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**FROM SANCTULUS TO SACER  
SUGGESTED TYPOLOGY OF JESUIT SCHOOL  
PLAYS FEATURING ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUK IN THE  
BOHEMIAN PROVINCE\***

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**ABSTRACT**

The study analyses a thematic corpus of plays on St. John of Nepomuk, more specifically dramatic texts written in the Bohemian province in the first half of the 18th century. Based on the treatment of the biographical narrative it divides these dramatic works into four types according to the portrayal of the saint: John as a little boy, as a young man, as a priest and martyr and lastly as a saint.

While the plays have the same subject matter, which they loosely adapt and develop, they differ in terms of content and language, depending on the age and level of the actors. As a didactic part of the curriculum of Jesuit colleges, these texts would improve the rhetorical capability of the students but also support their moral and religious instruction.

**Key words:** St. John of Nepomuk; Jesuit drama; school production; first half of the 18th century; Bohemian province; Baroque legendistics

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Research concerning Jesuit school plays in the Bohemian lands has not reached its zenith, despite more than a century of tradition and a recent renewal of interest.<sup>1</sup> Even the research of primary sources is not at its end, so that it can be presumed there will be more discoveries of synopses, individual plays and convolutes that will radically change our view of this type of theatrical production. At any rate, even with the current state of knowledge it is safe to declare that one of the thematic bodies common to many Jesuit colleges is – not surprisingly, given the contemporary character the topic had in the day – drama concerning an important Czech Baroque saint and patron of the Bohemian

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Jesuit drama, see Port (1968), Scherl (2010), Bobková-Valentová, Jacková (2010), Jacková (2011). In the European context this phenomenon has been treated most recently in “Central and Eastern European Countries”, section “Bohemia” in the synthesis by Bloemendal, Norland (2013: 639–642).

lands, St. John of Nepomuk.<sup>2</sup> This study will particularly examine all preserved complete texts, while taking into account an additional corpus of synopses of Jesuit school plays written in colleges within the Bohemian province in the first half of the 18th century. Thanks to the popularity of the topic the number of plays that have survived to this day provides a relevant specimen for examination with essential informative value. The main goal of this article is to establish a typology of the plays based on comparative analysis of the treatment of the story and its protagonist, who would serve as a role model to the students of Jesuit colleges.

Jesuit educational system, as postulated in the set of rules *Ratio studiorum* (1599),<sup>3</sup> had a prominent position within the region in the time after the Battle of Bílá Hora and influenced the operation of other schools of the same type in Bohemia. The learning model was quite unified both in lower and higher education; Jesuit colleges in the Bohemian lands were organized into six classes with a high number of pupils. Theatrical productions were an indispensable part of the curriculum, be it regular exercises (*exercitationes*) and declamations (*declamationes*) or more official performances – originally rehearsed as the school celebrations of the end of the school year, later as presentations of the college's individual classes that were held from May to the beginning of July.<sup>4</sup> We will focus specifically on this last subtype of Jesuit school drama, mostly written by the class teachers.<sup>5</sup>

Most plays concerned with John of Nepomuk were produced in 1729, i.e. the year of the Saint's canonization; nevertheless, texts were also produced both in the decade before this date and in the years after it.<sup>6</sup> The oldest record of a stage production of a Jesuit school play on John of Nepomuk dates already from 1689 and comes from Prague's Clementinum college.<sup>7</sup> The text of the play has, however, not been preserved. The first preserved text of a synopsis (a periocha in the form of printed programme, which contains a brief summary of the play) was produced in the same college in 1701.<sup>8</sup>

## Textual Corpus

This paper focuses specifically on a collection of complete manuscripts of Nepomucene plays, written and produced in 1720s and 1730s in colleges in Nové Město in Prague and in Uherské Hradiště, a town in South Moravia. The manuscripts are stored

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<sup>2</sup> For the historical personality of John of Pomuk, the rise of his cult and his beatification (1721) and canonization (1729) see Polc (1993), Ryněš (1972), Stejskal (1921–1922), Vlnas (2013).

<sup>3</sup> See its modern edition in Lukács (1986: 357–454).

<sup>4</sup> More on Jesuit school system, theatrical elements in class and the typology of the school dramatic productions in more detail in Bobková-Valentová (2006: 86–103), also concerning theatre incorporated into the curriculum in Jacková (2011: 31–58).

<sup>5</sup> Their names can be found in the catalogues of persons, exceptionally even included in the text. Sometimes, thanks to the comparison of the scribe's hand with his manuscript of the Fourth Vow, the text of the play can be identified as an autograph.

<sup>6</sup> For a complete inventory of the Nepomucene plays, see Kraus (1918). In comparison with foreign inventories of the repertory of the Jesuit theatre it is obvious that the Nepomucene topic was far more typical for the Czech territory, judging by the higher number of preserved dramatic works. Three bilingual Latin-German synopses (1708 Eichstätt, 1710 Straubing, 1719 Amberg) are cited in Szarota (1979: 1275–1298 texts of synopses, 1776–1782 commentaries on plays).

<sup>7</sup> See Kraus (1918: 71), who refers to Menčík's (1895: 180) inventory.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. below Bernardus Pannagl's drama *Divus Joannes Nepomucenus invictus Christi Martyr*.

in Czech National Archives (more specifically in the Old Manipulation and Jesuitica funds).<sup>9</sup> The preservation of a similar body of dramatic texts in their entirety is unique within the European context, which makes information acquired by their analysis all the more exceptional.<sup>10</sup> An entire text is usually necessary for detailed analysis; unfortunately, from the vast body of Jesuit school dramas, only very few plays have survived to this day in their complete form. For comparative reasons, we shall enlarge the corpus with the synopses of ten additional Nepomucene plays,<sup>11</sup> which will help to illustrate the suggested typology. Still, the form of a synopsis (a brief summary of the plot, individual scenes and non-narrative parts of the play) only allows us to reconstruct the general way in which the topic was treated, or at best the play's structure – while not giving many clues about its specifics.

For clarity's sake, a chronological list of discussed plays and synopses follows below, stating the title of the work, its author, the class he taught,<sup>12</sup> place and year of production and the form in which the play was preserved (i.e. full manuscript and/or a printed synopsis).

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus invictus Christi Martyr, in silentio secreti confessionis et in spe publicae canonizationis gloriosus.*

Bernardus Pannagl, rhetoric, Prague – Clementinum, 1701, synopsis.

*Vox clamantis Mariae amantis echo.*

Joannes Tiller, lowest grammar, Prague – Nové Město, 1724, text.

*Gratia indeptae rea gratiae.*

Joannes Tiller, middle grammar, Prague – Clementinum, 1725, synopsis.

*Unio sexaginta elegantiarum.*

Joannes Pelletius, rhetoric, Prague – Nové Město, 1725, synopsis.

*Nobilissima sapientis lectio Vanitas vanitatum.*

Joannes Tiller, syntax, Prague – Clementinum, 1726, synopsis.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus patiendo Martyr gloriosissimus.*

Joannes Winkler, middle grammar, Uherské Hradiště, 1729, text.

*Angelus ad aras Divus Joannes Nepomucenus.*

Antonius Machek, rudimentistae, Prague – Nové Město, 1729, text and synopsis.

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<sup>9</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, 999; NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-446, 447, box 175, 176.

<sup>10</sup> A complete critical edition of hitherto unpublished Jesuit school plays on St. John of Nepomuk, including introductions, mirror translation into Czech, critical apparatus, commentaries, annotations and indexes has been prepared by an interdisciplinary board of scholars (Kateřina Bobková-Valentová, Alena Bočková, Magdaléna Jacková, Martin Bažil, Eva Pauerová, Jan Zdichynec, Zdeněk Žalud). The monography, entitled *Saint John of Nepomuk on Jesuit School Stage*, is the first of a series of publications entitled *Theatrum Neolatinum: Latinské divadlo v českých zemích* [Latin Theatre in the Bohemian Lands], which will introduce commonly inaccessible texts of Baroque dramatic works to both scholars and wider audience. More on this editorial project in Bočková, Ždichynec (2010).

<sup>11</sup> These synopses (together with others) are preserved in the convolute NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39.

<sup>12</sup> The terminology of individual classes in Jesuit colleges largely differs also in the titles of the plays. For clarity's sake, we use the terms lowest grammar (which was commonly divided into *rudimentistae* and *principistae*), middle grammar (commonly only called grammar), highest grammar (also known as *syntax*), poetic and rhetoric. For the division of classes in Jesuit colleges, see Bobková-Valentová (2006: 55–57).

*Sacratior Gratiarum trias.*

Carolus Walhoffen, middle grammar, Opole, 1729, synopsis.

