with Italy; in the second edition of *De voce et re fidei*, published in 1555, Flacius

includes a dedication (dated 1554) in which he expresses his concern for the events taking place in his homeland and his impatience with the attitude of Venice:

Recently I read again your booklet in which you describe the cruelest persecutions that took place after you left Capodistria – incited and carried out in our Istria by certain Grisonios and Busdraghis and that detestable papal legate Della Casa, all servants of the Antichrist – where the most righteous men and good foreigners are tortured for the sake of ridiculous and obvious superstition. I, and I was not the only one here in Germany, was particularly grieved, but also amazed that the glorious Doge and the wise Senate had given so much freedom to these infamous villains to rage against their faithful subjects. And this despite the fact that our land, among other things, had demonstrated its loyalty in the war against Emperor Maximilian. I could mention many facts from those times which show how, together with other landsmen, my father and my uncles on the paternal and maternal side, endured various perils and suffered great losses for six long years because their firmly remained with Venice.⁷¹

Later, the two men were to cooperate in a futile attempt to rescue Baldo Lupetina from prison as in 1552 and 1553, when Flacius was in Venice and Vergerius used his courtly connections in order to achieve liberation. Flacius was to return to Venice once more in 1563, probably inspiring his dedication to *De sectis* in 1565.⁷²

It should be added that the accusations of defying the veneration of the saints were frequent in Venetian trials: in the case of Angelico da Crema, the charges were almost entirely centered around his statements related to the sacraments, the cult of the Virgin Mary and the invocation and images of saints.⁷³ Likewise, Don Francesco from Felonica was accused of denying the intercession of the saints, confession and purgatory, as well as the fact that a list of Lutheran books had been found in his possession, which he declared had been recommended by Vergerius.⁷⁴

An additional source of Flacius's interest in the question of saints can be found in his research into the history of the proto-Protestant movements, such as the Hussites and the Waldensians. These in particular condemned the veneration of the saints as intercessors, as well as their images and relics. Flacius devoted an extensive section in his *Catalogus* to them, his engagement also resulting in a meeting with representatives of the Czech Brethren (Jednota bratrská) in 1556. This religious movement, an heir of the Hussites, was extremely enthusiastic in its attempts to achieve unity

between all evangelical branches. Their great concern about dissent among German Lutherans, not to mention numerous other Protestant groups, fostered the idea of sending representatives to speak with them and cooperate in finding a basis for unity.⁷⁵ Thus, Jan Blahoslav and Matej Czervinka were sent to Magdeburg to meet Flacius, equipped with some of their writings and a letter by Jan Czerný (Nigranus), one of the first men of Jednota at the time and the founder of its archives.⁷⁶ According to the report of their journey they debated for several days, apparently making repeated attempts to direct the conversation towards the question of dissent, whereas Flacius was primarily interested in the heritage of the Hussite movement, insisting on calling the Brethren "Waldensians" despite their vehement protestations.⁷⁷

With regard to the history of the Hussites, Flacius indeed embarked upon systematic research in 1552 at the latest, when he mentions his having read the *Historia Hussitarum* by Cochlaeus.⁷⁸ Between 1552 and 1557 he systematically studied the Hussites and announced to his friend and publisher Caspar Nydbruck on more than one occasion (1552 and 1553) that he was intending to edit and publish all Hussite writings. Furthermore, on the occasion of Blahoslav's visit, Flacius asked to be sent anything that Blahoslav believed might be useful to him. Indeed, it appears he received a number of manuscripts. In 1557, when Nydbruck unexpectedly died, 37 rare manuscripts belonging to the University Library of Prague remained in Vienna and were at the time of Mirković still kept at the Royal Library. According to this author, these manuscripts contained 47 treatises, all of which, with the exception of transcriptions of Wycliff's works, being manuscripts by Czech reformers and chroniclers.⁷⁹ The most important results of this systematic work of collection and research were the first edition of Hus and Hieronymus of Prague,⁸⁰ as well as the *Confessio Waldensium*, the edition of the Taborite Confession.⁸¹

Understandably, Flacius used primarily Catholic sources to acquire knowledge of the Waldensians and the Hussites, as they, despite their harsh critique, tended to present their adversaries accurately. The parallel with the Hussites was nothing new at that time as Luther himself had publicly acknowledged Hus as his own predecessor. However, in the *Historia Hussitarum*, Flacius also found details of the attitudes towards the veneration of saints endorsed by Hus and his followers. Apart from doctrinal considerations, Cochlaeus presented a very controversial episode with the intention of criticizing Hus for making his own saints out of scoundrels. This also serves as a window through which to view the

circumstances of the period. It tells of an incident in which an adherent of Hus approaches a friar that was sitting in the Carmelitan church with relics and begging for alms on account of them and publicly denounces him for showing vile (possibly animal) bones and “greedily deceiving Christians by begging for alms”.⁸² The situation escalated to conflict with several armed men joining the offender and maltreating the prior of the monastery and a number of friars with harsh words and blows. Three men were decapitated as a result of this incident and, according to Cochlaeus, publicly proclaimed as saints by Hus: their relics (pieces of clothes soaked in their blood) were venerated in the Bethlehem chapel, which was henceforth dedicated to their memory. We can not know what Flacius thought about these accusations, but the disparaging attitude towards relics of the saints may have appealed to him, particularly when Cochlaeus said:

There goes your preaching, and that of your men, about the venerations of saintly bones, since you condemn it, saying that St Wenceslas miserably achieved the kingdom of martyrdom, namely through fratricide; and similar things you claim of the other saints about which priests and monks are preaching, since they possess many heads, many arms, and different bones of one saint. Those bones are certainly not of saints, but can be sooner believed to belong to vile corpses.⁸³

Cochlaeus identifies the same attitudes in Hieronymus of Prague: that on one occasion he even “took the relics from the altar in the monastery of St Mary *in arena Pragae*, threw them in the mud and smashed them with his feet”.⁸⁴

Flacius did not fail to notice the parallel between the developments in the Hussite and the Lutheran movements: both had had great teachers, both had been betrayed by the mainstream after the death of their teacher. While the authentic, non-compliant Hussitism was carried on by the Taborites – despite the persecutions of the Prague masters, who had the backing of major noblemen and a strong University – Luther’s ideas were preserved and perpetuated by Flacius and his collaborators, such as Gallus, Amsdorf, and Alberus. Evidence of this parallel could be in the *XXIII. articuli Magistrorum Pragensium contra Taboritas*, which were included in Cochlaeus’s book. In the chapter on the invocation of saints, the Prague masters uses Catholic arguments to support it, such as the difference between *latria* and *doulia*, explicitly stating that the saints could be

invoked for aid and intercession.⁸⁵ Flacius himself possessed and planned to publish the Taborite Confession and stated in the *Catalogus* that their doctrine was “entirely in accordance with ours”.⁸⁶ As a matter of fact, he was of the opinion that the Taborites were better and purer in their doctrine than Hus or Wycliff, since they had adopted much from the Waldensians – a statement which, though meant positively (he calls Waldo the one “through whom Christ made his truth shine, having driven away the darkness of Antichrist”⁸⁷), did not thrill the Czech Brethren particularly as they were trying to distance themselves from any associations with the Waldensians.⁸⁸

