

HRZZ PROJEKT LIGHT

Između znanja i neznanja

2nd Research Workshop

ENLIGHTENMENT ACTORS IN CROATIAN LANDS

Book of abstracts

24 September 2026

Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences

Trg Marka Marulića 19, Zagreb

Multimedia Hall

2nd Research Workshop

Enlightenment Actors in Croatian Lands

Publisher
Croatian Institute of History

Organiser
HRZZ Project "Between Knowledge and Ignorance:
Ideas, Practices, and the Legacy of the EnLIGHTenment in Croatian Lands"
(LIGHT) (IP-2024-05-5581)

Editor
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Proofreading of abstracts in English
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Graphic design
Maja Perić, Matea Marušić and Teodora Shek Brnardić

Cover images

- Top left:** Envelope from Zadar with a letter addressed to Fra Andrija Dorotić
Top right: Letter from Vinko Kalafatić to A. F. Kollar, polymath, Latinist and chief imperial librarian
Middle left: Letter from Julije Bajamonti to Sorgo's niece, the Dubrovnik-born Deša Gozze-Gučetić
Middle centre: Title page of the poem "Pisma Xalosna" by Josip Krmpotić
Middle right: Letter from the widow Aldegonde Prol to the Viennese representative Botta Adorno
Bottom left: Letter from Maksimilijan Vrhovac to the Zagreb canon Pavao Šelendić
Bottom right: Letter from Miho Sorgo to Julije Bajamonti

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24 September 2026

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PROGRAMME

08:15–08:30

Welcome speech and participant introductions

08:30–09:15 KEYNOTE LECTURE

Karen Harvey (University of Birmingham) – *The Digital Infrastructure of "Social Bodies, Material Identities: Embodiment in British Letters, 1680–1820"*

09:15–09:30

Discussion

09:30–10:15 KEYNOTE LECTURE

Ivana Tomić Ferić (University of Split) – *The Correspondence of Julije Bajamonti*

10:15–10:30

Discussion

10:30–10:45

Coffee Break

PANEL I: CORRESPONDENCE, INTELLECTUAL NETWORKS AND THE CIRCULATION OF IDEAS

10:45–11:05

Zrinko Novosel (Croatian Institute of History) – *Enlightenment Ideas and Actors in the Intellectual Network of Professor Vinko Kalafatić*

11:05–11:20

Discussion

11:20–11:40

Maja Perić (Croatian Institute of History) – *The Enlightenment Beyond Borders: The Privileged Company of Trieste and Rijeka, Transnational Networks, and the Circulation of Ideas, 1750–1775*

11:40–11:55

Discussion

11:55–12:15

Katja Radoš-Perković (University of Zagreb) – *The Relationship Between Giulio Bajamonti and Teresa Bassegli Gozze: New Contributions to the Published Correspondence*

12:15–12:30

Discussion

12:30–13:15

Lunch Break

PANEL II: CORRESPONDENCE, POWER AND CONFLICT

13:15–13:35

Stipe Ledić (Catholic University of Croatia) – *Maksimilijan Vrhovac: Enlightener, Josephinist, and Reformer on the Episcopal See of Zagreb in the Light of Correspondence*

13:35–13:50

Discussion

13:50–14:10

Matea Marušić (Croatian Institute of History) – *Friar Andrija Dorotić and Vincenzo Dandolo: Correspondence as a Space of Conflict Between Civil Authority and Ecclesiastical Autonomy*

14:10–14:25

Discussion

14:25–14:40

Coffee Break

PANEL III: CORRESPONDENCE, RESEARCH PRACTICES AND COMMUNICATION MEDIA

14:40–15:00

Teodora Shek Brnardić & Marta Jurković Matović (Croatian Institute of History) – *Publishing the Correspondence of Count Miho Sorgo (1739–1796): Practical Experiences and Preliminary Findings*

15:00–15:15

Discussion

15:15–15:35

Goranka Šutalo (University of Zagreb) – *Occasional Poetry in the 18th Century as an Important Medium of Communication: The Example of Two Occasional Poems by Joso Krmpotić*

