

A Paradigmatic Shift since the Velvet Revolution? State-of-the-art Research and new Historiographical Perspectives on the Pontifical Seminary of Olomouc (1579-1741)

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Abstract: Since the nineteenth century, the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary has been the object of numerous studies. Nevertheless, these research efforts rarely attempted to assess the overall impact of the seminary in the Margrave of Moravia and the territories under its supervision. To date, a comprehensive analysis of its development, from its inception until its suppression, is still missing. The grounds for the historiographical neglect towards this institution, which constituted a core element of the Jesuit mission in Olomouc, can be found in the cultural, socio-economic, linguistic, and political barriers that affected the historians dealing with this topic before the Velvet Revolution (1989), the re-establishment of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome (1994), and the entrance of the Czech Republic in the European Union (2004). The aim of this article, therefore, is to provide the readership with a panoramic review of the state-of-the-art research on the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary until 1992 and to outline the new historiographical perspectives opened with the demise of the communist Czechoslovakian regime.

Keywords: Pontifical Seminary; Olomouc; Jesuits; Velvet Revolution; Middle Ages.

Rezumat: Încă din secolul al XIX-lea, Seminarul Pontifical din Olomouc a făcut obiectul a numeroase studii. Cu toate acestea, eforturile de cercetare au încercat rareori să evalueze impactul global al seminarului în Margravatul Moraviei și în teritoriile aflate sub supravegherea sa. Până în prezent, lipsește încă o analiză cuprinzătoare a evoluției sale, de la înființare până la desființare. Motivele neglijării istorice a acestei instituții, care a constituit un element central al misiunii iezuite

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din Olomouc, pot fi găsite în barierele culturale, socio-economice, lingvistice și politice care au afectat istoricii care s-au ocupat de acest subiect înainte de Revoluția de Catifea (1989), de reînființarea Institutului Istoric Ceh din Roma (1994) și de aderarea Republicii Ceha la Uniunea Europeană (2004). Scopul acestui articol este, așadar, de a oferi cititorilor o imagine de ansamblu asupra cercetărilor de ultimă oră privind Seminarul Pontifical din Olomouc până în 1992 și de a schița noile perspective istorice deschise odată cu căderea regimului comunist cehoslovac.

Cuvinte cheie: Seminar pontifical; Olomouc; iezuiți; Revoluția de Catifea; Evul Mediu.

Introduction

Last night, Most Illustrious Monsignor, a very dark eclipse and a rain of tears occurred here in the North, with the bitter news that came to us from the death of that true father of many nations, the Most Holy Gregory XIII. [...] However, throwing myself most humbly before Her and, through Her, to those who have perhaps already been elected Pontiff, I recommend this most holy undertaking [i.e., the Pontifical seminars] to Her; the only means to renew the world and to keep alive the possession of this Holy See amid of every most barbarous nation, not to mention how grave a shock our religion would feel if so many poor sheep were forced to scatter and return under the teeth of those wolves that tear infinite souls every day (so to speak).¹ As the quote above reports, on May 22, 1585, the Jesuit Father Antonio Possevino² lamented

¹ "Hier a notte, Monsignor Illustrissimo, si fece qui nel Settentrione un oscurissimo eclissi et una pioggia di lagrime, coll'acerba nuova che ci venne dalla morte di quel vero padre *multarum gentium*, Santissimo Gregorio XIII. [...] Però, gettandomi humilissimamente inanti lei et, per mezzo suo, a chi sarà stato forse già eletto in Pontefice, le raccomando questa santissima impresa [...]; unico mezo a rinnovare il mondo et a tener vivo il possesso di cotesta Santa Sede in mezo di ogni piu barbara natione, per tacer quanto grave scossa sentirebbe la religione nostra, se tante poverelle pecorelle fossero costrette di sbandarsi et ritornare sotto i denti di que' lupi ehe sbranano (per cosi dir) infinite anime ogni giorno." Antonio Possevino, SJ, to Tolomeo Gallio, May 22, 1585. László Lukács, SJ, 'Die nordischen papstlichen Seminarien und Possevino (1577-1587)', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, XXIV/47 (1955): 33-94.

² For his biography, cfr. Emanuele Colombo, 'POSSEVINO, Antonio,' in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia, 2016), vol. 85, pp. 153-58.
[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-possevino_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-possevino_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

in such a sorrowful tone the death of Pope Gregory XIII to the Cardinal Tolomeo Gallio.³ Appealing to the influence of the former secretary of State, Possevino aimed at safeguarding the numerous Pontifical seminars erected by Gregory XIII in his long tenure (1572-1585).