This comparison between the teachings and the situation of the Taborites and that of the Flacians was formulated by Flacius in 1557 and published as the preface to his *Confessio Waldensium*. Historical experience proved that Hussitism declined only due to internal dissension, which should have been a lesson to the German reformers, as Flacius emphasized on more than one occasion while preparing the debate for Worms Colloquium in 1557. Unfortunately, his unwillingness to compromise only sharpened the discordances in the extreme, thus marking a great drawback for the Protestant cause. Flacius did not attend the Colloquium himself, though he did prepare the instructions for the delegates of Thuringia and sent them together with a letter to Duke Johannes Friedrich II.⁸⁹ In this letter he again points out the parallel between the situation of the German Protestants and that of the Hussite churches.⁹⁰ Among the Hussites, as among the Lutherans, there existed “the adiaphorists” and “the steadfast”, though the latter were cruelly persecuted by the Papists and the teachings of Hus would have vanished entirely had it not been for the appearance of Luther.⁹¹

It should be added here that Matěj z Janova (Matthias Parisiensis, d. 1393), a precursor of Hussitism, appears in the *Catalogus* as a separate witness. Flacius refers to a piece of writing entitled *Libellus de Antichristo* by Jan Milič. The main thrust of the book maintained that the Antichrist had already arrived, evidenced by the fact that statues and false relics were being venerated everywhere and that the saints were being adored instead of Christ.⁹² Despite this, in his presentation of the attitudes of Matěj z Janova, Flacius is not far from what can be found in the latter's *Regulae Veteris et Novi testamenti*.⁹³

Another important influence on Flacius's attitude towards the veneration of saints probably came from German satirical and polemical

literature, with which Flacius was well acquainted. Particular significance can be attributed to Erasmus Alberus, the author of the extremely popular *Der Barfuser Münche Eulenspiegel und Alcoran* (1542), a bitter parody of the *Liber conformitatum sancti Francisci cum Christo* by Bartholomew of Pisa (d. 1401).⁹⁴ Alberus collaborated with Flacius in Magdeburg and obviously belonged to his circle. Evidence to support this comes from an epistle by Leonard Beyer, written in Cottbus in 1550, in which he asks Erasmus to greet Nicolas Amsdorf, Stephan Tucher, Flacius, Nicholas Gallus and *omnes fratres* on his behalf.⁹⁵ It is noticeable that St. Francis (at times also St. Dominic) suffered particular denunciation by Flacius. In *Rasgovarange*, the Lutheran harshly condemns the two Mendicant orders and their founders:

... and besides we should say that Fra Dominic, a Spaniard from a village called Calorga, was the chief of hypocrisy and superstition, and also a great swindler, and that Fra Francis of Assisi was another swindler and he never had any wounds, but all was great empty talk and fraud.⁹⁶

The Franciscans were the dominant order in Istria (it was from this order that his uncle changed to adopt Lutheranism) and also the keenest in making denunciations. Furthermore, the preachers of this order were criticized in Italy for their ignorance and superstition, even by members of their own order.⁹⁷ However, the primary source of the poison that the Lutherans were directing at the Franciscans was the identification of Francis with Christ by late medieval authors in particular, such as Bartholomew of Pisa as mentioned above. Erasmus Alberus commented:

If all the miraculous deeds in the Alcoran had in fact happened, we could say that Francis together with his brothers had indeed defied Christ and his Apostles. As Christ only once made wine from water, and Francis three times. Christ was transfigured only once, and Francis twenty times. Christ suffered the pains of his wounds only for a short while, while Francis bore his wounds for two entire years with considerable pain. Francis and his brothers raised more than a thousand people from the dead, restored sight to more than a thousand blind men, expelled more than a thousand demons from the obsessed, straightened up more than a thousand lame men, as well as cattle: cows, calves, hogs, and sheep. All in all, Christ never did anything that Francis would not have done as well, and more than that.⁹⁸

Flacius contributed to this satirical condemnation with several pamphlets that clearly point to the influence of Alberus. These include *Vergleichung Francisci mit Christo et Libro Conformitarum, das ist aus der Barfusser Bibel abgedruckt*, a comment on a pictorial comparison between Christ and St. Francis (so-called *Arbor Conformitatum*) accompanied by a satirical address to *D. Klingen Münch zu Erfurd*, beginning with the words: *Erwirdiger Vater im Antichrist*;⁹⁹ another being *Unterscheid zwischen der waren Religion Christi, und falschen Abgöttischen lehr des Antichrists in den fürnemsten stücken*, in which Francis is shown to reign together with God in heaven (on the side that shows the false doctrine).¹⁰⁰ In *De sectis*, Flacius accuses the Mendicants of promoting superstition for their own benefit, while in the *Catalogus* he eventually characterizes them as the “pillars of the Antichrist”.¹⁰¹

Finally, we should not neglect minor and less specific influences. Among the authors with enormous influence in humanist circles was Erasmus of Rotterdam. In his *Colloquia*, he mocks supplications directed to the saints and the trust placed in them to help people in their everyday lives on earth, and he severely criticizes the custom of pilgrimages as detrimental to morals.¹⁰² The *Colloquia* were extremely popular in Italy and were viewed by the ecclesiastical authorities as *una cosa molto perniciosa*, which taught children at the most tender age to mock the true and holy Christian religion.¹⁰³ Another influence might have been Calvin’s *Admonitio de Reliquiis*, which Flacius was most probably acquainted with. We can argue that the paragraph in his *De sectis* that speaks of a “recently published booklet, which commemorates the numerous bodies and heads of the saints said to be lying in various places and their showing to the miserable mob, not without significant profit, in order that they be adored and invoked” refers precisely to this treatise of Calvin.¹⁰⁴

* * *

This article aimed to present the preliminary results of ongoing research into Lutheran attitudes towards the veneration of the saints. As a personality with a different background from other reformers, in particular his Istrian and Venetian provenance, Flacius is a particularly interesting case in this respect. The preaching of his two model reformers for whom condemnation for the veneration of the saints was among its principal

tenets, together with the ambiguous situation in Venice, where apparent benevolence towards Protestantism went hand in hand with an abundance of picturesque practices of a cultic nature, formed a basis for his views and arguments; while his interest in proto-Reformation movements deepened his insight into the topic. The way German polemic and satirical literature influenced Flacius remains a topic for future investigation and further research within the broader context of the Reformation and beyond is bound to result in additional discoveries of interest.

