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MARCI MARULI *EVANGELISTARIUM* – *VETERA & NOVA*:  
MARKING THE FIFTH CENTENARY OF THE EDITION (1516-2016)

The *Evangelistarium* is considered to be the most mature and most important work of moral theology of the Split humanist, one that, alongside the *De institutione bene vivendi*, made his name and turned him into a writer with a worldwide reputation. The outstanding *fortuna* of this writing of Marulić is evidenced by the frequency with which it was published and translated, the number of copies of old editions still kept in libraries, and the testimonies of some of its readers. The first extant edition of the *Evangelistarium* was printed in Venice in May 1516; there are suggestions that there were some earlier editions, although some of the knotty places in Marulić's chronology are quite difficult to smooth out. The work was printed not only in Venice, but also in Basel, Cologne, Paris, Antwerp, Louvain, Florence, Madrid, Split and Zagreb. The Latin original went through 19 editions (complete or in parts) and there were 13 editions in translations, into Flemish, French, Italian, Spanish, English, Croatian and German. Among its readers, there were many persons of distinction, kings and diplomats, bishops and priests, humanists and writers (Henry VIII, Charles V, Thomas More, Jan Dantyszek, Sebastian Münster, Wilhelm Eisengrein, Pierre de Backere, Jean Garet, Jean and Jacques de Billy, Petrus Canisius, Juan Lorenzo Palmireno, Bartolomé Fernández de Revenga, Gregorio Mayáns y Siscar, Juan de Zumárraga, Silvano Razzi, Bellisario Bulgarini, Giuseppe Garampi, Ludovico Pelleatti, Giovan Battista Rossi...).

Marulić consciously gave his work what we might call a pretentious title and in the preface announced his programme: to show the way to virtue on the principles of the Holy Writ. He determined, then, to consider the works and lessons of both Old and New Testament, and what he took from the treasury of holy books attentively to explain under the headings of faith, hope and charity. The exposition is divided into seven books with unequal numbers of chapters, the theological virtues announced comprising the theme of only a small number of them, in fact, less than 10% of the whole work.

As well as those, the writer discussed other crucial Christian and universally human virtues and, naturally, their oppositions, in other words sins. The discussion did not ignore motivations, and talks of rewards for virtuous and penalties for vicious procedures. It also debates a number of other things that cannot be subsumed under the heading of either virtue or vice. In fact, the contents of the *Evangelistarium* are the whole spectrum of themes important for virtuous living, and so the claim that the work is dedicated to the theological virtues needs to be taken with some reservation. The *Evangelistarium* has a mosaic structure, for there is none of the expected coherence, nor does it stick to any standardised scheme in the argument. For this reason, i.e. because of the choice of themes, and because of

the incoherent mosaic structure, the *Evangelistarium* has much in common with similar works that deal with issues of faith and morality, such as the *Dictorum factorumque memorabilium libri novem* of Valerius Maximus, Lactantius' *Divinae institutiones*, Augustine's *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide et spe et caritate*, several writings of Bernard of Siena and Thomas à Kempis' *De imitatione Christi*. There are particularly many points of contact in terms of theme and genre with Erasmus' work *Enchiridion militis Christiani*. Both of these works were offshoots of the same current of the new devotion (*Devotio moderna*) and both, as against the theological culture that educated theologian and discipline, promoted a faith that trained the Christian warrior to resist the various dangers of this world on the way to the life eternal. Marulić's work is an expression of the eternal human endeavour and so there is no surprise that it should have similarities with other works of moral piety. Since they draw on the same sources, they have a common worldview and value system, and the commonplaces of classical and Christian literature are necessarily involved. But notwithstanding these similarities, the choice of themes, the way they are distributed and argued all reflect the stamp of Marulić as author.

Thematically conceived as dealing with the trinity of faith, hope and charity, perhaps under the influence of some things from life or from books that he read during the writing, the *Evangelistarium* branched out into a complex argument the objective of which was to transmute the ideal of Christian piety into practice, into a virtuous life, and an effective love. It is not written exclusively or even primarily for the clergy, as some have held, but is a manual for a virtuous and blessed, or genuinely Christian life, like his other work – the *De institutione*. The difference lies in the *De institutione* teaching by example, the *Evangelistarium* convincing by power of argument, with instructions and rhetoric. Because it urges universal eternal values and because it is suffused with the thoughts of universally human and classical wisdom, this five-century-old work of Marulić is today interesting and current reading. A look into the literature shows that in spite of these properties and the importance of the name of Marulić, the work has still not been studied according to its deserts.

Three annexes give lists of editions of the *Evangelistarium*, a bibliography of secondary works, and a review of selected chapters of the *Evangelistarium* and corresponding themes from the works of Valerius Maximus, Bernard of Siena and *De imitatione Christi*.

**Key words:** Marko Marulić, *Evangelistarium*, Valerius Maximus, St Bernard of Siena, Thomas à Kempis, Erasmus, moral manual, spirituality