These seminars had been established (mainly under Possevino's instigation) across the entire European continent. They aimed to convert the youth of these countries where Catholicism had been outlawed and persecuted. In this vast educational network spreading from Rome to Vilnius, the *seminarium pontificium* of Olomouc (Olmütz) - then capital of the Margrave of Moravia - played a pivotal role. In the grand scheme for propagating the Catholic faith among all the nations on Earth, Olomouc, together with its twin seminary of Braunsberg (Braniewo) - then part of the bishopric of Warmia - was assigned the delicate task of overseeing Northern-Central Europe. Established at the end of 1578, the seminary welcomed young students of several nations, namely Balts, Hungarians, Moscovites, Ruthenians, Scandinavians, and Transylvanians. Occasionally, pupils from the British Isles, Flanders, and other Catholic territories (above all the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) would receive a scholarship as well. Once they completed their studies at the hands of the local Jesuit Fathers (who had arrived in Olomouc in 1566), such 'fortified' youths were supposed to return to their homeland and lay the foundations of the Catholic renewal.

Throughout its existence, ranging from its initiation in 1578 to its cessation in 1741, the Olomouc Seminary went through various upheavals that challenged, deviated and even undermined its original mission. Primarily, the dismay of the Catholic faith in the Moravian diocese, coupled with the paucity of human and financial capital, prompted the Olomouc bishops, from Stanislaus Pavlovský to Cardinal Francis of Dietrichstein, to Archduke Leopold William of Habsburg, to demand (and repeatedly bestow) some of the seminary's scholarships for the formation of the diocesan clergy. Secondly, the course of the Thirty Years War and its reversals, such as the revolt of the Moravian Estates (1619) and the Swedish occupation of Olomouc (1642-1650), imposed dramatic displacements of the Olomouc seminary and the relocation of its students in other Pontifical and Jesuit facilities. Ultimately,

³ For his biography, cfr. Giampiero Brunelli, "GALLIO, Tolomeo," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia, 1998), vol. 51, pp. 685-690.
[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/tolomeo-gallio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/tolomeo-gallio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

due to the limited resources at its disposal, the seminary oscillated between the myriad goals it was supposed to achieve; a failure or complication in one context implied the shift of the missionary resources and impetus to another.

Methodology

In their attempt to reform the Catholic Church, the Council fathers gathered in Trent (1545–1563) placed a special emphasis on the preparation of future priests. The eighteenth canon of the twenty-third session of the Council, held on July 15, 1563, decreed that, to educate the ecclesiastical youth in their dioceses, bishops shall establish a *seminarium*. This bucolic term, familiar in the ancient world for Lucius Columella's *De Arboribus*,⁴ had already been Christianised by St. Ambrose to indicate Noah's Ark.⁵ However, the direct inspiration for this novel institution came from Cardinal Reginald Pole, who expressed in the council of London of 1555 the urgency of designing spiritual nurseries of seedlings, where the Catholic youth was to be nurtured in the faith, secluded from the dangers of secular life.⁶ Indeed, as for other Tridentine decrees, the implementation of episcopal seminaries proved challenging, especially in the dioceses impacted by the Reformation,⁷ since bishops often lacked detailed instructions and adequate resources.⁸ Therefore, in the pontificate of Gregory XIII, the Holy See resolved to found and endow several Pontifical seminaries, the first of which was erected in Vienna in 1573.

⁴ L. Iunii Moderati Columellae, *De re rustica libri XII. Eiusdem de Arboribus liber, separatus ab aliis* (Lugduni: apud Sebastianum Gryphium, 1548), p. 466.

⁵ Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis, 'De Noe et arca, liber unus' in *Opera Omnia. Volumen Primum* (Mediolani: Typographia Sancti Josephi, 1875), p. 302.

⁶ Simona Negruzzo, 'The Tridentine Proposal for the Formation of the Clergy: The Seminaries,' in Nelson H. Minnich (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Council of Trent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 212–214.

⁷ As lamented by the imperial nuncio Giovanni Delfino, in 1573, among the German bishops and princes, only the bishop of Olomouc had established a diocesan seminar. László Lukács, SJ, 'Die Grundung des Wiener papstlichen Seminars und der Nuntius Giovanni Delfino,' *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, XXIII/45 (1954): 35–75, especially 36.

⁸ Celeste McNamara, *The Bishop's Burden. Reforming the Catholic Church in Early Modern Italy* (Washington D. C: Catholic University of America Press, 2020), pp. 4–6.

