

Staud, Géza

A magyarországi jezsuita iskolai színjátékok forrásai I-II. 1561-1773

Fontes ludorum scenicorum in scholis S. J. Hungariae

Pars prima

(Sources of the Hungarian Jesuit school plays for the theater. 1561-1773. I-II.)

Edited by the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Budapest, 1984-1986., Octavo 504 pp. + 472 pp.

Theatrical performances in schools were preparatory to professional performances on the national scale. Herein lies their importance from the point of view of national culture and society, in addition to their pedagogical and didactic value. The study of this activity was long neglected and only in the second half of the last century did historians of literature begin to study these plays more seriously. Their interest, however, was focused not on the production (acting) of the play, but on its text, the written drama. Furthermore their interest was almost exclusively directed towards the pieces written in the national language, while the majority of texts were in Latin, yet these are as much the product of the culture of their time as those written in the national language. Moreover, the theatrical production represented a much more complex form of art than the written work. This latter was meant to be read, while the former performed, where the acting plays a vital role. It is typical of the historical research concerning these school plays for the theater that in spite of a great deal of individual and partial studies, there does not exist to date a single comprehensive work sufficient to acquaint us with and serve as a guide to the school plays for the theater of all different cultures. The precondition for the compilation of such a universal work is, of course, that each individual nation do its own systematic, evaluative research.

In pre-World War I Hungary there existed, from the middle of the 16th to the middle of the 18th century, rich and well developed activity in the realm of school plays for the theater. What makes this even more significant is the fact that, because of its peculiar political situation, and in contrast with other nations, this was the only form of theater in Hungary. This cultural activity was almost entirely the domain of denominational schools. The Jesuits led the way because they had the most extensive and dense network of schools. In 1773, the year the Society was suppressed, they had 40 middle or higher level institutions in the Hungary of the time.

The study of theatrical performances in schools dates from the second half of the last century. But it was a tentative and individual effort. These partial pieces of research provided valuable fragments of information, but they were insufficient for the reconstruction of the complete history of theater plays in schools. For this a well planned, collective effort was needed. This effort was undertaken a few years ago, in Budapest, by a group of eleven literary historians. They were inspired by the example the Polish historians of school plays, who had started their research quite a bit earlier, and of their planned a four-volume work, the first two have already been published (in 1965 and 1976). The Hungarian undertaking, sponsored by the Academy of Sciences, considered its first and most basic task a general survey of the area and the collection of data, in order to form an initial picture of who played where, when, what and with what results. The researchers have divided the material among themselves since this kind of activity existed not only in Jesuit, but also in Piarist, Franciscan and Protestant schools. This tenacious and perseverant work has resulted in the discovery of some 15,000 theatrical plays performed in schools. The plan is to publish the sources that document these plays in five volumes. The first three volumes will contain the richer Jesuit material, while the fourth and fifth volumes will include the plays of the other Catholic, as well as Protestant schools.

The present volume is the first fruit of this commendable and happy undertaking. Its author is a professional historian of the theater. He has worked in this field for several decades and has collected, with great care; a bibliography of the plays of the Jesuit schools in Hungary and, in 1975, published his

fundamental "Bibliography of the History of the Hungarian Theater" (Bibliographie d'Histoire du Théâtre en Hongrie) in two volumes. He is the initiator of the present research into schooltheater as well as its leading personality. Thus it is no wonder that the largest and most burdensome part of the work, namely the Jesuit material, was assigned to him.

Taking the founding of each college as his starting point, the author lists in chronological order the source texts discovered and collected. In the first volume we find the material of the ten oldest schools, founded between 1561 and 1624, namely: Tyrnavia (Trnava or Nagyszombat) — Claudiopolis (Cluj or Kolozsvár) — Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár) — Magno-Varadinum (Oradea or Nagyvárad) — Sellia (Sal'a nad Vahom or Vágsellye) — Thuroczium (Kláštôr pod Znievom or Znióvárja) — Homonna (Humenné) — Poniumium (Bratislava or Pozsony) — Scepusium (Spišská Kapitula or Szepeskáptalan) — Comaromium (Komárno or Komárom). In the second volume we find 17 more colleges, founded between 1627–1673: Jaurinum (Gyór or Raab) — Cassovia (Košice or Kassa) — Gyöngyösinum (Gyöngyös) — Szatmarinum (Satu Mare or Szatmár) — Quinqueecclesiae (Pécs or Fünfkirchen) — Sopronium (Sopron or Ödenburg) — S. Nicolaus in Liptovia (Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš or Liptószentmiklós) — Ungvarinum (Užhorod or Ungvár) — Szakolcza (Skalica or Skalitz) — Trenchinum (Trenčín or Trencsén) — Neosolium (Banská Bystrica or Besztercebánya) — Schemnitzium (Banská Štiavnica or Selmecbánya) — Rosnavia (Rošnava or Rozsnyó) — Patakinum (Sárospatak) — Eperiesinum (Prešov or Eperjes) — Leutschovia (Levoča or Lőcse) — Solna (Žilina or Zsolna). Nagyszombat being the oldest and in any case the most important college, the source material concerning the history of its theater takes up the largest part of the first volume, some 155 pages. The theatre of the Pozsony school receives 83 pages, that of Kolozsvár 59 pages and the smallest that of Gyulafehérvár, altogether only 4 pages.

