

## Letters

*To the Reverend Priest in Christ, Sir Jerolim Pipiko,  
Doctor of Both Laws, Estimated Dean of the Split Archdeaconry and my Lord,  
with Greatest Merits. In Venice.*

Reverend Sir. I wanted to write to you these last days but I was prevented by the death of my brother Ivan, God give peace to his soul. After your departure from here he fell ill from fever on the galley. We asked the rector's permission to transfer him to the land for cure while our Valerije was the commander of the galley. However, we did not succeed, not even by using the people who might influence him (the rector). He proved to be very cruel, please God let him repent his sin, and save him at the end. Amen.

My other brother Petar is confined to bed as he seems severely ill. I have brought the physician Siva from Šibenik but he does not have a favourable opinion of his health. I do not know what will follow, but whatever happens let God be praised. My great comfort is that one of my brothers left this world with all the church sacraments, and deeply repentant in my arms, as a faithful Christian should be. The other brother confessed and is contritely prepared to do the will of God in whose hands are our life and our death. But I feel in myself the struggle between pain and reason. Sorrow occupied my mind at the beginning but, at the end, it gave place to reason. *And that is the gift of God the great*, whom I praise because he smites us more gently than our sins deserve. He punishes us with grace, not

to do us evil but to save us for eternity. All misfortunes he sends to us are for our own good, and therefore we must simply praise him and only thank him for everything.

Thinking again about the oppression of Christians by infidels and looking for the reasons in my imagination, it occurred to me that I should write a small discussion on these matters. I hope it would be useful for those who are ready to read it sensibly and to assess it reasonably. I send it to you together with this letter. It is written in Italian so that everybody may understand it. If it seems to you that it would be spiritually fruitful for Christians, please, send it to the press. As far as I can tell I believe that it will be the case and that its contents will have some influence. All will be well if the high dignitaries of the Church and secular gentlemen take care that citizens abstain from public crimes by means of prohibitions and punishments. Otherwise, we are finished. God's wrath will be always against us, which is incited more by the neglect of powerful men than by the failings of peoples. For even now *the axe is laid at the root* and nobody notices the offence of God until his revenge extends to us. Oh, how vain is the credulousness of those who hope to oppose God's wrath by human force.

As you learned before, here, in the territory of Croatia, 500 Hungarian and Croatian horsemen, all of them brave and well armed men – were crushed in the middle of an open plain, by 300 badly armed Turkish horsemen. There is no reason why they escaped and why they did not have courage to oppose a less numerous enemy while having such a great advantage. However, we still do not understand that it is not the power of the enemy which oppresses us but God's wrath.

Today, the latest confirmation of eyewitnesses has arrived that three thousand Skender-pasha's horsemen have occupied the region of Slavonia as far as Zagreb, and without any resistance. They chased a great number of prisoners, as many as they were able to lead, in a herd, like oxen, sheep and other cattle. If a king cannot take care of his own estate I do not know how he will be able to care for one belonging to someone else.

The signs of God's wrath are evident, and those who take this into consideration are not numerous. They still hope for the help of human forces. This hope is quickly shown to be in vain as you can see reading my work.

I wish you a good health in Our Lord.

*Yours M. Marulus*

*From Split, in 1501, on the date of July 19.*

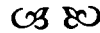
# **m** DOSSIER: MARKO MARULIĆ **o**

[P.S.] Please, recommend me to his Lordship the reverend Abbot Bergognoni, who, through his humanity, is our great friend. If he needs me for anything I am at the disposal to his Lordship. Let Jesus Christ maintain him in his grace. Amen.

I have written a small piece of poetry in our mother tongue, divided in six books, depicting the history of Judith and Holofernes. I finished it last Lent and dedicated it to our dean. It is conceived in a poetic manner. Come, see it and you will say that

the Slavonic language also has its Dante. The courage I feel when I am with you makes me to overestimate myself. I greet you once more.

