

Henryk Sławiński¹

Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

The Concise History of the Theological Journal “Polonia Sacra”: A Hundred Jubilee

The liberation of Poland in 1918, after the First World War, and after hundred twenty three years of occupation by Russia, Prussia, and Austria did not happen by mere chance. Many people from different backgrounds played important roles that contributed to this event. Aside from Polish politicians very active in international diplomacy, and the soldiers fighting on battlefields, there were also many intellectualists,

¹ Dr. Habil. Henryk Slawinski, prof. UPJPII, is a Roman-Catholic priest ordained in 1989. He has earned Master's Degree in Pedagogy and his PhD. in Pastoral Theology and Habilitation in Homiletics. He has taught Liturgy, Homiletics, as well as Pedagogy in several priests' seminaries and the Pontifical Theological Faculty in Poland. At present, he is a professor at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, and gives lectures in the priest seminary of the Missionaries of the Holy Family. He has authored ten books and numerous published articles in Polish, German, English, and Italian. He published Polish translations of two documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* (Washington, D.C. 1982) and *Preaching the Mystery of Faith* (Washington, D.C. 2013). He is the Editor in Chief of “Polonia Sacra”; the President of Society for Polish Teachers of Homiletics, a member of Polish Theological Society, and a member of The Council for the Religious Language at The Council for the Polish Language at the Presidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

and people engaged in art, who cared for the development of the Polish language, traditions, religious rites and prayers in the Polish language. There were also various theologians that made a conscious effort to support the intellectual formation of the Poles. One of the platforms, which allowed the development and popularization of creative ideas was the theological journal, "Polonia Sacra". This paper seeks to elaborate in a very concise manner the history of this journal, as well as the contemporary challenges facing it. This is why first and foremost, this paper will assess the ideological situation in Europe after the year of rebirth of Poland – 1918. Then, what will be addressed, is the turbulent development of the journal from 1918. The last point that will be covered is the present condition of the journal in the context of new reforms of the higher education system in Poland. The paper will be finished with a short conclusion.

1. The ideological situation in Europe after the year of rebirth of Poland – 1918

In the epoch, in which the Poles regained anew their own country on November 11, 1918 – after a long period of occupation by three powerful neighbors – several dominant ideologies prevailed, most notably in the field of education. One may label them as naturalism, materialism, and nationalism. Aside of these ideologies there was also an emerging Christian awareness and understanding of the human person, nation, society, and the Church².

Christian philosophers, historians, theologians, and canonical lawyers attempted to immerse themselves in the growing cultural dialog. The drive for this involvement was the publishing of the Canon Law in 1917 by Pope Benedict XV (1854–1922). It was published during the First World War, shortly before its end.

² H. Sławiński, *Wychowanie prorodzinne. Według pedagogów katolickich Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2000, p. 19–42.

2. The beginning and the turbulent renewal of "Polonia Sacra"

The independence received by Poles after the First World War gave place to the intellectual activities of the well educated people. Some of these individuals were Christians, who wanted to instruct their fellow citizens on the following points: how to be good people, how to remain active members of the society, and how to be faithful members of the Catholic Church looking for God.

One of the means of influence on the society that was disposable to them was the academic review. Among different university magazines, periodicals, and reviews the newly minted "Polonia Sacra" (initiated by Roman-Catholic priest and professor at the Jagiellonian University, dr Jana Nepomucen Fijałek (1864-1936) stood out. The journal was founded in Krakow in 1918 and was the organ of the Society of Pope Benedict XV. The reason for creation of this society was the publication of the Canon Law (*Codex iuris canonici*) by pope Benedict XV. According to the status of the society, its aim was the unification of the academics, who were engaged in teaching the doctrine of the Catholic Church on Polish territories. Also according to its status, this society distanced itself from the political engagement, and concentrated itself on the aim of spreading the Christian culture among Poles³. One of the means was the publication, the support and the popularization of the Catholic reviews, resources, and books⁴. Therefore the magazine "Polonia Sacra" had a subtitle "The Scientific Publication of the Society of Pope Benedict XVth edited by Fr. Jan Fijałek, Professor of the Jagiellonian University".

Indeed, dr Jana Nepomucen Fijałek was the founder of the magazine and naturally its first editor-in-chief. He was respected in his era as the

³ *Statut Towarzystwa imienia Jego Świątobliwości Papieża Benedykta XV*, Kraków 1917, §3. The Statute was approved on August 23rd, 1917 and issued by the Society of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XV. *Statut Towarzystwa imienia Jego Świątobliwości Papieża Benedykta XV*, Kraków 1917, p. 14.

