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## On the University of Padua and the Poles

It is with the satisfaction that comes from patiently awaiting the publication of one's work—and also with the sense of responsibility felt by the editors of this volume of the Ignatianum Philosophical Yearbook—that we present to our readers a collection of studies and contributions that complement the still-ongoing series of publications devoted to Polish–Paduan relations. The impetus for addressing this subject was the anniversary celebrations marking the founding of one of Europe's oldest universities in 1222. These celebrations resonated widely around the world, including in Poland, where a special task force was established by order of the Minister of Science and Higher Education to coordinate initiatives undertaken on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the University of Padua.

Thanks to the involvement of scholars whose expertise and previous research earned them a place on this research team, it was possible to bring together an international group of outstanding specialists in the history of Polish–Italian relations, educational travel, and especially the history of the Paduan Ateneo. These scholars shared their knowledge and even took part in source-based research. The results of these new investigations and analyses are now appearing in the form of articles and critical editions—some of which are still awaiting publication.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The increasingly extensive bibliography on Polish–Paduan relations can be found across the volumes published as part of the special series *Natio Polona. Fontes et Studia*. See,

The high quality of this scholarship is reflected in the texts included in this very issue of the Ignatianum Philosophical Yearbook. Their content aptly illustrates the current directions of research into the culture of the Republic of Venice, particularly the development of the Ateneo under its rule, which had already been founded in 1222—at a time when Padua still enjoyed political independence.

The networks of scholarly contacts are examined, for example, by Anna Horeczy through the case of Piotr Wysz of Radolin; the religious education of the nobility in the Catholic spirit has long been the subject of Antonella Barzazi's research; a detailed interpretation of archival materials concerning the election of Jan Zamoyski as rector of the University of Jurists is presented by Franco Benucci; the role of Paduan studies in the formation of the Polish elite, in which the author of these words, Mirosław Lenart, is interested; the intellectual circles of the Paduans as they appear in diplomatic contexts are discussed by Dorota Gregorowicz in her analysis of the nunciature of Annibale di Capua in Poland; and the courtly culture promoted by a Paduan student, Łukasz Górnicki, author of *The Polish Courtier*, is recalled by

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for example: *I polacchi presso la tomba di Sant'Antonio a Padova. Memorie materiali, donazioni, testimonianze di culto (secoli XVI–XIX). La Cappella polacca al Santo (1896–2018)*, eds. Giovanna Baldissin Molli, Mirosław Lenart, Magdalena Wrana, Padova University Press, 2023; Olga Kucharczyk, *Herby przedstawicieli nacji polskiej na Uniwersytecie Padewskim. Katalog znaków heraldycznych*, foreword by Mirosław Lenart, essay by Franco Benucci, Warsaw, Instytut Polonika, 2023; *Universitas ultramontanorum. Herby konsyliarzy ze Śląska, Pomorza i Prus na Uniwersytecie Padewskim*, eds. Mirosław Lenart, Sławomir Marchel, heraldic catalogue edited by Maria Leniowska, Opole, Uniwersytet Opolski / Archiwa Państwowe, 2022; *Statuta Universitatis scholarium iuristarum studii generalis Paduani ab anno 1331 ad annum 1404 (Codex Bibliothecae Cathedralis Gnesnensis 180)*, introduction by Mirosław Lenart, preface by Krzysztof Stopka, Opole, Uniwersytet Opolski, 2020; Mirosław Lenart, Marta Wojtkowska-Maksymik, Magdalena Wrana, *Polacy przy grobie św. Antoniego w Padwie*, vol. 1: *Pamiętki, donacje, świadectwa kultu (wieki XVI–XIX)*, Opole, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2019; vol. 2: *Kaplica polska (1896–2018)*, ed. Mirosław Lenart, Opole, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2020; *Album Polonicum. Metryka nacji polskiej w Padwie 1592–1745. Edycja fototypiczna*, vol. 1, part 1, ed. Mirosław Lenart, Warsaw, Narodowy Instytut Polskiego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego za Granicą POLONIKA, 2018. In addition to this series, several special journal issues devoted to Polish–Paduan studies also deserve mention: *Italica Wratislaviensia* 2021, vol. 12(1): *Polonia – Veneto: viaggi, contatti, scambi*, eds. Justyna Łukaszewicz, Małgorzata E. Kowalczyk; *Italica Wratislaviensia* 2021, vol. 12(2): *Polonia – Veneto: viaggi, contatti, scambi*, eds. J. Łukaszewicz, Małgorzata E. Kowalczyk; *Romanica Cracoviensia* 2023, special issue (no. 3): *Gentiluomo Padovano. Relazioni culturali delle élite polacche con la Repubblica di Venezia; Perspektywy Kultury* 2023, vol. 41(2/1): *Classical Inspirations and Cultural Aspirations of Polish Cultural Promoters in Padua*. Several volumes are still pending publication, including those devoted to Polish *consiliarii*, students connected to military academies, and editions of previously unknown archival materials.