*[Originally in Italian]*



*To the Reverend Father in Christ,  
Sir Jerolim Pipiko, Doctor of Both Laws, my Worthiest,  
the Greatest Honour. In Venice.*

Reverend Sir in Christ. I wrote to you my last [letter and sent] by our father Toma, our priest. I wrote you about our misfortunes which increased in number due to the illness of our mother. She was stricken by a great fever so that only God can free her from it and recover her health. All other remedies were in vain and have not improved her health. Her life forces decrease steadily; she cannot chew her food because she feels weakness in her jaws, but we try to keep her alive by liquid food. Let God be praised.

Now you see in what circumstances I find myself. I lost two brothers in one month and now I face the loss of my mother if Jesus Christ does not make a miracle and cures her. It would be less evil if it happened to me in some other time, but now I manage the household myself, which was not the case earlier, and the things I have not dealt with before burden me. If I did not expect Valerije's arrival, I should occupy myself with other things, but I have to take care of the house because of my love for him. I miss my mother's help, to my greater unrest and pain, so that I am in trouble from all sides, like a sailor in a great tempest on a frail ship and without equipment. My hope is in God only and he will free me, by his love and

mercy, from so much distress, and bring me to the port of spiritual peace. And thus freed from worldly worries I shall spend the rest of my life on that which will be to the praise of the Supreme Being, for the health of fellow-people and for the purification of my sins which, I must confess, are the cause of my above mentioned misfortunes that I deserved. *You are just, Oh Lord, and your ordinance is right. But it may be useful sometimes to remember this when we, comforted, revive the spirit in God.*

I wrote to you about our exemplary work. Could you, please, if the printing has not yet begun, send me it for a few days? If you do that I shall return it immediately with corrections and modifications. If it is not possible, patience, we shall reply to its readers or to us writers with the words of the poet Martial directed to Avitus, saying: »There are good things that you read here, and some indifferent, and more bad. Not otherwise, Avitus, is a book made.«<sup>1</sup>

You probably heard from others about the perfidiousness of our Antonio d'Alberti. After our brother Petar's death, he showed, without any guilt or pretext from our side, a great hatred. He thinks that he cannot do any good to himself without doing a bad turn to

others. I forgive him every offence because of divine love, although I found myself disturbed many times. I suppressed the impulses of wrath with those divine words: *Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.* I patiently endured all the offences and I described this in my sonnets, which I send you together with some other things because I believe that they will bring you some pleasure. I wrote them because I did not know how to free myself from the anxiety I suffer. In order to comfort myself in these anxieties, I achieved some beautiful things which I had not seen before. Please, enable me to see you, although it will be difficult for me due to my numerous obligations, which do not allow me to rest. Pray God that I am relieved from them quickly and brought back to myself in order to be His for whom I always yearn. Live well.

*From Split, in the Lord's year 1501,  
on the date of 2nd November.*

[P.S.] Recommend me to our reverend Monsignor Abbot Borgognoni, if I can do anything for his lordship, I am always at his service; I can do little, but little is much when what is offered is my all.

*Yours M. Marulus*

*[Originally in Italian]*

<sup>1</sup> Translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey.



# m DOSSIER: MARKO MARULIĆ 0

*To the Reverend Priest in Christ,  
Jacopo Grassolario, Virtuous and Erudite Man,  
who Loves me Very Much and is Very Dear to me. In Venice.*

Marko Marulić greets priest Jacopo Grassolario. My, and also your, Jerolim spoke to you much about me. However, as far as I can gather from the letter you sent me, he thinks of me as a person who loves much. And usually the praise of these people surpasses truth. You think that I am worth as much as he himself is convinced in this. Therefore you began to love me and you wish that I love you as well. When you are inclined to everybody who is honest, you show indeed what kind of man you are. You deserve that I ask you kindly in return – although you will find in me less than you heard – not to diminish in any way your intention of friendship, and I shall try with all my might to behave in a similar way. I shall equal or surpass your ardent feelings. What is more pleasant, dearer to me than the benevolence and kindness of those like you? Let others love richness, honours and enjoyments. Nothing is dearer to me than to have friends, especially those friends who are connected by mutual nurturing of true and sincere love towards God. I can discern from your letter how much discussion about anything referring to