NOTES

- 1 For example, in *De captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae praeludium*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883), VI, 546.
- 2 A detailed presentation of the state of research and various approaches to the issue of sixteenth-century iconoclasm is given by Schnitzler, *Ikonoklasmus-Bildersturm*, 9-28.
- 3 There are some fine exceptions, of which I would like to draw attention to the book of Kolb, *For all the Saints*, and references listed in chapter I, n. 2.
- 4 For the fifteenth-century humanist criticism of hagiography, see Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History*, 117ff.
- 5 *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 6th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 83; elaborated by Melancthon in 1531, in his *Apologia*, *ibidem*, 316-28.
- 6 *Ubi enim spes commodi et subsidii corporalis et spiritualis adempta fuerit, ibi cultus sanctorum facile evanescet, sive illi sint in sepulchris, sive in coelis. Frustra enim aut ex mera caritate nemo ipsorum facile recordabitur nec eos colet et honore divino afficiet. Ibidem*, 425. Cf. Schenda, "Die protestantisch-katolische Legendenpolemik," 31.
- 7 Kolb, *For all the Saints*, 17-8.
- 8 *Magnifice consolatoria exempla, et sententiae, ex Vitis et passionibus Sanctorum et aliorum summorum Virorum* (Wittenberg: Schlirlentz, 1544), Preface; Kolb, *For all the Saints*, 36.
- 9 Judging from the correspondence with his publisher, Caspar Nydbruck, he wrote the first version containing 188 witnesses (articles) in 1552, but this increased in the first publication in Basel (1556), and by the time of the Strassburg edition of 1562 it contained more than 440. The edition used in this article is from the seventeenth-century (see bibliography), made according to the Strassburg edition. Recent extensive treatments of this important work are those of Frank, *Untersuchungen zum Catalogus testium veritatis*, and Hartmann, *Humanismus und Kirchenkritik*, chapter 6, 141-97.
- 10 *Non sit nobis religio cultus hominum mortuorum, quia si pie vixerunt non sic habentur, ut tales quaerant honores, sed illum a nobis coli volunt, quo illuminante laetantur meriti sui non esse consortes. Honorandi ergo sunt propter imitationem, non adorandi propter religionem. Si autem male vixerunt, ubicumque sint non sunt colendi... Quare honoramus eos caritate, non servitute, nec eis templa constituimus, nolunt enim se sic honorari a nobis, quia nos ipsos, cum boni sumus, templa summi dei esse noverunt.* Augustine of Hippo, *De vera religione* 55, CCSL 32, CETEDOC database.
- 11 Until a few decades ago, the only extensive presentation of his life and work was that of Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus*. In the 1960s, Yugoslav historian Mijo Mirković wrote several versions of Flacius's biography, the most extensive and scholarly being *Matija Vlačić*; though much criticized for its Marxist approach, it remains an extremely valuable source of information

owing to it is steady founding on primary sources from a large number of European libraries. Due to limited space, I have omitted studies on particular theological questions related to Flacius and have mentioned only the most recently published biography by Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, the great merit of which, despite its occasionally somewhat sensationalist approach, is his reference to a huge number of writings by both Flacius and his contemporaries, some of which lead to very fresh insights. Its additional value is the extensive bibliography of both sixteenth-century prints and secondary literature.

- 12 Flacius, *Eine Schrifft widder ein recht epicurisch buch* (1549), Aij and Aijj.
- 13 *Bilder (so fern sie zu keiner Abgötterey ursach geben / oder falsche und Gotlose historien vorstellen) möchten vielleicht in Kirchen geduldet werden / weil sie dieselben ein wenig zieren / und die unerfahren leren und erinnern. Doch solt mann hierin auch eine mas halten / denn es were besser das man die lebendigen Tempel Gottes / denn die steinerne Tempel / mit solcher unkost schmückte.* Flacius, *Ein Buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen...* (1550), K i. For the Latin version, see the earlier (1549), but shorter *Liber de veris et falsis adiaphoris*, X 5.
- 14 *Haec de decoro etiam in hac parte dicere volui, non quod negem picturas habere vel in templo vel extra templum Adiaphoron esse, sed quod imaginum abusum, qui iam denuo crescere incipit, gravi repraehensione dignissimum esse iudico.* Flacius, *Liber de veris et falsis adiaphoris*, X 5.
- 15 *Denn wie man sagt / Obiecta movent sensus, was man sihet / da wird man verstürtz auff.* Flacius, *Ein Buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, K ij. Flacius, *Liber de veris et falsis adiaphoris*, X 5. Cf. his disapproval with Michelangelo's depictions of nude bodies in *De sectis*, 155.
- 16 *In solchen hendeln ist sehr vleissig zubetrachten / das der gemeine man... nicht könne / von den sachen unterschiedlich urteilen. Mit einer kleinen eusserlichen Ceremonien allein / lest sich der unvorstendige pöbel / viel leichtlicher bewegen / als mit einer geschickten sahrffsinnigen disputation.* Flacius (under the pseudonym Johannes Hermannus), *Das man in diesen geschwinden leufften* (1548), A ij.
- 17 *Denn bald am anfang... sol der Priester nach Papistischer arth das Confiteor sprechen / Darinnen der Priester der Junckfrawen Maria und allen Heiligen beichtet / und damit Abgötter aus ihnen machet / in dem / das er ihnen Göttliche ehr und macht zuschreibet / nemlich vergebung der Sünden / und erforschung unsers herzens.* Flacius, *Wider den schnöden Teuffel* (1549), Biiij. In another place, he calls it *eine specktakel Messe / odder rechte narren mess.* Flacius, *Eine Schrifft widder ein recht epicurisch Buch* (1549), C ij.
- 18 *Das ist / einer wird... ein Psalmen murmeln / der andere vielleicht eine fabel aus dem Esopo / der dritte etwas aus dem Eulenspiegel etc.* Flacius, *Widder die neue Reformation* (1550), D.
- 19 *O ihr Reformirer / ja wol ihr Deformirer und versteller der Kirche!* Flacius, *ibidem*, C ij.

- ²⁰ ... *buduchy besida boxgia cista, i suitla, cha di da se nima pochlagmati, ni castiti priliche a vi na sramotu Gospoda, hochietege poctouati, i chlagmatise sberitam, i scolinami, i zinzensi, i suichiami*. Flacius, *Rasgovarange* (1555), B. Cf. an earlier ironic passage on saints: "Would it not be fine if you went to the holiest of the holiest bones of the dead, to the smeared and consecrated stone of the altar and to the idols that stand there, in a good papist and idolatrous manner, falling on your knees with uncovered and bowed head?" *Were es nicht fein / das mann zu den allerheiligsten todenbeinen / zum geschmirten und geweihten Altarstein / und zun götzen die droben stehen / auff gut Papistisch und Abgöttisch / mit gebogenen knien / mit blossen und geneigten heupt gienge?* Flacius, *Grundliche verlegung aller Sophisterey* (1551), G.
- ²¹ Cited from Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 218.
- ²² ... *a paruo recimi, bil imil ti sminost za poiti vdiglie, sprida gednoga chraglia, bres imiti chaco gednoga, chi bi te popeglial, i molil zate? ne stanouito? zato hochiess ty rechi da imasse poiti vdiglie chu Bogu? i molitga bres vsridengie od coga svetza?* Flacius, *Rasgovarange*, A 2.
- ²³ *Popadass ti cholica slicagnia od svita giesu ti draga, gia niman za slidoueani nego besidu Boxgiu, cha me vci cisto da sprid pridem vdiglie sprida otza nepescoga, i molim gnega za gedinoga vsridnica isucharsta, znagiuchij zato, da gia nisan dostogian, da silugiuchyse za poslussati gnegouoy vogli*. *Rasgovarange*, A 2.
- ²⁴ *Quibus precessionibus manifeste ex mortuis sanctis non mediatores tantum, sed et veri ac omnipotentes Dii finguntur. Quid enim quisquam maius et melius ab aeterno Deo petere possit, quam purificationem mentis, seu iusticiam, et vitam aeternam, aut regnum coelorum? quod isti a mortuis hominibus directe petunt. Similia complura sunt in illo templo, aliisque istic passim. Iisdem etiam idololatricis invocationibus propalam ac penitus abrogatur Christo suum verum officium, eiusque beneficia et gloria in miseris, peccatoresque homunciones transcribuntur*. Flacius, *De sectis*, 38.
- ²⁵ Flacius, *De sectis*, 39.
- ²⁶ *Lutherus, p.m. solitus est dicere: Papistae orant sine intellectu, sine affectu, et cum contradictione*. Flacius, *De sectis*, 216.
- ²⁷ *Multipliciter profecto sibi ipsis in oratione repugnant: invocant loco Dei Petrum, Dominicum, Franciscum, Christophorum, aut etiam aliquam foedissimam statuam Lampsaceni dei (ut supra ex Catharino audivimus) et dicunt, Tu est pater noster, aut Ave Maria; cum scient Christophorum, Franciscum, aut statuam non esse Deum, nec vocari Mariam. Eodem modo appellat et implorat etiam statuarum truncos, ossa, laceramenta vestium, et similia, coram quibus orantes in genua procumbunt. Secum ergo ipsi foedissime pugnant, dum truncum aut picturam ore appellant Patrem; et interim conscientia eorum eis dicit, esse tantum truncum, lapidem, colorem, putre os, aut lacerum panniculum*. Flacius, *De sectis*, 216.

