

## TWO 17-TH CENTURY JESUIT PLAYS IN LJUBLJANA INSPIRED BY ENGLISH LITERATURE

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### Abstract

Jesuit teachers, whose members came to Ljubljana in the late 16th century, placed great emphasis on the production and staging of the school drama. Despite the domination of religious themes, the range of its subject matter was wide and varied. The article discusses two plays which derived their subject matter from English literature, namely from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and Holinshed's *Historie of Britain*. The texts themselves are lost, but in the case of the Holinshed-inspired work (a version of the King Lear story), a detailed synopsis has been preserved. The article examines the synopsis and the extant manuscript reports about the plays, the original English sources, and the treatment of the two works in contemporary scholarly treatises.

### Introduction

The article begins by outlining the characteristics of Jesuit school drama, focusing on the genre as written and performed by the Ljubljana Jesuits, who arrived and founded their school in the late 16th century. The discussion concentrates on two plays which derived their subject matter from English literature, namely from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and Holinshed's *Historie of Britain*. The plays themselves are lost, but in the case of the Holinshed-inspired work, a detailed synopsis has been preserved. The article examines the synopsis and the extant manuscript reports about the plays, the original English sources, and the treatment of the two works in contemporary scholarly treatises.

### 1. The Characteristics of Jesuit Drama

The Jesuit Order (approved by the Pope in 1540, suppressed in 1773 and reestablished in 1814) played an important role in Slovene secondary and tertiary education. The first Jesuits arrived in Ljubljana in 1597, starting the lowest two *gymnasium* classes in the May of the same year (HACL<sup>1</sup> 7). Apart from the Latin *gymnasium*, they also established higher studies: a full academic three-year course in phi-

<sup>1</sup> *Historia annua Collegii Societatis Jesu Labacensis*.

osophy (officially begun in 1704, but only made complete in 1705), as well as courses in theology. The latter, however, was never organised as a full academic programme, being limited to courses in moral theology and canon law (Dolar, *Jesuitenkolleg* 52–4; Ciperle 174). The Ljubljana Jesuit College never attained the status of a university and no academic titles appear to have been conferred (Ciperle 174).

An important element in Jesuit teaching was the institution of the school theatre. Declaiming a (usually Latin) text contributed to the students' command of the language and gave them practice in public speaking, while the spectacular performances at the same time promoted the popularity and influence of the Order itself (Škerlj, "Jezuitsko gledališče" 153; Ciperle 170). The importance ascribed to the theatre is evident from the fact that the Ljubljana Jesuits, having started school in May 1597, staged the first performance with their students – *Dialogus de s. [Joanne] Damasceno* – as early as the autumn of the same year (HACL 7). Later, the students performed several times a year: at the conclusion and – even more frequently – at the beginning of the school year (in October or November), on major church festivals and the memorial days of the Order and its saints, for carnival, and, increasingly, at dynastic and patriotic celebrations, e.g. in honour of victories won over the Turks in the second half of the 17th century (Škerlj, "Jezuitsko gledališče" 147). The major productions engaged gymnasium students from all six classes (148) and, for the more demanding roles, even students of philosophy or theology, or those who already had a degree in the Liberal Arts (194). At the same time, a teacher could also stage a small-scale performance with his own form alone (148). Modest performances of this kind would be produced in the classroom, whereas more ambitious projects were organised in the College courtyard; in St James' church, which formed part of the College complex; sometimes even in the College cemetery; and – in summer – in the municipal park Tivoli, in front of the Jesuits' summer villa "Pod turnom". At least since 1607, however, the most important location was an indoor "auditorium", intended both for internal ceremonial occasions and relatively public celebrations. By 1618, a new auditorium had been built, and in 1658 the Order received a new gymnasium building, including a large hall with a sophisticated modern stage allowing five changes of scenery (Škerlj, *Italijansko gledališče* 22–3). The performances produced in the more public places appealed to a wider audience – not only the invited guests of honour, the students and their parents, but also the townspeople and countrymen (Škerlj, "Jezuitsko gledališče" 148).

