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»TER TUŽNIH KONSOLAJ« (»AND CONSOLE THE SORROWFUL«):
MARULIĆ'S POEM *UTIHA NESRIĆE* (*CONSOLATION IN DISTRESS*)
AND THE PSEUDO-SENECAN *DE REMEDIIS FORTUITORUM*

Utiha nesriće (*Consolation in Distress*) is one of Marulić's Croatian poems of medium length, written in 370 doubly-rhymed twelve syllable lines. Between 1856 and 2000 the poem ran through eight complete or partial editions. Today, it is regularly included in Marulić's anthologies. Although this makes *Utiha* a fairly popular work, it has not received adequate scholarly coverage. It has, however, been touched upon in a couple of articles dedicated to other subjects; there the *Utiha* has been described primarily in terms of form, as a »dialogue in verse«.

UN has survived in two versions: the *V* text in the manuscript miscellany the *Vartal*, by Petar Lucić from Trogir, composed between 1573 and 1595, and the older *R* text, now kept in the National and University Library in Zagreb (signature R 6634). Only the *R* text bears the title *Utiha nesriće*, and only this ends with a poetic »signature« (which, incidentally, confirms Marulić's authorship of *UN*):

*Pisan ma, poteci ter tužnih konsolaj,
Marko Marul, reci, pisa vam pisma saj.*

(Go, my song, console the sorrowful,
Say it was written for you by Marko Marul)

These straightforward technical terms *utiha*, *konsolaj* (*consolation*, *console*) suggested a new interpretation: let us interpret this work as a literary consolation! The European culture has a long tradition of both literary consolations and written manuals for consoling. Originating in Greek antiquity, literary consolations were composed until early modern times. Mirko Tomasović is credited with being the first to fit *Utiha* into the tradition of consolation writing, in his comparison between Marulić's text and Petrarch's voluminous compendium *De remediis utriusque fortunae*. However, *Utiha* resembles even closer the text that inspired Petrarch, *De remediis fortuitorum* (*Remedies for Unexpected Grievances*), ascribed to Seneca the Younger. There is ample proof that Marulić drew directly on the *De remediis* while composing the *Utiha nesriće*.

Today the brief *De remediis* is little known, and not readily accessible due to the fact that modern classical philology considers it a summary, or a florilegium, and not a Seneca's original work. This explains why today *De remediis* is not to be found in Seneca's canon. Yet, in the Renaissance times pseudo-Seneca's brief text was a major influence on consolation writing, both in Latin and in the vernaculars. Immediately after the invention of the printing press, the *De remediis* ran through several consecutive editions. What is even more important, it was included in the 1490 Venetian edition of Seneca's complete works; this is the edition Marulić consulted while putting together his *Repertorium*.

De remediis fortuitorum is a moral-philosophical compilation with the aim of preparing man to accept the pain and misery of *condition humaine*. The »medicines« are maxims and attitudes, and they should be »administered« before the coming of difficult times. *De remediis* attains its dialogical form by threats and lamentations grouped thematically (»You will die«, »I have shipwrecked«) and alternating with consolatory answers. Yet, this is, by no means, an elevated philosophical dialogue in the vein of Plato or Cicero, but a simple *didactic exchange of questions and answers* between the *pupil* and the *master* (the classical model of this being Donatus' *Grammar*).

From pseudo-Seneca's *De remediis* Marulić takes over the »entries« which he uses as a backbone of his poem. Although in *Utiha* entries are not repeated before each consolation, as it is the case with pseudo-Seneca, their arrangement within the general plan of the work is identical. On the other hand, Marulić is less predictable in his selection of pseudo-Seneca's consolatory arguments. While in certain entries Marulić employs *exclusively* the material from *De remediis*, elsewhere he mobilizes entirely new arguments. At least in one instance Marulić takes over *solely the wording of pseudo-Seneca's entry* (UN 181-188, »Nisam jak ni moguć...« (»Neither strong nor powerful am I ...«) Material from pseudo-Seneca's catalogue occurs more often in the second, than in the first part of *Utiha*.

Marulić choose to accommodate the thoughts of pseudo-Seneca to the new stylistic and ideological requirements. Marulić remoulds pseudo-Seneca, using as follows: simplification of the source (cf.: *De rem.* 4,1 – UN 57-58; *De rem.* 5,4 – UN 75-76; *De rem.* 5,5 – UN 79-80), reformulation until the source becomes unrecognizable (*De rem.* 2,7 – UN 27-28; *De rem.* 11,1 – UN 203-204), reshaping of the loosely interconnected Senecan prose anthology into a new, more coherent poetic whole; this reshaping Marulić achieves by more consistent use of the grammar category of person, by emotional intensification of the exchange between interlocutors (for ex. the phatic *slušam riči tvoje, I hark to thee*, UN 21, performative *Pravo ti hoću rit, I will tell you in truth*, 28, appeals, promises, exclamations, and rhetorical questions), and by realistic imagery and colloquial phrasema. Also, relying all the time on the overall design of the pseudo-Seneca's work, Marulić writes an emphatically *Christian* text. He adds Christian motifs, Christian *exempla* (Apostles UN 49-54, Job 141-146, the New Testament in praise of poverty 165-178, the Martyrs 195-198), paraphrases the Bible, (93-94 – II Cor 12:9-10; 231-232 – Psl 19:37) and stresses life after death as an important consolatory argument. Also, Marulić mitigates the Stoic sternness of the *De remediis* (contrast *De rem.* 12,1 – UN 223-228; *De rem.* 15,2 – UN 303-304).

The identification of *De remediis* as the model for *Utiha* can help establish Marulić's original text. There are differences in the R and V versions; we can now choose among them by following the pseudo-Seneca. This procedure is decisive at UN 89-92 (cf. *De rem.* 6,1), 139-140 (*De rem.* 9,1), 183-184 (cf. *Repertorium*, to which the search for Marulić's model ultimately took us), and 289-290 (*De rem.* 14,2). This is important, because Marulić's editors, though amply documenting textual variants in R and V versions of the *Utiha*, have never bothered to explain on which grounds we are to prefer one reading over the other.

The newly discovered relationship between *De remediis* and *Utiha* lays the basis for the placing of the latter into a new context within Marulić's opus: among Marulić's paraphrases of Latin works, such as *Od uskarsa Isusova* or *Stumačen'je Kata*. As a lively communicative text *Utiha* also provides a valuable point of reference for *Dobri nauci*, popular sermon in verse that Marulić wrote for oral presentation. In the end, one wonders what sort of public *Utiha nesriće* was intended for? The answer is that Marulić obviously aimed at a wider, secular, and primarily male public. This point invites another comparison: a comparison with Marulić's *Letters to Katarina Obirić*, where he addressed the female, monastic public.