Marta Wojtkowska-Maksymik, a scholar of this work. The issue also includes important contributions that offer valuable syntheses from the perspective of Polish–Paduan relations—such as the article by Wojciech Tygielski, which explores Padua as a significant point of reference for Polish culture. The thematic section is further enriched by studies such as Maria Leśniowska’s examination of the cultural baggage brought back from Padua by students from Silesia; Roksana Rał-Niemeczek’s analysis of the works of Jan Kochanowski—the most prominent Polish poet of the Renaissance—who stayed in Padua three times between 1552 and 1559; Sławomir Marchel’s reflections on the figure of the Polish Padua-trained physician as a model of the learned man in the early modern period and his reception in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth; and, finally, an important reminder offered by Elżbieta Barbara Lenart, who writes about the widely known Italian architect, artist, and writer Camillo Boito. It is worth adding that Camillo Boito’s biographies rarely mention his Polish roots on his mother’s side—Countess Józefina Radlińska—an omission all the more significant given that it was thanks to Boito that many Polish memorials were preserved in the Basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua. In connection with the last of the authors mentioned in this issue, it should also be noted that Barbara Lenart is affiliated with the *Accademia dei Rampanti*, an active scholarly association based in Padua. This international society of researchers continues the legacy of the mid-16th-century “academy among the Poles,” which brought together Polish students around the ideals characteristic of the fashionable and dynamic Renaissance academies of the time.

The achievements of this broad group of scholars bring a twofold satisfaction. On the one hand, the new insights provided by the research discussed above—largely based on previously unknown archival materials—have sparked considerable interest within the academic community. On the other hand, they also evoke a certain sense of regret, and perhaps even envy, among researchers accustomed to working independently, outside of collaborative teams where expertise and knowledge are mutually shared. That is why the continuation of these studies—and more importantly, their expansion to include an ever-wider circle of scholars—as well as the preparation of new editions of Padua-related archival sources, will not only serve as a valuable repository of knowledge, but have already become a vivid example among young researchers of a collaborative mode of scholarship. This approach stands in stark contrast to the previously common tendency to monopolize research topics, a practice that often led to deep frustration and the inability to see one’s academic projects through to completion.

Finally, it is worth noting that the ongoing research into the connections between the Polish elites and the culture of the Republic of Venice continues to be fueled by anniversary celebrations, most notably the 550th anniversary of Nicolaus Copernicus's birth, which was commemorated with great ceremony in 2023. As a result, two new volumes have been added to the growing body of studies on Polish–Paduan relations, both published in connection with these celebrations. The academic community at the University of Ferrara produced a collection of articles titled *Niccolò Copernico, Ferrara e le università nel Rinascimento. Studenti, docenti, eredità* (edited by Marco Bresadola, 2024). Meanwhile, the University of Padua honored its former student with the volume *«Totus mundus commutatur» Copernico e l'Università di Padova* (edited by Vincenzo Milanese, Padova 2025).

The volumes mentioned above, which include numerous references to Polish studies on Polish–Paduan relations, bear clear witness to the significance of the publications prompted by the 800th anniversary of the University of Padua. Thanks to this initiative, it has been possible—if only in part—to make up for time lost due to Poland's complex history and to highlight the achievements and values of Polish scholarship and culture as an integral part of the rich and multifaceted heritage of European civilization.

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