*Pietas spectata per ignes et aquas.*

Joannes Braun, highest grammar, Opole, 1729, synopsis.

*Supremi honores sacerrimis exuviis Divi Joannis Nepomuceni peracti.*

Josephus Werner, poetic and rhetoric, Opole, 1729, synopsis.

*Gloriosus Divi Joannis Nepomuceni pro sigillo poenitentiae agon.*

Joannes Winkler, highest grammar, Klatovy, 1730, synopsis.

*Pharos famae naufragantis Divus Joannes Nepomucenus.*

Antonius Machek, lowest grammar, Prague – Nové Město, 1730, synopsis.

*Vindex duliae Divus Joannes Nepomucenus.*

Antonius Machek, syntax, Prague – Nové Město, 1731, text.

*Mysterium a seculis tacitum, lingua incorrupta sacramentalis merces silentii.*

Antonius Jenisch, whole school, Uherské Hradiště, 1732, text and synopsis.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus, tenera in aetate virtutis et scientiae illustris idea.*

Joannes Rirenschopff, middle grammar, Prague – Nové Město, 1734, text and synopsis.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus laurea Martyr gloriose coronatus.*

Antonius Sindt, rhetoric, Prague – Malá Strana, 1748, synopsis.

This article shall focus on the manner in which the Saint's life story was treated in individual plays. We will analyse the motives and historical events the teachers/playwrights chose from the Nepomucene tradition, and infer to what degree they employed their own fantasy in the creation of their story. We will specify the degree of alteration the Saint's biography was subjected to in the teachers' attempts to make the play more suitable for the age of their pupils, and how this influenced the language of their dramatic works.

While the storylines are mostly products of the authors' fantasy, the main source of inspiration for most of them remains Bohuslaus Balbinus' legend, *Vita Beati Joannis Nepomuceni*. This accomplished work of Nepomucene legendistics appeared – among others – in the Bollandist Antwerp collection *Acta Sanctorum* of 1680,<sup>13</sup> which served as a basis for the canonization process and ultimately established the official text of the legend. In 1682, Balbinus reprinted the text in *Bohemia Sancta*, the fourth tome of his *Miscellanea* – this time without editorial adjustments and Bollandist notes.<sup>14</sup>

Apart from these two sources, authors also cite the canonization documents or rather their summaries (*Summaria*) – Balbinus' legend formed part of those as well, although their basis was a complete description of the beatification and canonization process.<sup>15</sup> In most plays from the chosen corpus, however, the Nepomucene legend is not treated as a historically accurate biography. More often, the playwrights would choose a single anecdote or period in the Saint's life (his childhood, studies, or martyrdom and death), which they subjected to their own dramatic treatment. Some of the teachers quote their

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<sup>13</sup> Balbinus (1680: 667–680).

<sup>14</sup> Balbinus (1682: 94–113).

<sup>15</sup> *Acta utriusque processus*.

source in the *argumentum* to their play,<sup>16</sup> where they also specify the topic and provide a brief summary of the narrative. Interestingly, some of them also emphasise their own creative input (as in the formulation *Ex vita S. Joannis Nepomuceni, argumento accessit Poësis*).<sup>17</sup>

### Type One: John as a Little Boy

This category comprises plays written for the youngest college pupils (lowest or middle grammar classes). John is portrayed as a little boy – a peer of the children who would act in the play, and his perfect behaviour is an example for them to follow. The authors either draw from some episodes from the Nepomucene legends (baby John's recovery from a serious illness after the intervention of Virgin Mary, his ardent service as altar boy in the Cistercian monastery in Zelená Hora and so forth) – but some prefer to construe the plot on the basis on their own fictional storyline. The plays are set in surroundings the children would find familiar (school, home, church, forest, grove) and the plot is – with alternate success – adapted to their vision of the world (including competition among boys, small tussles, envy of the elder's affection but also friendship and support). Apart from the young protagonists, adults (spiritual guides, teachers) also appear in the play; sometimes, John's father makes an appearance on stage – a feature exclusive to this category of plays.

An example of a play that shows St. John of Nepomuk as a little boy is *Angelus ad aras Divus Joannes Nepomucenus* (Angel at the Altar, St. John of Nepomuk).<sup>18</sup> It was written for the lowest college grade (*rudimentistae*) in 1729 by their teacher Antonius Machek. The manuscript is an autograph of the teacher,<sup>19</sup> which was far from common in similar dramatic works. Rather remarkably, the text contains recitatives, arias and choruses; fully texted musical passages appear very rarely in this type of texts. Together with the play itself, a printed synopsis in Latin and Czech has been preserved, containing brief summaries of individual scenes.<sup>20</sup>

In the prefatory *argumentum*, the author refers to Bohuslaus Balbinus. However – as was the custom at the time – he does not quote Balbinus accurately and in the second part adapts the plot to his own needs. From the whole Nepomucene legend, he chooses a motive from the Saint's childhood: as soon as John learned to speak, he would study the acolyte rules to be able to assist during Mass.<sup>21</sup> This subject is transformed by Machek

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<sup>16</sup> *Argumentum* is a type of a prefatory summary, in which the author described the plot and occasionally also quoted the source of his chosen subject matter. Before the teachers could start writing the play itself, they had to have the *argumentum* approved by their superiors – see Bobková-Valentová (2006: 98).

<sup>17</sup> See *Gratia indeptae rea gratiae*, *argumentum*.

<sup>18</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 330r–337v. More on this play in Bobková, Bočková (2004: 955–974), Jacková (2011: 199–203).

<sup>19</sup> The handwriting of the manuscript of the play is identical to the one of author's handwritten Fourth Vow (*Professi quatuor votorum*. ARSI, sign. Germ. 45, f. 304r, 305r).

<sup>20</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 329r–329v.

<sup>21</sup> *Angelus ad aras*, *argumentum*: *Joannes ut primum fari per aetatem potuit, formulam Sacrificio divino ministrandi exacte perdidit. Eaque in usum deducta, ex oppidulo patrio ad Matris Divinae aedem sub Auroram quotidie excurrens, sedulam angelico ministerio addixit operam. Ex P. Balbino, l. IV., Miscel.*

into a story of a devoted boy called John (frequently referred to as *parvulus*), who burns with desire to be an altar boy. His main adversaries are older boys (*aemuli*), depicted as lazy, spiteful, nagging and greedy. They only serve at Mass because they receive small gifts afterwards, and have no intention to be robbed of these by little John. They ridicule him as *sanctulus* and incessantly plot against him. Unable to agree among themselves, they end up fighting in the climax scene in the vestry. When caught, they show appropriate penitence and when John puts in a word, they all begin to serve at Mass together. With the help of additional minor characters (lazy classmates, unsuccessful beggars, idle altar boys and so forth) the author then produces more anecdotes, which serve to highlight John's good qualities, such as diligence, compassion, generosity, pity etc.

The storyline is not very complicated, just a sequence of loosely connected episodes. John moves on to overcome various obstacles and impediments and to reach his dream through his zeal. The story is set in Nepomuk and its surroundings; the individual segments take place in the street, at school, at home, in church and so on. There are no allegoric characters, no long monologues or declamation; the storyline is dynamic and full of action, enhanced by lively dialogue. Short rejoinders resemble realistic dialogue; fast alternation of characters gives the sensation of overlapping. Other language devices are also adapted to the age of the spectators: the text abounds with diminutives<sup>22</sup> or repetition of typical collocations and phrases – by use of which the students would unconsciously learn suitable phrases for Latin translation.<sup>23</sup> Apart from practicing the phrases already discussed in class, the teacher would introduce new ones to prepare the ground for further language study. Simplicity and comprehensibility observed the age of the boys for whom the play was intended. The key intention of this simple play was to introduce John of Nepomuk as an exemplary altar boy and to highlight his angelic qualities. The boys would play their own peers, and would therefore get a clear example, moral instruction and certainly also amusement.