The plays were written chiefly by teachers of the higher gymnasium classes. These would also direct the performances, coach the actors, and arrange both the technical details of the staging and the publication of theatre programmes, the so-called *perioches* or *synopses* (184–5). Most plays were written in Latin, as stipulated in the Jesuit "Order of Studies" (a detailed set of rules for their schools). Gradually, however, the vernacular – German, in the case of Ljubljana – began to intrude as well, spreading from short passages to whole plays. The oldest record of a Jesuit play in Ljubljana completely performed in German dates back to 1635 (Škerlj, *Italijansko gledališče* 31).

The texts of the plays produced in Ljubljana are lost, with the exception of two works by the famous Baroque Jesuit playwright Nicolaus Avancinus [Avancini], who

spent a year in Ljubljana teaching the highest gymnasium class (*Rhetorica*). Nevertheless, the titles preserved in diaries, annals and the extant synopses afford some insight into the subject matter, while the synopses also reveal the dramatic structure of the works (Škerlj, “Jezuitsko gledališče” 150). A synopsis usually contains the “argument” of the play followed by a scene-by-scene summary, the list of actors, and often the list of the best students (194). The argument presents the story as found in the author’s sources, whereas the more detailed summary gives the contents of the actual play. The latter usually begins at a point where the plot is already beginning to thicken, or even nearing the catastrophe (175).

As a genre, Jesuit school drama originated in the Renaissance drama, which had adopted a number of classical features regarding both form and subject matter. The formal influence of classical drama resulted, for example, in a more concentrated action with a limited number of major characters; the frequent observation of the unity of place and time; division into acts and scenes; the use of prologues, epilogues and choruses; and a logical sequencing of the scenes (151, 185, 191). Classical subject matter, on the other hand, was soon supplemented in Jesuit drama with Biblical, legendary, and other religious themes; the use of allegory, drawn from both Christian and pagan mythology, was extensive as well (151–2, 178–9). Despite its emphasis on religious themes, the Jesuit drama performed in Ljubljana (as well as in other countries) reveals not only Biblical stories, legends about saints and martyrs, moralising and didactic plays, hortatory plays, and allegories, but also plots taken from ecclesiastical, secular, and – later – from modern history; patriotic plays; ancient mythology; and comedy (185–9). It must be noted, however, that antiquity, history etc. were used relatively late in the Ljubljana production; moreover, there was very little realistic or humanly appealing subject matter. The Jesuit drama in Slovenia had not evolved directly from the Renaissance genre but from older Jesuit production elsewhere, so that it was dominated by religious and moralising themes from the very beginning (189, 195; *Italijansko gledališče* 25).

Beginning to flourish in the second half of the 16th century, Jesuit drama had a predominantly Baroque character from the start (Škerlj, “Jezuitsko gledališče” 152). This Baroque component escalated over time, resulting in more and more elaborate stagecraft and increasing emphasis on instrumental music, singing, and dancing (149; *Italijansko gledališče* 108). The mass scenes and choruses at the same time fulfilled a pedagogical function, since they ensured the participation of a great number of students (*Italijansko gledališče* 99; “Jezuitsko gledališče” 153). (All these characteristics are evident also in the second of the plays discussed in this paper, the late 17th century version of *King Lear*.) According to Škerlj, the true value of the Ljubljana Jesuit production lay not in the aesthetic value of the texts, but in the fact that the audience came into contact with contemporary European theatre forms, including the formal structure of plays, diverse motifs, and staging (“Jezuitsko gledališče” 195–6).

## 2.1. A Play Based on the *History* of the Venerable Bede

One of the Ljubljana Jesuit plays, performed on the feast of Corpus Christi in 1603, is reported by manuscript sources to have been inspired by the work of the

Venerable Bede (673–735 A.D.). The full identification, however, has not been established up to now by the treatises dealing with Jesuit drama. Since the manuscripts refer to the play by different titles, it may have sometimes even escaped notice that they describe one and the same work. Dolinar, for example, citing as his sources the *Collectanea*<sup>2</sup> (288), HACL (40), and ALA<sup>3</sup> (133,50), heads the list of school performances for 1603 with the entry: “De geminis fratribus Imma et Junna; ein Theaterstück von Beda Venerabilis, aufgeführt an Fronleichnam [Feast of Corpus Christi]” (*Jesuitenkolleg* 198). At the end of the list, he adds as a separate entry: “Nach HACL wurde an Fronleichnam ‘Anglo in vinculis libero tempore sacrificii pro se facti’ gespielt.” He does not appear to connect the two, for in other instances when a single play is referred to by different titles in the sources, he makes an explicit note of it, as in the case of another performance in the same year (1603): “Tragoedia de Constantini persecutione in S. Imagines; die zum Schluss des Schuljahres aufgeführte Tragödie heisst in der ‘Historia annua’: ‘Copronymus Iconomachus’” (*ibid.*).

