

M l a d e n P a r l o v

MARULIĆ'S AUTHORSHIP OF *THE LIFE OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST*

The old-Croatian *Life of St John the Baptist* is a fluently written Latin prose piece. It has survived in two versions: the shorter in Petar Lucić's *Vartal (The Garden)*, and the longer in the *Florentine Miscellany*, a collection of Croatian texts written at the end of the 15th or the early 16th century. The author has chosen the version from the *Florentine Miscellany* as his base-text mainly because of its greater length. This version was written on thirteen folios (210x150 mm) filled with text from top to bottom. Based on the observations that single lines from the *Life* are to be found in other works by Marulić as well, and that it contains some stylistic elements typical of the writer's verified output, scholars such as Carlo Verdiani and Josip Badalić believed that it is unquestionably the work of Marulić. However, this claim was contested by Milan Moguš, Dragica Malić and others who rightly argued that some minor writer may have cited Marulić, especially since some expressions figuring prominently in the *Life* are not to be found in Marulić's familiar works. The comparison between the *Life* and Marulić's confirmed works, in terms of meter, rhyme and other poetic and literary features, recently undertaken by Mirko Tomasović, speaks in favor of Marulić's authorship.

Taking as the point of departure the assumed authorship of Marko Marulić, the author draws a parallel between the *Life* and Marulić's other Latin and Croatian texts, proving not only that they share the same style and show identical employment of the Old and New Testaments, but exhibit great similarity (even identity) in subject-matter and base-concepts. These similarities have been put here in two separately treated groups: In the first part (biographic-hagiographic evidence) the author draws a comparison between single figures appearing in the *Life* and other works by Marulić proving that the author of the *Life* and Marulić corroborate their theses by using the same exemplary biblical figures and even the same words and contexts. In the second part (theological evidence) he focuses on the selected theological thoughts (on baptism, chastity, and the five senses) with equally surprising results, showing that even here the similarities are too striking to be a matter of pure coincidence. In the end, he checks the possible models for the *Life*, including the homonymous works by Domenico Cavalca and Jacobus from Varazze (de Voragine) coming to the conclusion that the author of *The Life of St John the Baptist* drew directly on pages of the New Testament, which the author considers to be the firmest proof of Marulić's authorship, since Marulić's familiarity with the Bible is notorious.