15:35–15:50

Discussion

15:50–16:00

Closing remarks

Professor Karen Harvey

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The Digital Infrastructure of 'Social Bodies, Material Identities: Embodiment in British Letters, 1680-1820'

This paper will discuss the project 'Material Identities, Social Bodies: Embodiment in British Letters c. 1680-1820'. The project draws on thousands of familiar letters, those exchanged between family and friends, now scattered in record offices throughout the UK and north America. Apart from a very small number, these letters are previously unpublished and most barely used by scholars. The letters were selected to service the thematic focus of the research project – the body, letters and identity. The project uses these familiar letters to write a history of the inhabited body and of the inhabitants' vocabulary for this. Nevertheless, because familiar letters were arguably 'the most important kind of writing in the eighteenth century' (Clare Brant), the corpus of letters created by MISB are an invaluable resource for many scholars of the long eighteenth century and is already being used widely in teaching and research.

This paper will report briefly on the research findings relating to the body. However, the main focus will be the digital aspects of the project. The project has generated a corpus of 3344 letters. These have been input into a bespoke researchers' database. The database includes fully searchable transcriptions and digital photographs of the letters. Around 20% of the contents of this researchers' database are available in a more limited public version here: <https://socialbodies.bham.ac.uk/>. The researchers' database enables limited filtering but is also designed to enable sophisticated analysis of the letters. This keynote will reflect on the processes of selection, transcription, database design and analysis using the facilities offered by the database. It will share some of the lessons learned along the way and expose some of the challenges involved in creating the digital corpus.

Asst. Prof. Stipe Ledić

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Maksimilijan Vrhovac: Enlightener, Josephinist, and Reformer on the Episcopal See of Zagreb in the Light of Correspondence

The appointment of thirty-five-year-old Maksimilijan Vrhovac as Bishop of Zagreb in 1787 by Emperor Joseph II represented a turning point in the ecclesiastical and social life of Civil Croatia (*Banska Hrvatska*). Vrhovac ascended to the bishopric as a proven member of the Josephinist intellectual circle and an advocate of enlightened absolutism. His intellectual and ideological profile was strongly shaped by his membership in the Freemasons, specifically through his active participation in the Zagreb lodge *Prudentia* and close ties with the prestigious Vienna lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht*, which gathered the intellectual elite of the Monarchy led by cameralists such as Joseph von Sonnenfels.

As a man of particular trust of the Viennese court, which is also confirmed by his earlier appointment as rector of the central seminaries in Zagreb and Pest, Vrhovac understood the Catholic Church in the spirit of “reform Catholicism” and Enlightenment aspirations. According to this concept, the Church was supposed to be a modernised institution in the service of the state and the achievement of the common good (*bonum commune*), and the clergy a mediator of Enlightenment knowledge among the common people. From the very beginning of his episcopal service, Vrhovac energetically approached the implementation of Josephinist reforms in the Diocese of Zagreb. This included: implementing the decree to reduce the number of canons of the Zagreb Chapter (from twenty-eight to a mere eight); redirecting chapter revenues through the Religious Fund (*Vjerski fond*) for the maintenance of newly established parishes and chaplaincies; abolishing the traditional Zagreb rite in the liturgy and introducing the Roman rite; and assuming state and episcopal supervision over the education of clerics, thereby removing the Chapter from the administration of the seminary.

Such a radical reformatory intervention into the centuries-old structures of the Diocese of Zagreb caused a long-lasting conflict between the enlightened bishop and the Zagreb Chapter. As a traditional and powerful medieval estate institution, the Chapter understandably saw the Josephinist reforms as a loss of its centuries-old privileges, social influence, and significant material revenue.

The death of Emperor Joseph II in 1790 and the general revocation of his decrees prompted a strong reaction from the estates. The canons of the Zagreb Chapter sought at all costs to reclaim their abolished rights and restore the pre-Josephinist state of affairs. In contrast, Bishop Vrhovac had no intention of abandoning the introduction of a “firm order” (*stabilem ordinem*) in all areas of the functioning of ecclesiastical institutions, which was a fundamental postulate of Josephinism. As the main pastoral and administrative tool to achieve this goal and subject the Chapter to episcopal supervision, Vrhovac initiated a canonical visitation of the Cathedral Archdeaconry in early 1792. The visitation, which was prolonged until late 1794, turned into a battleground of open conflict between the bishop and the canons.