Škerlj, on the other hand, correctly identifies the two titles as referring to the same work. Noting that manuscript sources often cite the titles of plays with minor or even considerable variations (“Jezuitsko gledališče” 157), he proceeds to illustrate this practice with examples from the year 1603, contrasting (among others) the references made to the abovementioned play in the *Collectanea* and HACL. First he quotes the *Collectanea* (what follows is my own translation from the Latin): “On the feast of Corpus Christi, a play was produced whose theme had been taken from the Venerable Bede, about the twin brothers Imma and Junna (?): one brother caused many Masses to be said for the other, who had been taken prisoner, believing him to be dead, and the other was freed from his bonds as often as the rite was performed; finally, he was permitted to go free by the tyrant, who was astounded by the novelty of this thing.”<sup>4</sup> HACL, on the other hand, refers to the staging of a “dialogue” (a common synonym for “play” in these sources, cf. Škerlj, *ibid.*) “about an Englishman in bonds, set free when Mass was said for him” (40).<sup>5</sup>

Škerlj thus establishes a link between the two titles; another valuable contribution is the quote adduced from the *Collectanea*, since it clearly states that the play was inspired (but not written) by Bede. The relevant place in Bede’s work, however, is not

<sup>2</sup> *Collectanea Ex Annis Praeteritis Spectantia Ad Gymnasii Labacensis Historiam. Vindicata ab interitu Anno M.DC.LI [1651]*. The document forms an appendix to the *Diarium Praefecturae Scholarum In Archiducali Collegio Societatis Jesu Labaci Inchoatum Anno M.DC.LI*. Bound in a single volume, they are preserved in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (under No I/31r).

<sup>3</sup> *Austria, Litterae annuae* (annual reports for the Province of Austria). Annual reports, based on the HACL chronicle, were sent by the Rector of the College to the Provincial of the Jesuit Order in Vienna. Collected in a report on the entire province, they were forwarded by the latter to the General of the Order in Rome (Dolinar, *Letopis* 10).

<sup>4</sup> “In festo Corporis Christi productum Drama, cuius thema ex Venerab. Beda desumptum de geminis fratribus Imma et Junna (?), quo[rum] alter pro altero captivo, quem mortuum existimabat multa Missae sacrificia curabat, et alter toties vinculis solvebatur quoties sacrum fiebat, qui tandem a Tyranno rei novitatem obstupe[sc]ente liber abire permissus est” (qtd. on 157 n. 20). The question mark is Škerlj’s; the emendations in square brackets are mine, supplied after viewing the original manuscript.

<sup>5</sup> “In solemnitate Corporis Christi emblematis platea et carminibus plurimis exornata et ‘De Anglo in vinculis libero tempore sacrificii pro se facti’ dialogus fuit exhibitus.” In the published Slovene translation: “Na praznik Rešnjega Telesa so ulico krasili emblemni in številni napisi v verzih. Prikazan je bil dialog ‘O Angležu v vezeh, osvobojenem v času zanj darovane maše’.”

examined. Relying on the report in the *Collectanea*, Škerlj repeatedly expresses uncertainty about the brothers' names, noting that they are not clearly legible in the manuscript (*Italijansko gledališče* 24; "Jezuitsko gledališče" 157, 186). In regard to the content, he is likewise limited to speculation – thematically, the play would have belonged to the category of piously didactic or moralising plays:

Številne so drame v skupini, ki bi jo lahko imenovali pobožno poučno ali moralizirajočo. Tudi teh je okoli deset. Že prav na začetku svoje ljubljanske dramatike, 1603, so jezuiti uprizorili igro, vzeto iz spisov starega "častiljivega" Bede: "... de *Geminis fratribus Imma et Junna*[""] (lastni imeni nista zanesljivo čitljivi v "Letopisu"<sup>6</sup>), ki je slavila bratovsko ljubezen in vrednost maše, ki celo tirana premaga. (*Italijansko gledališče* 24; cf. also "Jezuitsko gledališče" 186)