28 Flacius, *Historia certaminum*, Preface.
 29 *ingens chaos diversitatis salvatorum*. Flacius, *De sectis*, 58.
 30 *Una natio, una civitas vel homo, pro suo idolo et salvatore elegit sanctum Franciscum, alia Dominicum, tertia Iacobum, et sic deinceps: ut exempli causa, Romae in primis adoratur S. Petrus, Venetiis S. Rochus, Mediolani S. Ambrosius, in Asisio S. Franciscus, Coloniae tres Reges, et sancta Ursula cum suis 11000 pedissequis; in Hungaria Vladislaus; in Gallia S. Ludovicus, et prae illi ignota dea S. Genoveva, in Anglia S. Thomas; Viennae in Austria S. Stephanus, Augustae S. Ulrichus; et sic porro alius mortalis homo alibi.*

In hisce mortuis miseri homunciones omnem suam spem et fiduciam repositam et collocatam habent, ac praesertim olim habebant, inque honorem eorum aedificabant templa, monasteria, altaria, fraternitates; sacrificabantque ipsis missas et officia, uti vocant, accendebant ipsis candelas, erigebant idola; recitabant illis quotidie frequenter, Pater noster, Ave Maria; ieiunabant ipsis, et peregrinabantur.

*De privatis et singulis personis seorsim dicere, infinitum et imperscrutabile foret, quam varios sibi sanctos ac sanctas in auxiliares destinaverint, eosque subinde pro libitu mutarint. Legantur modo Legendae et exempla sanctorum, ubi innumeras historias reperire facile fuerit, quomodo iam hic, iam ille, nunc hunc, nunc alium sanctum adoraverit et invocaverit; ubi iam se huic, iam illi Ecclesiae, altari, imaginibus, donisque condecorandae devoverit; et hoc vel illo modo se ab ea recipi in gratiam, iuvarique et ex mediis periculis eripi supplex flavitaverit. Imo non solummodo unus hunc, alter alium adoravit sanctum; verumetiam unus hoc templum, altare et imaginem summo in honorem habuit, coluitque et inde in suis difficultatibus auxilium asperavit, aut alia bona ab eis quaesivit. Verbi causa unus S. Mariam in Anglia adoravit, alter illam in Loreto, tertius in Racanato, quartus illam Venetiis quae vocatur de miraculis, quintus formosam Mariam quae est Ratisbonae, sextus illam in Polonia Cestochoviae, septimus Mariam in Grienthal, octavus eam quae est in Solio (im Sal) in Carinthia, alius aliam. Dies enim, vel etiam annus me deficiat, si hanc innumeram varietatem idolorum recensere conarer. Ita semper uni Papistae hic locus, sanctus, statua, idolumque prae alio praestantius visum est, quae sibi infinita prorsus pro libitu in isto Babylonico regno superstitiosi stultique homunciones omnibus horis commenti sunt; ex quibus quidem illi omne auxilium et solatium petierunt. Quae horribilis idololatria adhuc hodie in quibusdam locis pleno furore grassatur. Flacius, *De sectis*, 57-8.*

31 *Hinc sanctus Antonius sues pascit. S. Martinus et Georgius belligerantur. S. Apollonia medetur dentium doloribus. S. Nicolaus in periculis maris opitulatur. Flacius, *De sectis*, 253.*

32 *Inculcarunt iidem isti tertiae istius religionis architecti, infinitam battologiam aut demurmurationem variarum preclarum, varias consecrationes, vel potius incantationes diversarum herbarum, vestium, vini, ficuum, cere, butyri,*

- salis, carnis, placentarum, rosarum, olei et similes ethnicas vel potius magicas superstitiones. Flacius, *De sectis*, 94.
- 33 Porro haceadem licentia freti monachi, monache, aliique innumerabiles impostores et seductores, quisque suum cultum plenissimo ore ebuccinavit, ut TALI NASSA simplices et laicos homines fraude circumvenirent, pecuniasque ipsos emungerent. Unde illae immensae opes sacrificorum, rasorum, monachorum ac nonnarum, et templorum. Flacius, *De sectis*, 61.
- 34 Denique quamprimum aliqua vel superstitionis vetulae, vel etiam malitiosa lena, subornata a quopiam avaro sacrificio aut monacho, de aliqua pictura exclamat, La madona pianze, La madona pianze (id est, domina lachrymat, exudante humorem pariete picturae) mox eo miserum vulgus, sine omni intellectu, cogitatione, aut veritatis inquisitione, divinique verbi ac mandati consideratione, plane ut bruta, tanquam ad praesentissimum quendam opitulatorem Deum confluit... Flacius, *De sectis*, 40.
- 35 Nec ociatur aut caecutit in tali lucri occasione sanctissimus Pontifex, cum suis purpuratis harpyis, quamprimum enim a talium idolorum mystis aut ministris, oblati muneribus petuntur indulgentiae, eo concurrentibus et offerentibus aliquid: mox eum cultum, ut Catholicissimum confirmat, et insuper amplissimis indulgentiarum bullis largitionibusque exornat, superstitionis plebeculam, ex stulta porro insanam, fascinatam, attonitamque reddit et excantat. Flacius, *De sectis*, 41.
- 36 O miseranda et deploranda hominum caecitas ac fascinatio; O detestanda et execranda istorum pastorum, vel potius luporum haeresis aut malitia, qui fictis miraculis pecuniariae rapinae gratia, vilissimas imagunculas ac idola, pro vero ac vivente Deo adorandas, colendas ac invocandas misero imprudentique popello obrudunt. Flacius, *De sectis*, 41.
- 37 PAP: Ca ti diss od Putouangi, ny dobro poyti v mista daleca za viditi gdi pociuagiu tila od Suetaaz, a to da nas pomogu v nassih vmarangi? CH: Sueezi nisu nigdar xelili gednu stuar takouu. Pace kada bihu v xiuote pocarahu tacoua putouangia, da vi druzi obicugete poyti tako voglno za vciniti nepodobschyn, i tamnosti pod imeno od deuocionof. Flacius, Rasgovarange, B.
- 38 Eadem contradictio est in istorum religione, quod cum doceat, sanctos hic in terris fuisse modestissimos ac humilimos, omnemque gloriam Deo tribui voluisse; nunc contra fingit, ita eos gloriae cupidos ambitiososque esse, ut templis et aris se dignos censeant, se pro mediatoribus et opitulatibus coli velint; ac denique cadavera et putria sua ossa, atque adeo vestes paniculosque sordidos, et ipsas demum suas imagines coli adorarique praecipiant. Qui honor nisi eis contingat, saevire eos in mortalium genus, immisso igne S. Antonii, aut alia calamitate. Flacius, *De sectis*, 223.
- 39 'Si Deus, sancti, sacer cultus, et omnes nostri Religiosi tam sunt auri cupidi: cur ego tam divinam rem non omnibus modis quaererem, et coaceruarem?' Flacius, *De sectis*, 225.