Another play drawing from John's childhood is *Vox clamantis Mariae amantis echo* (The Voice of the Caller as an Echo of the Loving Mary),<sup>24</sup> created as soon as 1724 by Joannes Tiller for the students of the *infima grammatices classis* of the college of Nové Město in Prague. The text does not contain an *argumentum* or a reference to a particular source. It draws from Balbinus' legend, however, in the motive of John being born to infertile parents after their prayers to the Virgin,<sup>25</sup> and also in its strong emphasis on reverence to Virgin Mary. The text is atypical in that it does not contain an *argumentum*, prologue, epilogue or chorus, although the play probably contained them original-

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Cf. Balbinus (1682: 95–96): *Puer Joannes, ut primum fari per aetatem potuit, formulam Sacrificio divino ministrandi exacte perdidit, eaque in usum deducta, nullo postea impellente, quotidie cum prima Aurora ex oppido ad Cisterciense coenobium decurrere, omnibus ex ordine, quotquot Sacra facerent, Sacerdotibus ad aram servire consuetudinem sibi fecit [...].*

<sup>22</sup> *Servulus, parvulus, praemiola, chartula, latrunculus, misellus.*

<sup>23</sup> E.g. collocations comprising parts of the body: *pedem inferre, pedem tenere, manu tenere, manum inferre, fesso pede, curta aure, ignato pedi, tardato pede etc.*

<sup>24</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 299v–308v.

<sup>25</sup> *Vox clamantis*, v. 50–55: *Adhuc enim / Nihilum fuisti, jam suo tibi adfuit / Virgo favore, dum piam ferens opem, / Sterili parentum te dedit nasci thoro / Et singulari gratia natum fovet / Fovitque semper.* Cf. Balbinus (1680: 669): *Parentes oppidani et mediae fortunae fuerunt, pietate magis quam genere et opibus illustres. Pietatis hoc indicium est, quod aetate jam senecta, cum prole omni carerent, precibus et votis fuis ad Dei Matrem [...] impetrarint filium.*

ly. Remarkable scenic notes scribbled on the margins of the text inform us about stage action and movement of actors, e.g. *Venit Rosilus* (Enter Rosilus) or *Eripit pignus* (Takes the gift). These are far from common in this genre. At the end of the manuscript below the text of the play is a crossed-out signature *M. Joannes Tiller*.

The main plot partly resembles the play we have discussed earlier. John gets a medallion with the likeness of Virgin Mary from his protector *Mariophilus* (admirer of Mary). John's peer *Rosilus* is envious of both the gift and *Mariophilus'* affection. *Rosilus*, supported by other boys, tries to think of a way to get the medallion for himself. After he steals it from John, they are confronted by a band of robbers in the woods and lose it. One of the robbers, however, regrets the deed and hangs the medallion on the branch of a tree, where it is subsequently discovered by John. The culprit confesses and repents, which allows the play to end in conciliation and universal celebration of Virgin Mary. Here as well, John shows unshakeable faith and ardent religiosity, and his deep affection for Virgin Mary is emphasized. In opposition to the specific setting of the other play, this one is set in an indefinable landscape, where nature idyll blends with worship of Mary; the author follows the traditional symbolic pattern when he mentions various flowers to underscore, with their beauty, the beauty of the Virgin.<sup>26</sup> The natural motive is also implied in the speaking names of the boys – *Rosilus*, *Narcissulus*, *Florilus* (derived from “rose”, “narcissus”, “flora”), or characters such as *Genius florum*, *Faunullus* and so forth.

In comparison to the previous work, *Vox clamantis* is shorter and more modest in terms of characters and action. Dynamic scenes alternate with lyrical sequences, where nature descriptions prevail; the language of these poetic sections is metaphoric and figurative.<sup>27</sup> To express their love for the Virgin, the characters use the language of the love poems of the time;<sup>28</sup> their relationship to Mary is often referred to as *gratia* (usually in the sense of “grace, kindness, affection”, but also “thanks”, “gracefulness” and “forgiveness”).<sup>29</sup> Deep devotion to the Virgin shown by not only John but also his adversaries was intended to set the example to the little protagonists. The foes in *Angelus ad aras* are driven mainly by greed and hatred towards John. In *Vox clamantis*, other boys envy John the affection he receives; only at the end do they understand that envy needs to be replaced by shared affection towards the Virgin, which leads to more Marian celebrations. That is also the main educative goal Tiller intended for his play.

<sup>26</sup> *Vox clamantis*, v. 154–161: *Semper suo / Candore pulchram Virginem casto albicans / Narcissus ornet. Cedat pulchrum decus tulipae venustas / Tuqve, praecelsa nitens submissione viola, Virgineis caput / Substerne plantis! Caeteri, quotqvot tulit / Faecunda tellus flosculos, quotqvot feret, / Florete et almae Numinis Matri inclytos / Cedite in honores!*

<sup>27</sup> *Vox clamantis*, v. 143–149: *Floridos inter sinus / Florens perenna! Spiret hic sibi leves / Favonius auras et vagus frondem increpet / Teneroqve lusu gramini illudat, fragrans / Florum venustas distrahat oculos, odor / Nares amaene mulceat, amusas manus / Flos purpurascens basiet et ornet caput.*

<sup>28</sup> *Vox clamantis*, v. 12–15: *Mellita svaves basia infigunt tuis / Charites labellis, purpurascens rosae / Rubea venustas, lilii candens nitor / Pulchre decoras pulchrius pingunt genas; v. 163–168: Dulcis Maria! Flosculos quot fert humus, / Tot ex amanti corcula effundat sinu! / Caelo quot ardent stellulae, Virgo, Tui / Tot sint amoris linqvulae! Qvotqvot mare / Vastum recenset guttulas, tot sint, Tuo / Praestet decori gemmulas!*

<sup>29</sup> More on the concept of *gratia* in Bobková-Valentová, Bočková, Bažil (2011: 252, 257). The notion of *gratia* at the same time alludes to the original meaning of the name John (“God is gracious” or “Gracious gift of God”) – see more in Bobková-Valentová, Bočková, Jacková (in print: Introduction to *Vox clamantis*). Another allusion to John's name is the very title *Vox clamantis*, in which the Baroque symbolism aligns John of Nepomuk with John the Baptist.

A plot of *Gratia indeptae rea gratiae* (Grace Indebted to Grace Received)<sup>30</sup> also draws from John's childhood. It was written by Joannes Tiller one year after *Vox clamantis* (1725) for the middle grammar class (*media classis grammatices*) of the Clementinum college in Prague. The text has only been preserved in the form of a synopsis; according to the *argumentum* it draws from Balbinus' remark that John recovered from a serious illness after his parents dedicated him to Virgin Mary who was revered in the Nepomuk area.<sup>31</sup> This incident triggers the plot of the play: John, grateful to his kind Protectress, takes a pilgrimage to the altar of the Virgin to dedicate his life to her and present her with his likeness to express his thanks. Similarly to his previous play, Tiller uses the name *Mariophilus* and a related flower name *Florinus*. The boys wish to prepare a smooth way for John's pilgrimage, free of obstacles and sprinkled with flowers; however, he considers the easy path errant and takes the thorny way right into the forest, where he is attacked by a robbers' band. John seeks asylum in a cave, where he decorates Mary's portrait with flowers and hangs his likeness, asking for protection. *Florinus* finds John's portrait in the cave, considers him dead and writes an epitaph for him. The plot gets more complicated when John finds his own grave. At the end, after many peripetias, all meet at the Virgin's altar and extol Mary together.

There are obvious parallels in the plots of both Tiller's plays, be it the nature descriptions, the motive of the portrait, the robbers or the character of *Mariophilus*. In the second play, however, John's adversaries are not his peers: he has to overcome the difficulties of a journey,<sup>32</sup> which can foreshadow his future hardships that will eventually lead to a martyred death. The character of John's father is introduced, grieving over the loss of his son but at the same time hoping that the Virgin will protect him. The chief common motive of the plays is the concept of *gratia*, which symbolises – given the etymology of his name – John himself,<sup>33</sup> but also the grace of God that cured him, and also the Virgin, Mother of Grace (*Mater Gratiarum*). In the non-narrative parts, a personified character of *Gratia* appears on stage. In this play, too, students should imitate John's deep devotion to Mary, his piety, bravery and courage to take the complicated path – and, last but not least, the friendship between the boys that set out to find John. Unfortunately, the specifics of the stage production cannot be derived from the text of the synopsis.

The common features of the plays in the first category are a simple fictional plot, where narrative passages surpass the lyrical descriptions and there are next to none allegorical characters. Language and stylistics are to some extent adapted for the students of lower grades. The protagonists are close to the pupils both in age and behaviour, which makes it easy to identify with them and learn from the story, thus fulfilling the primary didactic purpose of these plays.

<sup>30</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 58.

<sup>31</sup> *Gratia indeptae rea gratiae*, argumentum: *In primo aetatis vere deflorescentem invaletudine Joannem pii parentes Beatissimae Virgini ad Nepomucum beneficiis florentissimae devoverunt. Votum secundavit eventus, ex quo Joannes Sospitatri Clementissimae gratum se stitit peregrinus. Ex vita S. Joan. Nep. argumento accessit poësis.* Cf. Balbinus (1680: 669): *Nam cum puellus Joannes in gravissimum incidisset morbum, voto ad ejusdem Divae Virginis simulacrum a parentibus edito et promissis in aetatem reliquam pro filio obsequiis, protinus surrexit incolumis.*

<sup>32</sup> The motive of *bivium*, in which the comfortable path leads to abomination and the thorny path to salvation, is typical for numerous plays. Cf. Jacková (2011: 132–138).

