

**IN THEATRALIBUS EXERCITIIS UNUM
FERE QUAERI POPULAREM PLAUSUM
TOWARDS THE MECHANISMS OF CURBING
THEATRICAL PRACTICES AT JESUIT SCHOOLS
IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY**

KATEŘINA BOBKOVÁ-VALENTOVÁ

Out of the various approaches available to a scholar engaged in research of the forms, development and functioning of the Jesuit school theatre, analysis of the structure, subjects and quality of the preserved dramatic texts is generally considered the most valuable. The material ranges from exemplary, on occasion unproduced dramas intended to showcase the ideal forms and style to the extant fragment of the actual school play output. The dramatic texts are complemented by numerous, albeit equally erratically preserved, synopses, i.e. program brochures explaining the plot and the moral of the plays presented.

A basic insight into the forms, suitable subjects and manners of staging plays at Jesuit schools can be gained from the school regulations captured in *Ratio studiorum* and various guidelines issued by general congregations. Information on the actual performance practice, including the dates of the performances, their length and/or their success, is drawn from the diaries kept by the professed houses and from sporadic comments found in the annual reports. Other important sources include consuetudinaries, Superior Generals' circular letters, instructions issued by father visitors and letters by provincial superiors. These materials typically attend to aspects of the actual practice that departed from prescribed norms and seek to bring them in line with the elementary principles of use of theatrical elements in the Jesuit pedagogical system.

The focus of this article is on these attempts to enforce restrictive measures in the context of the great boom of the Jesuit theatre in the second half of the seventeenth century. While the increasing sophistication and burgeoning use of visual and musical performance elements clearly won the admiration of the audiences, it had also strong critics among those Jesuits, members of the educated elites and patrons of the Jesuit schools and colleges who placed primary emphasis on the educational function of the school theatre. For the purposes of this study, Provincial Superior Jacob Stessl (1658–1723) shall serve as a representative of these critical voices and extracts from his letters devoted to the school theatre performance practice written during his years as the head of the Bohemian Province (1708–1712 and 1715–1718)¹ shall be examined. The selection represents an extremely well preserved body of texts from a period for which also other sources are available, making it possible to observe the roots of the suggested restrictions as well as to their actual impact on the theatre practice.

¹ An edition of the surviving theatre-related texts is provided in an appendix.

The first and the most comprehensive of the extant documents is Stessl's circular letter of 26th July 1709, almost entirely devoted to the practical issues arising from theatre activities at Jesuit schools.² It comes down in several copies, each representing a distinct phase of the use of the document. The fair copy composed in Brno is held in the MZA's Jesuits in Brno collection and belongs to the scanty few surviving documents linked to the local Jesuit gymnasium.³ Deposited under the shelf number 48A, the collection includes three letters by Provincial Superior Jacob Stessl addressed to schools between the years 1708 and 1710. Two of these, addressed to the Rector, are inserted into the circular letter although there is little thematic overlap.

The character of the letter as well as the first part of its closing formula⁴ required that it be entered by all colleges into their compulsory books of regulations received from superior generals, provincial superiors and visitors.⁵ As most of these books (*Libri ordinationum*) are now lost, only one copy, preserved in the collection of letters kept at the Uherské Hradiště College, is readily available for examination.⁶ Sometime in the mid-1720s, an unknown Jesuit, possibly a co-worker to the Provincial Superior, undertook to create an abridgement of these books titled *Farrago diversarum ordinationum a Praepositis Generalibus et Provincialibus pro Bohemiae provincia factarum*.⁷ In a chronologically ordered section dedicated to the provincial superiors' circular letters and father visitors' memoranda, there is a copy of the letter penned by Provincial Superior Stessl on July 26th, 1709. The letter is quoted in its entirety but the date and the place of publication are omitted.

The third version of Stessl's circular letter can be found in the same part of the provincial archive as *Farrago*, among a miscellany of collections, summaries and indexes of directions issued by father visitors, superior generals and provincial superiors, created probably around the mid-1720s. The text quoting only the parts of the text related to theatrical issues is to be found in a collection of provincial superiors' regulations titled *Summarium ordinationum provinciae in titulos ordine alphabeti distributos digestum*.⁸ As the title indicates, *Summarium* represents a thematically organized collection of extracts from directions and regulations. The first entries come from the mid-1680s. Regulations concerning theatre are placed in the chapter *Magistri scholarum*. This classification may seem somewhat surprising but it makes sense because the Jesuit order school regulations

² Moravský zemský archiv (Moravian Land Archives) in Brno, Jezuité v Brně (Jesuits in Brno) collection, E 25 (further referred to as MZA, E 25), shelf num. 48A, fol. 1r-v and 4r-v. Attached to the regulations governing theatre activities, there is a brief note concerning the duties of brethren accompanying fathers on short walks and long journeys outside the grounds of the Jesuit residences. In addition to closing formulas, the list contains an interesting inscription which testifies that Stessl's stay in Brno was extended well into August after which he left for Olomouc (*Litterae [annuae – K. B.-V.] usque ad finem Augusti ab me opportune diriguntur Olomucium.*).