On pages 39–40 the author gives the organizational framework of his source material, that is to say the method according to which he will present his information. Thus every chapter begins with a brief history of the college. He lists the titles of the used sources, their location and designation. Then follow the data of each production: the year it was produced, the title and language unless it was Latin. This is followed by the complete text of the source. Where the printed program has survived, this too is mentioned. Finally even a bibliography of each play is given. The form and scientific apparatus of his publication live up to the highest standards.

He also provides abundant information about the historical sources of each play performed in Jesuit schools (pp. 22–38). In this matter fortune seems to have been on his side: he had exceptionally extensive and rich source material at his disposal. The best known of these sources are the *Litterae Annuae* (Yearly Letters) and the *Historia Domus* (History of the House). The history and source value of the *Litterae Annuae* are well known and need no further explanation, but the history of the *Historia Domus* does require a few words of clarification. In the author's view, as in the case of the *Litterae Annuae* its origin is to be sought in the method of the Jesuit Roman headquarters' correspondence with their provinces (commercium epistolare) and its regulating rules, the *Formula Scribendi*. In fact, from the second half of the 16th century onwards there exist regulations as to how the histories of the colleges ought to be written and sent to Rome. But these regulations relate only to the origin of the college: by whom, when and under what circumstances the college was founded. Nothing is said about a systematic continuation of these histories. The fact that no trace is found of such continuous and detailed house histories in the central Jesuit headquarters in Rome—indeed in the provinces not pertaining to the German Assistancy (Spanish, French, Italian) they are actually missing—is clear proof that they are of local origin and that their existence is due to orders within the German Assistancy. A still more definitive answer, which disposes of all doubts, can be found in Duhr's work (*Geschichte der Jesuiten* II/2 359). On 28 February 1603, Ferdinand Alber, the Visitor of the German Assistancy gave orders that in all the houses of the Assistancy a detailed history of the house be written in historical and not panegyric style, avoiding all the semblance and traces of eulogic praise, which so frequently characterize the *Litterae Annuae*. These house histories are checked and approved by the Provincial who, after approving them returned to the houses to be kept there and continued year after year. In this directive there is no suggestion

that a copy must be sent to Rome together with the *Litterae Annuae*. Alszeghy Zs. in his *History of Hungarian Literature* . . . III (1935), lists thirty-nine Hungarian *Historia Domus*. The majority of them are conserved in the archives of the Library of the University of Budapest. Their value as historical source material is far higher than that of the *Litterae Annuae*. These latter were written for the edification of the members of the Society and were read aloud at mealtimes in the dining room of the houses. The writer, consequently, omitted all details he considered non-edifying or not to the point. He also omitted the names of individuals. Not so in the *Historia Domus*. There are no such limitations here; on the contrary, the writer must aim for completeness and besides mention of the 'light' he must also inform prosperity of the 'shadows'.

The existence of such rich and highly valuable source material should be enough to inspire and impel the author to finish the remaining volumes as soon as possible. Because all those who admire the Hungarian cultural values of the past desire and hope that this bold, high-level and important undertaking will be crowned with total success.

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**Paysans et nations d'Europe centrale et balkanique.
La réinvention du paysan par l'état en Europe centrale
et balkanique aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles**

Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 1985, pp. 286

Within the scope of the No. 589 research project of the C.N.R.S. an international conference was held from 9 to 12 december 1981, in Paris, with the title "Identités culturelles dans les sociétés paysannes d'Europe centrale et balkanique" on the problems of cultural identity of "peasant" societies in South-East Europe.

The official language was French and English. Five topics were discussed: 1. The use for ideological and political purposes of linguistics, dialectology, ethnology, folklore, historiography and rural sociology. 2. Conceptual categories for analysing peasantry: the case of national census. 3. Roles and relations between oral peasant traditions, popular and populist literature and literacy tradition. 4. The peasant and state's cultural and educative policy: national language development — state's folkloristic politics — state's education and the peasant. 5. The image of peasantry according to state versus peasantry according to religious institutions.

There were 30 participants from 8 countries; 17 lectures were delivered, all of them followed by vivid discussions. Most of the lectures were available for the participants in multiplied copies, some of them in English e. g. Frederick B. Chary: Differences in "Rural" and "Urban" Bulgaria; Alke Kyrakidou-Nestoros: The Idea of the "Folk" in Modern Greek Folklore; Vilmos Voigt: Processing of Ethnic Symbols in Folklore. Since 1981 the lectures of several participants have been issued in other publications. The importance of this Proceedings is that it is the first time when the reader can get a fairly complete view on the topics of the conference. This book is unique even among the especially rich French sociological and ethnological publications. It includes Rumanian, Greek, Turkish, Gypsy, Yugoslav, Bulgarian, Polish, German and, of course, Hungarian topics. The major tone and the main method is still unmistakably "made in France".

The volume does not contain all the material of the conference. The English articles were translated into French. Papers are divided into three main parts: *folklorismes—langues, ideologies, identités nationales—paysans et politiques*. The French organizers have written a short introduction to each part where they refer to the achievements of the discussions. The book contains 18 articles. Some of them were written or rewritten in the meantime. Two lectures delivered in Paris were not published: *Les aspects inter-ethniques de la cohabitation entre des groupes allemandes et d'autres ethnies en l'Europe Sud-Est* by Ingeborg Weber-