<sup>33</sup> See note 29.



## Type Two: John as a Young Man

The plays in this category build continuously on the preceding group. Their expected audience are slightly older boys (middle and highest grammar classes). Here, John appears as a student or a young teacher – still quite close in age to the actors. If the authors draw from the legendist tradition in the creation of their story, they almost always choose John's experience as a humanities student in Žatec. The drama takes place in a generic school (Jesuit college); a new element introduced in this category is the nobleman's court. Among the actors there would be students from higher social strata, for whom the Jesuit college was a step in preparation for their future career in politics or clergy. Together with the realistic characters of John, his classmates and noblemen, allegorical characters are also present in these plays.

An example of the above-mentioned type is a play by Joannes Rirenschopff *Divus Joannes Nepomucenus, tenera in aetate virtutis et scientiae illustris idea* (St. John of Nepomuk, Since his Youth Famous as an Example of Virtue and Scholarship),<sup>34</sup> written in 1734 for the students of middle grammar (*media classis grammatica*). The text does not contain an *argumentum*, prologue, epilogue or chorus. However, the contents of these parts of the drama have been preserved in the form of a printed synopsis in Latin.<sup>35</sup> The synopsis also contains a table of characters (*clavis personarum*), which, while incomplete, supplies Latin translation or character description to the names of the main characters (mostly Greek by origin), thus enhancing the spectators' understanding. The dramatist does not quote his source but the play could have been inspired by the mention of John's studies in Balbinus' legend, according to which the Saint showed immense diligence, talent and loquacity.<sup>36</sup>

In this play, John of Nepomuk appears already as a student at the verge of adolescence. The plot displays allegorical elements (speaking names, an imaginary group of John's enemies, complex imagery of Hell), which overlap with realistic action of characters including John's classmates. Nevertheless, reflexive passages, prayers and monologues (including inner monologues) continuously prevail over narration; the performance is not based on dramatic action. Two sets of characters interact in the play: *Theolater* (referred to in the synopsis as *Religio*, Religious Reverence) and his aids *Eusebius* (who represents *Pietas*, Piety), *Philotheus* (*Amor Divinus*, Divine Love) and *Palladius* (*Genius Scientiae*, Science Personified) appear as defenders of piety, morality and education, which lead young people to prudent life. Their adversaries are *Philocosmus* (*Amor Mundi*, Worldly Love) and his courtiers *Eleutherius* (*Libertas*, Liberty), *Cosmogenes* and *Vanophilus* (who are not mentioned in the *clavis personarum* but their names show they are lovers of worldliness and vanity), who tempt young people to be idle and enjoy the pleasures of life.<sup>37</sup> With

<sup>34</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 86r–93v.

<sup>35</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 82r–82v.

<sup>36</sup> Balbinus (1682: 669): *Erat ei, cum dulci et rosea quadam ac pudibunda pietate, acre, vividum et igneum quoddam ingenium; cui ut parentes crescendi darent copiam, Zatecium ad celebres ea tempestate Latinitatis scholas miserunt. Hic prima Latinae grammaticae elementa ac reliquas annis sequentibus humaniores disciplinas egregio profectu et rara ingenii commendatione percepit.*

<sup>37</sup> Jacková (2011: 106–107) classifies similar dramatic works as constructed on the *psychomachia* principle. See also Szarota (1979: 45–47), who uses the term *Dramen mit Konfliktstrukturen*.

manifold decoys they try to win John, who unwaveringly resists and returns to school. Here, the play climaxes in a competition where John triumphs over his classmates in both virtue and erudition and becomes a credit to the whole school.

John of Nepomuk is introduced here as a role model for youth, an example to be followed in every respect, as the second part of the play's title suggests (*idea imitationi studiosae juventuti propositus* – the example of virtue and scholarship, presented to youth to be imitated ardently). The main emphasis is not only on John's fervent faith, a common trait of all Nepomucene drama, but here specifically on discipline and diligence in one's studies and on the value of education as such. Much more than in other comparable plays, the text employs mythological imagery and similes or images from antiquity.<sup>38</sup> It would almost seem that the teacher meant to use the play as a supporting didactic devise for the revision of subjects discussed in class, and also to revive both common and less frequent motives taken from ancient mythology.<sup>39</sup>

In Tiller's third play, written in 1726, an older character of the Saint is introduced – by now he has become a spiritual teacher and advisor. The text was written for the *syntaxis* (highest grammar class) of Prague Clementinum college and bears the title *Nobilissima sapientis lectio Vanitas vanitatum* (The Most Noble Lesson from a Wise Person: Vanity of Vanities).<sup>40</sup> The text has only survived in the form of a synopsis. Judging by the *argumentum*, the plot draws from an anecdote mentioned in the canonization protocols, but there is no evident direct connection to a particular part of the Nepomucene legend.

The allegorical characters of Vanity (*Vanitas*), Virtue (*Virtus*) and Youth (*Adolescentia*) appear in the prologue and chorus but they have no bearing on the dramatic action. At the court of noble youth Adolphus, his advisor *Philocosmus* shows him merry life in pleasure and mundane vanity. John, as a dextrous teacher of holy life (*vitae sanctoris magister dexterrimus*), tries to find a way to save Adolphus. When Adolphus and his courtiers go hunting, they meet John, who shows them the vanity of their deeds on the example of a beautiful apple ridden with worms (among others). He persuades the young nobleman to prefer heavenly immortality to the shortcuts of vanity. Step by step, he unmasks the volatility of life and worldly fame and manages to convert Adolphus to accept the rules of holy life. John thus vanquishes *Philocosmus*, makes him leave Adolphus' court and stays with the young man as his counsellor.

Tiller's play is again mostly set in the natural environment of a forest, which is seen as an opposition to Adolphus' court. Once more, the author employs names with floral associations (*Florillus*, *Narcissus*) and allegorical characters such as *Pomona* etc. Similarly to the above-discussed play by Rirenschopf, the chief villain is a lover of the world and tempter *Philocosmus*; this time, however, he is not fighting for John's soul but battles

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. e.g. the series of allusions to wealth and luxury (Croesus, Midas, the treasures of Argolia, abundance on the Erythrean shore, the palace of Nero, the gardens of Lucullus) or examples of faithful friendships from ancient mythology and literature (Achates and Aeneas, Pylades and Orestes, Nisus and Euryalus); also the imagery of the underworld and infernal torture, and so forth.

<sup>39</sup> See *Divus Joannes Nepomucenus*, v. 53–57: *Inimica votis nubila recedunt procul, / Propinat ubi Fortuna Craeseas opes / Cornuque fundit divite Argolicas suis / Profusa gazas, ubi quid aut Arabs legit / Erythraeum ad aeqvor, in sinum large influit*; v. 128–130: *Aeneam Achates citius et Orestem prius / Pylades relinquet, Nysus Euryalum prius, / Qvam vos amatos deseram comites mihi*.

<sup>40</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 65.

with John over the soul of young Adolphus. In this story, John is no longer a peer of the students who would perform the play, but rather an ideal image of their teacher,<sup>41</sup> who shows them the way, protects them from the traps of sinful life and leads them to proper piety and faith. On the other hand, the actors could relate to the young and noble Adolphus, who is able to overcome the temptations of *Philocosmus* and find his way back to rightful life under John's guidance.

The second category of Nepomucene school plays presents more thoughtfully wrought and more serious storylines; both examples are based on the principle of *psychomachia*. In comparison to the first type, more non-narrative elements are employed (monologues, prayers, inner thoughts); the plays contain an allegorical level and their symbolism becomes more complicated. The main goal of the teachers was to introduce to their students the clash of contradictory sets of values, to stress the vanity and transience of the world in contrast to spiritual life and to show the right way, marked by the effort to be virtuous and by desire for wisdom and education.

### Type Three: John as Priest and Martyr

The third category of plays follows the legendist frame of the Nepomucene story most closely and puts most stress on the firm character of the protagonist as the principal cause of his glorious martyred death. The historical topic enables the author to build a dramatic plot full of twists with a rapid sequence of events that would be compelling for the audience. The plays are composed for the students of middle and highest grammar but surprisingly seem simpler in terms of structure and narrative than the preceding category. The setting is determined by the topic – the action takes place at the royal court for the most part, and apart from the protagonists (John, King Wenceslas and Queen Johanna) an important role is attributed to the courtiers and their intrigue. This feature is once again aimed at the noblemen among the students and is supposed to show the traps typical for the life of the aristocratic families.

