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Introduction

This issue of the *Rocznik Filozoficzny Ignatianum* is devoted to the contribution of the Polish Jesuit Tomasz Dunin Szpot (1644/45–1713) to the study of Jesuit missions in China, as documented in his principal manuscript works preserved in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu in Rome.

The volume opens with an article by Marek Inglot SJ devoted to the early development of the Society of Jesus in the context of its initial missionary orientation, as expressed in the *Formula Instituti* (1540) and further developed in the *Constitutions*. The author demonstrates that the key features of the order – availability, mobility, and the universal character of its mission – were already present in the vision of Ignatius of Loyola and his first companions. The article also examines the formation of a global apostolic project based on obedience to the pope, as well as the development of ad gentes missions and educational institutions that shaped Jesuit activity in the early modern period.

Davor Antonucci studies the letters of the Italian Jesuit Prospero Intorcetta as an expression of the global character of the missionary enterprise, which created a network of connections linking the activities of the Society of Jesus in China with European courts in order to secure

financial support for the missions. Newly available documents make it possible to trace the activities of Jesuit procurators traveling to Rome precisely for this purpose. The article focuses on the work of Martino Martini and Prospero Intorcetta, particularly in relation to fundraising and the episode involving the trade in musk, highlighting the continuity of their efforts.

Gościwit Malinowski delves into the perception of Islam and Muslims in China in Tomasz Dunin Szpot's *Historia Sinarum Imperii*. The study situates this account within the broader context of political, religious, and intellectual relations between Europe and the Islamic world in the early modern period. The author discusses Szpot's treatment of the origins and development of Islam in China, the role of Muslim communities, and their contacts with missionaries, paying particular attention to terminology (including the distinction between *religio* and *superstitio*) and narratives of its transmission through Persian merchants, Muslim scholars, and Mongol connections. The article also traces polemical encounters between Jesuits and Muslim scholars, showing how early modern European missionary historiography interpreted the presence of Islam in East Asia.

Janusz Smołucha presents Tomasz Ignacy Szpot Dunin as a Jesuit historiographer of the Chinese mission who, as a *Sarmata scriptor*, transferred the cultural experience of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth into his description of China. The author highlights the importance of Szpot's formation in a borderland environment and the influence of multiethnic and multiconfessional realities on his interpretation of the Orient, perceived not as exotic but as comparable to Eastern Europe. The article examines his approach to imperial authority in moral terms, his ordering of religious traditions, and his tendency toward a broad Eurasian perspective. It also emphasizes that Szpot's writings constitute not only a compendium of knowledge about China but also a Sarmatian theological-political reflection on order and Christian mission.

Natalia Królikowska considers the sources and interpretative frameworks that shaped the image of the Muscovite state in the works of Tomasz Szpot Dunin, with particular attention to its role in Central Asia, Siberia, and its relations with China at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The author investigates whether Szpot's narrative was based on earlier Catholic accounts or on reports produced by Jesuits active in China, and to what extent it reflected the stereotypes and political interests of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth after 1686. The article also addresses the influence of the aims of the Society of Jesus on his treatment of the subject, situating the analysis within the

broader discussion of the tension between loyalty to the state and to the religious order.

Łukasz Burkiewicz offers an account of the expedition the expedition of the Portuguese Jesuit Bento de Goës SJ (1602–1607), undertaken to verify Matteo Ricci's hypothesis concerning the identity of Cathay and China and to locate Christian communities. The author highlights the significance of this journey for European geography and analyzes it on the basis of well-known accounts as well as the less frequently used description by Tomasz Ignacy Dunin Szpot, likely derived from a now-lost report by Ricci.

Paweł Nowakowski presents a comparative analysis of the works of Antonio Possevino and Tomasz Szpot Dunin as two Jesuits united by a shared project: the conceptualization of the Christianization of Asia, especially China. He demonstrates that Possevino, in his *Bibliotheca Selecta*, outlined a global and pragmatic vision of Jesuit mission, whereas Szpot Dunin, writing a century later, developed it through a focused account of China and by emphasizing the role of Alessandro Valignano. In conclusion, it is argued that Szpot Dunin's work constitutes a realization of Possevino's earlier project, reflecting a coherent strategy of Jesuit global evangelization.

Liu Xun explores the problem of centralization of imperial power in late Ming and early Qing China on the basis of Tomasz Dunin Szpot's *Historiae Sinarum Imperii*. Combining a Jesuit perspective with the context of Sarmatian political thought, the author employs a historical-comparative method. He examines Szpot's concept of imperial authority, particularly the *anima-corporis* metaphor, his rejection of tyranny, and the role of legal and bureaucratic constraints. Comparison with modern sinological scholarship shows Szpot's interpretation as a system balancing strong rule with moral limitations. The article emphasizes that his explanation of the fall of the Ming dynasty reveals an awareness of the structural weaknesses of this model, presenting his work as a significant contribution to the history of political thought and early sinology.