³ MZA, E 25, shelf num. 238. According to the original inventory, documents belonging to the gymnasium were held under numbers 47 (Gymnasium Brunense SJ – labores scholastici, dramata, synopses, praemia, orationes, etc.) and 48 (Gymnasii et universitatum privilegia, pro his ordinationes, studiosi, propter hos et studia lites).

⁴ *Demum, ut epistolam istam Reverentia Vestra ad mensam legi et reliquis Provincialium epistolis adscribi jubeat, impense oro...* MZA, E 25, shelf num. 48A, fol. 4v.

⁵ *Caput VIII De libris ordinationum*, in: *Ordinationes* (1635: 56–57).

⁶ MZA, G 11, shelf num. 600, unfoliated.

⁷ Národní archiv (National Archives), Jesuitica collection (further referred to as NA, JS), shelf num. IIIo-423, unfoliated.

⁸ *Ibid.*

were grouped according to the person in charge of them. In addition to the extracts from the 1709 circular letter, the chapter includes a quote from the Superior General's letter of April 16th, 1698 and extracts from two Stessl's later letters. All of these will be discussed in some detail below.

The introductory passage of Stessl's circular letter only appears in the fair copy because it does not contain any binding directions or recommendations. It recalls the unceasing interest of the Superior General in the quality of education at Jesuit gymnasia and praises the many teachers of whose merit the Superior General had learnt by way of evaluation reports sent to Rome.⁹ Nevertheless, the reason for the composition of the letter is mentioned in the same breath: certain offences in connection with school theatre.

The first problem mentioned is the amount of time devoted to theatre. Stessl complains that performances frequently exceed the one-hour time limit stipulated by Jesuit school regulations and that excessive periods of time are used for their preparation: the rehearsals and the manufacture of stage sets and properties were reported to take up to eight weeks.¹⁰ Another issue that Stessl's letter targets is the immoderate use of stage devices and non-textual elements of the play. The Provincial Superior identifies the cause in inadequate censorship¹¹ and calls for a consistent and careful use of all available control mechanisms. He maintains that the school prefect should be presented the complete text of the play along with its argumentum and synopsis.¹² Stessl goes on to condemn the practice wherein censors tended to turn a blind eye to issues arising during dress rehearsals and that the dress rehearsals often took place at a very short interval before the actual performance.¹³ Stessl prohibits any use of stage devices for weekly declamations of the classes of Poetic and Rhetoric as well as for the academies presented by lower classes. He stipulates that any theatrical productions at the Jesuit gymnasia should be held before the end of June. His letter also addresses the process of selection of a play's argument, referring to the relevant regulations in *Regulae*¹⁴ and *Ratio studiorum*.¹⁵ He advises that plots should be adequate to the size of the class and that the viability of representing noble

⁹ So called *Informationes de Magistris et Professoribus* were composed by school prefects and served to inform the provincial superior of his subordinates. The objective was to facilitate the decision making in matters such as who should continue teaching, who should be sent to proceed with their studies and who should never be allowed to teach again.

¹⁰ Originally, the rehearsals were not to take longer than three weeks (Flemming 1923: 252). Three weeks were allowed in the Upper Rhenish Province, while the teachers in the Flander-Belgian Province were expected to prepare the production in only two weeks (Poplatek 1957: 80, 73).

¹¹ For details on the process of the creation of the text and its evaluation within each college see Bobková-Valentová (2006a: 87).

¹² The term *argumentum* is used for a condensed summary of the plot located at the beginning of the synopsis. It can be either a quote that inspired the play, or its paraphrase. *Argumenta* almost invariably reference their sources. A *synopsis* or *periocha* is a specific type of theatre programme that provides basic information about the performance and an outline of the individual parts of the play. Rather than a plot summary, these texts interpret the meaning of the stage action.

¹³ The requirement that the dress rehearsals take place well before the performance (Father General C. de Noyelle urges in his letter of 1684 that it should be as many as 8 days prior to the premiere) was probably never enforced since all available documents indicate that the interval was one or two days.

¹⁴ *Regulae provincialis*, 58, *Regulae Societatis Jesu 1616*, p. 46, in: *Institutum SI 3* (1893: 17).

