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**“GRAMMATICA” OF EMMANUEL ALVAREZ SJ
AND ITS EDITIONS IN POLISH-LITHUANIAN
COMMONWEALTH IN THE 16TH CENTURY**

SUMMARY: The paper briefly characterizes the Jesuit education in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 16th century and the first Latin grammar book by Emmanuel Alvarez SJ used in colleges. The reader is presented with a brief description of the *Grammatica* of Alvarez and its editions in Poland till the end of the 16th century.

KEYWORDS: Latin grammar, Emmanuelis Alvari, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 16th century

Saint Ignatius of Loyola regarded apostolic work, including its slightly unrewarding aspect, namely education, as one of the most prominent activities of the Jesuit Society. As a result, each newly constructed Jesuit house was accompanied by a school and a college. All these houses were organized according to a common design, typically based on the first school established in a given country or province. In Poland a model college was that in Braniewo. However, regardless of the details characterizing a particular house, a Jesuit college was supposed to be a humanistic school, where the knowledge of Latin and Greek grammar shaped the students' erudition, eloquence and devotion.

At the beginning of their work in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Jesuits faced numerous difficulties.¹ The first dozen priests to

¹ Cf. Natoński 1969. Natoński's work appeared as the last, sixteenth chapter of the monograph on Jesuit history, p. 414-476.

arrive to Warmia at the end of 1564 were foreigners. Similarly, a majority of Jesuits working in Poland till the end of 16th c. were of foreign origin. They were educated outside Poland, often before entering the Society. It was not until the later period, when Jesuits started to grow in number and become more powerful, that the foreigners were replaced by Poles. According to Bronisław Natoncki (1970: 309-337; 1994: 29-58) in the 16th c. there were 181 Polish Jesuits working in Poland. From the 17th c. on, the majority of Jesuits acting in the Commonwealth, that is in the Polish Province established in 1575 and later on (from 1608) also in the Lithuanian Province, were of Polish origin (Natoński 1970: 40; Poplatek [typescript]).

According to Jesuit Constitutions, a majority of candidates to the Society could be accepted. No special prior education was required, although it was appreciated due to the many needs of the developing order. However, an individual could not receive education in the Society if, upon entering the novitiate, he could neither read nor write in Latin.

In the first years of the Society's existence in Poland, most Jesuits had reached some level of education yet before entering the novitiate. The first generation of Jesuits was characterized by extremely diverse and inhomogeneous education, they changed schools and academic centers, often learning in heretic environments and during scientific journeys throughout Europe. It is worthwhile to note for instance the studies of Justus Rabb at universities in Strasbourg, Wittenberg, Jena, Leipzig and Paris or those of Stanisław Grodzicki in Frankfurt and Wittenberg, at Krakow Academy and in Rome (Łukaszewska-Haberkowa 2013: 119, 133f.). Other Jesuits, for example Jakub Wujek and Stanisław Warszawicki, appreciated education received in the Commonwealth (Łukaszewska-Haberkowa 2013: 119, 133f.). Due to the lack of stable educational structures, Jesuits often changed colleges in order to finish their philosophy and theology courses, frequently as external students. However, it seems that in the end this diversity had an overall positive effect on their education. Moreover, Protestantism greatly influenced future Jesuits: numerous candidates made a catholic profession of faith only directly before entering the novitiate.

According to a common belief, the Society of Jesus possessed a uniform, systematic and constant scholar system from the beginning of the

order's existence in Poland, that is from the 16th c. This is, however, not true. St. Ignatius of Loyola did not prepare nor record any general rules needed by the rapidly developing Jesuit educational system. The so-called *Ratio studiorum*, that is a document specifying scholar rules pertaining to all Jesuit schools, emerged slowly and not without difficulties. It was not until 1599 that it was finally accepted and from that time each college was obliged to adopt it.