The second half of the sixteenth century witnessed also the resumption of tremendous Pontifical efforts to inspire and oversee the conversion of all the nations to Catholicism. Although the apostolate was not a concern of the Council of Trent, its aftermath witnessed the Papal attempts to re-assert the leading role of Rome in spreading the Gospel across the four continents.⁹ The missionary model implemented by the Catholic Church did not possess the traits of the “spiritual conquest” applied in the New World, where spiritual interests advanced under the aegis of temporal weapons.¹⁰ Instead, the Papacy preferred the “way of the piety,” which was the conversion through preachers and priests to reveal to the heretics, the schismatics, the infidels and the pagans “the mistakes, in which they were induced by the persuasion of very wicked men and in which they now live.”¹¹ Videlicet in Europe, a keystone of this evangelisation strategy was the education of the youth and the formation of local clergy for the missionary territories: numerous national colleges and seminars were therefore established in Rome and several European cities, entrusted to the newly established religious orders, in particular the Society of Jesus.¹²

The “Bohemian question,”¹³ the multifarious and (for the Catholic Church) problematic religious milieu generated with the Hussite revolution and exacerbated by the Reformation, acquired a graver and higher-stakes dimension with the relocation of the Imperial capital to Prague in 1583. In this context, within the Catholic field, the desire and pressure to enforce the Tridentine reforms and reject any claim of religious tolerance progressively increased over time, finding their most zealous proponents in the Society of

⁹ Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *A Companion to the Early Modern Catholic Global Missions* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018).

¹⁰ Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Propaganda Fide I: La congregazione pontificia e la giurisdizione sulle missioni* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2022), p. 209.

¹¹ “Ne’ quali a persuasione di huomini sceleratissimi sono incorsi e vivono.” Archivio Storico de Propaganda Fide, Scritture Originali rife- rite nelle Congregazioni Generali 1622 - 1892 (SOCG), I Collegi, vol. 362, “Raggioni date a diversi Illustri Cardinali in favore de ‘Collegi, e seminari instituiti dalla Santità di Gregorio XIII,” fol. 11r. - 31r. (here 13r).

¹² Paul F. Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548-1773* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2019), pp. 48-53.

¹³ František Kavka and Anna Skýbová, ‘The ‘Bohemian Question ‘in the Sixteenth Century,’ in James R. Palmitessa (ed.), *Between Lipany and White Mountain. Essays in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bohemian History in Modern Czech Scholarship* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 149-165.

Jesus and its supporters.¹⁴ The most serious hindrance to the recatholicisation plans of the Bohemian Lands laid in the shortage of ecclesiastical manpower, which left hundreds of parishes and thousands of souls unattended.¹⁵ Overcoming this paucity of 'shepherds' proved indeed challenging for the Catholic leadership, since besides the decline of vocations among the Bohemian (both German and Czech-speaking) youth, the bishops had to handle and improve the dilapidated finances of their dioceses. Therefore, external Catholic support, both in terms of missionaries and resources, appeared crucial for solving the confessional-economic-political riddle posed by the intricate Bohemian question.

State-of-the-art-research

The first historical account of the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary¹⁶ was sketched by the Jesuit Father Johannes Schmidl (1693-1762).¹⁷ In the first volume of his monumental history of the Jesuit Bohemian Province, Schmidl provided a fundamental overview of the seminary, its foundation and purpose.

¹⁴ Francesco Gui, *I gesuiti e la rivoluzione boema. Alle origini della guerra dei trent'anni* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1989), pp. 11-27, 143-177.

¹⁵ See the case of the domain of Mikulov, where the Olomouc bishop could not support the recatholicisation efforts of Adam Dietrichstein and send valid priests for the *cura animarum*. Adam Darlage, 'The Feast of Corpus Christi in Mikulov, Moravia: Strategies of Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation (1579-86),' *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96/4 (2010): 651-677, especially 664-665.

¹⁶ Before him, the Pontifical seminary was briefly mentioned in the celebration of its founder, Gregory XIII, by Marc'antonio Ciappi, *Compendio delle heroiche, et gloriose attioni, et santa vita di Papa Greg. XIII* (Roma: Giovanni Martinelli, 1591), p. 21; the 1596's edition of the *Compendio* is embellished with a fictional image of the seminary, Marc'antonio Ciappi, *Compendio delle heroiche, et gloriose attioni, et santa vita di Papa Greg. XIII. Distinti in Tredici Capi, in memoria delli XIII. anni, ch'egli visse nel suo Felice Ponteficato* (Roma: Stamperia degli Accolti, 1596), p. 33; the seminary was mentioned by the Bohemian Jesuit historiographer Georgius Crugerius in *Sacri pulveres mensis aprilis: ad Sanctomontanam SS. Virginem Mariam* (Pragae: Joannis Arnolti à Dobroslavina, 1669), pp. 114-115, in the entrance of April 20, day of the death of Gregory XIII (interestingly, Crugerius mistakenly postponed Gregory's death by 10 days, exactly those added in the Gregorian calendar reform).

¹⁷ For his biography, cfr. Ivana Čornejová, "SCHMIDL, Johannes, SJ," in Katerina Bobková-Valentová, Jarmila Kašpárková (eds.), *Historiam scribere: rádová historiografie raného novoveku, II, Biografický slovník* (Olomouc: Historický Ústav AV ČR - Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2018), pp. 609-610.