A dramatic work that treats the life of John of Nepomuk as a chronological sequence of events without employing complicated allegories is *Divus Joannes Nepomucenus patiendo Martyr gloriosissimus* (St. John of Nepomuk, through his Suffering the Most Glorious Martyr).<sup>42</sup> Composed in 1729 by Joannes Winkler for middle grammar students in Uherské Hradiště, it alludes directly to Balbinus' legend in the *argumentum*.<sup>43</sup> John of

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<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the teachers of lower college grades were at the verge of adolescence themselves and could still be looking for the right way in life (in the grammar classes, the teachers would be graduates of the three-year course in philosophy; they taught grammar classes before entering theological faculty). Cf. Bobková-Valentová (2006: 62–63).

<sup>42</sup> NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-446, box 175, f. 56r–66v.

<sup>43</sup> *Divus Joannes Martyr, argumentum: Veritatis fideique integerrimus cultor D. Joannes Nepomucenus subinde ab Joanna (Pietatem substituiimus) conscientiae electus arbiter; dum sacrosanctum confessionis sigillum Wenceslao perurgente violare renuit, ad hoc violandum prius fortunae bonis, minis, tandem et catastis sollicitus. Neque illis corruptus, nec istis etiam deterritus, manibus pedibusque vincitus, ex ponte Prageno in subjectum flumen Moldavae dejicitur. Cont. Bolan., 16. Maji, T. 3. Cf. Balbinus (1682: 670): Regina, Wenceslai quotidianis sceleribus offensa, cum nullum amplius ex rebus humanis solatium caperet neque per mariti suspiciosos oculos capere posset, crudelitatem ejus perhorrescens (maxime quod etiam mensam dapesque regias, caedibus procerum et sanguine respargere pro deliciis et bellariis*

Nepomuk, the confessor of Queen Johanna, refuses to share her confession with her husband King Wenceslas. The King summons him to a feast, tries to persuade John with flattery, promises, money, and in the end – threats and torture. John does not waver, choosing a martyr death instead. At night he is thrown from the Prague Bridge and drowned. The play ends in a lamentation over John's death and the fate of the Czech lands, and holds John as an example to the whole world – for even if he could save his life he preferred death to a life stained by sin.

The play's structure alternates lively dialogue between Queen Johanna, King Wenceslas and the courtiers with lengthy monologues of the protagonists, which sometimes stretch to the length of the entire scene. Comic relief is provided by the characters of the cooks preparing a feast. A fairly unusual element is the incorporation of the Queen into the drama, as Jesuit school plays – for obvious reasons – would normally not employ female characters.<sup>44</sup> Here, however, the author substitutes the Queen by allegorical *Pietas* (Piety), as implied in the *argumentum* (*Pietatem substituimus*). There are no other allegorical characters in the play; the dramatization merely adapts the narrative of the Nepomucene legend. The author often quotes or paraphrases Balbinus' text – both in the prosaic summaries of individual scenes and in the versed text of the play.<sup>45</sup> In contrast to Balbinus, the playwright more accentuates King Wenceslas as a cruel and ruthless tyrant – a probable reference to Seneca's tyrants with their characteristic untamed passions.<sup>46</sup> As a result, the students had an opportunity to recall a highly fashionable Nepomucene story (the play being staged only two days after Nepomuk's canonization<sup>47</sup>), but also – unwittingly – to absorb ancient dramatic tradition, commonly used by Jesuit school drama.

An identical plot transferred into an allegorical plane can be found in the printed synopsis of *Gloriosus Divi Joannis Nepomuceni pro sigillo poenitentiae agon* (The Famous Fight of St. John of Nepomuk for the Seal of Confession).<sup>48</sup> The remarkable similarity of both plays is not surprising, given that the latter was written for the highest grammar students (referred to as *suprema classis* in the text) of the Klatovy college by the same author, Joannes Winkler. The historical characters are replaced by personified character qualities – Queen Johanna transformed into *Pietas* (Piety), King Wenceslas into *Desidia* (Laziness), John of Nepomuk into *Sanctitas* (Holiness). Piety, disgusted by crowned Laziness, finds consolation in heavenly guidance and the saintly judge of conscience, Holiness. Sinful Curiosity (*Curiositas*) urges Laziness to find out what Piety said in her confession and invites Holiness to the royal court. When Laziness cannot bring Holiness

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*habebat), quod tutissimum videbatur, omnem mundi amorem abjicere unigue se Deo totam (quantum vita conjugalis sineret) donare constituit.*

<sup>44</sup> Jacková (2011: 48).

<sup>45</sup> See *Divus Joannes Martyr*, the opening of Scene 12: *D. Joannes sacramentum Regi prodere indignum ratus, temptis ultimate minis terroribusque regiis, tandem toto animo sacrilegium aversatur*. Cf. Balbinus (1682: 672): *B. Joannes, indignum ratus ea de re toties obtundi, non verbis, sed toto capite et severo vultu sacrilegium aversatus est*. For the versed parts, see e.g. *Divus Joannes Martyr*, v. 470: *Mysta, moriendum tibi est*; cf. Balbinus (1682: 672): *Audi, inquit, Sacerdos, moriendum tibi est [...]*.

<sup>46</sup> The word *furor* is frequently repeated in the text – see e.g. *Divus Joannes Martyr*, v. 105–106: *Furorne Regem traxit in rabiem, scelus / Qvod cumulet effrons scelere?*; v. 162–163: *Regis furorem exasperas, isthoc nisi / Pandas secretum*; v. 165: *Urgebit autem Caesaris posthac furor*. For the notion of wrath in Seneca's tragedies as a model for Jesuit playwrights, see Pauerová (2014).

<sup>47</sup> Zemek (2001: 140).

<sup>48</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 59.

to talk, he decides to bury it in the waves; in the water element, Holiness acquires the laurel crown of victory.

The moral of both plays is identical: John of Nepomuk unshakably defends the Seal of Confession, even for the price of torture and death. The plots are analogous; in *Gloriosus agon*, however, Winkler elaborates on the courtiers' roles and completes the plot with an excursus on the Saint's pilgrimage to Stará Boleslav,<sup>49</sup> thus emphasising his reverence to Virgin Mary. It cannot be deduced from the synopsis whether this is an identical historical extract whose protagonists merely wear the allegorical cloaks this time, or whether the author used allegory and symbolism more pronouncedly (as the dedication to older students would suggest).

Judging from a preserved synopsis, the play *Divus Joannes Nepomucenus laurea Martyr gloriose coronatus* (Saint John of Nepomuk, the Martyr Gloriously Crowned with Laurel),<sup>50</sup> written for the rhetoric class of the college of Malá Strana in Prague by Antonius Sindt as late as 1748, puts even more stress on courtly intrigue. Here, the courtiers instill in the King's mind a suspicion of the Queen's intended adultery. The well-known chain of events then leads to John's death.

#### **Type Four: John as a Saint**

This category of Nepomucene drama mostly contains allegorical plays. John is no longer the protagonist: he has been replaced by his own worshippers, who fight for the promotion of his cult or prepare the celebration of his canonization. The stories are set in various environments, commonly employ allegorical characters and personified qualities and the authors almost completely break away from the legend and give more space to their own creative fantasy. The main objective of these plays is to pay tribute to the Saint, fortify the reverence to him and show how his fame is spreading both at home and in the neighbouring countries.

By its division into two parts, historical and allegorical, the play by Bernardus Pannagl, *Divus Joannes Nepomucenus invictus Christi Martyr, in silentio secreti confessionis et in spe publicae canonizationis gloriosus* (St. John of Nepomuk, the Invincible Martyr of Christ, Glorious in his Silence Regarding the Seal of Confession and his Hope of the Public Canonization)<sup>51</sup> stands between the third and fourth category. It was produced by the rhetoric class (*facultas oratoria*) of the Clementinum college in Prague as soon as 1701, making this the oldest preserved synopsis of a play on the Saint.<sup>52</sup> A far more elaborate rendition of the story is offered than in the case of Winkler. Pannagl divides the plot into two parts: the first one, *Joannes in silentio* (John in Silence), depicts last

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Balbinus (1682: 672): *Paucis post diebus B. Joannes Boleslaviam ad antiquissimam totius Bohemiae Divinae Matris effigiem [...] quae eo loci religiosissime colitur, iter suscipit.*

<sup>50</sup> Křižovnická knihovna [Library of the Crusaders of the Red Star], sign. XVIII G 10, vol. 9, adl. 63.