Škerlj hypothesises that this would have been a legend extolling the power of the divine service and of brotherly love (ibid.; "Jezuitsko gledališče" 157 n. 20). To illustrate the popularity of the latter subject in Jesuit drama, he gives a quote from Weilen's work on the Vienna theatre – "Muster brüderlicher Liebe geben die Söhne des Königs Scilus (1587), ... oder das von Anton Kaschutnik [Košutnik] verfasste Schauspiel von Naromoimus und Neambadorus (1723)" –, speculating that the 1603 Ljubljana play might have been related to the one from 1587, or that either might have served as a source for Košutnik ("Jezuitsko gledališče" 186 n. 68). At least the former of these suggestions, however, is unlikely, since the 1603 play was beyond doubt modelled primarily on Bede.

An examination of Bede's works reveals that Chapter 4,22 of his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* bears the caption: "Ut vincula cujusdam captivi, cum pro eo missae cantarentur, soluta sint" (PL Migne 95,205C–208A), or: "A prisoner's chains fall off when Masses are sung on his behalf". The resemblance to the title of the 1603 play as given in HACL is striking. Moreover, the protagonist of Bede's narrative is a young man named Imma, with a brother called Tunna. The similarity to the names from the *Collectanea* establishes: (1) that this chapter is the origin of the 1603 Jesuit play briefly summarised in the *Collectanea*, and (2) that the play about the twin brothers is identical with the "dialogue" noted in HACL. Chapter 4,22 runs as follows:

*A prisoner's chains fall off when Masses are sung on his behalf* [A.D. 679]

In the above battle in which King Elfwin was killed,<sup>7</sup> a remarkable thing occurred, which I should not fail to mention, since it will further the salvation of many. During the battle, a young thegn named Imma belonging to Elfwin's forces was struck down, and lay apparently dead all that day and the following night among the bodies of the slain. At length he recovered consciousness, sat up, and bandaged his wounds as well as

<sup>6</sup> As evidenced by the above quotations from manuscripts, this reference is to the *Collectanea*, not to HACL, although it is the latter (*Historia annua*) that is usually referred to as "Letopis".

<sup>7</sup> A battle near the river Trent, fought between King Egfrid of Northumbria and King Ethelred of Mercia. Elfwin was Egfrid's brother.

he could; then when he had rested awhile, he got up and tried to find some friends to help him. While so engaged he was found and captured by men of the enemy forces, and taken before their leader, who was a nobleman of King Ethelred. When asked his identity, he was afraid to reveal that he was a soldier, and answered that he was a poor married peasant who had come with others of his kind to bring provisions to the army. The nobleman ordered him to be given shelter and treatment for his wounds; and when he began to recover, he ordered him to be chained at night to prevent his escape. But this proved impossible, for no sooner had those who chained him left than the fetters fell off.

Now this young man had a brother named Tunna, who was a priest and abbot of a monastery that is still called Tunnacaestir after him. And when he heard that his brother had been killed in battle, he went to see whether he could find his body. Finding another very similar to him, he concluded that it was his; so he took the body back to his monastery, gave it honourable burial, and offered many Masses for the repose of his brother's soul. And it was on account of these Masses that, as I have said, when anyone tried to chain him, he was immediately set free. The nobleman, whose prisoner he was, was astonished, and asked why he could not be bound, and whether he possessed any written charms to protect him from binding like those mentioned in fables. He replied: "I know nothing about such things. But I have a brother who is a priest in my own province, and I am sure that, thinking me killed, he is saying many Masses for me; and were I now in another life, my soul would be freed from its pains by his prayers." After he had been held some time in the nobleman's custody, those who observed the young man closely realized from his appearance, clothing, and speech that he was no common peasant as he said, but of noble birth. The nobleman then sent for him privately, and pressed him to disclose his identity, promising that he would do him no harm if he told him the truth about who he was. On this assurance, the young man revealed that he was a king's thegn. At this the nobleman said: "I realized by all your answers that you were no peasant. You deserve to die, because all my brothers and kinsmen were killed in that battle: but I will not put you to death, because I have given you my promise."

