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RHETORICAL PROCEDURES IN MARULIĆ'S WORKS
IN THE VERNACULAR

The present article analyzes the rhetorical procedures employed by Marulić in his Croatian works. Most prominent are the Biblical episodes concerning Judith and Susanna. Incorporated into the biblical books in two different ways, the two episodes were obviously chosen by Marulić with intention of creating two different literary forms. After having assessed the importance and position of the respective stories within the two epics, the author concludes that in *Susanna* there is not one single allusion that might point to the potential national purport of the event which the story tells. *Judith*, on the contrary, meets this fundamental requirement of the humanist epic. From this standpoint *Susanna* is a literary *exemplum* of Christian life, very much like medieval legends about Christian saints and martyrs.

The author then considers the relationships: author — God, author — reader, author - literary hand, again noticing disparate procedures, and discovers that the poet personally intervenes in *Judith* much more often than he does in *Susanna*. It is another imperative of the biblical epic genre of moralistic-didactic character. The scope of this particular procedure is to involve the reader with the message of the epic and to have his attention by offering him active participation. This is typically attained by rhetoric formulas which make the reader a moral witness to the story, merging his viewpoint with the perspective of the Almighty, conceived as the supreme patron of the just. In writing his epic about Judith Marulić artificially intervened on the texture and composition of his biblical model, in order to meet the demands of the humanist epic.

In *Susanna*, on the other hand, he proficiently used his knowledge of numerology, as is shown by the symmetry of its composition, and turned the biblical passive protagonists into active participants (the husband Joakim and the relatives), and energetically set the main directions of the story from the very beginning, i.e. from the introductory descriptions (the prosopography of Susanna and the description of Joachim's garden). Yet, the postponement of tension in both epics is attained in similar ways. Also, the epic and the dramatic are similarly intertwined. (In this sense the two epics provide a solid basis for further attributions).

The author finally touches upon the prayer as a dramatic implicitly dialogical form which occurs in Marulić's epics as a self-contained shorter lyric type, and points to the scrupulous attention that the poet paid to the structure of his other prayer songs. In the end she notices traces of medieval rhetoric in the two epics.