¹⁵ „13. ... argumentum sacrum sit ac pium, neque quicquam actibus interponatur, quod non latinum sit et decorum..., 14. ... Eorum autem, qui sumptus suppeditant, in ipsa praemiorum distributione honorifica mentio erit facienda. Magna autem cura caueat, ne discipuli, dum se ad huiusmodi res comparant, morum faciant, studiorumve iacturam.“ *Ratio studiorum 1599, Regulae Rectoris*, 13–14, in: *MPSI V.* (1986: 373–374).

and magnificent subjects should be carefully considered. Otherwise, he claims, the play becomes a source of bewilderment and a target of ridicule by viewers and readers alike.¹⁶

In the conclusion of the passage dedicated to theatre, Stessl's concerns with failing control mechanisms are reiterated and the need for regulation of the use of stage devices is stressed once more. It is evident that a significant number of young teachers, fascinated by the possibilities theatre offered, not only immensely enjoyed their work on the productions but also came to consider it as a certain – from the point of view of the Jesuit order totally undesirable – form of self-presentation: „*Inter dramatum auctores insinuant se non raro aemulationes homine religioso penitus indignae, dum unus alterum splendore apparatus vincere et apud externos spectatores sibi uni inanem plausum vindicare indefesse allaborat.*“ In all such cases, it was the – no doubt unpopular – task of an experienced school prefect to take uncompromising measures.

As implied by the introduction of Stessl's letter and confirmed by our knowledge of the Jesuit school regulations, none of the criticised offences or measures to remove them was novel or surprising.

The issue of selecting a suitable subject is addressed in *Ratio studiorum*¹⁷ and its relevant paragraphs¹⁸ are referred to in several letters by superior generals. Carol de Noyelle (1615–1686, Superior General 1682–1686) and Thyrso Gonzáles (1624–1705, Superior General 1686–1705) in particular sought to curb the turbulent development of the school theatre. In addition to his admonitions concerning appropriate subjects and the necessity of using the Latin language, a letter by Carol de Noyelle dispatched to provincial superiors in the early spring of 1684¹⁹ recommends the very same regulation mechanisms as Stessl 20 years later. This seems to prove that the Superior General's directions had been followed somewhat vaguely or, at best, inconsistently. The circular letter by de Noyelle is not included in *Farrago* or in *Summarium* and the only extant copy to be found is in the records of the Brno gymnasium.²⁰ This seems to imply that by the mid-1720s when *Farrago* and *Summarium* were composed, de Noyelle's guidelines were replaced by Stessl's letter of 1709.

As the Bohemian province was not the only one to neglect de Noyelle's directions, a number of his requirements were repeated 10 years later by Superior General Thyrso Gonzáles in a letter sent to the Bohemian province on April 16th, 1695.²¹ Excerpts and paraphrases were used by the compiler of the *Summarium* as a sort of introduction

¹⁶ „*aptum duntaxat admirationem et risum in auditore sapiente aut synopseos Lectore excitare.*“

¹⁷ „*Item non est satis, (si) sint rerum indifferentium, non malarum aut honestarum, sed sint omnia pia, religiosa et non solum, quae non nocent moribus, sed quae vehementer prosint et aedificant.*“ Poplatek (1957: 49). The author quotes *Annotationes in ordinem studiorum humaniorum* written by Jacobus Ledesma prior to 1575 for the Roman advisory boards. The standart edition MPSI I. (1965: 373–374) was unfortunately unavailable to me.

¹⁸ *Regulae provincialis*, 58, *Regulae Societatis Jesu 1616*, p. 46, in: *Institutum SI 3* (1893: 17); *Ratio studiorum 1599*, *Regulae Rectoris*, 13–14, in: *MPSI V*. (1986: 373–374).

¹⁹ For an edition of the letter dated on April 17th, 1684, see Poplatek (1957: 84–85, n. 136).

²⁰ The letter for the Bohemian Province, practically identical with the edited version for the Polish Province, was dated in Rome on June 10th, 1684 and promulgated in the province by the Provincial Superior B. Christelius on July 15th of the same year.

²¹ P. Jacobo Willi, visitatori et viceprovinciali, Pragam, 16. Aprilis 1695, *Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu*, shelf num. Boh 5, fol. 206v-207v. The original draft held in the Roman registry of Gonzáles' correspondence has not been consulted for the purposes of this article.

to Stessl's circular letter. *Farrago* cites Gonzáles in the *Memoriale* of the extraordinary visitor to the Bohemian province Jacob Willi (1693–1696) to whom the letter was addressed.²² Superior General Gonzáles directs his attention to the suitability of subjects and discusses restrictions to be imposed on the use of stage devices. The letter also sets the recommended length of a performance to one hour, considers June to be the ideal time for school play productions and emphasizes that the time devoted to preparations should be limited.