<sup>51</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 11.

<sup>52</sup> John of Nepomuk was referred to as "Saint" and "Blessed" long before his official beatification (1721) and canonization (1729). The longstanding reverence shown to the saint was in fact the basis of one of the articles in the canonization process. See also the titles of Balbinus' legend in printed (and thus censor-approved) works: *De Beato Joanne Nepomuceno* (Balbinus 1680); *Vita Sancti Joannis Nepomuceni* (Balbinus 1682).

days of John's life and his martyred death. The situation at the royal court incorporates the important element of scheming and sly courtiers trying to find their way into royal affection. The second part, *Joannes in spe* (John in Hope), shows *Impietas* (Impiety) and *Mendacium* (Falsehood) losing a battle with Heaven over John's memory. After the battle, *Fama* (Fame) and *Virtus* (Virtue) spread John's fame at home and abroad. The story, apart from showing John as a role model for priests and confessors, strives to emulate his cult and recommend him to Rome as a suitable candidate for canonization.

The play is declamative, constructed with shrewd argumentation and formed by disputes of individual characters. Apart from moral instruction, students would practise their rhetorical skills and dignified presentation on stage. Pannagl considered his text to be very good – so much so that he incorporated its revised version into his collection of exemplary school plays and declamations *Musa Panagaea*, which only came into print in 1729.<sup>53</sup> The exemplary printed version of the text is somewhat different from the original drama written for a single performance by a school class. Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify specific textual shifts, as the original version only survived in the form of a synopsis.

A similar composition can be found in the synopsis of *Pietas spectata per ignes et aquas* (Piety Tested by Fire and Water),<sup>54</sup> performed in 1729 by the highest grammar class in Opole. Its author, Joannes Braun, divided the story into two parts, one historical (*pars historica*) and the other allegorical (*pars idealis*). After a traditionally narrated plot in the first part there follows a parable on the rivers of Bohemia. These pass the news of John's martyred death to the Roman Tiber, whose task it is to spread John's fame throughout the world.

*Vindex duliae Divus Joannes Nepomucenus* (St. John of Nepomuk as an Advocate of the Veneration of Saints)<sup>55</sup> is an example of an entirely allegorical dramatic work. It was written for the syntax class of the Nové Město college in 1731 by the author of the above-mentioned play *Angelus ad aras*, Antonius Machek. This text, as well, is Machek's autograph – verified not only by the identical handwriting but also by textual affinities. For instance, four verses of the introductory monologue in the first scene are identical.<sup>56</sup> In both cases, the monologue is a buoyant, ardent prayer replete with poetic images; in the first play, however, this is a prayer of little John to God, while in the second play John's worshipper prays to John himself. Textual parallels between both texts continue.<sup>57</sup> *Vindex duliae* nevertheless represents a considerable content shift in comparison with *Angelus ad aras*. The allegorical story takes place after the Saint's death; its protagonist is one of

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<sup>53</sup> Pannagl (1729: 9–79).

<sup>54</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 114.

<sup>55</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 999, f. 585r–592v.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Angelus ad aras*, v. 50–54: *Vos aestuanter mentis accensae faces, / Ardete, jure caelici exurant fibras / Pectoris amores. Quaeque concessa est mihi / Animi facultas, omnis adamati Dei / Sit haec odoris victima cremanda ignibus;* and *Vindex duliae*, v. 1–5: *Vos aestuantes cordis accensi faces, / Ardete, jure dulici exurant fibras / Pectoris amores. Quaeque concessa est mihi / Animi facultas, cuncta Joannis sacro / Esto dicata cultui.*

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *Angelus ad aras*, v. 68–70: *Ah, quantum sacri / Amoris ardet ignibus pectus meum! / O, si daretur;* and *Vindex duliae*, v. 13–15: *O Nepomuci gloria, ah, quantum Tui / Amoris ardet ignibus pectus meum. / O, si daretur!; Angelus ad aras*, v. 509–510: *Tace, ne tu mihi impingas scelus. / Dudum probatum;* and *Vindex duliae*, v. 181–182: *Ignoro scelus. / Dudum probatum.*

John's worshippers (*Joanneus cultor*), who strives to promote the cult of the Saint. Again, there are two opposing camps: *Haeresis* (Heresy) and *Iconoclasta* (Iconoclast) refuse the worship of John as idolatry, arguing that reverence only pertains to God. Their arguments are refuted by *Religio* (Religion) and *Dulius* (Worshipper of Saints), who point out that adoration of saints does not necessarily diminish veneration of God. They are supported by additional allegorical characters (*Bohemia, Hesperia, Ungaria, Germania*), who represent countries where the Nepomucene cult was spreading at the time. Two characters, *Androdilus* and *Scrupulosus latriae zelotes* (Scrupulous Worshipper of God) undergo a conversion. Initially, they take Heresy's side – the name of the latter underscores the dogmatic conviction that real faith means exclusively worship of God. *Androdilus* starts to doubt this and is incarcerated for his doubts by Heresy. After a prayer to the Saint, he manages to escape. Later, *Scrupulosus* changes his mind as well, after veneration of the Saint helps to cure him from an illness.

The plot is more complicated than in *Angelus ad aras*, which was written for younger pupils. *Vindex duliae* is also more elaborate rhetorically and puts more emphasis on monologues. The play is modelled after a real case of the attempt to damage the tomb of John of Nepomuk. The incident happened during the so-called Calvinist cleansing of the cathedral in 1619, which was initiated by Abraham Scultetus, the pastor of Frederick I, King of Bohemia. Scultetus was probably the model for the main servant of Heresy (called *Minister* or *Pastor* in the play).<sup>58</sup> The attempt to damage the tomb and the punishment to the offenders forms a climax of the work and the moral instruction leading from it is strongly emphasised by the author already in the *argumentum*.<sup>59</sup> In the scene of the punishment of the blasphemers John himself appears in the drama, protects his grave and punishes the offenders by death or paralysis (*Vindex* in the title consequently meaning, apart from “advocate” or “defender”, also “vindicator”). John, however, does not appear on stage as a real or allegorical character; his role is one of an intercessor, advocate or defender. The play, with its argumentation in favour of the adoration of saints, was possibly a veiled polemic with non-Catholic Christianity. It was probably intended to lead the students to contemplate both physical and metaphysical meaning of the concept of sanctity.

A play that stands out from the corpus in terms of length, subject matter and purpose is *Mysterium a seculis tacitum, lingua incorrupta sacramentalis merces silentii* (A Mystery Kept Secret for Ages, Uncorrupted Language as a Reward for Keeping the Holy Silence of Confession).<sup>60</sup> It was created in 1732 by rhetoric teacher Antonius Jenisch. The work is rather exceptional genre-wise because it served as a representative performance of the entire college in Uherské Hradiště on the occasion of the festive opening of its new

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<sup>58</sup> This notion is further expanded by uniting the character of Heresy with Calvinism and the Iconoclast with Frederick I – see more in Bobková-Valentová, Bočková, Jacková (in print: Introduction to *Vindex duliae*).

<sup>59</sup> See *Vindex duliae*, *argumentum: Deum in Sanctis honorari velle docet perenne prodigium illud, quo nemo inultus abijt, qui sanctitatem Beati Joannis Nepomuceni aliquo facto laedere vel sepulchrum violare praesumpserit. Ex Act. Canoniz. Cf. Acta utriusque processus (1722: 24): Perenne prae alijs recensetur prodigium illud, divinae sic elargiente bonitate, ut nemo inultus abeat, qui sanctitatem Beati Joannis Nepomuceni aliquo facto laedere vel sepulchrum violare praesumpserit.*

<sup>60</sup> NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-447, box 176, f. 54r-69v.

assembly hall, renewed after the damaging fire of the previous year. Two copies of a printed Latin synopsis have been preserved with the manuscript of the play.<sup>61</sup>

Personified arts and sciences (*Polyhistor*, *Philologus*, *Mythosophus* etc.) appear in the manifold story. Under the guidance of *Athenarchos* and *Thalia*, they prepare a festive opening of a new theatre. *Mythosophus* has to choose a patron for the new theatre and suggests *Harpocratus*, the god of silence. *Hagiophylactus* opposes: the theatre should not be dedicated to pagan idols. He lets *Philologus* make his choice; *Philologus*, under the guidance of *Eudoxus*, *Eusebius* and *Polyhistor*, picks none other than John of Nepomuk. Later, the artists arrange a magnificent decoration in the foyer of the theatre, dominated by the picture of the intact tongue of the Saint. Even *Mythosophus*, pagan at first, is converted in favour of the silent Saint and has John's statue erected by the sacred spring in front of the theatre. Comic relief is provided by the funny antics of a couple of servants, *Musellus* and *Fusculus*, whose scenes are a pleasant refreshment in the compact and manifold allegorical narrative.