- 40 *De sectis* was not the only work with an address to the Venetian authorities, cf. *Historia certaminum*, Preface.
- 41 Letter from 30 August 1534, ed. by Friedensburg, *Nuntiaturberichte*, 301-2.
- 42 Letter of Della Casa to Cardinal Farnese from 16 May, 1545, cf. Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 9, with numerous other examples.
- 43 Cf. the letters of Grechetto addressed to cardinal Rodolpho Pio de Carpi from 14 January 154, doc. 21 in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 247; and from 13 October 1546, doc. 29, *ibidem*, 262.
- 44 *Corpus reformatorum*, ed. by Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider, Heinrich Ernst Bindseil, Wilhelm Baum, and Eduard Cunitz (Berlin, 1834, repr. 1963) III, nr. 1831, col. 745-50.
- 45 *Per conto de lor mercantie voglino offender manco che possono il re d'Inghilterra*. Letter of Della Casa, cited in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 24.
- 46 In words of Della Casa: *Io ho ben visto, che questa Santissima impresa... non piace a questi Signori, che il Serenissimo principe ragionando mi disse: "Questo sarà un gran disturbo"*. Letter of 3 July, 1546, *ibidem*, 24.
- 47 Letter of Della Casa from 28 October of the same year: *Fu fatto longo ragionamento... after which an answer was given... che la lor città fosse libera et sicura a ogni comodo et honore et però che non haveano a dubitar di cosa alcuna, ma aspettarne sempre ogni amorevolezza*. *Ibidem*, 24.
- 48 *Hanno poi li predetti magnifici fatto rispondere ali Protestanti che stiano sicuri, che dal stato et forze loro riceverano sempre più tosto piacere che ingiuria...*; and somewhat later, related to the news on the progress of Turkish troupes in Hungary: *... le cose dei Protestanti piglino ogni giorno più forze et siano unitissime, di che se ne ha uno piacere estremo qua*. Letter to Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo from 11 July 1546, doc. 18, *ibidem*, 243. Buschbell identifies the author as Lodovico da l'Armi.
- 49 Cf. Comba, *I nostri Protestanti*, II, 327; Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 98-9; Miculian, "Contributo alla storia della riforma protestante," 222;
- 50 Cited in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 25.
- 51 Della Casa attributes this turn to the preaching activity of a Franciscan, Pennarolo, at whose sermons in San Marco the Signoria was present every day. *Ibidem*, 88, quotation in n. 3.
- 52 Despite the unfavorable circumstance that this arrangement implied intervention of secular authorities in exclusively ecclesiastical matters, Della Casa prudently advised Rome not to complain about it.
- 53 Fontana, "Documenti Vaticani", 401, XCI, from 23 June. Another important measure introduced by Della Casa was an index of forbidden books, published in 1549. His idea was much criticized, primarily because it did not come from Rome and because the names could easily be changed. Vergerius reprinted and ridiculed the index in the same year. Della Casa's index was edited by Reusch, *Die indices*.

- 54 The trial is described in detail in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 88-93. Bishop of Lavello and Della Casa appear particularly disappointed with the mildness of the punishment, the later speaking in a letter about *Fra Angelico da Crema Heremitano a ch'io voleva far tagliar la lingua, et la clemenza de i Signori deputati non volle*. Bishop of Lavello speaks about the cutting of the tongue as *la pena più mite*; letter to cardinal Farnese from 14 May 1547, doc. 36 in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 272.
- 55 Cf. Comba, *I nostri Protestanti*, II, 70.
- 56 According to Grecchetto in a letter to Cervino it was probably Vergerius, but may also have been Bishop of Chiogga or Baldessara Altieri. Cited in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 94, n. 5. In 1555, Duke Cristoph of Württemberg interceded in vain on behalf of Lupetina. Cf. Kausler/Schott, *Briefwechsel*, 87-8; Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 208-9.
- 57 A copy of the confession was sent to Augsburg by the German consul. Cf. Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 227. Flacius gave a report on Lupetina's death in *De sectis*, 43f.
- 58 An anonymous letter from Capodistria, attributed to Thomas Stella and dated 1546 reports that the bishop is incorrigible and Grechetto laments in the same year that Trieste is entirely corrupted by heresy due to its vicinity to Vergerius's diocese, mentioning among other things the rejection of the veneration of saints. Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 114.
- 59 The process is described in detail *ibidem*, 103-43.
- 60 The document is given by Stancovich, *Biografie*, I, 384ff. and Hubert, *Vergerios publizistische Tätigkeit*, 263, nr. 12; and commented by Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 122-3.
- 61 Cf. the anonymous denunciation of Pietro Pamphilo, a layman from Gubbio, in which it is said that among other things he has "always dishonored the Saints, slandered the images, and said that the one of Madonna of Loreto is a work of devil: *ha sempre dishonorato i Santi, vituperato le imagini et detto, che quella della Madonno del'Oreto è opra del diavolo...*" Doc. 87 (August 1551) in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 318. Vergerius also wrote a book entitled *Della camera et statua della Madonna chiamata di Loretto* (1554), which was published in Latin in the same year in Tübingen, under the title *De Idolo Lauretano*.
- 62 *PAP: Nayme bi imel verouati od Gospoge od Loreta, a ne carati onih chi gredu za viditi onu presuetu Camaru, v choy nassa Gospogia bi posdrauglena od Angela, i hrani suoga sina, i bi parnesena simoca od Angeli. CH: Naime bihote imiti sram za verouati, onoy preuelicoy laxi, i himbe angeli imaglu drugo ca ciniti, nego stati za noisti zidi na ramenah od xudie v Italui.* Flacius, *Rasgovorange*, B or 9.
- 63 The same procedure can be observed in the case of Nacchianti, Bishop of Chiogga: even though his prolonged trial was originally initiated as a result of his statements against the Pope during his stay in Trent in 1545, the investigation of witnesses by Massarelli in Chiogga, which could be

organized only in 1548, was eventually reduced to several untrustworthy women, two of whom were apparently identical with the nuns that fled the monastery and were chastised, and now offered a reluctant testimony that the bishop had destroyed an image of a saint. Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 164 and 172. This is of particular interest with respect to the fact that the issue of images and saints comes only after 40 other doctrinal questions in the list of questions compiled for the use of the inquisitors, doc. 97, *ibidem*, 325-9, esp. 328.

64 ... *suoi discepoli... nieghano l'intercessione de Santi, vanno dicendo che tanto è votarsi a Santi quanto sopra di un cacatoio...* Letter of Ambrosio di Loschi to Pope Paul III from 15 October 1546, doc. 53, *ibidem*, 287.