Moreover, Schmidl referred to one of the major turning points in the life of the seminary: the request made in the year 1600 by Cardinal Francis of Dietrichstein to obtain fifteen scholarships for the formation of the Olomouc diocesan clergy.¹⁸ This privilege, granted by Pope Clement VIII, significantly influenced the development of the seminary until the Cardinal's death in 1636. The work of Schmidl, albeit based on original Jesuit archival documentation, was still bound to *theorhetorics* (i.e. convincing the readership that God operated in history)¹⁹ and pre-positivist methodological standards, and therefore can only partially be considered a secondary source.

After Schmidl, the seminary was further investigated by Augustin Theiner (1804–1874). The Silesian Oratorian, future archivist of the Vatican Archives, published in the biennium 1839–1838 two volumes devoted to the Catholic attempts to reconvert Scandinavia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These books belong to the staunchest pro-Papal phase of Theiner's tempestuous religious life²⁰ and were conceived as a response to Leopold Ranke's *Die römischen Päpste*; hence their apologetic tone.²¹ Due to his professorship at Propaganda Fide College, and his cooperation with the ailing archivist Marino Marini, Theiner was one of the few historians allowed to access and publish manuscripts before the opening of the Vatican Archives in 1883.²² The documents pertaining to the Olomouc Seminary, such as its *ratio et leges*

¹⁸ Johannes Schmidl, *Historiae Societatis Iesu Provinciae Bohemiae, pars I (1555 - 1592)* (Pragae: Typis Universitatis Carolo-Ferdinandae in Collegio S.J.ad S.Clementem, per Jacobum Schweiger Factorem, 1747), pp. 433–434; Johannes Schmidl, *Historiae Societatis Iesu Provinciae Bohemiae, pars II (1593–1615)* (Pragae: Typis universitatis Carolo Ferdinandae in Collegio S. J. Ad S. Clementem, per Jacobum Schweiger Factorem, 1749), pp. 230–231, 263.

¹⁹ Marc Fumaroli, 'The Fertility and Shortcomings of Renaissance Rhetoric: The Jesuit Case,' in John o'Malley et al. (eds.), *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, vol 1 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2006), pp. 90–106, especially p. 101.

²⁰ Hubert Jedin, 'Augustin Theiner: Zum 100. Jahrestag seines Todes am 9. August 1874,' *Archiv für schlesische Kirchengeschichte*, 31 (1973): 134–176. The books were published just four years after the announcement of his (re-)conversion to Catholicism. Augustin Theiner, *Geschichte der geistlichen Bildungsanstalten* (Mainz: Kupferberg, 1835), pp. V–LXVI (this preface is dated 13 November, 1833).

²¹ Augustin Theiner, *Versuche und Bemühungen des heiligen Stuhles in den letzten drei Jahrhunderten, die durch Ketzerei und Schisma von ihm getrennten Volker des Nordens wiederum mit der Kirche zu vereinen. Nach geheimen Staatspapieren* (2 vols., Augsburg: Kollmann, 1838), Band 1, Theil 1, pp. VI–VII, 1–102 (the entire preface is indeed an erudite, heartfelt praise of the Catholic Church, St. Peter and his *munus*, inherited by the Roman Pontiffs).

²² Owen Chadwick, *Catholicism and History. The Opening of the Vatican Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 31–45.

and first students' list,²³ advanced significantly the research on the topic, despite lacking proper archival references and their transcription errors.

Besides the brief mention of the seminary by Christian d'Elvert (1803-1896)²⁴ in his history of education in Moravia,²⁵ Theiner's pioneering work remained an isolated historiographical effort for several decades. Only at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Jesuit Father Alois Kroess (1856-1928)²⁶ composed, as part of his monumental history of the Bohemian Province, the first comprehensive study on the Olomouc Pontifical seminary, from its foundation until the bishopric of Cardinal Dietrichstein.²⁷ Kroess had spent two years working in the Roman archive of the Jesuit Order (1894-1896), where he presumably embraced the admonition given by General Luis Martin in the 24th general congregation of the order of 1892 to cultivate and delve into the Society's past.²⁸ Later, he spent several years in Prague, until 1896, consulting sources for his *magnum opus*, whose first volume emerged in 1910.²⁹

²³ Augustin Theiner, *Versuche und Bemühungen des heiligen Stuhles in den letzten drei Jahrhunderten, die durch Ketzerei und Schisma von ihm getrennten Volker des Nordens wiederum mit der Kirche zu vereinen. Nach geheimen Staatspapieren* (2 vols., Augsburg: Kollmann, 1839), Band 1, Theil 2, pp. 56-57, 66, 153-155, 299-306, 313-322.