Andrzej Wadas analyzes the portrayal of Zhang Xianzhong's rule in Tomasz Dunin Szpot's account contained in *Collectanea Historiae Sinesis*. The author demonstrates that Szpot does not merely record events but interprets them through classical and biblical frameworks, but also presents Zhang as a paradigmatic tyrant. The article highlights the use of anti-tyrannical discourse and references to both biblical and classical traditions. Situating the analysis within the context of Jesuit historiography, it shows how descriptions of violence were transformed into moral and theological reflection. Overall, the study underscores the role of

interpretative frameworks in shaping the European image of China in the early modern period.

Monika Miazek-Męczynska reflects on the description of the funeral ceremonies of Xu Guangqi in Tomasz Dunin Szpot's *Historiae Sinarum Imperii*. The analysis highlights the interweaving of Chinese and Christian traditions in these rites, pointing to the significance of the Jesuit method of accommodation developed by Matteo Ricci. The analysis emphasizes that the preservation of local secular practices was possible within a Christian framework. The description of the funeral thus serves as evidence of the reconciliation of both traditions and confirms the effectiveness of Jesuit missionary strategies in seventeenth-century China.

Bogdan Zemanek addresses the problem of Tomasz Dunin Szpot's accounts of the events of 1683, namely the Qing conquest of the Zheng state in Taiwan and the arrival of Bishop François Pallu. The author argues that Szpot marginalizes the political significance of these events, presenting them briefly and with inaccuracies, while giving extensive attention to Pallu's arrival due to its relevance for missionary disputes and the Chinese Rites Controversy. The article explains that Szpot's perspective was shaped by his role as a historian of the missions and by the context of inter-order rivalry. The analysis demonstrates how missionary priorities and spatial perceptions influenced the European image of China, often obscuring major political transformations.

Hanna Wadas reconstructs the image of the Kangxi Emperor in Tomasz Dunin Szpot's account, highlighting the mechanisms of his idealization in Jesuit missionary writings. The author shows that Szpot presents the ruler as an exemplary monarch, endowed with exceptional intellectual abilities and virtues of governance. Particular emphasis is placed on the emperor's interest in European sciences and on the role of Jesuits – especially Ferdinand Verbiest and Thomas Pereira – as his teachers. The article shows that this portrayal fits within a broader pattern of idealizing rulers favorable to missionary activity.

Bartłomiej Wołyniec offers a study of the life of the Polish Jesuit Jan Mikołaj Smogulecki, a scholar and missionary active in seventeenth-century China. The author examines his origins, education, and public career, which he relinquished upon entering the Society of Jesus. He further analyzes Smogulecki's missionary and scientific work in China, particularly in the fields of mathematics and astronomy. Particular attention is given to his role in establishing contacts with Chinese elites. Overall, the article portrays him as a figure who combined scientific and religious pursuits and as a significant participant in the dialogue between European and Chinese cultures.

Katarzyna Gara examines the writing style of Tomasz Dunin Szpot in *Historiae Sinarum Imperii*, presenting it as a self-conscious form of early modern learned Latin. She identifies a synthesis of scholarly rigor, classical rhetoric, and missionary theological narrative. The author underscores the cognitive, persuasive, and interpretive functions of this style, which enables the translation of Chinese realities into the idiom of Latin culture. Drawing on examples from the text, the analysis further reveals the richness of the linguistic devices and rhetorical strategies employed.

In the final article of the volume, Tomasz Śmigła examines the application of digital humanities tools in research on Jesuit missions in China, using the edition of *Historia Sinarum Imperii* as a case study. The author discusses the full research process – from digitization and HTR transcription, through critical editing in Classical Text Editor, to corpus analysis and the use of language models. The article demonstrates that digital technologies do not replace the researcher but rather expand their methodological and interpretative capacities. The text also emphasizes the importance of selecting appropriate tools in relation to specific research objectives.

The volume is rounded out by two book reviews: one by Krzysztof Bekieszczuk, devoted to Ines G. Županov's *Jesuit Missions in Coastal and South India (1543–1773). Between Mission and Empire*, and another by Robert Danieluk SJ, concerning Kilian Stumpf's *The Acta Pekinensia or Historical Records of the Maillard de Tournon Legation*, vol. 3: *January 1708 – February 1709*, eds. Paul Rule and Claudia von Collani (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2024; *Studies in the History of Christianity in East Asia*, 10).

We wish you an enjoyable reading.
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