65 *Ibidem*, 287.

66 Ferrai, "Il proceso di P.P. Vergerio", 342.

67 *Non valde versatus in theologica*. Ernst Bizer, "Analecta Brentiana," *Blätter für Württembergische Kirchengeschichte* 57/58 (1957/1958), 358.

68 *Ich habe newlich brieff empfangen von dem E.H. Petro Paulo Wergerio Bischoff zu Justinopoli / welcher orth x. meil von unser stat ligt und iij. oder iiij. von Triest / der ist nu ongefehr vor Xij. jaren Bebstlicher legat gewest zu Wittenberg / und nu fast in die v. jar vom Babst (darumb / das er seine kirche recht in Christlicher leer hat unterweiset) wol tribulirt worden / und nu gar verdampt und veriagt. Itzt er ist in Grisonibus im Welchen gebirge ongefehr zwo tag reis von Meiland / alda schreibt er / das teuflische wüten / grausamkeit und verfolgung / welchs die gesandten von dem Bapst zu Justinopoli angericht haben / nach seiner veriagung. Er schreibt mir unter andern / er wolle lieber im hause Gottes ar sein / denn reich werden in der hütten der gotlosen.*

*Ist das nicht ein wunderlich ding / das in Welsch land ein wolgelerter Bischoff / der vor bey dem Bapst wol enthalten / und dar zu / ein grosser Herr gewesen / umb das bekentnis des Herrn Christi willen sein reichthumb / ehr / und alles hat verlassen / und in das elend ziehen wollen / und nu zwei tag reis von Meiland widder den Bapst schreibet / und drücken lest / Die Deudschen aber / die so lang Christliche Religion klar und rein gehabt / die bekant / und sich der halben uber ander leute gerümet / itzund sie // verleugnen / verteuffeln / unnd verfelschen sollen. Flacius, *Widder den auszug des Leipsischen Interims*, Bij-Bij.*

69 Flacius also wrote a number of shorter exhortations to steadfastness in faith, such as *Eine schöne Historia von standhaftigkeit des heiligen Basilii* (1549), *Ein Vermannung zur bestendigkeit* (probably 1549), *Ein sehr schöne histori von der standhaftigkeit in Bekentnis und Leiden des heiligen manns Simeonis* (no year given, perhaps 1549/50), *Eine freidige vermannung zu klarem und öffentlichem bekentnis Jhesu Christi* (1550), *Vermannung zur gedult und glauben zu Gott* (1551), and *Ein geistlicher trost* (probably 1551), in which he admonishes that the loss of salvation is worse than physical suffering and death.

- ⁷⁰ The booklet was published in the same year in Wittenberg, in the German language and without mention of Flacius's name; the story was republished by Vergerius under his own name in 1551 and found a number of other reporters. Flacius referred to the story a number of times, for example in the above mentioned *Adhortatio ad serenissimum Principem*, where he mentions Spiera together with Baldo Lupetina. *De sectis*, 43.
- ⁷¹ Flacius, *De voce et re fidei*, A ij and A vj, cited from Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 210-1. Gerharo Busdraghi was the auditor of Della Casa and one of the four ecclesiastical members of the Venetian court for heretics. Annibale Grisonio was named Inquisitor for Istria and was a partisan of cruel methods: at the beginning of his investigation in Capodistria, he held a sermon in which he proclaimed that all Lutherans should be stoned. This incident resulted in an official complaint by the Council of Fourteen of Capodistria to Venice accusing him likewise of installing his own instructed witnesses in the trial, demanding that Grisonio be substituted. Although the secular authorities of Venice were displeased with the matter, fearing rebellion in Capodistria, Della Casa approved of Grisonio's methods and even broadened the scope of his authorization. Ferrai, "Il proceso di P.P. Vergerio", 183; Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 145ff.
- ⁷² During his visit in 1563, Flacius made attempts to speak with the representatives of the Council of Ten, but was refused. In 1570, he wrote two more addresses to the Republic of Venice. These obviously failed to impress as the second, handwritten, bears on the back side the comment of the authorities: *Mathio Flacio Istriano d'Albona scrive e manda compositioni sue heretiche, perverse et maledette*, adding that they should be preserved without reading, in order to be used against Flacius once he is arrested. cf. Schatzmayr, "Beiträge", 62-4.
- ⁷³ Cf. Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 93.
- ⁷⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, 98, as well as App. 44 and 45.
- ⁷⁵ In September 1555, at the Synod of Koźminek, they united with the Reformed communities in Lesser Poland for the same reason. Cf. Wotschke, *Geschichte*, 142f.; Hein, *Italienische Protestanten*, 222.
- ⁷⁶ In 1555, Flacius had sent a letter to the seniors of the Czech Brethren, in which he exposed his view of them as the heirs of the Waldensians, nearly reproaching them for the way in which they understood their own history; the answer of Johannes Czerný (Nigranus) strongly declined Flacius's theories with the argument that their founders had no knowledge of the Waldensian doctrine and that no Waldensians existed in Bohemia at that time. Cf. Goll, *Quellen*, I, 51-2.
- ⁷⁷ Their journey is described in *Cesty českých bratri M. Červinky a Jana Blahoslava* (1556), ed. by Timoteus Č. Zelinka (1942, repr. 1945), and the meeting itself (rather bitterly) in Blahoslav's letters to Rokyta and Israel (1557), ed. in Goll, *Quellen*, I, App. M, 128-9 and N, 129-32. Upon his return, Blahoslav also published a booklet describing the history of the Czech

Brethren in order to prove their standpoint: *Summa quaedam brevissima collecta ex variis scriptis Fratrum, qui falso Waldenses vel Piccardi vocantur, de eorundem Fratrum origine et actis* (1556).

78 Johannes Cochlaeus, *Historiae Hussitarum libri duodecim* (St Victor at Mainz: Franciscus Behem, 1549). Cf. Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 199.

79 Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 200.

80 *Mag. Johannis Hus et Hieronymi Pragensis Confessorum Christi Historia et Monumenta*, 2 vols (Nuremberg: Johannes Berg & Ulrich Neuberg, 1558), reprinted in 1715 and remained the standard edition until modern times.

81 *Confessio Waldensium... de plerisque nunc controversis dogmatibus ante 134. annos contra claudicantes Hussitas scripta, nostrisque temporibus statui, ac rebus pulchre correspondens* (Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1568). A modern edition of the Confession: Molnár/Cegna, *Confessio Taboritarum*.

82 *At ille per superbiam, mentiris, iniquit, esse sanctorum reliquias, ossa mortuorum cadaverum hic retines, et Christianos decipis cupide mendicando*. Cochlaeus, *Historia Hussitarum*, lib. I, 41.

83 *Ecce tua et tuorum praedicatio venerationem sanctorum ossium, cum tuis reprobas, dicens. Quod sanctus Wenceslaus modico, id est, Fratricidio regnum promeruit martyrii, et hic cum sanctis aliis, quos sacerdotes et Monachi praedicant, habent unius sancti multa capita, multa brachia, et diversa ossa, Quae utique non sanctorum, sed vilium cadaverum esse potius reputantur*. Cochlaeus, *Historia Hussitarum*, lib. I, 40.

