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MARKO MARULIĆ'S *JUDITA* AND *LA JUDIT* OF GUILLAUME  
SALLUSTE DU BARTAS

Marko Marulić (1450-1524) and Guillaume Salluste du Bartas (1544-1590) show several similarities: both poets were lawyers, very religiously involved (Du Bartas was a calvinist and Marulić a follower of the »*devotio moderna*« movement of the Catholic church) and – the most importantly for our analysis – Du Bartas was the first French poet whose work, written in French, was based on the Bible, on which Marulić had also based his epic poem, written in Croatian some seventy years before the French *Judith*. Both poets' epics were influenced by the Roman poet Virgil. In Du Bartas' *La Judit* Holofernes has some features of the French king François le I<sup>er</sup>, a cruel persecutor of Huguenots, while in Marulić's description of the Assyrian army it is not hard to recognize Turkish military units who were plundering Split's hinterland in Marulić's time.

Both Marulić and Du Bartas considered Judith an executioner of God's will, but her greatness and heroism consisted in complete submission to Jehovah.

In Marulić's scenes visual elements are very present while in Du Bartas's work sonority is of paramount importance.

Some digressions from the concise Biblical stories are similar in both epics: Marulić and Du Bartas vividly describe the suffering of Bethulians who fear perishing of thirst in the besieged city, while in Holofernes' tent the leader of Amonites Achior skillfully explained the history of the Jewish people, pointing out that they were invincible whenever obedient and trusting in their God.

Holofernes did not like that explanation and chased Achior from his army sending him to experience the misery of the Bethulians.

Judith's beauty is described in interesting ways by the two poets: In Marulić's poem, Judith is a »donna« in accordance to Petrarch's *canzoniere* – as proved in M. Tomasović's work (»Is Judith a donna of the Petrarch's 'Canzoniere'?«). In Du Bartas' verses there are traces of the Baroque description of feminine beauty.

In Marulić's poem Ozias plays a main role among the Jewish priests, while in du Barthas epic Chabris and Charmis are not only priests but also people's advisers. In Marulić's verses Abra does not say a single word, but her assistance to Judith is very important, while in Du Bartas' *La Judit* she is simply a chambermaid. Eunuch Bagoas is depicted in Du Bartas' work as the adoptive son of Holofernes and his confidant, while in Marulić's epic he is just Holofernes' servant.

It is much easier for Judith to decide to kill Holofernes the way she is depicted in Marulić's than in Du Bartas' work. Du Bartas did not forget to mention that Holofernes's soul went directly to Hell, while in Marulić's work there is no mention of it.

(Translated by the author)