As soon as Imma recovered, the nobleman sold him to a Frisian in London, who took him away, but found that he was unable to fetter him. When one kind of fetter after another had been put on him and none could hold him, his buyer gave him permission to ransom himself if he could. It was at the hour of Terce, the customary time of saying Mass, that his chains were most frequently loosed. Promising either to return or to send his ransom money, Imma went to King Hlothere of Kent, who was nephew to the above Queen Etheldreda,<sup>8</sup> because he had once been

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<sup>8</sup> The wife of King Egfrid.

one of the queen's thegns. From him he ob[t]ained the money for his ransom, and sent it to his master as he had promised.

When Imma returned to his own country, he visited his brother and gave him a full account of all his troubles and how he had been helped in them; and from him he learned that his chains had been loosed at the times when Mass was being said on his behalf. He also realized how he had received comfort and strength from heaven in many other dangers through the prayers of his brother and his offering of Christ's saving Sacrifice. He related his experiences to many people, who were thereby inspired to greater faith and devotion and gave themselves to prayer, almsgiving, and offering the Holy Sacrifice to God for the deliverance of their friends who had departed this life; for they understood how this saving Sacrifice availed for the eternal redemption of soul and body.

Among those who told me this story were some who had actually heard it from the mouth of the man to whom these things had happened, so that I have no hesitation about including it in this history of the Church as it was related. (241–3)

The extent to which the original story was preserved in the adaptation for drama is, of course, a matter of speculation, since neither text nor synopsis is preserved. The wording in the *Collectanea*, referring to a "tyrant", suggests that the plot may have been simplified, so that Imma does not undergo two captivities but is released by his original captor. This would create a more tightly-knit story with greater dramatic impact, since the repetitions of the same occurrence would probably become tedious or even laughable. What is certain, however, is that it was this particular passage from Bede that served at least as a point of departure and chief inspiration for the Jesuit play.

## 2.2. A Version of the King Lear Story

Another, much later play undoubtedly based on an English source bears (in the German synopsis) the title *Tugend-Cron Der Kindlichen Liebe. In Cordilla einer Tochter Layri Königs in Britannien* ("The Virtue-Crown of Filial Love. In Cordilla, a Daughter of Layrus, the King of Britain"). Its Latin title is cited by Dolinar, who notes for the year 1698: "Virtus coronata pia in patrem filiae in Cordylla Regis Britannorum fillia [*sic*]; anlässlich der Prämienverteilung. Vgl. ALA 156,62" (*Jesuitenkolleg* 208). This work is one of less than 30 plays by the Ljubljana Jesuits whose synopses have been preserved (cf. Škerlj, *Italijansko gledališče* 482; Steska 110). Its synopsis, as well as most of the others, is included in Janez Gregor Thalnitscher's [Dolničar's] *Miscellanea* (as No 19 in Vol. 3), accessible in the library of the Ljubljana Seminary.<sup>9</sup>

The synopsis, a twelve-page quarto, has a German cover page, which offers not only the title but also information about the occasion for the performance (the con-

<sup>9</sup> I owe particular thanks to Dr Marijan Smolik for having the entire text scanned for me.

cluding distribution of school prizes in 1698) and about the printer ("Laybach / in der Mayrischen Buchdruckerey 1698"). What follows is a one-page argument (*Innhalt*) in German, which summarises a version of the whole King Lear/Layrus story, and a six-page scene-by-scene summary of the play itself, also in German. The last four pages contain a Latin list of roles and actors. The latter reveals that roles were given to gymnasium students from all six classes, from the lowest (*Parva*) to the highest (*Rhetorica*); in addition, they were assigned to some students of moral theology and Bachelors, as well as Masters, of the Liberal Arts and Philosophy. The cast comprises both the nobility and commoners, including sons of well-known families, such as the Counts Blaggay [Blagaj] or the Barons Valvasor.