²⁴ On the life of this influential Moravian historian and politician, cfr. Pavel Cibulka, 'd'ELVERT, Christian Friedrich,' *Biografický slovník českých zemí*, 2020.

²⁵ Christian d'Elvert, *Geschichte der Studien-, Schul- u. Erziehungs-Anstalten in Mähren und Österr. Schlesien, insbesondere der olmützer Universität, in den neueren Zeiten* (Brunn: Rohrer 1857), p. XXXIV. Interestingly, d'Elvert did not quote Schmidl, yet used Crugerius' *Sacri Pulveres* and Joseph Wladislaw Fischer's first history of the city of Olomouc (which however merely translated into German the notions of Schmidl, without any reference) *Geschichte der königl. Hauptstadt und Granzfestung Olmütz im Markgrathume Mahren. Zwenter Band. Welcher die politische Geschichte bis zum Jahre 1808 enthält* (Olmütz: Auf Kosten des Verfassers, gedruckt bey Anton Alex. Skarnitzl, k.k. pr. Buchdrucker, 1808), p. 181.

²⁶ László Szilas, 'Kross, Alois,' in Charles E. O'Neill, S.I., Joaquín Maria Dominquez, S.I. (eds.), *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús. Biográfico-temático. III Infante de Santiago - Piatkiewicz* (Roma-Madrid: Institutum Historicum, S. I. - Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001), p. 2228; Eduard Widmoser, *Südtirol A-Z: Kr-N* (Südtirol-Verlag, 1988), ad indicem.

²⁷ Until 1928 the Bohemian Jesuit Province was not re-established and the Bohemian Lands were part of the Austrian Jesuit Church. Ivo Cerman, 'Jesuit Historiography in Bohemia,' *Jesuit Historiography Online*. <https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/entries/JHO/COM-192532.xml>.

²⁸ Robert Danieluk, S.J., 'Some Remarks on Jesuit Historiography 1773–1814,' in Robert A. Maryks, Jonathan Wright (eds.), *Jesuit Survival and Restoration: A Global History, 1773-1900* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 34-48, especially 37-38.

²⁹ Alois Kroess, *Geschichte der Böhmisches Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu* (4 vols., Wien: Opitz, 1910), I. Band, pp. 516–543; Alois Kroess, *Geschichte der Böhmisches Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu* (4 vols., Wien: Verlag, 1927), II. Band, pp. 668–669, 676–677, 683, 694–696. The entire publication was delayed by severe financial challenges. The fourth and last tome saw the light only in 2012.

Among the historical findings presented by Kroess, who lamentably never quoted his sources verbatim, the most noteworthy is the request of the Olomouc Bishop Stanislaus Pavlovský to obtain six scholarships from the seminary for the formation of the diocesan clergy. This demand, sent to the Jesuit General Claudio Acquaviva in 1586, preceded by almost fifteen years the privilege granted to Dietrichstein.

The research conducted by Theiner and Kroess was then expanded and refined by the Czech archivist and historian Bohumil Navrátil (1870-1936). In his in-depth critical edition of the sources pertaining to the Olomouc Jesuits, Navrátil published numerous documents regarding the Pontifical seminary from the onset of its mission until 1590. In the original project, Navrátil intended to cover the period until the Moravian Estates' Insurrection, yet after the First World War he halted his editing work due to his involvement in the academic life of the new-born Czechoslovak Republic.³⁰ Despite Navrátil's systematic approach, whose results far eclipsed those of his predecessors, this edition cannot be considered exhaustive, since he was barred from accessing the Jesuit archives in Rome, allegedly "due to the disfavour of the Jesuit General Franz Wernz."³¹ Among the most valuable documents discovered by Navrátil, there are the above-mentioned pleas of Pavlovský to obtain scholarships for his diocesan clergy.³²

In 1923, as the result of extensive archival research, two volumes further explored the development and issues faced by the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary. The first tome was devoted to the life and deeds of Gregory XIII, penned by the famous Austrian historian Ludwig von Pastor.³³ The thorough investigation pursued by Pastor did not deal directly with the Olomouc Seminary, yet it highlighted several primary sources regarding its

³⁰ In 1920 he was nominated the first dean of the Philosophical Faculty of the newly established university of Brno, and later in 1927 rector. Martin Vonásek 'Bohumil Navrátil,' Tomáš Borovský (ed.), *Historici na brněnské univerzitě. Devět portrétů* (Brno: Archiv města Brno, 2008), p. 9–33.

³¹ "pro nepřítel generála jezuitů Františka Wernze." Drímal does not provide any reference to this statement. Jaroslav Drímal, 'Archivář Bohumil Navrátil,' *Sborník archivních prací*, 21/1 (1971): 545–561, especially 551.

