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Odile Krakovitch, *La Censure théâtrale (1835-1849), Édition des procès-verbaux*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016. 801 pp. Bibliography and indexes. €88.00 (cl) ISBN 978-2-8124-5105-8; €59.00 (pb) ISBN 978-2-8124-5104-1.

Review by Anthony J. Steinhoff, Université du Québec à Montréal.

Censorship was an omnipresent force in nineteenth-century French cultural life. Of course, some of the more notorious cases have received ample attention from scholars, from Victor Hugo's fights with French censors over *Hernani* and the July Monarchy's repression of political caricature after 1835 to Flaubert's difficulties with *Madame Bovary*. But for all the subject's importance, the literature on censorship during France's nineteenth century remains thin. Robert Justin Goldstein has made major contributions to this history with his studies of censorship in the visual arts.^[1] At the end of the 1990s, Pascal Ory edited a volume of conference papers that shed light on censorship practices in Republican France.^[2] With respect to the theater, the leading figure has been Odile Krakovitch, who published a major study of Hugo while still a *conservateur* at the *Archives nationales*.^[3]

The present work is the fruit of Krakovitch's familiarity with the archival records relating to theatrical censorship. As the secondary title promises, this is first and foremost an edition of primary sources, namely the *procès-verbaux* generated by censorship officials reviewing theatrical works during the July Monarchy. As Krakovitch explains in her lengthy introduction to the volume and to the *procès-verbaux*, these documents are, in fact, of two types, reflecting the two sorts of censorship to which the French theater was subjected until the early twentieth century: repressive and preventative. The former consists of reports by individuals—prefects, theater inspectors, police officials—written after actual performances. In part, this control served to assure that the dramatic texts were performed as approved, indeed that changes imposed by censors were actually respected. These reports are particularly interesting for the light they shed on theatrical culture during the July Monarchy: actors who made seemingly unilateral decisions to restore words or phrases cut by the censors, or who used gestures and tonal emphasis to connote ideas and situations that had drawn the censors' ire. Egregious changes to the approved text, namely restorations of cut material or additions that had never been reviewed, routinely resulted in the suspension of future performances. But the reports also amply document that staging, costuming, and lighting choices (for example, the manner in which royalty or religious figures were presented) could equally cause a play whose text had been deemed acceptable to be cancelled after a first (or second) performance.

Of the 555 reports presented here, however, only sixty-two stem from this repressive censorship. The remainder were produced as part of the "preventative" censorship process, that is, the review and authorization of plays prior to their actual staging. In the absence of expressly formulated rules governing censorship, these *procès-verbaux*, taken together, enable us to gain a clearer sense of the criteria censors used in examining manuscripts. In her organization of this material for the volume, Krakovitch highlights the major areas of concern: politics, religion, and morals. In addition, the reports reveal that censors had an easier time defining what was acceptable (or not) when it came to religion and morals than with respect

to politics and notions of social order. These *procès-verbaux* also cast interesting light onto the very process of preventative censorship. Although many of the reports are brief, giving merely the author, title, date, the theater requesting the authorization, and a two- or three-line summary of the decision, a good number are quite extensive. Not only do they announce the point(s) the censors found problematic, but they also reveal how the censorship process could take on a collaborative dimension as censors worked with authors (for example, Eugène Sue and Prosper Goubaux) to arrive at a text (*Les Mystères de Paris*) that could ultimately pass muster.

To help the reader place these *procès-verbaux* in a broader context, Krakovitch has supplied two further resources at the end of the volume. The first is a series of lists summarizing the results of the censorship officials' work during the July Monarchy, Second Republic, and Second Empire (to 1866): a list of theaters that had been reprimanded during the July Monarchy, a list of works prohibited during the July Monarchy (organized according to the theater that had requested their authorization), a list of plays prohibited between 1850 and 1886, a list of plays that had been called to the attention of the prefects, lists of plays approved after 1850, and a list of plays that remained prohibited until 1882. The second "resource" is a final primary source document that presents materials gathered during an 1891 Chamber of Deputies inquiry into the theaters, namely the results of the 1849 *Conseil d'État* investigation of censorship during the July Monarchy and the minutes from the meetings of the commission charged in 1849 to draft a new law on the theaters.

Preceding all of this source material are two lengthy introductions. The first is primarily narrative in nature and provides a history of theatrical censorship in France from the First Empire to the Third Republic. As the author indicates in the notes, this overview is largely drawn from texts that she has published elsewhere, including in finding materials that she prepared for the *Archives nationales*. Since most readers will not have ready access to those texts, readers will be grateful to Krakovitch for the inclusion of that information here. That said, the introduction's integration into this volume is not entirely successful. While replete with insights and detail, the text is prone to repetition. The second shortcoming is not so much a matter of the content itself, but rather its framing. In effect, Krakovitch has penned an introduction not just for this volume, but for a series of three projected volumes (of which the second will present source material on the Second Empire and the third on the Third Republic). This is certainly a valid strategy, but ideally it should have been announced explicitly at the very beginning. The second introduction, by contrast, is specific to this volume but also much more technical. Here Krakovitch, ever the archivist, presents and explains her editorial choices, a discussion that also yields valuable information about the holdings in the *Archives nationales* relating to theatrical censorship in post-Napoleonic France.

Overall, this is a resource that will greatly interest scholars of nineteenth-century French literature, theater, and cultural politics. We can only hope that Odile Krakovitch will succeed in producing the remaining volumes she has planned for this valuable project.

NOTES

[1] Robert Justin Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth-Century France* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989); and, more recently, Robert Justin Goldstein, *Out of Sight: Political Censorship of the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[2] Pascal Ory, ed., *La censure en France à l'ère démocratique (1848...)* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 1977).

[3] See especially, Odile Krakovitch, *Hugo censuré: la liberté au théâtre au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1985). Useful, too, in this context is the survey by F. W. J. Hemmings, *Theater and State in France, 1760-1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Anthony J. Steinhoff
Université du Québec à Montréal
steinhoff.anthony@uqam.ca

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