84 *Extractis quippe de altari reliquiis in Monasterio S. Mariae, in arena Pragmae, eas luto instravit et pedibus calcavit*. Cochlaeus, *Historia Hussitarum*, lib. III, 125. There is a comment on the margin: *O sanctum virum qui Vuiclephi imaginem venerabatur in cubiculo, et Christi imaginem in publico omni contumelia affecit impiissime* – in which Cochlaeus again contrasts the veneration of Catholic saints and the new, Hussite ones. Cf. the paragraph on the veneration of Žižka, lib. V, 218.

85 Cochlaeus, *Historia Hussitarum*, lib. V, 194-5. Cf. chapter on feasts, 195-6.

86 *Ego "Thaboritarum Confessionem" anno 1431. scriptam habeo, penitus cum nostra doctrina consentientem... quam aliquando edam*. Flacius, *Catalogus*, 640.

87 *Porro Christus potissimum per quendam Petrum Val dum... suam veritatem, depulsis Antichristi tenebris... illustravit*. Flacius, *Catalogus*, 630-1.

88 Flacius, *Catalogus*, 640. In contrast to them, the Waldensians strove to identify themselves with the Taborites and later with Jednota, in order to gain safety against persecutions. Cf. Martinů, *Die Waldesier*, 94.

89 Landesarchiv Weimar, Reg. N. 235, 23 v., 24 and 24v. The instructions have been published in *Corpus reformatorum IX*, col. 199-213. Cf. Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 256; Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 331-2.

90 *Nam paucis annis post mortem Huss coepit Rokenzana, pragensis civitas et totus flos sapientium ac potentum Bohemiae tractare de reconciliatione*

- cum Antichristo seu Babylonica Thaide, et subinde magis ac magis ad eam accedere. Flacius, *ibidem*, 23 v. Cited from Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 256.
- 91 *Oriebatur itaque inter illos quasi adiaphoristas et constantiores, miserabilis et diurna concertatio... Certe, nisi Lutherus venisset, Hussitae dudum plane interijssent...* Flacius, *ibidem*, 24. Cited from Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, I, 257.
- 92 *Dicit quoque opera Antichristi esse, quod fabulae et adinventiones hominum in Ecclesia regnent, quod passim statuae et falsae reliquiae colantur. Item quod alii alios Sanctos ac servatores pro Christo colant.* Flacius, *Catalogus*, 767.
- 93 *Matthiae de Janov dicti Magister Parisiensis Regulae veteris et novi testamenti I-IV*, ed. by Vlastimil Kybal (Innsbruck and Prague, 1908-1913), *passim*, esp. III, 202-4. Cf. *idem*, *M. Matěj z Janova*.
- 94 This voluminous work was first published in Wittenberg by Hans Lufft, with a preface by Luther. It is found on the index of Sorbonne in 1547 and that of Della Casa in 1549 and remained forbidden throughout the sixteenth century, but its great popularity secured further editions in German, Latin, French, English, and Dutch. Cf. Reusch, *Die indices*, 111, 141, and *passim*.
- 95 *Pia epistola Leonardi Beyer, pastoris Cygnea ob Adiaphora pulsus, ad D. Doctorem Erasmum Alberum, eius voluntate veluti confessio quaedam edita* (12 March 1550), attached to Flacius, *Duo scripta duorum doctorum ac piorum virorum* (1550), C 5.
- 96 *... i po sebe dimo, da on fra Duminik spagnol od sela zvana calorga, bi poglauiza od ipochrixie, i od supersticionof, i imegioschie od hinza i da fra Francisco od Axixa bi gioschie gedan hinaz, i nime nigdare Rane da ono bi gedno veliko besidouange, i himba.* Flacius, *Rasgovarange*, B2 or 10.
- 97 In 1548, Franciscan preacher Thomas Stella (who was to become Bishop of Capodistria the following year, after Vergerius's conversion to Protestantism) censured particularly the Mendicant preachers, which he considered "the major cause of the pestilence today": *... li frati son oggi predicando la principal causa di tanta pestilentia.* Carte Cerviniane 43/68. Resp. a 11, Archivio di stato, Florence; cf. his letter to cardinal Cervino from 17 Septemeber 1548: *... l'heresie vanno crescendo per principal causa de predicatori, che cuono veramente guastatori.* Doc. 39 in Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 275.
- 98 *Wenn die Wunderwerck / in der Barfuser Alcoran // geschrieben / alle geschen weren / so möchte Franciscus sampt seinen Brüdern / Christo und seinen Aposteln wol trotz bieten. Denn Christus hat nur ein mal aus Wasser Wein gemacht / Franciscus aber drey mal. Christus ward nur einmal transfigurirt / Franciscus aber zwentzigmal. Christus hat ein kleine zeit schmerzen seiner Wunden erlidden / Franciscus aber hat seiner fünfß Wunden zwey gantzer jar / nicht on geringe schmerzen getragen. Franciscus und seine Brüder haben mehr denn tausent Todten aufferweckt / mehr denn Tausent Blinden sehend gemacht / mehr denn Tausent Lamem / beide*

Menschen und Vihe / Kühe / Kelber / Sew und Schafe gerad gemacht. In summa / Christus hat nie nichts gethan / Franciscus hats im nach gethan / und viel mehr gethan. Erasmus Alberus, *Der Barfuser Münche Eulenspiegel und Alcoran*, Preface, B iij.

- 99 Published by Christian Rödinger, year unknown, probably in the Magdeburg period. Published in original size in Max Geisberg, *Der deutsche Einblatt-Holzschnitt in der ersten Hälfte des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, 11. Lieferung (München, 1924), no. 26, and today widely accessible in the English edition, *The German Single-leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550*, rev. and ed. by Walter L. Strauss, 4 vols (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), no. 921. Transcribed and analysed by Selge, "Ein Magdeburger Flugblatt". Dr. Konrad Klingen was a preacher who helped preserve the Catholic Mass in Erfurt, but at the same time allowed considerable room for Lutheran elements in his theology and was therefore considered a dangerous adversary. For bibliography, see *ibidem*, 224. Klingen appeared as the target of an earlier polemic writing by Justus Menius, *Widder den Hochberumbten Barfuß zu Erfurt, D. Cunrad Klingen* (1527).
- 100 Preserved in Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Illustration by Lucas Cranach the Younger at Wittenberg and, according to F.J. Stopp, taken over later by Flacius for his purposes. "The Early German Broadsheet and Related Ephemera: A Bibliographical Survey," *The Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 2 (1970), 85; cf. Hildegard Zimmermann, "Vom deutschen Holzschnitt der Reformationszeit," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 23 (1926), 106; cf. Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 181.
- 101 *De sectis*, 74-8. *Catalogus*, 424. In the *Catalogus*, he names a number of authorities who spoke against the Mendicant orders, such as Conrad Waldhauser and Matthias Parisiensis.
- 102 Thus in *Naufragium, Convivium religiosum*, and *Peregrinatio religionis ergo. Colloquia Familiaria*, ed. by Léon-E. Halkin, F. Bierlaire, and R. Hoven in *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia. Recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1972), 1/3; cf. *Enchiridion militis christiani*, ed. by Werner Welzig in *Desiderius Erasmus. Ausgewählte Schriften* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), I, 176-204.
- 103 Grechetto proposed general prohibition as he considered Erasmus to be giving impetus to Luther and thus a saying became current: *Aut Luther erasmizat, aut Erasmus lutherizat*. Letter to Cardinal Farnese from 11 March 1546, doc. 26, Buschbell, *Reformation und Inquisition*, 255.
- 104 *Editus est dudum libellus, qui commemorat plurima sanctorum corpora et capita, quae in diversissimis locis esse iacentur, et miserae plebeculae non sine maximo quaestu adoranda et invocanda ostententur.* Flacius, *De sectis*, 223. That he did not mention the author by name and that he hurried to say "that contradiction is most manifest and known to all even without the booklet" (*Quae contradictio ut manifestissima est, ita etiam sine eo libello*