³² Bohumil Navrátil, *Jesuité Olomouctí za Protireformace. Akty a listiny z let 1558–1619, vol. I 1558–1590* (Brno: 1916), pp. XVII–XVIII, 179–188, 203, 207–220, 227–230, 294–296, 301–303.

³³ Ludwig Pastor, *Geschichte der Papste sei dem Ausgang des Mittelalters. Gregor XIII. (1572–1585)* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1923), pp. 178, 280, 685, 694–696.

notable position in the grand-strategy of the long and fruitful Pontificate of Gregory XIII. The significance of Pastor's efforts lies in the verbatim quote or precise reference to the archival sources (stored in the Vatican,³⁴ Propaganda Fide archives or elsewhere)³⁵ such as the students' list of the students enrolled from the seminary foundation until the first visitation conducted by Propaganda in 1624.³⁶ Moreover, Pastor was aware of the findings of the Finnish Historical expedition to Rome, including them in his treatise.³⁷

In the same year, the Czech archivist Hynek Kollmann (1864-1938) produced the first volume of a groundbreaking critical edition of sources collected in the rich archives of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide.³⁸ Contrary to Navrátil, Kollmann's inquiry had been perceived by the ecclesiastical authorities as crucial for the process of recatholicisation of Czechoslovakia, with whom the Holy See was attempting to re-establish diplomatic ties.³⁹ Unfortunately, since Kollmann was the sole member of the Czech Historical Expedition to Rome in charge of exploring and copying Propaganda Fide's

³⁴ Avviso di Roma of July 22, 1579, [then stored in] Urb. 1047 p. 243, Vatican Library. Pastor, *Geschichte der Papste*, p. 280.

³⁵ "Il giorno di S. M. Maddalena visitò [Gregory XIII] il collegio Inglese et fu recitata fi una oratione a S. S latina et molto dotta con alcuni versi latini bellissimi, al qual collegio s' e mostrato molto liberale havendoli sin ad hora fatto conferire 300 ducati il mese, et veramente S. Stà merita in questa grandissima laude come in molte altre parti rare, che ha eretti dieci collegi in varie parti del mondo, cioè: uno in Fiandra, uno in Boemia, uno in Prussia, uno in Vienna et uno in Olmutz, et dieci qua in Roma, nelli quali spende ogni anno più di 40 mille ducati d'oro." Giovanni Antonio Odescalchi to the Duke of Mantua, July 25, 1579, Gonzaga Archives, Mantua. Pastor, *Geschichte der Papste*, p. 280.

³⁶ "Catalogus alumnorum collegii Olmucensis" [from Gregory XIII down to 1624, then stored in], Visite, 1, p. 17 et seq., Propaganda Archives, Rome. Pastor, *Geschichte der Papste*, p. 178.

³⁷ Federico Zuliani, 'L'expédition historique finlandaise à Rome (1900-1915) e la storiografia italiana novecentesca,' in Andrea Meregalli, Camilla Storskog (eds.), *Bridges to scandinavia* (Milano: di/segni, 2016), pp. 157-169.

³⁸ Ignatii Kollmann, *Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Res Gestas Bohemicas Illustrantia. Tom. I. Pars I. 1622-1623* (Pragae: Typis Gregerianis, 1923), pp. 2, 52-53, 299, 305.

³⁹ The Cardinal prefect Mieczysław Halka-Ledóchowski, persuaded by the diplomatic efforts of the Land Marshall of Bohemia, Jiří Kristián prince of Lobkowitz, opened the doors of Propaganda's archives and wished Kollmann "abundant success in the work, done certainly for the good of the Roman Church (hojně zdaru v práci, konané zajisté pro dobro církve římské)." Zdenek Kristen, 'Hynek Kollmann: 31 cervence 1864 - † 22. cervna 1938,' *Zprávy českého zemského archivu*, 9 (1946): 5-52, here 13, without reference.

sources (1890-93, 1899-1901, 1902-1903)⁴⁰ his declining health and familiar problems endangered such a monumental edition plan, which could not progress after the year 1624 and was completed posthumously by Antonín Haas.⁴¹ Undoubtedly, the most remarkable result of Kollmann's edition has been the publication of the 1624 visitation of the Olomouc seminary, overseen by the nuncio Carlo Caraffa and handled by the Olomouc canon Johannes Ernst Plateis.⁴²

In the midst of the Second World War, the Russian emigré in the Czech Republic Antonín Vasiljevič Florovskij (1884-1968), following the path traced by Evgenij Šmurlo (1854-1934),⁴³ conducted extensive research on the Jesuit attempts to reunite the Orthodox Church to Rome, analysing also the function of the Olomouc Pontifical seminary in these missionary efforts to evangelise Eastern Europe.⁴⁴ Regrettably, while conducted with utmost meticulousness, Florovskij's study was animated by a spirit of Great-Russian nationalism, often imposing a narrative that did not match with the historical findings.⁴⁵ In this sense, instead of underlying the richness of the Czech-Russian cultural relations, as expected by the author, this volume reveals the obstacles met by the Jesuits in propagating the Catholic faith, and the opportunistic behaviour of numerous non-Catholic students, who attended the Olomouc seminary without renouncing the Orthodox rite. However, by providing additional details to the biographies of the seminary's Eastern European students (often known only by their name in the 1624 students' list), Florovskij's work constitutes a landmark for understanding the development of the Olomouc Seminary.