The question to be asked is what effect could have a circular letter by the Provincial Superior had where the authority of the Superior General had failed. Theoretically, it should have been equally binding but in practice, it had virtually identical, i.e. almost zero effect where theatre was concerned. Stessl himself reflects on this in the beginning of his second term in the province. His letter of September 1715 betrays his frustration at having failed to curb the length of the performances to sixty minutes, eradicate the practice of holding theatre productions beyond the end of June and make teachers present the entire performance during the dress rehearsals. The blame is in all three instances laid at the door of school prefects whom Stessl accuses of being too lenient. But not even this rebuke and calls to account seem to have resulted in any radical changes: the complaints about fame-craving authors kept cropping up over and over again. Singing, dances and special effects continued to appear in the school performances and the ambitious teachers did not hesitate to dedicate enormous amounts of work, money and physical effort throughout the term to achieve success. All this was considered foolish, useless and even harmful in the eyes of the superiors, to such an extent that Stessl felt compelled to use an exceptionally harsh formulation *inviolabiliter et indiscriminatim ubique locorum serventur sequentia* in his following letter, quoted but undated both in *Farrago* and *Summarium*.

How did the school prefects and teachers react to these forcefully articulated limitations? Did they effectuate any significant changes in the way school plays were staged? To find answers to these questions is far from easy. It can be, however, attempted through a confrontation of Stessl's demands (italicised summaries below) with the information on the actual performance practices drawn from the Klatovy and Clementinum College diaries and from the texts and synopses from Prague's Jesuit gymnasia that have been made available.²³

1. *The duration of a performance must not exceed 60 minutes for Grammar classes and 90 minutes for higher grades.* The new wording in itself implies a concession to the prevalent practice. The actual length of each individual performance can be inferred from the number of lines, typically somewhere between 800 and 1,400 lines²⁴ in the

²² „Pater Noster litteris 16. Aprilis 1695 datis improbat frequentes actiones scenicas Professorum, quae plerumque fiunt sine fructu et cum studiorum, disciplinae scholasticae morumque dispensione et vult accurate observari, quae mandantur vel permittuntur in hoc genere in Ratione Studiorum, in quem finem adfert Regulam 19 Professoris rhetoricae, quae excludit omnem ornatum scenicum. Si tamen ejusmodi actionem scenicam superiores quandoque indulgeant, horae spatium non excedat fiatque ante initium Junii, uti jam ante ordinatum. Vestes autem tunc apud externos, non per nostros Professores, sed per discipulos erunt procurandae. Insuper Superiores non patiantur probationes ad longum tempus protrahi.“ *Summarium, Magistri scholarum, Farrago* 9v–10r.

²³ For lists of productions and plays see Bobková-Valentová (2003: 148–157); Bobková-Valentová (2006b: 179–186); Jacková (2011: 223–253).

²⁴ The texts of plays staged in the first half of the eighteenth century at the New Town College are held in NA, Staré Manipulace collection, shelf num. SM J/20/17/18, box no. 998 and 999.

surviving texts written at the New Town College in the 1730s and 1740s. It is evident that a performance, even with minimum music input, could not have possibly fit into the prescribed limit. Diaries from the Clementinum College give a clear indication that the event – including a speech by the teacher and distribution of premiums – lasted up to three hours.²⁵

2. *Teachers must explain what stage effects are going to be employed when presenting the text of the play to the prefect.* It is difficult to tell whether this rule was observed or not. While there are almost no stage directions in the preserved texts of the plays, the synopses sometimes imply a number of stage effects, especially in allegorical plays. But it can be relatively safely said that some plays were performed with a bare minimum stage devices.²⁶
3. *Students are not allowed to help out in performances organized by other classes although the classes of Poetic and Rhetoric may combine for one joint performance.* Although this could have been the practice at very small schools, no direct evidence has been presented as yet.
4. *Any use of stage devices is strictly prohibited in weekly declamations and academies.* Both diaries seem to bear witness that this restriction was observed, especially where academies of lower classes are concerned. The weekly declamation prepared in turns by one of the two highest classes²⁷ could exceptionally be staged and replace another theatrical production, typically that of the class of Rhetoric.²⁸
5. *No plays may be staged after the end of June.* A comparison of performance dates in the 1690s, when plays were typically staged not only well into July but also in August, with the data available for the 1720s and 1730s leads to a conclusion that the chief portion of the theatrical activity was moved to the second half of May and June. An occasional extension of the season into July, as documented at the Clementinum College in the 1720s, seems rather an exception than a rule.
6. *There should be a several days' interval between the first and the second part of a two-part play.* Staging of two-part plays is little documented. The instalments of *Questio juris et facti*, prepared by the New Town class of Poetics under the guidance of Fr. Czepani in 1736 were played almost three weeks apart, probably on the same dates as monthly declamations (January 20th and February 9th).²⁹

Finally, it must be emphasized is that festive pieces were exempted from the regulations concerning the length and partially also from those concerning stage devices and non-textual elements. This exemption applied not only to productions on the occasion of coronations and canonisations and visits by the ruler, but also to performances held

²⁵ A performance would typically start at 4 o'clock and there is one documented case of a play ending at 7 o'clock (NA, JS, Mss 20 and 21 *passim*).