omnibus notissima) might speak in favor of this hypothesis, though Calvin's treatise was published in 1543, twenty years before *De sectis*. Indeed, despite the differences and hostilities between the Lutherans and the Reformed, there was occasional contact and a certain amount of mutual respect: in 1555 and 1556, Flacius and Nydbruck wrote to Calvin several times and sent him the organisational plan for the *Ecclesiastica Historia*, asking him for his opinion, which, however, he only managed to do in 1557 after the work had already started according to Flacius's idea. Cf. Mirković, *Matija Vlačić*, II, 53-5.

WRITINGS OF MATTHIAS FLACIUS ILLYRICUS CITED IN THIS STUDY:

- Bulla des Antichrists: dadurch er das Volck Gottes widderumb inn den eisern Ofen der Egiptischen gefengknis denckt zuziehen, gleichstimmig mit des Meintzischen Rabsakes briefe: daraus wol zuvernemen, was der Teufel durch seine beide tugend, das ist durch den Mörderische[n] Krieg widder die Kirche Gottes, und durch seine lügen, als da sind Concilium, Interim, Mittelding, Chorrock denckt auszurichten.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1550.
- Catalogus testium veritatis, qui ante nostram aetatem Pontifici Romano, eiusque erroribus reclamarunt: iam denuo longe quam antea, et emendatior et auctior editus.* Strassburg: Paul Messerschmidt, 1562. Reprint: Frankfurt a.M., 1666.
- Confessio Waldensium... de plerisque nunc controversis dogmatibus ante 134. annos contra claudicantes Hussitas scripta, nostrisque temporibus statui, ac rebus pulchre correspondens.* Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1568.
- Das man in diesen geschwinden leufften dem Teuffel und Antichrist zugefallen nichts in den Kirchen Gottes vorendern soll.* (under the pseudonym Johannes Hermannus). Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1548.
- Der Theologen bedencken odder (wie es durch die ihren inn offentlichen Drück genennet wirdt) Beschluss des landtages zu Leiptzig so in Dezember des 48. Jars von wegen des Auspurgischen Interims gehalten ist etc.* With Nicholas Gallus. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550.
- De sectis, dissensionibus, contradictionibus, et confessionibus doctrinae religionis, scriptorum et doctorum Pontificiorum.* Basel: Paul Queck, 1565.
- De voce et re fidei, quod que sola fide iustificemur, contra pharisaicum hypocritarum fermentum, liber.* Basel: [Johannes Oporin], 1563.
- Duo scripta duorum doctorum ac piorum virorum Lipsiae adiaphoricis corruptelis opposita, lectu sane dignissima. Item Epistolae aliquot eiusdem argumenti admodum lectu utiles.* Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550.
- Ecclesiastica Historia, integram Ecclesiae Christi ideam, quantum ad locum, propagationem, persecutionem, tranquillitatem, doctrinam... secundum singulas Centurias perspicuo ordine complectens.* With other Centuriators. 13 vols. Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1559-1574.
- Ein Buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen: darin fast der gantze handel von Mitteldingen erkleret wird, widder die schedliche Rotte der Adiaphoristen.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1550.
- Eine erschreckliche Historia von einem, den die feinde des Evangelii inn welsch Land gezwungen haben, den erkanten christum zuvorleugnen.* Magdeburg: [Michael Lotter], 1549.
- Eine freidige vermannung zu klarem und öffentlichem bekenntnis Jhesu Christi, wider die Adiaphoristische, Davidianische, und Epicurische klugheit, des*

- heuchelns und meuchelns... Gestelt durch Civilium einen Italiener. Verdeutscht aus dem welschen.* Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550.
- Eine schöne Historia von standhaftigkeit des heiligen Basilii beschrieben in der Tripartita historia. Item zwo andere schöne Historien. Von dem Weiblein zu Edessa, und von dem heiligen Barlaam, itzt zu dieser zeit sehr tröstlich und nützlich zu lesen.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1549.
- Eine Schrifft Ma. Flacii Illyrici widder ein recht epicurisch buch, darin das Leiptzische Interim verteidigt wird, sich zu hüten für den verfelschern der waren Religion.* Place and publisher unknown, 1549.
- Ein geistlicher trost dieser betrübten Magdeburgischen kirchen Christi, das sie diese verfolgung umb Gottes worts und keiner andern ursach halben leidet.* Time and place of publication unknown [1551].
- Ein gemine Protestation und Klageschrift aller frommen christen wider das Interim und andere geschwinde anschlege und grausame verfolgung der widersacher des Evangelii, allen Gottfürchtigen gewissen zu dieser betrübten Zeit überaus nützlich und tröstlich zu lesen* (under the pseudonym Johannes Waremundus). Place of publication and publisher unknown, 1548.
- Ein sehr schöne histori von der standhaftigkeit in Bekentnis und Leiden des heiligen manns Simeonis welcher ein oberster Superintendentent gewesen ist in Persia, und von seinen Gesellen, aus dem andern buch Sozomenis.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, [1549/50].
- Ein Vermannung zur bestendigkeit, in bekentnis der warheit, Creutz, und Gebett, in dieser betrübten zeit sehr nützlich und tröstlich.* Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, [1549].
- Gründliche verlegung aller Sophisterey so D. Pfeffinger mit den andern Adiaphoristen das Leiptzische Interim zu beschönen gebraucht.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1551.
- Historia certaminum inter Romanos Episcopos et sextam Carthaginensem synodum, Africanasque ecclesias, de primatu seu potestate Papae.* Basel: [Johannes Oporin], 1554.
- Liber de veris et falsis adiaphoris, in quo integre propemodum Adiaphorica controversia explicatur.* In: *Omnia Latina scripta Matthiae Flacii Illyrici hactenus sparsim contra adiaphoricas fraudes et errores aedita et quaedam prius non excusa. Omnia correcta et aucta.* Magdeburg: publisher unknown, 1550.
- Rasgovarange megiu papistu i gednim Luteran* (under the pseudonym Antun Segnanin). Padua [i.e. Tübingen]: Gracioza Percacina [i.e. Ulrich Morhart], 1555.
- Vermannung Matth. F. I. zur gedult und glauben zu Gott, im Creutz dieser verfolgung geschrieben an die Kirche Christi zu Magdeburg.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1551.
- Widder die neue Reformation Pfeffingers, des Meisnischen Thumbherrn.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1550.

Wider den schnöden Teuffel, der sich jetzt abermals in einen Engel des liechtes verkleidet hat, das ist wider das neue Interim (under the pseudonym Carolus Azarias Gotsburgensis). Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1549.

Zeichen am Himmel bei Braunschweig neulich gesehen, durch den superintendenten zu Braunschweig geschrieben, mit einer Vorrede M. Fl. Illyrici. Magdeburg, 1549.

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