⁴ *Statut Towarzystwa imienia Jego Świątobliwości Papieża Benedykta XV*, Kraków 1917, §4 b.

best historian of the Church in Poland. Unfortunately he was also known as someone with a strong sense of irony and a demanding personality towards young scholars, which prevented him from organizing a school around himself⁵.

In the group of the cooperators of the magazine there were professors of the Lviv University, Jagiellonian University and Warsaw University, among others: Władysław Abraham (1860–1940), Jan Grabowski, Jerzy Nowosielski, and Witold Rubczyński (1864–1938). The review was publishing the works in the field of the history of the Church, ethics, patrology and canon law.

In the year 1922 the Society Pope Benedict XV was dissolved, because its president, Dr. Antoni Górski (1862–1928) left Krakow for good in order to be a professor at the Free Polish University in Warsaw.

Left by the supportive protector, father Jan Nepomucen Fijałek started to publish the magazine under the updated title “Nowa Polonia Sacra: a periodical devoted to the study of Church history, canon law and theological literature in Poland”. He was the sole publisher and editor of “Nowa Polonia Sacra”. The issues of the new magazine appeared with un ordered chronology. The first issue of “Nowa Polonia Sacra” (Nr 2) was printed in 1926, the issue Nr 1 – 1928, and the Nr 3 – in 1939, which means after the death of fr. Fijałek.

The publishing of the theological magazine, which was meant as a continuation of “Polonia Sacra” was resumed after the Second World War in 1948. The title was subtly changed to “Polonia Sacra. The Theological Quarterly”. The numbering of its issues began anew, so the pre-war numbering was not retained. The magazine was published under the guidance of professors of the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University. Its Editor-in-Chief in the postwar years 1948–1954 was father Władysław Wicher (1888–1969), professor of moral theology at the Jagiellonian University and the dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University in the years 1937–1939. From 1954 Fr. Prof.

⁵ S. Piech, *Jan Nepomucen Fijałek (1864–1936)*, w: *Złota Księga Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej*, red. S. Piech, Kraków 2000, p. 381.

Władysław Wicher transferred to the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw, where he worked until 1957⁶.

The year 1954 brought a big change at the Jagiellonian University and Warsaw University. The Faculties of Theology on those both universities were dissolved by the communist authorities. On their place the communists arranged the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw, which in the year 1999 became Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. In the decades after the year 1954 the number of students at the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw was strictly limited by the communist authorities to a few hundreds. Nevertheless some activities were possible.

The decision of removing of the Faculty of Theology from the Jagiellonian University had consequence for "Polonia Sacra". The magazine ceased to be the publication of professors of the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University, and began to appear as the organ of professors of the Faculty of Canon Law at the then created Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw. The subtitle of "Polonia Sacra" was again changed. The magazine received the name: "Polonia Sacra. The Canonical and Historical Quarterly". The numbering of the issues was maintained, and the Editor-in-Chief in the years 1954-1958 was father Marian Myrcha (1907-1996), professor of the Canon Law. In those years the magazine was published in one thousand copies⁷.

In 1959 the title of the magazine was radically changed to "The Canon Law: A Quarterly". The only sign of the connectivity with the earlier magazine was the bibliography – the content of the issues of "Polonia Sacra" published in the years 1948-1958, which was included in the second issue of "The Canon Law: A Quarterly" in 1959.

The new history of "Polonia Sacra" review began in 1997. Then the magazine was reactivated at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow, and was published in Krakow twice a year. The occasion for

⁶ M. Janiak, *Polonia Sacra - przeszłość i treść czasopisma*, „Polonia Sacra” R. I (XIX) nr 1/45 (1997), p. 66.

⁷ M. Janiak, *Polonia Sacra - przeszłość i treść czasopisma*, „Polonia Sacra” R. I (XIX) nr 1/45 (1997), p. 73.

the fourth initiation of the periodical “Polonia Sacra” was the 600 jubilee of the erection of the Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University on January 11, 1937 by pope Boniface IX with the papal bull *Eximie devotionis affectus*⁸.

In the introduction to the first issue edited in 1997 at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow, the rector of the academy, fr. Prof. Adam Kubiś recalled the program of the theological magazine formulated in 1948 by fr. Prof. Tadeusz Glemma, who was the student and follower of fr. Jan Nepomucen Fijałek at the chair of History of the Church at the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University. According to the Glemma’s statement, those practicing in the field of theology have a duty to answer to the questions of today’s contemporary people in the light of the reason enlightened by the faith. It should provide people responsible for pastoral care with the directions and inspiration. “Polonia Sacra” reestablished in 1997 has as its program the service to the truth, which is a reflection of eternal Truth⁹.