⁴⁰ Jaroslav Pánek, 'Český archivár v Ríme. Hynek Kollmann jako cestovatel, pozorovatel a společník,' *Paginae historiae - sborník Národního archivu / Praha - Národní archiv*, 31/2 (2023): 191-222, here 194.

⁴¹ Ignatii Kollmann, *Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Res Gestas Bohemicas Illustrantia. Tomus II. 1623-1624* (Pragae: Statní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1954), pp. 101-116, 117, 119-154, 176-177, 302-303, 313-314, 324, 340-342.

⁴² Including the students' list already mentioned by Pastor.

⁴³ Evgenij Francevič Šmurlo, *Kurie a pravoslavný východ v letech 1609-1654. Rímskaja kurija na ruskom pravoslavnom vostokě v 1609-1654 godach = Le saint siège et l'Orient orthodoxe Russe 1609-1654* (Praha: Orbis, 1928).

⁴⁴ Antonín Vasiljevič Florovskij, *Cestí jesuité na Rusi: jesuité české provincie a slovanský východ* (Praha: Nakladatelství Vysehrad, 1941), pp. 10-14, 46-66, 74-95.

⁴⁵ Josef Saur, 'A. V. Florovskij (1884-1968),' *Slovanský Přehled, Review for Central and Southeastern European History*, 91/1 (2005): 131-146.

After the war, the historians living under the Communist regimes were barred from undertaking research on this topic by ideological obstructions, whilst the sources stored in Eastern and Central European archives became virtually inaccessible to Western scholars. Therefore, the main contributions were issued by the Roman Catholic institutions supervising the Olomouc Pontifical seminary, namely the Congregation de Propaganda Fide and the Society of Jesus. On the occasion of the 350th anniversary of its foundation, the former published its first comprehensive historiographical account.⁴⁶ In two articles, the Verbite missionary Ralph M. Wiltgen, author of a famous eyewitness account of the Second Vatican Council,⁴⁷ dealt with the Pontifical seminaries placed under Propaganda jurisdiction in 1622 (including that one of Olomouc).⁴⁸ Although the destiny of this seminary is therein merely sketched, Wiltgen was the first historian, supported by archival sources,⁴⁹ to describe its suppression, decided by Benedict XIV in 1741.⁵⁰

The second institution that governed the Olomouc Seminary, the Society of Jesus, gave two crucial contributions to its historiography. The Hungarian emigré, László Lukács, a pivotal figure in numerous research

⁴⁶ Josef Metzler O.M.I., Propaganda's archivist, coordinated the multi-volume project *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide memoria rerum*, which appeared fifty years after the failed attempt to publish the first official history of Propaganda Fide in 1922 (the 300th anniversary of the Congregation) designed by the Cardinal Prefect Jan Van Rossum. On the life of this Cardinal, actively engaged in the recatholicisation of Scandinavia, cf. Vefie Poels, Theo Salemink and Hans de Valk (eds.), *Life with a Mission. Cardinal Willem Marinus van Rossum C. Ss. R. (1854-1932)* (Nijmegen: Trajecta, 2010).

⁴⁷ Ralph M. Wiltgen, *The Rhine flows into the Tiber: a history of Vatican II* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1967).

⁴⁸ Ralph M. Wiltgen, 'Propaganda is placed in charge of the Pontifical Colleges,' in J. Metzler (ed.), *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum. 1622-1972. vol. I. 1622-1700* (Roma-Freiburg-Wien: Herder, 1971), pp. 483-505.

⁴⁹ Indeed, on the eve of the Communist coup d'état of Czechoslovakia, Václav Nesporek, in his *Dejiny University olomoucké* (Olomouc: Národní výbor hlavního města Olomouce, 1947), mentioned, *inter alia*, the termination of the seminary, quoting the Papal breve of 6/2 1740 (p. 161, note 17). This reference is indeed problematic (as others in Nesporek's text), since Benedict XIV had not been elected then.