In this paper, I will examine the positioning and activity of Maksimilijan Vrhovac during the first decade of his episcopal service, specifically his conflicts with the Zagreb Chapter, through the lens of his correspondence. Numerous preserved letters addressed to the Chapter itself, and particularly those sent to Vrhovac’s trusted friend, priest and canon Pavao Šelendić—which historiography has not evaluated until now—constitute a primary historical source of the highest order. The analysis of these unexplored testimonies opens an insight into Vrhovac’s daily activities and the moves by which he sought to consolidate his position and modernize the diocese. Insight into Vrhovac’s correspondence enables a reconstruction of the internal dynamics and issues through which the first turbulent decade of his administration of the Diocese of Zagreb was shaped. This will significantly complement existing historiographical knowledge about Bishop Vrhovac as a prominent representative of the Croatian Enlightenment.

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Friar Andrija Dorotić and Vincenzo Dandolo: Correspondence as a Space of Conflict Between Civil Authority and Ecclesiastical Autonomy

This study analyses the 1806 correspondence through a microhistorical and epistolary approach in order to reconstruct the relationship between French civil authorities and ecclesiastical autonomy in Dalmatia. Its central focus is the “Capitular Affair,” which marks the beginning of the political persecution of Friar Andrija Dorotić, the then provincial and a prominent opponent of French rule.

The analysis of letters by Vincenzo Dandolo, Dorotić, Friar Šimun Rebić, and other clerical and political actors reconstructs a network of political communication, the circulation of information, and mechanisms of surveillance, denunciation, and administrative coercion within Franciscan structures. The study shows that correspondence does not merely record events but actively produces political labels and statuses: through his own letters, Dorotić defends the autonomy of the Order, delays the convening of the chapter, and challenges civil interference, while administrative correspondence gradually constructs him as a “rebel” and opponent of public order.

As this case demonstrates, correspondence does not merely reflect the conflict; it actively constructs it, channeling it toward Dorotić’s political persecution and eventual exile.

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Enlightenment Ideas and Actors in the Intellectual Network of Professor Vinko Kalafatić

As an educated theologian and a jurist who taught legal sciences at the Academy of Zagreb in the late 18th century, Vinko Kalafatić maintained an extensive correspondence with prominent scholars throughout the Habsburg Monarchy. The investigation of this body of letters leads to several points of inquiry. Firstly, in both received and sent letters Kalafatić and his correspondents discussed politics, education, and literature, which opens the question of the nature of ideas pertinent to their enlightened discourse. Secondly, these letters can disclose Kalafatić's point of view on contemporary policies and offer a diachronic insight into his development as an active intellectual and commentator. Thirdly, a reconstruction of the network of his correspondents opens a perspective on the geographical distribution of Habsburg intellectual nodes, with Kalafatić operating in a seemingly peripheral community. This research will offer new insight into enlightened ideas discussed within the Habsburg republic of letters in the late 18th century.

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The Enlightenment Beyond Borders: The Privileged Company of Trieste and Rijeka, Transnational Networks, and the Circulation of Ideas, 1750–1775

Only recently a clear shift has become apparent in historiography, with various disciplines beginning to pay greater attention to the somewhat less visible individuals who played a role in the circulation of Enlightenment ideas, which were transformed and adapted at a local level depending on the (historical) context. Many people played an influential role in the transnational network of contacts, ensuring that the Enlightenment was not merely a phenomenon that originated in Western Europe and remained there. Indeed, by analysing correspondence it is possible to uncover all these different links in the network and to identify which actors fulfilled which specific roles in these various processes of social change.