The issue of “Polonia Sacra” numbered: I (XIX) nr 1/45 (1997) was printed in 600 copies and sponsored by the Committee of the Scientific Researches. The issue of “Polonia Sacra” numbered: II (XX) nr 2/46 (1998) was printed in 500 copies and also sponsored by the Committee of the Scientific Researches, and is began by the speech of John Paul II delivered in the academical church of St. Anna in Krakow on the occasion of the 600 jubilee of the erection of the Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University. The next issues of “Polonia Sacra” do not include the information neither of the number of printed copies, nor on the sponsorship. What requires the attention is the fact that since the issue Nr 8/52 (2001) till present, with the only exception of the issue Nr 28/72 (2011) the magazine has the leading subject.

The very simple, one color cover of the journal was changed with issue 17 (2013) 1 (32). It received then the new graphic shape. At the

⁸ A. Kubiś, *Słowo wstępne*, „Polonia Sacra” R. I (XIX) nr 1/45 (1997), p. 3.

⁹ A. Kubiś, *Słowo wstępne*, „Polonia Sacra” R. I (XIX) nr 1/45 (1997), p. 3–4; see: [T. Glemma], *Od redakcji*, „Polonia Sacra” 1 (1948), p. 1–5; *Nasz program*, „Polonia Sacra” nr 1 (1918), p. [V]–VII.

front cover there is the constant title of the journal, changing subject of each issue, and the photo connected with the subject. Beneath the photo there is a list of the authors and the titles of the articles in original languages. The back cover is simpler, and contains the names of the authors and the titles of their articles in English.

The editor-in-chief of “Polonia Sacra” in the span 1997-2009 was father Prof. Dr. habil. Andrzej Zwoliński, a specialist in social doctrine of the Church. Under his leadership there were 24 issues of the magazine edited to the public. After he left the Faculty of Theology for the Faculty of Social Sciences, the position of editor-in-chief of “Polonia Sacra” was conferred to Fr. Dr. habil. Wojciech Zyzak, a specialist in the Spiritual Theology. In the years 2009-2011 he edited six issues of the magazine from Nr 25/69 (2009) to Nr 30/74 (2012). In that time his vice editor-in-chief was Fr. Dr. habil. Henryk Sławiński, who became the editor-in-chief after Fr. Dr. habil. Wojciech Zyzak in the middle of the year 2012 had become a Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow.

In the years 2012-2018 there were 24 issues of the magazine edited under the leadership of Fr. Henryk Sławiński: from Nr 31/75 (2012) till the additional, special Nr 22 (2018), 5 (54) including the Bibliography of all articles printed since the first issue of “Polonia Sacra” edited in 1918.

Since 1998 till Nr 17 (2013), 2 (33) the magazine has been edited bi-annually. Beginning with the issue Nr 18 (2014), 1 (34) “Polonia Sacra” is being published quarterly, and at present the number of copies reaches hundred and five.

3. New time and new challenges

The beginning of the twenty-first century is marked by the connectivity of people via electronic links, communicators, and a growing number of publications available in digital formats on Internet sites. This new situation presented a challenge for existing print academic journals. That is why, beginning with the issue 16 (2012) nr 1 (30/74) (thanks to the efforts of then editor-in-chief Wojciech Zyzak), “Polonia Sacra” started

to appear in electronic form, online. This work with on line issues, identical to the content of the printed issues, including only those published after the appearance of the latter ones has been continued since the issue 16 (2012) nr 2 (31/75) by the next editor-in-chief, Henryk Sławiński. Since then, until the present issue 22 (2018) nr 5 (54), all articles have been available online at no cost.

The aim of “Polonia Sacra” is to promote the original theological research with emphasis on works of scholars in Poland. However, the pages of “Polonia Sacra” are foreseen also for the papers of acknowledged theologians from abroad. Having an international board of editors and reviewers, who are native speakers in different languages, “Polonia Sacra” maintains an international academic recognition. Its cooperation with many theological research centers all over the world allows the staff of editors to present a wide spectrum of contributions to international theological research.

Theology is the academic discipline that deals with Scripture and Tradition, as well as with the culture in which the Word of God has been preached and taught through the centuries. That is why “Polonia Sacra” also publishes articles about important people, ideas, and current events, that had or are still having a great impact on theological research. That is why, another important topic that is well observed by editorial board of “Polonia Sacra,” is the life of brilliant people, who believed in God, as well as their struggles for the truth, and activities undertaken for the benefit of the society. There is also place for the academic papers on the liturgy, popular devotion, religious customs, and traditions, relation between Church and civil authorities, religious communication and studies on religious language.

“Polonia Sacra” is available on line for free at the official website of the publisher of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow.

