

L ő k ö s I s t v á n

**FABULAE AND APOCRYPHA: AESTHETIC DETERMINISM
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOK OF JUDITH**

We are well acquainted with the debate concerning the Old Testament *Book of Judith*. Namely, is it a true Christian canonic document or a writing of suspect origin, as is still claimed by some Christian Churches (the Reformation Calvinist Church, for ex.), which take it for a not canonised biblical texts. Indeed, the *Book of Judith* has its theological and historic peculiarities. Its unknown author describes, on one hand, an event from the history of ancient East, and, on the other hand, wants to teach on religious matters. In other words, he uses a historic event and the historic experience of the Jewish people and squeezes its meaning to accommodate determined religious teaching. The contradiction did not escape St Jerome, who denoted the text as »*fabulae*« and »*apocrypha*«. The popularity of the story of Judith and Holophernes in European literatures is unquestionable, from the Old-English epic *Judith* to *Judith* by Marulić to the German Meistersang drama by Hans Sachs. The principal reason of its long-lasting popularity is, obviously, its *dual* nature. Marko Marulić, theologian and a 16th century poet, unmistakably detected both characters of the biblical *Book of Judith*, that of a »*fabula*« and that of an »Apocryphal book«. That is why we are hopeful that its analysis from the stand-point of the mentioned dualism will open a new dimension of his much praised work.