The ultimate goal that cardinal Stanislas Hozjusz was pursuing when he invited Jesuits to Poland was to create a network of modern schools (Nadal 1965: 136). As a result, in a very short time a number of colleges were founded, which required considerable manpower as well as financial means to operate.² Clearly, all these needs by far exceeded the possibilities of a newly established province. It should also be mentioned that the formation of a Jesuit teacher took more than a dozen years (Bieś, Dybowska, Grzebień 2012: 74-80).

The program and curriculum of Jesuit colleges in the Commonwealth are broadly known and have been a topic of numerous publications. The majority of them (e.g. Kot 1931: 226-234; Piechnik 2000: 299-332), however, synthetically deal with the very beginnings of the order's history, overlooking the less well-known aspects of the subject. Yet, in the first half century of the order in Poland Jesuits did not wholly obey the principles imposed by the Society (Łukaszewska-Haberkowa 2014: 39-62). In case of education this resulted, among others, in a large variety of different syllabuses. Jesuit schools in Poland were generally highly acclaimed, although till 1575 they did not attract particularly large numbers of students, among which, by the way, a half were dissenters. Until late 1580s professors in higher classes were of foreign origin.

What undoubtedly had an adverse effect on Jesuit teaching quality was the fact that teachers frequently changed, especially in the Commonwealth. Having finished their philosophy course and pedagogical training, clerics were obliged to teach in lower classes for the period of two years, but they frequently performed this duty in several colleges in parallel. Directly after this period they commenced theological studies followed by teaching in higher classes. They typically spent several

² It is estimated that at the beginning of 1590s Jesuit schools belonging to the Polish Province of the Jesuit Society educated and supported 3300 students.

years in the *Rhetorica* and ran one or two courses of philosophy. Finally they began teaching theology. Due to the lack of qualified staff, later on they usually took on administrative duties.

Jesuits could not afford to purchase handbooks for their schools – financial means, even to cover current expenses, were in short supply, not to speak about expensive teaching aids. In the 17th c. (Bednarski 2003: 178-185) the difficulty in finding inexpensive handbooks still remained a problem. Colleges occasionally received books as gifts from benefactors, who in the 16th c. were not necessarily absolutely faithful to the catholic teaching. Jesuit Society was well aware of the List of Prohibited Books, but volumes, even those by Luther or Calvin, were never burnt here. Forbidden prints were typically closed up in inaccessible locations, were only selected people could consult them. On the margins of surviving books of this type one can frequently find polemic comments and remarks (Grzebień 2013: 201f.).

It was not until *Ratio studiorum*³ was published, a document dating from the fall of the century, that the Grammar of Emmanuel Alvarez was broadly accepted in Jesuit teaching⁴. Before that time teaching of Latin had been very diverse and numerous handbooks had been used. The grammar book by Johannes Despauterius was commonly regarded as the best choice, but because of insufficient number of copies as well as diverse, often protestant, education of professors, more often than not it was substituted by different handbooks, such as those by Cornelius Valerio, Heinrich Glarean or Cornelius Traiectinus. One could also come across, albeit seldom, books by Christoph Hegendorff and Thomas Linaere (*Ratio studiorum* 1996: 561-562).

The first two classes of Jesuit colleges, *Infima* and *Grammatica*, were supposed to prepare students for their Latin language course through a lecture on basics of grammar and syntax, that is the so-called *syntax parva*. Due to problems related to diverse knowledge levels of students as well as the above-mentioned lack of handbooks, the approach

³ The publication of *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Jesu* was preceded with numerous difficulties. The first edition of the document was established in 1586, it was then published again in 1591, but the version acknowledged by all province started to be in force 8th Jan. 1599, cf. Danysz 1921: 158.

⁴ Cf. Żołądź 1990: 91 and critical study of Alvarez book by jesuit, Jan Ożóg: Ożóg 1997: 141-160.

to teaching was considering to be more significant than a choice of a particular handbook.

