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Introduction

The first seven articles in the current volume of the “Ignatianum Philosophical Yearbook” are dedicated to Jesuit missions in China, based on the manuscript work of the Polish Jesuit Tomasz Dunin Szpot (1644–1713) entitled *Historiae Sinarum Imperii*, located in Rome in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI Jap. Sin. 102, ARSI Jap. Sin. 103). In this work, which has a chronological character, Szpot included a description of the Jesuits’ experiences in the Middle Kingdom from the initiation of the mission by St. Francis Xavier in the mid-16th century up to the first decade of the 18th century.

The volume opens the text by Andrzej Wadas dedicated to the crisis of the Jesuit missions in Macau in 1606, which was caused by Western missionaries. The problem is presented from both a local and global perspectives. It is based on the annual periodization adopted by Szpot, which combines the Western chronology based on the Gregorian calendar with the Chinese dating system associated with the Mandate of Heaven. In the next article, Łukasz Burkiewicz shows – taking into account earlier historical sources and dispersed information in Szpot’s work from Jesuit missionaries – the political, economic, and cultural significance of the Grand Canal for Chinese civilization. Considered by many researchers

to be a greater technical wonder than the Great Wall of China, the canal served not only as the main transport artery connecting the barren north with the fertile south, but also as a social glue for the various ethnic and national groups of the empire. In the following text, Janusz Smołucha analyzes the circumstances of the funeral of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci, who died in Beijing in 1610. The author emphasizes the cultural complexity of this event, on which two ceremonies – Catholic and Confucian – overlapped, and the funeral itself became a symbol of harmony between Eastern and Western traditions. Hanna Wadas devoted her article to the Nestorian stele from Xi'an, erected in 781 and discovered in 1625. The find quickly attracted the attention of Jesuit missionaries working in China, who both studied the tablet on-site and described its content in reports to Rome. The discovery was not only an important historical testimony but also became an important evangelistic tool, as the stele well fit into the traditional values of Chinese culture, which included fidelity to tradition and concern for historical memory.

In the next text, Paweł Nowakowski presents the profile of Wu Sangui (1612–1678), a military commander and self-proclaimed emperor who played a significant role during two pivotal periods in Chinese history – the fall of the Ming Dynasty (1644) and the so-called Rebellion of the Three Feudatories (1673–1681) against the new Qing Dynasty. According to the author, Szpot does not resort to extremes in his description of this prominent “warlord”, he skillfully considers the motives of his actions, and objectively presents the historical conditions in which Wu Sangui operated. Gościwit Malinowski, in his text, conducted an analysis of Tomasz Szpot Dunin’s brief account of the stay in Rome of the Russian diplomat Boris Sheremetev. The Chinese part concludes with the article by Tomasz Graff and Bartłomiej Wołyniec dedicated to the role of Jesuit colleges in propagating knowledge in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth about the missionary activities of the Society of Jesus in the Far East. This was done by using Polish translations of the works written by Jesuit authors who described India, Japan, and China. Among the methods of disseminating knowledge, theatrical spectacles featuring Oriental themes held an extremely important place. Jesuit education about the Far East contributed to the emergence of a fashion for the so-called Chinoiserie during the Enlightenment period.

The second part of the volume, which consists of six texts, is primarily devoted to aesthetic issues and continues the theme of the previous issue. However, it opens with two articles dedicated to philosophical and social problems. In the first text, Marek Sokołowski analyzes the media image of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in three feature films which were screened for

popular culture. The author assesses whether these productions are hagiographies, biographies, or confessional religious movies. In the second article, Halina Šimo examines Friedrich von Hayek's views on morality. The author believes that the axiological thought of this Austrian scholar is underestimated by the researchers of his academic work. Meanwhile, this well-known representative of the liberal economic school saw morality as the foundation for his libertarian concepts. In the next article, dedicated to aesthetic issues, Anna Telatycka attempts to interpret the complex symbolism of the church rose window compared to spatial forms created by the sound waves of different frequencies. She presents this well-known religious symbol in connection with acoustic phenomena that universally accompany human beings. For this reason – the author states – the rose window has a universal meaning and is perceived similarly by humanity regardless of cultural differences. Malwina Tubielewicz-Michalczyk devoted her text to symbols in the urban space of Częstochowa. The religious and artistic objects she selected and discussed commemorate important figures in the city's history associated with art, literature, and social activism. The author argues that in contemporary times, it is possible to skillfully combine tradition with modernity and maintain urban values and historical continuity in public space.

In the following text, Etleva Bushati discusses the significance and symbolism of industrial architecture in Albania from 1912 to 1990, identifying four phases in its development. The country's development and urban planning were particularly influenced by the industrial complexes from the socialist era. The symbolism of this architecture is complex and reflects both the achievements and challenges associated with the country's industrial past and the legacy of communist ideology. In the last article of this volume, Justyna Kleszcz discusses the aesthetic value of buildings designated for urban agricultural purposes, which, integrated into the urban fabric, strive to combine features of intensive farming and industrial activity with residential and recreational use. Among the examples discussed there are also complexes of offices, logistics, and exhibition buildings. The volume concludes with the report by Agnieszka Januszek-Sieradzka from the international scientific conference entitled "Phenomena of Punishment and Reward in the Life of Czech and Polish Societies in the Middle Ages and Modern Times", which took place in Leszno on September 25–27 of this year.

The editors wish you a pleasant reading.