All the issues have been indexed by such on line indexes as The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (CEJSH); Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL), IC Journals Master List (index-copernicus.com), and “The European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences” (ERIH PLUS). “Polonia Sacra” fulfilled criteria for inclusion to the latter index on May 13, 2017. It was proved then

that the magazine of the Faculty of Theology of Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow fulfils norms required by the mentioned index. The magazine is available on line. Each academic paper is scholarly peer reviewed prior to its approval for publication, and the editorial board follows double blind procedure. These explicit procedures for external peer review are respected by “Polonia Sacra”. The magazine has academic editorial board, which includes members affiliated with universities or other independent research organizations. The journal has valid International Standard Serial Number (ISSN code), confirmed by the international ISSN register: ISSN 1428-5673, which refers to print issues of “Polonia Sacra”. Additionally since the issue 16 (2012), 1 (30) all the following issues have electronic International Standard Serial Number (e-ISSN): e-ISSN 2391-6575.

Since then all the academic papers published in “Polonia Sacra” have their Digital Object Identifier (DOI), which begins with the identifier of the whole magazine: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15633/ps>. To this general identifier the specific number of the paper is added. This characterization of all papers allows for the standardization procedures by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Another requirement fulfilled by “Polonia Sacra” is that all articles approved for publishing are accompanied by abstracts in English and bibliography, as well as information on authors’ affiliations and their e-mail addresses. And last, but not least, the editor-in-chief pays attention to the parity of the articles, in order that no more than two thirds of the authors publishing in “Polonia Sacra” are from Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow. This also allows for the pursuit of the aim to publish at least one third of the articles from authors in other countries. This leads to the following breakdown: the journal is considered to be international, as more than one third of the articles are published by authors from another country; national – when more than one third of the articles are published by authors from another academic institution; and local – when less than one third of the articles are published by authors from another academic institution. “Polonia Sacra” may thus be treated as national, at the threshold of being international.

Conclusion

The hundred year anniversary of Poland receiving freedom and autonomy goes hand in hand with the hundredth jubilee of the theological journal of Theological Faculty in Krakow. The history for both the faculty and the theological journal was turbulent. As a result of the hatred from communist authorities towards the Roman Catholic Church, theology, and religion as a whole, religious structures were treated by Marxists as the opium for the poor. New times bring new challenges. In the last years a lot of new theological journals appeared in Poland due to the support of the ministry of higher education. The reform of this education, which was implemented on October 1, 2018 aims to reduce radically the large number of periodicals supported financially by the mentioned ministry. There is a chance that “Polonia Sacra” will remain as the academic journal, which allows many scholars mostly from Krakow, but also from all over Poland and foreign countries, to publish the fruits of their theological research.

Summary

The Concise History of the Theological Journal “Polonia Sacra”

The paper deals with the history of the theological journal of Theological Faculty in Krakow. It was initiated just before the end of the First World War, in 1918, and published not without difficulties. There were only three issues printed till the Second World War. After it the publication of “Polonia Sacra” was reinitiated in Krakow. However, because the communist government in Poland expelled the Theological Faculty from Jagiellonian University in Krakow, and allowed only that the theology might be taught at the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw, the journal “Polonia Sacra” was published for a very short time in Warsaw. The renewal of the journal “Polonia Sacra” as the official publication of the Faculty of Theology in Krakow was restarted again in 1997 and has been continued till now. The Internet era became a challenge for the journal, which gained the national recognition, and has the aspiration to be an international forum for the academic exchange of theological research.

Keywords: Polonia Sacra, theological journal

Zwięzła historia teologicznego czasopisma „Polonia Sacra” w setną rocznicę powstania

Artykuł dotyczy historii czasopisma teologicznego Wydziału Teologicznego w Krakowie. Został on zainicjowany tuż przed końcem pierwszej wojny światowej, w 1918 roku i był wydawany nie bez trudności. W okresie dwudziestolecia międzywojennego wydano tylko trzy numery. Po drugiej wojnie światowej ponownie zainicjowano publikację „Polonia Sacra” w Krakowie. Ponieważ jednak komunistyczny rząd w Polsce usunął Wydział Teologiczny z Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie i pozwolił jedynie na nauczanie teologii w Akademii Teologii Katolickiej w Warszawie, czasopismo „Polonia Sacra” było wydane przez bardzo krótki czas w Warszawie. Odnowienie czasopisma teologicznego, „Polonia Sacra” jako oficjalnego pisma Wydziału Teologicznego w Krakowie nastąpiło w 1997 roku i jest kontynuowane do dziś. Era internetu stała się wyzwaniem dla czasopisma, które zyskało narodowe uznanie i ma aspiracje, aby stać się międzynarodowym forum wymiany teologicznej myśli akademickiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Polonia Sacra, czasopismo teologiczne

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