Handbooks by Despauterius were most classical in form, above all due to the author's classification of syntax. Despauterius successively published *Rudimenta*, *Exercitationes*, *Syntaxis* and *Commentarii grammatici*, the latter was published in Paris in 1537. His books were reprinted in Krakow in the printing houses of Maciej Szarffenberg (1528, 1537) and Hieronim Wietor (1532) (Estreicher 1977: XV.160). This particular handbook draws from medieval tradition, utilizing the ideas and the way of presentation of earlier grammarians; it is varied in character, in that it is not based on the grammar of only one ancient author. What is also significant, Despauterius often underlines the importance of the mother tongue and frequently recommends the reader to translate certain forms into his native language (Cytowska 1968: 60f.). In the book in question, as well as in those of Valerio and Glarean, *rudimenta* are mostly derived from Donatus. The name of Donatus was often given to the first class, which was supposed to last two years.

In 1572 a grammar book by Emmanuel Alvarez was published.⁵ It was as a matter of fact the first Latin handbook published in view of being used in class under the guidance of a teacher, rather than for self-study. It is worth to note here that Emmanuel Alvarez, born in 1526, was a Jesuit, professor of literature and the rector of Coimbra college (Sommerovogel 1891-1900: 1.223-249), so he was well aware of the nature of a teacher's work. The initial version is a massive book containing 526 pages of dense print, divided into three parts. The next (1572) version, the proper, so to speak, Alvarez, contained *De Etymologia*, *De Syntaxi* and *De Prosodia* (Cytowska 1968: 64-65), consecutively describing these chapters of grammar.⁶ It was probably the language handbook remaining in constant use for the longest period of time in Poland or maybe

⁵ *Emmanuelis Alvari e Societate Iesu de Institvtione Grammatica libri tres. Olyssipone, Excudebat Joannes Barrerius typographus Regius, M. D. LXXII, Cum Privilegio.* The edition contained 245 pages (243 numbered pages), in quarto format. The second edition, on which most handbooks were later based, also included an index: *Emmanuelis Alvari e Societate Iesu de Institvtione Grammatica libri tres. Venetiis, Apud Basam or apud Franciscum de Franciscis Senensem, MDLXXV, 4^o, pp. 526.*

⁶ Description by M. Cytowska, cf. Bednarski 2003: 160-161.

even in entire Europe.⁷ And as each source remaining in use for too long a time, it finally became exhausted. Although it is mostly remembered by unfavorable opinions it received in the 18th c., it should be noted that at the time of publication it served extremely well as a grammar compendium. Its concise character was underlined in the first version of *Ratio studiorum* from 1586. At that time it was also suggested that Alvarez's grammar book should be adapted to school teaching. This act of standardization of teaching practice all throughout Jesuit colleges combined with selecting a specific Latin handbook (specially prepared for this reason), is absolutely unique. One can even risk a statement that it is unique in the history of education in general.

By the end of the 16th c. there were several different Polish editions of Alvarez's grammar book, all of which say a lot about the development of Jesuit schools as well as their needs in terms of teaching practice in the diverse and multifaceted Commonwealth.

The first Polish edition of the book was published by Melchior Nehring in 1577 in Poznań.⁸ What is important, it seems that this printer became known in the catholic milieu thanks to the publication of this very print for Jesuits.⁹ In 1577 it was one of 13 prints that he printed in Poznań. The most commonly cited copy of this edition can be found in Kórnik Library, bound in one volume with Cicero's letters (Wojciechowska 1927: 137), also published for a Jesuit college.¹⁰

A Jesuit researcher into the order's literature, Carlos Sommervogel, in his voluminous work¹¹ claims that the 1577 edition of Alvarez's oeuvre was complete, that is contained all three parts. In fact, it was only its last book (*Grammaticarum institutionum liber tertius. De syllabarum*

⁷ Most recently in Saint Petersburg in 1840.

⁸ [Emmanuelis Alvari] *Grammaticarum institutionum liber tertius. De syllabarum dimensione. Posnaniae*, Melchior Nering, 1577, 8°.