The argument, i.e. the story understood to form the background of the events, runs as follows (the translation is mine):

Cordilla, daughter of King Layrus from Britain, [was left] without her portion of inheritance which was the share of both her sisters, for the reason that an ambiguous utterance of hers ("although not now, yet in the course of time she would give preference over her filial love to another love, namely that for her husband") was misunderstood by Layrus. Yet it was she who brought her beauty and rich natural gifts to a French prince in marriage, to the greater good fortune of Layrus than Cordilla. Later, when this father was robbed of his kingdom by his daughters' sons, who had been induced thereto by their craving for the crown and by the long life of Layrus, he found shield and shelter with Cordilla until everything that had been lost was restored to him. Time goes by, taking Layrus away. Then Cordilla is raised to the British throne, to the greatest vexation of Merganes and Conedagus, her cousins [Vötteren], who overwhelmed Cordilla with war, dragging her from the throne into prison and thence to the flames. When the innocent had already mounted the bier, the villainous judges were driven by the death-shade of Layrus to despairing horror and thus into the depths of the sea. Cordilla, on the other hand, is again proclaimed Queen under the virtue-crown of filial love. Polydor. 1.1.

The play itself, however, begins at the stage where Layrus is already banished from his kingdom, lamenting his misfortune while attended by the faithful Spiridius. In Act 2, Scene 4, he re-enters Britain with Cordilla and is proclaimed King by the faithful, but in Scene 10 he is killed in battle, in a rebellion caused by the false news that the British treasures have been sent away to France (he does not simply "pass on", as the argument seems to suggest). Spiridius, however, puts on Layrus' armour and fights until victory has been attained; the villains of the piece, Merganes and Conedagus, are spared at the word of Cordilla but banished from the kingdom, and Cordilla is crowned Queen by Spiridius. The third and last act brings the renewed hostilities of Merganes and Conedagus and the remainder of Cordilla's story as outlined in the argument.

The plot of the play is interesting from a historical point of view. As noted by Škerlj, the author does not appear to have utilised Shakespeare's *King Lear* (*Italijansko*



*gledališče* 99–100);<sup>10</sup> the plot which has Cordilla at least temporarily established as Queen, as well as the names of the evil relations, Merganes and Conedagus, would point to the story as related in one of Shakespeare's sources, Raphael Holinshed's *Historie of Britain* (1577, 2nd edition 1587). Shakespeare's changes, which include "most of the character of Kent, all of the Fool, the madness of Lear, the murder of Cordelia" (Houghton 18) and the whole sub-plot featuring Gloucester, Edmund and Edgar, inspired by Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* from 1590 (16), are ignored. Moreover, the Jesuit text adopts the name "Cordilla", which stems from the older tradition ("Cordeilla" in Geoffrey of Monmouth's 1135 *History of the Kings of Britain* and in Holinshed, "Cordella" in an older English play on the same topic), not Shakespeare's form "Cordelia", which is taken from Book 2, Canto 10 of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (*ibid.*).

The parallels with Holinshed are striking, except that the Jesuit author rewards Cordilla, giving her a happy ending. Even Holinshed's account of Lear's natural death after regaining his kingdom tallies with the argument as given in the Jesuit synopsis, though not with the events actually shown in the play. I quote some relevant extracts from Holinshed's Book 2:

Nevertheless it fortuned that one of the princes of Gallia (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood, and good conditions of the said Cordeilla, desired to have hir in mariage [...] Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of deniall to receive anie thing by way of dower with Cordeilla, tooke hir to wife, onlie moved thereto (I saie) for respect of hir person and amiable vertues. [...] After that Leir was fallen into age, the two dukes that had married his two eldest daughters, thinking it long yer the government of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and reft from him the governance of the land [...] In the end, such was the unkindnesse, or (as I maie saie) the unnaturalnesse which he found in his two daughters, [...] that [...] he fled the land, & sailed into Gallia, there to seeke some comfort of his yongest daughter Cordeilla, whom before time he hated. [...] Leir and his daughter Cordeilla with hir husband tooke the sea, and arriving in Britaine, fought with their enimies, and discomfited them in battell, in the which Maglanus and Henninus [the elder sisters' husbands] were slaine: and then was Leir restored to his kingdome, which he ruled after this by the space of two yeeres, and then died, fortie yeeres after he first began to reigne. [...] Cordeilla after hir fathers deceasse ruled the land of Britaine right worthilie during the space of five yeeres, in which meane time hir husband died, and then about the end of those five yeeres, hir two nephewes Margan and Cunedag, sonnes to hir aforesaid sisters, disdaining to be under the government of a woman, levied warre against

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<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, Shakespeare does not appear to have been utilised by the Vienna Jesuits either: the year 1726 saw the performance of *Hamlet*, but in the version of Saxo Grammaticus (Škerlj, *Italijansko gledališče* 98 n. 17).