The topics discussed in the letters preserved in Antwerp, Brussels, Vienna and Rijeka concerning the activities of the Privileged Company of Trieste and Rijeka between 1750 and 1775 clearly show how individual actors, such as Aldegonde Proli, Botta Adorno, Count Rudolf Chotek, and Urbano Arnoldt had their own function within this transnational network. The various issues and situations in the letters clearly show how certain plans and ideas were specifically adapted and transformed in the given context. Communication did not proceed exclusively from the top down; rather, the correspondence reveals that individuals at lower hierarchical levels also exerted influence on their superiors.

During this workshop I will outline the specific role of these individuals and how it is manifested in the correspondence. Who are the actors? How did they become part of this network? In other words, what is their role within the Company and in this joint state project? In what way do they “represent” the circulation of Enlightenment ideas, citing specific examples from the correspondence which I will continue to analyse in the meantime?

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The Relationship Between Giulio Bajamonti and Teresa Bassegli Gozze: New Contributions to the Published Correspondence

In the recent volume *Julije Bajamonti. Korespondencija* [The Correspondence of Julije/Giulio Bajamonti] (Tomić Ferić 2024), the Ragusan noblewoman Teresa (Descia) Bassegli Gozze is listed among the addressees to whom Giulio Bajamonti had written for a longer period of time. The 67 published letters are exclusively those sent by Bajamonti within a time-frame from April 1787 to June 1796. Unfortunately, only 21 are actual, full-fledged letters, while the remaining 46 are just concepts. During the research within the HRZZ-funded project “LIGHT – Between Ignorance and Knowledge. Ideas, Practices and Legacy of the Enlightenment in Croatian Lands”, a folder with 20 handwritten letters by Descia Bassegli Gozze to Giulio Bajamonti was filmed at the Archaeological Museum of Split, encompassing a longer period of time, from March 1784 to May 1788. Contemporarily, in the State Archive in Dubrovnik, in the Bassegli and Bizzarro family collections, 25 more letters from Bajamonti to Descia Gozze were identified, spanning from 1782 to 1792. Among those, 16 are unknown and unpublished, while nine of them are the integral versions of what was published in the form of brief concepts in the Tomić Ferić volume. The aim of this paper is to present the new material and contextualise it within the existent correspondence, i.e. to determine to what extent these unpublished letters confirm or deny the supposedly important role of the Ragusan noblewoman in Bajamonti's life and work.

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Publishing the Correspondence of Count Miho Sorgo (1739–1796): Practical Experiences and Preliminary Findings

A key proponent of the Enlightenment in the Republic of Dubrovnik, Count Miho Sorgo (1739–1796) [Michele di Sorgo; Miho Sorkočević] gained recognition for his cultural contributions during his lifetime. Sorgo's legacy, however, remains difficult to study: his letters are scattered across archives in Croatia and abroad and, as such, fairly unfamiliar to wider audiences. Recent scholarship on his contemporaries has highlighted the need for a comprehensive assessment of this corpus (Sama 2003; Giurgevich 2010; Tomić Ferić 2024). This lacuna will be addressed by a forthcoming critical edition of Sorgo's correspondence, to be published in collaboration with the State Archive in Dubrovnik. The volume comprises more than 300 letters located across 11 archives and libraries in Croatia, Italy, Switzerland, and the United States. Part of the corpus will also be made available to the public in a dedicated online database. In this presentation, we will outline the research steps (including archival work and transcription), demonstrate our digital data management workflow (using Airtable), and present our preliminary findings while charting future research avenues.

Asst. Prof. Goranka Šutalo

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Occasional Poetry in the 18th Century as an Important Medium of Communication: The Example of Two Occasional Poems by Joso Krmpotić

The occasional nature of 18th-century Croatian lyric poetry is one of the key poetic characteristics of the lyrical expression of that period. According to Neven Jovanović, there are three key features of occasional poetry: occasionality, representativeness, and functionality (Jovanović 1998: 444). The representativeness of an occasional poem stems from the fact that the addressee is “exposed to the community” (ibid.: 445), which implies the importance of the mutual relationship between the addressee and the community. The function of the occasional poem is therefore no longer dominantly aesthetic (ibid.). For this reason, an important characteristic of occasional poetry is functionality rather than dominant aesthetic quality; thus, according to Irena Bratičević, the function of such poetry is “to state values, primarily moral and political, that are held by society” (Bratičević 2005: 21).