God pleases you. Our love will be steadfast as long as it is based on this. And indeed, those who think all the time about love eternally. »*This is my commandment*«, said the Lord: »*Love one another!*« And, lest we should think that it is enough to love each other in the ordinary way as secular people do, he added: »*as I have loved you.*« He does not direct us to fleshly love but to spiritual. From such love, holy and beneficial harmony is born: »*I say to your father, that if two of you shall agree on earth about anything at all for which they ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them.*« Let us meet, dearest Jakov, but not only for the sake of meeting, although this would also be dear to me, but to join our hearts. And Christ will be in the midst of us. Let our love direct us only to love towards God. Pagan tradition celebrated boastfully only four couples of friends<sup>2</sup> and it did not know our love. They might have loved passionately, faithfully and steadily, but how long, I ask you? Definitely not longer than they lived, and that was a very short time. A quick death

brought separation and they descended into the underworld where no love reigned but permanent horror. On the contrary, the divine love of those believing in Christ is permanent and it exists even after the end of the life of this world, it never ends. When we leave this earthly circle where we are strangers and newcomers, and move to our celestial homeland, then we begin to love passionately. »*So there abide faith, hope and love – these three – but the greatest of these is love.*« Because the first two will cease when we possess what we hoped for and when we look at what we believed in. The third one will last for ever. »*God is love and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*« We shall be permanent and true friends if, loving each other, in constant conversations, i.e. an often exchange of letters, we incite each other to love Him who »*loved us before and laid down his life for us*«. (...)

*In Split, 3rd March, in the year  
1502 of the Christian salvation.*

*[Originally in Latin]*

*Translated by Živan Filipi*

<sup>2</sup> Castor and Pollux, Orestes and Pylades, Achilles and Patroclus, Nisus and Euryalus.

#4

# Spiritual Movement

## m DOSSIER: MARKO MARULIĆ o

translated into French (by Charles Didyer and Paul du Mont, respectively). Du Mont (who belonged to the *Devotio moderna*, too) introduced the *De institutione* to French readers as

*a treasury of renowned deeds and testimonies by saintly and celebrated persons from the Old and the New Testaments who could serve as models for an honest and saintly life.*

Their author was presented as

*a noble citizen of Split in Illyria, now in Slavonia [i.e., in Croatia], an outstandingly learned person of admirable reverence (...) which may be proved by a number of his contemporaries, and particularly by his own works.*

Du Mont's translation found a powerful response in the public, as was proved by subsequent new and revised editions. The first edition, which was printed in Douai in 1585, was reprinted in 1595, 1599, 1604 and 1696. The French edition of the *De institutione* stirred a linguistic and doctrinaire controversy in the public, which was referred to by Pierre Bayle in his *Dictionnaire historique and critique*.

Stunned at the translator's overly free interpretation of Marulić's original text, Bayle (a French erudite, philosopher, and predecessor of modern historical criticism) cited the Jesuit Martin Del Rio (1551-1608), a professor at the University of Graz, who had criticised the French economist and philosopher Jean Bodin (1530-1596) for suggesting in his *Method for Easy Learning of History* that judges should even make use of a lie in order to make an alleged guilty person admit the truth. Del Rio knew that this viewpoint had been supported by Marko Marulić from Split, but the fact was that du Mont had translated a theologically wrong attitude into a catholically right viewpoint in his translation of the *De institutione* in French.

In the sixteenth century, Marulić's viewpoint was disapproved of by neo-scholastic casuistry as well, so that the *De*

*institutione* was unexpectedly put on »a list of forbidden books.« However, it was not included in the complex *Index* issued by Rome's Holy Office, but in the partial edition published in Madrid in 1612, with a note saying »nisi repurgetur« (i.e., »until certain parts have been purified«), which gave a rather local significance to the prohibition.

Moreover, the inquisitorial proceedings against Antonio M. Caroli, a bookseller from Siena whom the Inquisition called to order for selling a small number of heterodox books in 1564, speak in favor of the abovementioned assumption. Among the incriminated publications that the commissioners of Siena's Inquisition found on the shelves of Caroli's bookshop there were four copies of Machiavelli's *The Prince* and a copy of Marulić's *De institutione*.