The most significant motive of this drama is the tongue, which is perceived at once as the Saint's relic but also as the symbol of speech – as opposed to silence (especially the particular silence leading to the Saint's death). Another crucial motive is the defence of reputation or goodwill, which was attributed to the Saint.<sup>62</sup> The play relates directly to the canonization celebration that took place in Prague, particularly the festive decoration in front of Prague's St. Vitus cathedral.<sup>63</sup> The fact that the play was intended to represent the college as a whole is demonstrated by higher standard of language and stylistics. As a capable rhetoric teacher, Jenisch uses a broad scope of forms of expression and rhetorical phrases. The significance of the play is both in the veneration of the Saint who is emulated as the patron of the new theatre but also in the association of piety and education, to which all didactic efforts of the Jesuit teachers were pointed.

From the corpus of plays analysed in this article, four more synopses belong in this category. In Joannes Pelletius' melodrama called *Unio sexaginta elegantiarum* (A Pearl of Thousand Beauties),<sup>64</sup> composed in 1725 for the rhetoric class of the Prague – Nové Město college, Bohemian lands are trying to get John (as a pearl of thousand beauties) fitted in the papal ring, i.e. canonized.

The canonization celebration itself is the topic of *Sacratior Gratiarum trias* (The Holiest Trinity of Graces),<sup>65</sup> written by Carol Walhoffen in 1729 for the middle grammar class of the Opole college. The main conflict here is between John's supporters (Innocence, Silence and Love) getting ready for his canonization, and his staunch opponents (Conflict, Envy, Libel and Pride). Both Vatican and Lateran appear as actual characters in the play and fight over the honour to host the canonization.

In the same year, Josephus Werner wrote for the joint classes of poetic and rhetoric in Opole a play entitled *Supremi honores sacerrimis exuviis Divi Joannis Nepomuceni*

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<sup>61</sup> NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-447, box 176, f. 52r–53v; NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 60.

<sup>62</sup> For a detailed thematic analysis, see Bobková-Valentová, Bočková, Jacková (in print: Introduction to *Mysterium a seculis tacitum*).

<sup>63</sup> Especially the southern part of the decoration, *Tempus tacendi*, focused on silence and was dedicated to the reverence to the Saint's tongue. An image of the god of silence, *Harpocratus*, appeared at the sides of the upper part of the illusive architecture.

<sup>64</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 40, adl. 32.

<sup>65</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 78.



*peracti* (The Utmost Honours Paid to Holy Relics of St. John of Nepomuk).<sup>66</sup> Planets and celestial bodies appear in the allegorical plot; they are preparing the celebration of John's martyred death. Each planet decorates the Saint with a typical element (Jupiter brings lightning, Mars gives him a sword, Venus – here under the name of Aurora – provides the sky at dawn, Mercur confirms his good reputation, Saturn brings the golden age of John's admirers). The Sun provides rays to shine as a halo around the Saint's head and Luna reclines at his feet, which love Mary so strongly. Together they create a monument to the Nepomucene fame.

In the last play, written in 1730 for the lowest grammar class in the college of Prague – Nové Město, called *Pharos famae naufragantis Divus Joannes Nepomucenus* (Lighthouse of the Drowning Reputation, St. John of Nepomuk),<sup>67</sup> Antonius Machek created a character of John's love (*Joanneus affectus*). This character liberates the unjustly incarcerated Innocent Reputation (*Innocentiae fama*), defends it against Libel (*Calumnia*), Lie (*Mendacium*) and Envy (*Invidia*) – thus restoring both freedom and reputation to the Offender (*Reatus*).

The main purpose of this article was to introduce the complete manuscripts and a complementary choice of synopses to provide a better overview of the whole textual corpus of this type of plays (in the Bohemian province, 16 texts and synopses of Jesuit school plays on John of Nepomuk have been discovered so far). Even given that the preserved sample is arbitrary, it can be quantitatively assumed that the plays most commonly portrayed John of Nepomuk as a saint and recounted the spreading of his cult, posthumous tributes and heavenly glory (six plays in total). This is understandable, given that these were all written around the time of Nepomuk's canonization; it also brought the authors a larger creative freedom when dealing with the topic of their choice, whose treatment frequently remained in the allegorical plane. The most famous motive of the legendist story, i.e. the conflict of John as confessor with King Wenceslas, which is highly suitable for dramatic treatment, is the subject of three dramas in our corpus. Their most remarkable feature is the involvement of more characters, courtiers in particular, and their interaction with the protagonists (John, Wenceslas and Johanna). The evolution of a broad scope of courtly intrigue is not firmly based in the Nepomucene legendist tradition and brings a contemporary element to the texts. Two more plays complement the historical narrative with allegory, focusing on the Saint's posthumous glory. Five times in total the playwrights have chosen the story from John's childhood or youth – mostly in plays intended for younger pupils. The dramatization only slightly draws from the legend, as the Nepomucene tradition does not mention this time in the Saint's life in much detail. This enables the teachers to create a lively story in the settings familiar to the students. These playwrights concentrate both on peer interaction (both friendly and competitive), but also on the adult influence on the formation of a young person (with adults in the role of teachers, spiritual advisors but also villains who try to lead the boys astray).

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<sup>66</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 113.

<sup>67</sup> NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 82.

## Conclusion

Our overview shows that while the Nepomucene plays draw from the same material (which they freely develop), they differ to some extent both in form and content, depending on the age and level of the students/actors. For the pupils of the lower grades the teachers strived to find a story that would be close to them, an anecdote based on action with little or none allegories and personifications. In the simple, uncomplicated narrative, John of Nepomuk is introduced as a little boy (a dedicated altar-boy or an ardent admirer of Virgin Mary), who sets an example worth following to the little actors. This type of plays is dynamic and action-based and often contains humorous or frivolous elements.

Older students would, with the help of a more serious treatment of the topic, master clever phrases and practice ornamental rhetorical expression. In a complex narrative with allegorical elements, John of Nepomuk is portrayed as a young man who favours virtue and diligent study, or as a teacher who leads young men from worldliness and vanity to the path of eternal salvation. In the traditional rendition of the legend, he becomes a priest who unwaveringly defends the Seal of Confession and even dies a martyred death for it. These more elaborate plays furthermore combine the historical and allegorical plane to describe the spreading of Nepomuk's posthumous glory.

For the students of higher grades the teachers would create elaborate allegorical dramatic pieces, which defended the cult of the Saint and showed the ways in which it was spread and developed. Apart from basic qualities such as piety, faith and virtue, they also stress wisdom and education. In those non-linear stories, full of personifications and symbols, actors needed to learn long Latin monologues by heart and to assume an elegant and dignified stage presence. The authors do not limit themselves to recounting of a story; a refined rhetorical form and manifold treatment gain prominence and use a broad scope of motives and various symbolic meanings.

This division, however, cannot be applied generally. Among the plays for the middle grammar classes, for instance, we find on one hand a rather complicated allegorical tale of John as a student, who resists worldly temptations and the decoys of *Philocosmus* (*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus, tenera in aetate virtutis et scientiae illustris idea*), as well as a simple chronological depiction of John's role as a confessor of Queen Johanna, free from allegorical implications (*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus patiundo Martyr gloriosissimus*). A complicated allegorical piece *Pharos famae naufragantis* fits the division drawn in this article even less. This play was in fact intended for the lowest grammatical class and is weaved around the motive of St. John of Nepomuk as a defender of reputation. Its specifics, however, are difficult to reconstruct from the synopsis.

In most cases, the teachers tried to adapt the topic and the stage production to the age and language abilities of their wards. The dramatic works were not only didactic in that they developed the stage skills of the students but also supported their moral and religious instruction. In spite of the fact that writing these plays was one of the teachers' duties, they displayed considerable creativity in adapting the subject matter to the varying age of the students. Both in terms of language and content, the authors successfully accentuated the elements that could apply to their pupils and the skills they wanted them to develop.

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### Abbreviations of archives

ARSI = Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu

NA ČR = Národní archiv České republiky [Czech National Archives]

NK ČR = Národní knihovna České republiky [Czech National Library]

JS = Jesuitica fund

SM = Stará manipulace [Old Manipulation] fund

### Manuscript sources

*Angelus ad aras Divus Joannes Nepomucenus*. Pro theatro exhibitus a rudimentistis Neopragensibus 1729, 27.