This type of poetry gained particular momentum during the 18th and 19th centuries, both in the Croatian and Latin languages (Bilić 2015: 74). Anica Bilić attributes the cause of this flourishing of occasional poems during this period to “the Enlightenment understanding of 18th-century literature, which strove to be topical, practical, popular, and useful” (ibid.). Therefore, as Stjepan Blažetin states, occasional poems clearly illustrate “the network of relationships among prominent people of a certain period, and thus contain a wealth of information about public life” (Blažetin 2025: 131).

These characteristics of occasional poetry will be illustrated through the example of two occasional poems by Josip Krmpotić—*Pismo žalosno na uspomenu blagorodne gospoje Antice rođene Arbanas* (Vienna, 1786) and *Cvil i suze djetinske nad umirajućim roditeljom* (Vienna, 1794)—which literary historiography long considered lost. These are occasional poems written on the occasion of the deaths of Josip Keresturi and his wife Antica Arbanas, and as such, they are a valuable and important indicator of the friendship between Josip Krmpotić and the Viennese court agent and Enlightenment figure Josip Keresturi.

Professor Ivana Tomić Ferić

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The Correspondence of Julije Bajamonti

Julije [Giulio] Bajamonti (1744–1800), a Split polymath, physician, and composer, was one of the most learned and progressive personalities in Croatian history. Through the culture of correspondence, he maintained connections with scientific and literary circles both in his homeland and across Western European cultural milieus.

Although research into Bajamonti's correspondence began many years ago, more systematic work on its digitisation, organisation, and scholarly analysis was initiated within the musicological project GIDAL – Musical Sources of Dalmatia in the Context of Central European and Mediterranean Musical Culture from the 18th to the 20th Century, led by the lecturer and supported by the Croatian Science Foundation from 2017 to 2021. Within the framework of the project, materials from several Croatian and foreign archives were digitised, transcribed, and analysed, including the Archives of the Archaeological Museum in Split, the Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb, the State Archives in Dubrovnik, the archives of the Kavanjin-Capogrosso family in the Museum of the City of Split, and the library of Museo Correr in Venice.

Most of Bajamonti's correspondence has been preserved in the Archives of the Bajamonti Legacy at the Archaeological Museum in Split within two groups: Group A (sign. XII/A, Correspondence Concepts) contains drafts of Bajamonti's letters to other individuals, while Group B (sign. XII/B) includes letters addressed to Bajamonti. The drafts and letters exchanged between 1771 and 1800 demonstrate Bajamonti's exceptionally wide network of friends and acquaintances and constitute a rich and valuable source of information about contemporaries, historical events, personal relationships, as well as Bajamonti's own activities and views.

From a historiographical perspective, the preserved material enables the reconstruction of numerous historical developments and allows for corrections and additions to previously published findings concerning Bajamonti's legacy. It reveals an extensive network of new research topics, ranging from the social, political, and cultural conditions in Dalmatia during the final decades of the eighteenth century to more specialised issues related to Bajamonti's oeuvre, scientific and professional interests, literary activities, and the exchange of manuscripts, books, and printed texts. In addition to examining Bajamonti's network of correspondents, this lecture will highlight his receptiveness to the social and intellectual movements of late eighteenth-century Europe, as well as his contribution to the affirmation of his own culture and identity, thereby foregrounding his place and role not only in Croatian but also in European cultural history.

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*Al Molto Rev. Andrea Aloisio D'Amico
Ministro Provinciale dell'Ordine di S. M. Giovanni
nella Provincia del S. Redentore*



PISMA XALOS

NA USPOMEMU

Blagorodne Gospoje Antice r.
Arbama od Lomnice Zakonite drux
visoko vidjenog, i Plemenitog Gospodina
Kerstury od Sineriga pri Carsko-Kral
kim Pristohem Narojnika.

Koja dan drugi miseca Rudenoga Bogol
priminu.

Slozena po Jofi Kermopotichu Sietomirsku.



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2026

*Al Mobile Signore
Il Sig. Dot. Giulio Bagamonti*