These interventions, however, did not harm Marulić's literary or moral reputation, although several passages and certain sentences of the fourth chapter of the the work were »corrected« in some later editions. In the fourth chapter Marulić enters in a discussion *O gajenju istine i izbjegavanju laži* (*On Nurturing the Truth and Avoiding Lies*). The reader may find the passages that are at issue here on pages 334-346 of Steelzi's edition published in Antwerp in 1584 and on pages II/191-208 of the edition published by the Split Literary Circle (1986-1988).

Even before du Mont's there had been previous attempts at making some alterations in the original text of the *De institutione* with a view to adjust it to Tridentine theology, so that John Fowler, for instance, pointed out that the edition published in Antwerp in 1577 had been »very carefully purified of numerous mistakes.« In the majority of the Latin editions, the text in question was left unchanged, as in the case of the Paris edition published in 1585, where on page 276 one can read the following:

*Sometimes, however, it is necessary to feign, to hush up something or even to tell a lie, when the situation is such that a*

*greater sin could be committed or a greater welfare lost if one refuses to resort to a lie.*

Moreover, there were biblical and patristical examples in favor of Marulić's viewpoints, such as the examples that were referred to by Gabriel Naudé in 1647. Namely, answering the question of whether it is permissible to lie to a patient (in a debate dedicated to Tadeo Colicola, a doctor of Pope Urban VIII), Naudé says, referring to Marulić's ideas:

*In the works by Marko Marulić from Split (the reader) will come upon a statement saying that the act of lying for the purpose of the general welfare or the greater glory of God (represents) an act of the highest respect and great prudence.*

While casuistry relied on the ethical principles of Aurelius Augustine at that time, Marulić supported his opinions by quoting examples of biblical characters taken from Jewish history, and theological viewpoints advocated by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St John of Damascus, St Hilary of Poitiers, and John Cassian.

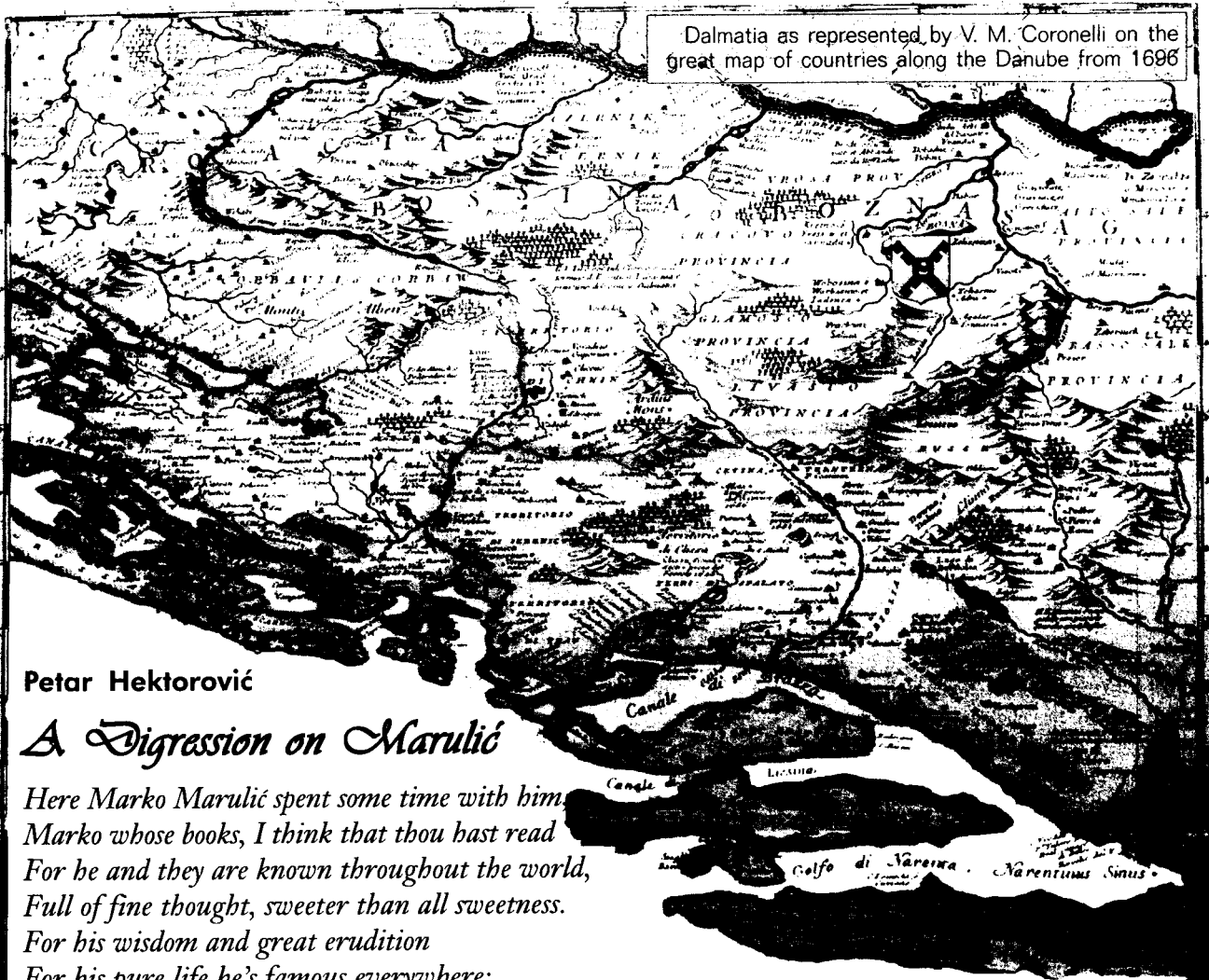
Marulić's Humanism has rightly been pointed out by today's scholars, although it is sometimes too much oriented towards man's spiritual world, leaving little space for this world's joys of life. The fact that Marulić stood up for and believed in man's honesty and peacefulness, that he had the sense of measure and faith in human goodness, is of a particular importance for our time.