⁹ By the way, in 1577 Nehring Publisher his first prints, but due to financial reasons also printed a heretic book entitled *Diatriba* by J. Niemojewski. As a result He had severe problems and was forced to leave Poznań. Cf. Wojciechowska 1927: 43-56.

¹⁰ *Epistolarum M. T. Ciceronis. Liber Decimus Quartus et Decimussexus. Posnaniae, Melchior Neringk, Anno Domini 1577*. Cf. Wojciechowska 1927: 138. (Estreicher 1977: VIII.67; XV-XVI.131 with reference to Kórnik Library). In another location (with alphabetically ordered prints, Estreicher 1977: XIV.247f.) Estreicher does not mention this print.

¹¹ Sommervogel 1890-1932: I.223-249.

dimensione). In 1577 publishing Alvarez’s Grammar in its entirety would be ungrounded. At that time teaching was carried out in five colleges: in Braniewo (established in 1566), Pułtusk (1568), Vilnius (1569), Poznań (1573) and Jarosław (1575). Most colleges had at least two parallel first classes, some (as for instance the five-class college in Braniewo) were international in character, that is were frequented mostly by inhabitants of borderlands and foreigners. It seems that for effective teaching of grammar basics, the choice of a particular handbook played no important role. In many cases teachers were selected among priests without full academic degrees. Fully educated professors were necessary in higher classes, where the demands and needs were greater. Still, proper infrastructure and books were in short supply. The problem was especially acute in some colleges, e.g. in Pułtusk, where the number of students in higher classes, including *Rhetorica*, was large – in 1573 this particular school had 361 students. In the same years the *Poetica* and *Rhetorica* classes were opened in Poznań. It is clear from the introduction to Alvarez’s book that it was aimed mostly at students and professors of this very school.

Large number of students in higher classes necessitated the creation of proper working conditions. Although in lower classes basics of Latin stylistics and etymology were taught, practical use of this knowledge was supposed to be exercised in the next class, the *Syntaxis*. The lack of a unique grammar handbook did not pose a problem here either, as even at this stage of education the differences in the students’ skills could still be compensated. The situation was more complicated as far as teaching poetics and advanced stylistics is concerned. That is the reason why only a single, selected part of Alvarez’s book was published. Besides, the Jesuit Society provided students with their handbooks free of charge, hence publishing all three parts (561 pages!) would be much too costly. Finally, the first two books of the Portugal Jesuit were closely related to each other – basic grammar knowledge presented in book one was supplemented by a lecture on syntax in the second volume. Hence, these volumes should be treated and utilized as unity (Cytowska 1968: 65). The third one in turn contained information on prosody¹² and was in itself an independent part.

¹² Among the volumes of Alvarez’s book, this one was later on published most frequently. Cf. Sommervogel 1890-1932: III.

The education that Jesuit colleges offered in the first years of the Society's existence in Poland, is well illustrated by entrance examinations to the college and novitiate in Braniewo. Candidates were supposed to describe their knowledge in a conversation with a superior (Łukaszewska-Haberkowa 2012: 7-18). If they lacked higher education or full college education, they enumerated the authors, whose works they came across. Among the writers they read, apart from Cicero, Virgil were Donatus, were Johannes Honter, Philipp Melanchthon, Nicolas Nicolasa Cleynaerts and Johann Spaugeberg (Łukaszewska-Haberkowa 2013: 140-175).

