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Introduction

We are presenting a new issue of the *Ignatianum Philosophical Yearbook* to the Readers, this time largely devoted to ecclesiastical matters, and in particular to papal diplomacy.

In the first article, Dorota Gregorowicz presents an analysis of how the international authority of the Holy See developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, based on the principle of the so-called active neutrality. The core of papal diplomacy in the modern era were apostolic nunciatures – permanent diplomatic representations in the capitals of Catholic countries. However, the nuncios, while staying in constant contact with Rome, had a lot of freedom of action, acting as mediators, arbitrators and overseers of the religious life of the faithful in their subordinate area.

In another article, Tomáš Černušák analyzed the attitude of the Prague nuncios at the turn of the seventeenth century towards people of other faiths. He based his reflections on the correspondence of nuncios and related sources referring to confessional differences in the Czech Kingdom. Prague, where Hussitism had been born a century earlier, was the permanent residence of Emperor Rudolf II at that time. For this reason, Prague became a center of international diplomacy and the activity of many diplomats, including apostolic nuncios. They were forced to tolerate the presence of non-believers and even their domination in some areas of political and social life, because they benefited from the legal protection of the state.

The subject of the activity of apostolic nuncios in Central Europe is continued by Henryk Litwin and Paweł Duda on the basis of sources referring to the mobility of Antonio Santa Croce operating in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the years 1627–1630. The authors managed not only to fill the gaps in his itinerary, but also to describe the organizational sphere of the nunciature at the time when the papal representative was outside the court. The article is a valuable addition to the study of travel in modern times.

The activity of the papal nuncio Giovanni Antonio Davia in the Polish Commonwealth is the subject of the article by Wojciech Kęder. It shows the role and importance of this diplomat during the election of the new king after the death of Jan III Sobieski in 1696. As the author pointed out, this election was one of the most corrupt. Despite various pressures, the nuncio sided with the Elector of Saxony, Frederick August Wettin, who, in order to be able to run for the Polish throne, secretly converted to Catholicism. Nuncio Davia legally authenticated this act, by which he brought on himself suspicions of breaking the law, and even accusations of private interest. Wettin's opponents argued above all that, according to an age-old principle, papal diplomats should remain neutral in the face of internal conflicts. According to the author, Nuncio Davia was not guided by private interests, but sided with Wettin for ideological reasons, being convinced that his policy was good for the Catholic Church.

In his article, Ihor Isichenko deals with the influence of the polemical works of Piotr Skarga (1536–1612) on the religious and cultural history of Ukraine. For this purpose, the author used not only the writings of Skarga, but also, e.g., the works of Stanisław Orzechowski, Benedykt Herbst, Herasym Smoterski and Hipacy Pocij. Skarga's writing talent was born during his stay in Vilnius, influenced by the multicultural and multi-religious atmosphere of that city. It was there that his work, *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* [*On the Unity of the Church of God*] (1577) was written, which contained a lecture on the Tridentine ecclesiological concept. It provided the basis for launching the process of a union between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the Polish Commonwealth.

Natalia Królikowska-Jedlińska presents an extremely interesting story of Polish Jesuits requesting a permission to participate in missions in the countries of the Middle and Far East from the 1620s to the 1730s from the General of the Society of Jesus. These requests referred to territories under Muslim rule and East Asian countries. China was the most popular destination. Those missionaries who failed to obtain permission to go to China were content with pastoral work in the Caucasus or Persia. Some of the Jesuits, using the support of Polish rulers or influential magnates,

went to distant countries, serving in diplomatic missions, and only after the fact they decided to submit the so-called *litterae indipetae* to Rome in order to obtain the blessing of the General.

In another article, Bartłomiej Wołyniec presents an original perspective on the Khotyn campaign of 1621 and the process of subsequent formation of the collective memory of it. The sources for this phenomenon are very scattered and fragmentary, based mainly on notes and excerpts prepared by historians before the great fire of Krakow in 1850. After their analysis, it turned out that for the inhabitants of the Polish Commonwealth, the Battle of Khotyn played the same role as the victory of the Christian fleet over the Turks at Lepanto half a century earlier did in the European dimension.

Hanna Wadas analyzes Aeschylus' *Oresteia* in terms of crimes committed by the heroes of the tragedy: infanticide, manslaughter and matricide. In this context, the author referred to the role of public institutions deciding about the life and death of citizens, to the importance of religion in social and political life, to rituals aimed at purifying the criminal, and to the functioning of the legal system on the example of the Attic judicial procedure.

In the next text, Magdalena Sadlik presents the Eternal City in selected accounts of the travels of Poles from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The author, based mainly on *Kartki z podróży* [*Travel Papers*] by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, presented the solemn atmosphere accompanying Polish pilgrims visiting Rome. It was a particular joy to them to meet with local Polish diaspora and visit places important for Polish history.

In the last article published in this issue, Joanna Małocha presents an image of the history of Poland in textbooks for teaching Polish as a foreign language. The author draws attention to the importance of passing on knowledge about the culture and history of the native country by Polish philologists teaching foreigners. The lack of this element may cause difficulties in understanding the Polish civilizational specificity and lead to problems of language communication disturbed by an erroneous use of idioms and unusual grammatical constructions, which are inextricably linked with Polish historical memory and the Polish cultural background.

I sincerely recommend all these articles.

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