Maji. NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 330r–337v.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus patiendo Martyr gloriosissimus*. A media classe grammatices Hradstii cothurnum induta pro scena exhibitus anno 1729, die 21. Martii. NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-446, box 175, f. 56r–66v.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus tenera in aetate virtutis et scientiae illustris idea, imitationi studiosae juventuti propositus*. Agente pro theatro academica mediae classis grammaticae juventute Praegae ad S. Ignatium anno 1734. NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 86r–93v.

*Mysterium a seculis tacitum, lingua incorrupta sacramentalis merces silentii*. Anno 1732. NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-447, box 176, f. 54r–69v.

*Professi quatuor votorum*. ARSI, sign. Germ. 45, f. 304r, 305r.

*Vindex duliae Divus Joannes Nepomucenus*. Pro theatro exhibitus ab academica syntaxi Neo-Praegae 1731, 21.

Maji. NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 999, f. 585r–592v.

*Vox clamantis, Mariae amantis echo sive Sanetus Joannes Nepomucenus, qvondam dilectus a Matre pulchrae dilectionis, eidem tenerrima dilectione correspondens*. Hodie in theatro propositus ab infima grammatices classe Neo-Praegae 1724. NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 299v–308v.

### Printed sources

*Acta utriusque processus = Acta utriusque processus in causa canonisationis Beati Joannis Nepomuceni Martyris super fama sanctitatis, virtutum et miraculorum, uti et super casu excepto seu cultu publico, huic Beato ab immemorabili tempore ante bullam Urbani VIII. Pontif. Max. exhibitio, Praegae constructa, Romae examinata et secuta beatificatione approbata*. Viennae <sup>1</sup>1721. Viennae <sup>2</sup>1722. Veronae <sup>3</sup>1725.

*Angelus ad aras Divus Joannes Nepomucenus*. Pro theatro exhibitus a rudimentistis Neopragensibus anno 1729. *Anjel při oltáři Svatý Jan Nepomucký*. Na lešení školním představený od mladeže první školy v Praze u sv. Ignatia léta 1729 [Angel at the Altar, St. John of Nepomuk. Performed on the School Stage by the Students of the First School at St. Ignatius in Prague, 1729 AD]. NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 329r–329v.

BALBINUS, B., 1680. De Beato Joanne Nepomuceno, ecclesiae metropol. Pragensis S. Viti Canonico, Presb., Martyre Praegae et Nepomuci in Bohemia. In: G. Henschenius, D. Papebrochius (eds.), *Acta Sanctorum*. Tom. III. Maji. Die XVI. Antverpiae, 667–680.

BALBINUS, B., 1682. § LIX. Vita Sancti Joannis Nepomuceni. In: B. Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae decadis I., liber IV. hagiographicus seu Bohemia Sancta*. Praegae, 94–113.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus invictus Christi Martyr, in silentio secreti confessionis et in spe publicae canonizationis gloriosus*. Actione theatri honoratus ab Illustrissima, Perillustri, Nobili ac Ingenua juventute facultatis oratoriae in collegio academico Soc. Jesu Praegae ad S. Clementem anno 1701, mense Majo. NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 11.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus tenera in aetate virtutis et scientiae illustris idea, imitationi studiosae juventuti propositus*. Agente pro theatro Perillustri, Nobili, Ingenua et academica mediae classis grammaticae juventute Praegae ad S. Ignatium anno 1734, mense ..., die ... NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, f. 82r–v.

*Divus Joannes Nepomucenus virescente inter undas laurea Martyr gloriose coronatus*. Dramate exhibitus a rhetorica Micropragena 1748. Křižovnická knihovna [Library of the Crusaders of the Red Star], sign. XVIII G 10, vol. 9, adl. 63.

- Gloriosus Divi Joannis Nepomuceni pro sigillo poenitentiae agon, venerationi Sancti Protomartyris scenice adumbratus.* Anno ab apothosis DeCVRsoqVe soLennIVM eIVs IVbILO, agente pro theatro Perillustri, Nobili ac Ingenua supremae classis juventute Glattoviae, die ..., mense Majo. NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 59.
- Gratia indeptae rea gratiae ad tribunal Matris Gratiarum votivo absoluta, debito in Sancto Joanne Nepomuceno quondam recuperatae sospitatis ergo ad beneficas Mariae aras ex voto peregrino.* Hodie in theatrum assumpto ab Illustrissima, Perillustri, Praenobili, Nobili ac Ingenua mediae classis grammatices juventute Praeae ad S. Clementem anno 1725, mense Majo, die ... NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 58.
- Mysterium a seculis tacitum, lingua incorrupta sacramentalis merces silentii. Revelatum in magni confessionis sigilli Protomartyre Sancto Joanne Nepomuceno celebratum comica panegyri anno a DIVI passione sUPra treCentos qVINqVagessIMO, saCrae Vero apotheosis tertIO.* Quo Musis Hradistiensibus e veteri in novam digressis scenam magno huic sacramentalis consilii et iudicii Angelo eadem vocali cordis et oris lingua dicabat, dedicabat, devovebat ligata et obligata universae gymnadis eloquentia. NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-447 box 176, f. 52r-53v.; NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 60.
- Nobilissima sapientis lectio Vanitas vanitatum, ex libro aeternae veritatis desumpta et pro fundameto Coelestis in terra occupationis Adolpho, illustri stirpis avitae surculo, per Sacriorem Magistrum Joannem Nepomucenum quondam recitata.* Hodie in theatro repetita agente Celsissima, Illustrissima, Perillustri, Praenobili, Nobili et Ingenua syntaxi Praeae ad S. Clementem anno 1726, mense ..., die ... NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 65.
- PANNAGL, B., 1729. *Musa Panagaea, diversa cum thematum, tum carminum genera pererrans, poëticen docentibus in subsidium, discentibus in prolium proposita.* Praeae.
- Pharos famae naufragantis Divus Joannes Nepomucenus.* Pro theatro exhibitus ab infima classe grammaticae Neo-Praeae anno 1730, mense ..., die ... NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 82.
- Pietas spectata per ignes et aquas, historico-ideali dramate honorI et VenerationI DIVI Ioannis NepoMVCeni affeCtVose proposIta* a Perillustri, Praenobili ac Ingenua supremae grammatices classe Oppolii, mense Junio, die ... NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 114.
- Sacriator Gratiarum trias sive Santus Joannes Nepomucenus in basilica Lateranensi D. Joanni Baptistae et Evangelistae sacra gratioso litigio Sanctorum fastis adscriptus.* Scenice celebratus a Perillustri, Nobili, Praenobili ac Ingenua juventute mediae classis grammaticae Oppolii anno 1729, die ..., mense ... NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 78.
- Supremi honores sacerrimis exuviis Divi Joannis Nepomuceni ad festivas stellarum faces devoto planetarum studio peracti.* Oratoriae et poëticae facultatis opera in scenam dati Oppolii in gymnasio Societatis Jesu anno 1729. NK ČR, sign. 52 A 39, adl. 113.
- Unio sexaginta elegantiarum Paraquariam nactus Nepomuci, istum olim Wenceslaus Piger in Albim et Moldavam projecit, pia Bohemia in sacrarium Beati Viti coniecit, eundem subinde decurente anno jubilaee coronatum Bohemorum leo annulo Piscatoris inserendum in Urbe Romana proposuit.* Super Unione hoc melodrama offerendum patrio spectatori composuit et pro theatro exposuit academica rhetorica gymnasii Societatis Jesu Neo-Praeae 1725, mense Junio, die ... NK ČR, sign. 52 A 40, adl. 32.

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**OD SANCTULUS K SACER  
JEZUITSKÉ ŠKOLSKÉ HRY O JANU NEPOMUCKÉM Z ČESKÉ  
PROVINCIE – NÁVRH TYPOLOGIE**

Shrnutí

Studie se zabývá analýzou tematicky uceleného korpusu her o sv. Janu Nepomuckém, konkrétně latin-  
skými texty pocházejícími z kolejí české provincie z 1. pol. 18. stol. Zkoumá způsob ztvárnění příběhu  
a hry rozděluje do čtyř typů podle pojetí hlavního hrdiny: Jan jako malý chlapec, Jan jako mladík, Jan  
jako kněz a mučedník, Jan jako světec.

Ačkoliv hry vycházejí ze stejné látky, kterou dále volně rozvádějí, alespoň rámcově se liší po stránce  
obsahové i jazykové podle studijní úrovně a věku herců. Jako didaktická součást výuky rozvíjely hry  
řečnické schopnosti studentů a podporovaly jejich mravní i náboženskou výchovu.