²⁶ Bobková-Valentová (2006a: 124).

²⁷ The term „weekly declamation” used here is in compliance with the Jesuit school regulations, i.e. denoting the regular Saturday presentation of the students' rhetoric or poetic skills. When used in connection with a theatre performance, the term *declamatio* or *exercitium hebdomalis/e* or *menstruatum* typically refers either to the occasion or to the smaller scale and/or lesser spectacularity of the performance.

²⁸ An undisputable piece of evidence proving the prevalence of this practice is for example the staging of *Prosopopeia animae damnatae* by the class of Rhetoric at the Clementinum College in March 1730.

²⁹ Jacková (2011: 248–249).

by Marian sodalities, most frequently during Eastertide. Rather than being acted by the *sodales*, these plays were staged under the auspices of the Marian congregation but performed by the class of Rhetoric, providing students an opportunity to stage longer and more spectacular pieces. As extant synopses from the Klatovy and Chomutov colleges indicate, these performances were played to honour patrons from among the secular and ecclesiastical nobility and enjoyed their financial support. They could either fully replace the end-of-the-school-year play of the class of Rhetoric or at least significantly diminish its importance.

This concise analysis reveals three distinct approaches to the unpopular restrictive measures. Firstly, that of adoption documented by instances where theatre activities were moved forward to an earlier date in June according to the superiors' requirements. The second approach involved non-acceptance of the required measure, either by seeking an alteration (e.g. an extension of the length of the performance) or simply by ignoring the measure. A typical example of this practice is the nearly customary non-compliance with the requirement for timely dress rehearsals. The third approach involved solutions that sought to circumvent the proposed restrictions. Thus for example Marian sodalities provided cover for representative performances of the Jesuit gymnasia graduates, especially outside of Prague.

Regardless of the fact that the examination of selected Stessl's letters broke no new ground in terms of newly discovered regulations, it still helped to shed light on the ways in which restrictions were enforced, on the time course of this process as well as on the various forms of conflict between the prescribed norms and practice.

Appendix

The editorial principles applied are based on those adopted by the author in her edition of *Consuetudines assistentiae Germaniae* (Prague 2011). Original capitalization is retained in titles and Jesuit order functions and degrees. Minor orthographic variations are adjusted to comply with the version used in the earliest manuscript. The same procedure was adopted in the case of distribution of the graphemes *u* and *v*. The digraph *qv-*, used consistently throughout the MZA manuscript, is replaced with *qu-* used in the later manuscripts. The *-ij* and *-ijs* endings are transcribed as *-ii* and *-iis*. Punctuation is modernized. Citations from other modern editions are not modified to comply with these editorial principles.

1) The circular letter from Father Provincial Jacob Stessl (Brno, 26th July 1709)

Manuscripts: MZA – the fair copy of the circular letter, MZA, E 25, shelf num. 48A, fol. 1r–v and 4r–v

Farrago – Transcript 1 – *Farrago diversarum ordinationum a Praepositis Generalibus et Provincialibus pro Bohemiae provincia factarum*, NA, JS, IIIo-423, modern foliation, fol. 11v–13r

Summarium – Transcript 2, possibly copied from Farrago – *Summarium ordinationum provinciae in titulos ordine alphabeti distributos digestum*, NA, JS, shelf num. IIIo-423, original foliation, fol. 11r–12v and 1v

[MZA fol. 1r]

*Reverende in Christo Pater.

Pax Christi!

