

*S m i l j k a M a l i n a r*

MARULIĆ'S CROATIAN PROSE WRITINGS

*Judith's* short prose framework - its dedication addressed to Dujam Balistrilić, the summary of the plot and notes on single lines in the epic - is by no means an unimportant fragment, since it shows an array of expressive possibilities of Croatian prose language by then unknown. At the same time, it casts a shade of doubt on Marulić's exclusive dependency on the Croatian prose tradition and implies a different, classical legacy. Indeed, considering the volume and excellency of his Latin writings, it is legitimate to assume that neither his Croatian prose was without Latin influence, especially since he lived and worked within the historic and cultural framework of the Renaissance, which was, as we know, strongly marked by the appropriation of elements from the Latin literary tradition, and since the poet himself perceives his work as the shaping of the corresponding poetic orientation. Contemporarily, he read and was familiar with Italian authors who, in giving form to their prose expression in mother-tongue, like himself, were confronted with the problem of choice between the autochthonous and alloglotic (Latin) formative codes. It is within this scope that the author examines the characteristics of the syntactic build-up of the prose passages in *Judith* (on the sentence and transphrastic structure level), offering their characterisation based on a comparison with relevant traditional and contemporary writing (including Marulić's Croatian rendition of the *De imitatione Christi*).