Maria Cytowska (1968: 65) claims that the first full edition of Alvarez's book was published in Poland in 1586. It seems, however, that this belief is unsubstantiated: in that year two editions were published, none of which was complete. The first print contained the second volume of the handbook (Emanuel Alvarez SJ, *Grammaticarum institutionum [libri tres]. Liber secundus. De constructione octo partium orationis*. Poznań, Jan Wolrab, 1586, pp. 381¹³), whereas the second one consisted of its third part (Emanuel Alvarez SJ, *Grammaticarum institutionum [libri tres]. Liber tertius. De syllabarum dimensione, etc.* Poznań, Jan Wolrab, [1586], pp. 192¹⁴). At the time of publication of these books, Jesuits already worked on a unique and consistent syllabus for all their colleges along with handbooks specially prepared for this purpose. Nevertheless, some colleges, e.g. in Vilnius., where apart from the college Jesuits also ran a primary school, still insisted on using the book of Despauterius (Cytowska 1968: 68). Meanwhile, in 1586 the first project of *Ratio studiorum* was elaborated by a selected body of six best pedagogues of the Society. The project was sent out to the provinces for critical comments (*Ratio studiorum* 1996, s. 561-562). Therefore, one can suppose that in view of the still uncertain future of *Ratio*, the complete edition of Alvarez's Grammar was considered unnecessary.

Literature mentions also a 1590 edition, which was supposed to have been ordered by Jesuits from Jan Wolrab's printing house in

¹³ Cf. Estreicher 1977: XII.160; Sommervogel 1890-1932: I.223; cf. Also Wierzbowski 1889: 2.163.

¹⁴ Cf. Estreicher 1977: XII.160; Sommervogel 1890-1932: I.223.

Poznań. However, similarly to the alleged 1578¹⁵ edition, there is no sufficient proof that the publication ever existed.¹⁶

Let us, therefore, repeat that the Latin grammar handbook by Alvarez perfectly suited the new syllabus in Jesuit schools, introduced as a results of *Ratio studiorum*. Though, the document came into being after several years of discussion and controversy with respect to the novel teaching system (Bednarski2003: 158-159), towards which Polish Jesuits remained generally skeptical. In 1599 objections against the book, already formulated back in 1586, were repeated and it was claimed that the book should be adapted for college use: it was too voluminous and far too detailed to be utilized at schools. Besides it was not properly translated into Polish. The latter is important, as in the 16th c. Latin handbooks were also utilized as concise manuals of the Polish language.

In the 1590s Jesuit colleges in the Commonwealth became more uniform and consistent. Moreover, colleges became more populated and the number of subjects taught increased, which necessitated further regulations. Two editions of Alvarez’s book published in 1592 (Emanuel Alvarez SJ, *De institutione grammatica. Liber 1. Scholis auctoris praetermissis*. Vilnius, 1592, pp. 50 (Estreicher 1977: XII.126; Sommervogel 1890-1932: I.226) and Emanuel Alvarez SJ, *De institutione grammatica. Lib. 1. Libri primi pars prior. De partim orationis declinabilium inflexione. Scholiis authoris omissis*. Vilnius, 1592, c. n. p. 69¹⁷) were printed explicitly for use in Jesuit schools and due to the introduction of *Ratio studiorum*. However, neither of them was a complete edition, which is attested, among other things, by the small number of pages.

The increasing importance of Jesuit schools called for a special version of Alvarez’s book, it should be concise and adapted to the

¹⁵ Emanuel Alvarez SJ, *Grammaticarum institutionum libri primi Epitome syntaxeos. [De constructione octo patrium orationis libellus]*, Poznań, Jan Wolrab, 1578, c. n. p. 59 (Sommervogel 1890-1932: I.225; Wojciechowska 1927: 169. Wojciechowska claims that it probably doesn’t exist).

¹⁶ Emanuel Alvarez SJ, *Grammaticarum institutionum libri primi Epitome syntaxeos, item faciliora praecepta, ex eiusdem auctoris libro secundo descripta*, Poznań, Jan Wolrab, 1591, p. 238.

¹⁷ Cf. Estreicher 1977: XII.126; Sommervogel 1890-1932: I.226.

three-stage teaching system. These books started to be printed in the 17th c. (Popiak 2008: 345-351). Also at that time printers became un-eager to print only small numbers of copies and also refused to print single volumes of Alvarez's oeuvre (Bednarski 2003: 161).

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