Non una epistola Admodum Reverendi Patris Nostri pro paterna, quam de singulis functionibus Societatis gerit, providentia mihi commissum voluit assiduam studii humanioris in provincia incrementum, ad quod sedulo promovendum Superiores locales, in partem solitudinis a me sub anni scholaris initium vocati, operam suam perquam laudabiliter contulerunt. Quemadmodum praeter alias subinde acceptas notitias satis testantur solitae de Professoribus inferiorum scholarum mense Junio consignatae informationes, in quibus permagna cum consolatione lego plurimos eorundem in erudiendis studiose et fructuose discipulis praeclare suo muneri satisfacisse. Aliquos tamen ex pluribus domiciliis cognitos potius excessus, dramatum causa subortos, quam defectus, qui profectum desideratum in studiosis multum sufflaminant, nequeo praeterire et eo fine in memoriam mature revoco, ut anno subsequente infallibile remedium ponatur.*³⁰

[Farrago fol 11r, Summarium] Praeprimis quidem dramata scholarum singularum - aliter res habet de comaeiis publicis totius gymnadis³¹ nomine propositis - adversus expressam totiesque inculcatam ordinationem ultra horam, alicubi plane [Farrago, fol 12r] horas integras, extrahuntur. Probae, labores item manuales studiosorum, opera chartacea, figulina ac similia effingentium³² ipsis insuper nonnunquam scholarum temporibus per septimanas quinas, senas quandoque [MZA, fol. 1v] etiam octonas praemittuntur. In representatione [Summarium, fol. 11v] spectaculorum curiosorum musica proluxa, jovialibus Morionum interlocutionibus, hastiludiis, choreis, minime vero in versu iuxta artem metricam expolito aut elocutione erudita vis potissimum constituitur, ita ut authores dramatum famam potius³³ rudioris vulgi, quam sapientum aestimationem ac juvenum in dexteritate agendi institutionem exinde mercari satagant. Nec argumentum dramatis, neque postmodo³⁴ synopsis in scenas digesta, sed sola in versum jam redacta actio, imo et³⁵ ista aliquando difficillime a directionis impatientibus Praefecti arbitrio subjicitur. In probis generalibus etiam ad ultimum usque ante exhibitionem diem subinde dilatis omittuntur studiose aliqua censurae aut correctioni obnoxia, unde evenit nec paucas, nec leves in exhibitionibus deinde emergere inconvenientias. Deinceps primo argumentum theatrale, postea peculiariter synopsis ac demum ipsam compositionem Praefecto scholarum ad revisionem accuratam tradi, nec minus in proba generali cuncta praevie ostendi oportebit. Abusus hebdomadarias declamationes et ipsas quatuor inferiorum scholarum, ut dicimus, academias proponendi cum musica, aliquot etiam personis comico ornatu indutis multum invalescit et omnino [Summarium, fol. 12r] tollendus erit. In ipsos menses aestivos tum Rhetor, tum Poëta, tum universim Magistri classium grammatices apparatus scenicum ita protelant, ut commode ante exeuntem Junium, qui tamen terminus productionibus praefixus manere debet, in theatro nequeant comparere. Si et Rhetor et Poëta unam [Farrago, fol. 12v] saltem e geminis menstruis suis ante Pascha exhibeant

³⁰ * - * MZA | *deest* Farrago, Summarium

³¹ gymnadis MZA, Farrago | gymnasii Summarium

³² effingentium MZA, Farrago | effinguntur Summarium

³³ famam potius MZA | potius famam Farrago, Summarium

³⁴ postmodo MZA, Farrago | postmodum Summarium

³⁵ et MZA, Farrago | *deest* Summarium

et mox a Paschate successive reliqui sua dramata expediant, percommode sub finem Junii omnium labores [MZA, fol. 4r] theatrales terminabuntur. Argumentum actionis, quod secundum *Rationem studiorum* pium esse convenit,³⁶ persaepe assumitur scholae et capacitati juvenum parum accomodatum, sed ultra congruentiam, verbi gratia de regibus aut facinoribus, grandia quaeque complectentibus, magnificum, in actus integros aut partes praeterea distributum, et ideo aptum duntaxat admirationem et risum in auditore sapiente aut synopseos lectore excitare. Nec commensatur exili quandoque discipulorum numero, ut necesse habeat ex aliena schola actores, cum istorum utrobique prodeuntium in profectu literario jactura, in auxilium vocare. Inter dramatum authores insinuant se non raro aemulationes homine religioso penitus indignae, dum unus alterum splendore [Summarium, fol. 12v] apparatus vincere et apud externos spectatores sibi uni inanem plausum vendicare indefesse allaborat. Atque haec, missis adhuc nonnullis aliis, sicuti partim nostrae modestiae, partim sanctis legibus et moderatorum ordinationibus adversari unusquisque facile cognoscit, ita prom[p]tam illorum emendationem a probatissima aliunde Superiorum vigilantia mihi indubie polliceri ausim, praecipue si Magistri summe sibi proficuum, imo necessariam Praefectorum in methodo docendi, producendi atque etiam se in scientia humanistica ulterius excolendi directionem patienter et obsequenter audierint, Praefecti ex adverso principalem officii sui curam in hujusmodi directione sitam esse et existimaverint, et opere ipso solerter comprobarint.