hir, and destroyed a great part of the land, and finallie tooke hir prisoner, and laid hir fast in ward, wherewith she tooke suche grieffe, being a woman of a manlie courage, and despairing to recover libertie, there she slue hirselfe, when she had reigned (as before is mentioned) the tearme of five yeeres. (qtd. in Houghton, 240–2)

The two villains of the Jesuit play (named Morgan and Cundah in Spenser) would thus appear to be Cordilla's nephews, not cousins (*Vettern*); a further argument in favour of this correction is that it is Layrus' "daughters' sons" that are said to have robbed him of his kingdom in the first place, and these would be most logically identified with Merganes and Conedagus, mentioned a few lines later in the synopsis. A possible explanation is the one suggested by Škerlj: namely, that the word *Vetter* may refer to any distant relation, not necessarily a cousin (*Italijansko gledališče* 99 n. 20).

The play abounds with Baroque elements as outlined in the "Introduction" of this paper. Structurally, it consists of a Prologue, Act 1 with 10 scenes, Chorus 1, Act 2 with 10 scenes, Chorus 2, Act 3 with 6 scenes, and Epilogue. The Prologue and Epilogue are allegories portraying the triumph of Filial Love; likewise the two Choruses, which allude to the dramatic action. Chorus 1 thus reflects the anticipated reunion of Layrus and Cordilla, showing Pallas (Athene), "a poetic figure of Filial Love", leading, "after a shipwreck, the *Art-Geist* of Layrus clad in the form of Ulysses into the pleasure gardens of Alcinous". Chorus 2, on the other hand, reflects the restoration of Cordilla as the legitimate successor of Layrus to the throne, although Layrus himself is dead: Salmoneus, son of the wind god Aeolus, is making thunder and lightning to spite the honour of the gods, but is felled by Adrastea, goddess of revenge and daughter of Jove, so that "Jove remains Jove". Since the actors playing the allegorical and mythological figures from the Prologue, Epilogue and the two Choruses (e.g. Envy, Perfidy, Ulysses, Salmoneus, Filial Piety, etc.) are listed in the *Chorus Musicorum* section, these parts would have been set to music.

The main plot (i.e. the conflict for the throne) is interwoven with magic and some low comedy provided by the Merganes and Conedagus scenes. There are other stage attractions typical of the period: Škerlj emphasises the use of music even in the dramatic action itself (i.e. not only in the prologue, epilogue, and between acts), since Merganes and Conedagus come in Act 1, Scene 5, to comfort the wounded Thyrsanes with *Nacht-Music [sic]*, a serenade (*Italijansko gledališče* 99). Moreover, the list of actors reveals several sets of dancers: 18 for the "Dance of the Iniquities", 14 for the "Dance of Fishermen", and a separate group as "Court Dancers". The mass scenes would have been visually impressive as well, since the cast includes several groups of minor characters, such as courtiers, the women of Britain (*Gynaecium* or *Frauen-Zimmer*), soldiers, satraps (!), etc. The numerous insertions of lighter elements and thrills, of course, dilute the suspense and contribute to the lengthiness of the play. Another weakness – noted by Škerlj – is the repetitive nature of the plot, since Act 3 essentially repeats the theme of Cordilla's loyalty, struggle and final reward (98). All in all, the performance was probably impressive as a spectacle, but lacked dramatic genius.

## Conclusion

The impact of English literature on the plays written and produced by the Ljubljana Jesuit teachers was, understandably, rather slight. Nevertheless, some traces do appear, as has been shown in this paper. By way of conclusion, it is worthwhile to mention that the period from 1597 to 1704, investigated by Dolinar, also contains works dealing with events from relatively contemporary British history. These include two plays presenting the story of Mary Stuart (*Pietas Mariae Stuarthae* from 1655 and *Maria Stuart Scotiae Regina* from 1662) and a declamation celebrating England's victory over "heresy" (*Anglia de haeresi Victrix, triumphatrix*) from January 23, 1686. The latter must have been inspired by the succession of James II, who favoured Catholics, in February 1685, but it may also have touched on the death-bed conversion of his predecessor, Charles II. No synopsis of these works has been discovered so far.

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