We must not forget that it was five centuries ago when Marulić stressed the need for a united community of European peoples, a community which would inherit the ancient Mediterranean civilization, and which should be based on equality among peoples and a mutual respect for their social, cultural, and religious aspirations on the eve of the time which we, not without pride, call modern.

*Translated by Nella Popović*

#51

# m DOSSIER: MARKO MARULIĆ 0



Petar Hektorović

## *A Digression on Marulić*

Here Marko Marulić spent some time with him  
 Marko whose books, I think that thou hast read  
 For he and they are known throughout the world,  
 Full of fine thought, sweeter than all sweetness.  
 For his wisdom and great erudition  
 For his pure life he's famous everywhere;  
 For his goodness and his holy living  
 He was loved and cherished everywhere he went.  
 With many gifts he ennobled our country,  
 Endowing her with honour and great praise;  
 Whose works the Croatian language have adorned  
 And no less honoured he the Latin tongue.  
 The works of his that I have read I think  
 Were not brought forth without the Holy Spirit  
 That gave him learning and set reason in it,  
 That all nations might know and honour him.  
 That Marko Marulić whom all admire,  
 Whose voice echoeth, bloometh everywhere.  
 They who have read his works know and can say  
 Whether they have ever met such wisdom.  
 Oh worthy Split, what fortune hath been thine  
 To have been the nest of such wise men,

Where many writers saw the light of day,  
 Men of great genius who achieved great fame,  
 Exceptional men whose fame hath never ceased.  
 They have ever been thy company,  
 Men who have excelled in every virtue  
 Through their own efforts and all greatly praised.  
 Yet over all, to speak the truth, stands Marul  
 With greatest glory, honour and renown.  
 As, midst all stars, the Day Star shineth out,  
 So doth his name shine out among the wise.

Petar Hektorović (1487-1572), nobleman and poet from the island of Hvar. His *Fishing and Fishermen's Conversations* (Venice 1568), a poetical account of the three days fishing trip, is one of the most original works of the Croatian 16th century literature. These are the verses 773-804, translated by Edward D. Goy.