[Farrago, fol. 13r, Summarium. fol. 1v] *Ad haec jubet Admodum Reverendus Pater Noster Fratres Coadiutores ad majorem promptitudinem comitandi Sacerdotes, in urbem exeuntes adstringi, nec iisdem dissimulari defectus graves [MZA, fol. 4v] pauperitatis in dispertiendis tum rebus, tum pecuniis administrationi suae subjectis, nec non libertatis ac religiosae indecentiae in minus cauta, magisque proluxa cum proximo peculiariter, quidem cum sexu muliebri conversatione.

Demum, ut epistolam istam Reverentia Vestra ad mensam legi et reliqui Provincialium epistolis adscribi jubeat, impense oro ac me ejusdem Sanctissimis Sacrificiis humillime commendo.*³⁷

*Brunae 26. Julii 1709

Reverentia Nostra

P.S. Literae usque ad finem Augusti ab me opportune dirigentur Olomucium.

Servus in Christo

Jacobus Stessl mp.*³⁸

2) Excerpts from other letters by Father Provincial Jacob Stessl concerning theatre performance practices

Manuscripts: Farrago – *Farrago diversarum ordinationum Praepositis Generalibus et Provincialibus pro Bohemiae provincia factarum*, NA, JS, IIIo-423, modern foliation, fol. 13v–14v

³⁶ „13. ...argumentum sacrum sit ac pium, neque quicquam actibus interponatur, quod non latinum sit et decorum...“; *Ratio Studiorum* 1599, *Regulae Rectoris*, 13, in: MPVS V. (1986: 373).

³⁷ * Ad haec jubet... * MZA, Farrago | *Jubet... * Summarium, caput Coadiutores, fol. 1 v.

³⁸ * - * MZA | *deest* Farrago, Summarium

Summarium – Transcript, possibly copied from Farrago – *Summarium ordinationum provinciae in titulos ordine alphabeti distributos digestum*, NA, JS, IIIo-423, original foliation, fol. 13r-v

Jacobus Stessl, Praegae, September 1715

[Farrago, fol. 13v]

3. Necdum impetratur, ut dramata Magistrorum non extendant solidam horam. In probis generalibus non exhibentur omnia, quae deinde in ipso dramate spectanda proponuntur, ultra Junium futilibus quaesitis praetextibus differuntur a nonnullis eadem dramata, quorum inscriptio post tot Superiorum ordinationes etiamnum desideratur. Mag-nae in docendo socordiae incusantur plures per provinciam humaniorum Professores, pars culpae istius merito redundat in negligentiam Praefectorum aut non vigilantium, aut metuentium hujusmodi vecordes Professores debite commonere, vel ad Superiores, quod tamen eorum exigit munus, deferre. ...

Jacobus Stessl, s.l. s.d.

[Farrago, fol. 14r, Summarium fol. 13r]

... Ad haec quaeritur Pater Noster Magistros nostros se in stylo oratorio ac metrico perparum exercere, atque vim omnem ab iis poni in leviculis verborum lusionibus ac saepe in illorum humanisticis seu in triclinio, seu in auditorio propositis exercitationibus vix unam periodum recte elaboratam, vel versum terse concinatum reperiri. Imo quae universalis per provinciam querela est in theatralis exercitiis unum fere quaeri popularem plausum per saltus, prolixos cantus et spectacula curiosa, pro quibus parandis etiam integro quadrante anni a Professore atque discipulis ingenti temporis, pecuniae et valetudinis jactura praeve collaboratur. Ut tam gravi tamque late potenti malo serio occurratur, deinceps inviolabiliter et indiscriminatim ubique locorum serventur sequentia: Nulla imprimis actio seu drama quatuor Professorum inferiorum solidae horae et Rhetoris et Poëtae sesqui-horae spatium, nisi omnium scholarum vel sodalitates nomine alicujus in magna dignitate constituti venerationi ex voluntate [Farrago, fol. 14v, Summarium fol. 13v] Superioris domus deferatur, excedat. Deinde Professor exhibens Praefecto ad revisionem drama simul indicet, quae spectacula aut quodcunque aliud velit recitationibus inserere, quae³⁹ Praefectus omnia rejiciet, quae diuturnum cassationis⁴⁰ et quemcunque similem laborem requirunt. Ex scholis aliis actores non assumantur ad particularis scholae drama, at ubi pauci numerantur discipuli, exhibeant inferiores quatuor Magistri potius solemnus per suos progymnasma, sed Rhetori et Poëtae semel eosdem pro dramate juxta arbitrium commedant.

Ab hebdomadariis declamationibus et academiis universaliter abesse debent comicae personae.⁴¹ Aequae Rhetor et Poëta ac alii adstringantur lege drama non extendendi ultra finem Junii. Improbatur ille saltem abusus, quo ita dividitur drama, ut die gemino quasi continuo totum exhibeatur. Si comoedus eandem materiam in duas divisam cupit actiones, intercedat spatium plurium dierum. ...

³⁹ quae Farrago | et Summarium

⁴⁰ cassationis Farrago | captationis Summarium

⁴¹ comicae personae Farrago | personae comicae Summarium

SOURCES

- MPSI I., 1965. *Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu 92. Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Iesu I*. Ed. Ladislaus Lukács. Romae, Institutum historicum Societatis Iesu.
- MPSI V., 1986. *Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu 129. Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Iesu V*. Ed. Ladislaus Lukács. Romae, Institutum historicum societatis Iesu.
- Ordinationes*, 1635: *Ordinationes Praepositorum Generalium, Communes toti Societati, auctoritate Septimae Congregationis Generalis contractae*. Antverpiae, apud Ioannem Meursium.
- Institutum SI 3*, 1893. *Institutum Societatis Iesu. Tomus 3. Regulae, Ratio studiorum, Ordinationes, Instructiones, Industriae, Exercitia, Directorium*. Florentiae, Typographia A SS. Conceptione.

REFERENCES

- Bobková-Valentová, K., 2003. Jezuitské školské divadlo v pražské klementinské koleji ve 20. letech 18. století. *Pražský sborník historický* 32, 105–168.
- Bobková-Valentová, K., 2006a. *Každodenní život učitele a žáka jezuitského gymnázia*. Praha, Karolinum.
- Bobková-Valentová, K., 2006b. Literární činnost jezuitských gymnaziálních učitelů určená škole (na příkladu uherskohradištského gymnázia ve 30. letech 18. století). *Studia Comeniana et historica* vol. 36, no. 75–76, 179–186.
- Bobková-Valentová, K., 2009. Raro habeantur comoediae vel tragoediae. In: K. Bobková-Valentová, E. Doležalová, E. Chodějovská, Z. Hojda, M. Svatoš (eds.), *Roma – Praga. Praha – Řím. Omaggio a Zdeňka Hledíková* (= Bollettino dell' Istituto storico Ceco di Roma, Supplemento 2008). Praha, Scriptorium, 409–423.
- Flemming, W., 1923. *Geschichte des Jesuitentheaters in den Landen deutscher Zunge*. Berlin, Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte.
- Jacková, M., 2011. *Divadlo jako škola ctivosti a zbožnosti. Jezuitské školské drama v Praze v první polovině 18. století*. Praha, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy.
- Poplatek, J., 1957. *Studia z dziejów jezuickiego teatru szkolnego w Polsce*. Wrocław, Zakład narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

IN THEATRALIBUS EXERCITIIS UNUM FERE QUAERI POPULAREM PLAUSUM TOWARDS THE MECHANISMS OF CURBING THEATRICAL PRACTICES AT JESUIT SCHOOLS IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY

Summary

The article focuses on how restrictive measures were enforced by Jesuit superiors general and provincial superiors on school theatre practice in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Three excerpts from circular letters (1709, 1715 and post-1715) by the provincial superior of the Bohemian Province Jacob Stessl (1658–1723) are analysed and compared and their impact on the theatrical activities at Jesuit schools examined. The author concludes that the enforcement of regulations required a long-term sustained effort and that superiors had to repeat their orders. It is demonstrated that some of the regulations were frequently ignored or circumvented. An edition of the analysed texts is provided in an appendix to the article.

**IN THEATRALIBUS EXERCITIIS UNUM FERÉ
QUAERI POPULAREM PLAUSUM
K MECHANISMU PROSAZOVÁNÍ RESTRIKTIVNÍCH OPATŘENÍ
V PRAXI JEZUITSKÉHO ŠKOLSKÉHO DIVADLA
NA POČÁTKU 18. STOLETÍ**

Shrnutí

Příspěvek je zaměřen na problematiku prosazování restriktivních nařízení jezuitských generálů a provinciálů do praxe školského divadla na počátku 18. století. Věnuje se třem úryvkům z okružních listů (z let 1709, 1715 a po 1715) českého provinciála Jacoba Stessla (1658–1723), porovnává jejich znění a sleduje dopad na divadelní činnost jezuitských škol. Dochází k závěru, že prosazení nařízení bylo vždy poměrně dlouhodobou záležitostí a neobešlo se bez opakování příkazů ze strany představených. Ukázalo se také, že některé předpisy byly opomíjeny nebo různými cestami obcházeny. Přílohu článku tvoří edice rozebíraných textů.