⁵⁰ Ralph M. Wiltgen, 'Supervision of Pontifical Colleges by the Evangelization Congregation,' in J. Metzler (ed.), *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum. 1622-1972. vol. II 1700-1815* (Roma-Freiburg-Wien: Herder, 1973), pp. 236-247.

projects of the Jesuit Institutum Historicum of Rome,⁵¹ published two valuable articles dealing with the foundation and background of the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary in 1954 and 1955.⁵² Moreover, throughout his long career, Lukács edited several volumes of sources related to Jesuit activities in Hungary (whose territories were under the seminary's oversight since its foundation) and the Austrian Jesuit Province (to whom the Olomouc college belonged until 1623).⁵³ The magnitude of these publication cannot be underestimated, since they not only shed additional light to the role of the Olomouc seminary in the missionary grand-design emerging then in the Catholic elites, yet also provided the academic community with the edition of numerous manuscripts previously unknown (as the result of the ban imposed on Navrátil).

The last two fundamental studies which focused on the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary were indeed published after the end of the Cold War, yet they were the result of years of research carried out in a completely different context. In 1990, Zdenek Hojda devoted one an article to the Nordic students of the Olomouc seminary, from its establishment to the revolt of the Moravian Estates (1619), when the Jesuits and their pupils were expelled from the region.⁵⁴ This contribution waited for many years in Hojda's drawer before resurfacing with the demise of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁵ In his study, complemented by 6 tables and 2 appendixes, Hojda made use of the state-of-the-art literature at his disposal. The article suffers from two major shortcomings: the impossibility to visit any archive outside Czechoslovakia diminish the historiographical value of the Olomouc students' list (appendix 1);

⁵¹ Lukács, who reached Rome in 1950, soon formed a group of work with his fellow emigrated confreres. Antal Molnár, 'La 'Scuola Ungherese di Roma: Storici Gesuiti emigrati ungheresi nella Città Eterna dopo il 1945,' in Francesco Guida, Zoltán Turgonyi (eds.), *Italia e Ungheria tra pace e guerra fredda (1945-1955)* (Budapest: Research centre for the humanities, 2020), pp. 185-200.

⁵² Lukács, 'Die Gründung des Wiener'; Lukács, 'Die nordischen papstlichen Seminarien'.

⁵³ Ladislaus Lukács (ed.), *Monumenta antiquae Hungariae [1550-1592]* (4 vols. Romae: Institutum historicum S.I., 1969-1987); Ladislaus Lukács (ed.), *Catalogi personarum et officiorum Provinciae Austriae S.I. [1551 - 1640]* (2 vols., Romae: Institutum Historicum S. I., 1978).

⁵⁴ Zdenek Hojda, 'Collegia Nordica v Olomouci a Braníevě 1578-1619,' *Acta Universitas Carolinae-Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, XXX/1 (1990): 49-95.

⁵⁵ The same author admits in the article (pp. 50-51) that he begun it in 1976, as part of his university thesis, which was itself the continuation of a previous research on the Swedish students of the Olomouc seminary by Miloš Kouřil, 'Skandinávští studenti na olomoucké universitě v době předbělohorské,' *Sborník k dějinám moravského školství*, 2 (1971): 3-25.

the focus of the article is unclear, since the title⁵⁶ refers to the seminars in Olomouc and Braunsberg, while 5 out of 6 tables include also Vilnius, and the second appendix reports the list of the Scandinavian students in Prague. However, the impact of this work in the Czech historiography should not be underestimated, as it remains the most quoted work on the topic up to date.⁵⁷

Two years later, the Norwegian historian Oskar Garstein (1924-1996)⁵⁸ wrote another study that focused (also) on the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary. After his theological studies, Garstein had resumed the research of the Scandinavian Historical Expeditions to Rome and harnessed the full potential of the thousands of copies and photostats gathered from various Roman archives by Prof. Oluf Kolsrud (1885-1945).⁵⁹ Garstein's efforts produced four ponderous, unsurpassed volumes on the Counterreformation in Scandinavia, the third of which was devoted to the Pontifical seminaries erected in Central and Northern Europe and the Scandinavian students enrolled there until the foundation of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. For compiling a comprehensive list of the Scandinavian students at the Olomouc seminary,

⁵⁶ Curiously, the term employed in the title, Collegium Nordicum, does not appear in contemporary sources; it seems to have been coined by the Czech historian Frantisek Kameníček, who twice defined the seminary "so-called collegium nordicum" (*tak zvané nordické collegium*), alas without any reference. Frantisek Kameníček, 'O vzniku prvních dvou kolejí jezuitských na Moravě,' *Sborník historický*, III (1885): 104-111, here 109; Frantisek Kameníček, *Zemské snemy a sjezdy moravské (1528-1628). Díl III a poslední* (Brno: 1905), p. 360.

⁵⁷ Martin Elbel, 'Utváření katolické konfesijní identity v Olomouci,' in Martin Elbel, Ondřej Jakubec (eds.), *Olomoucké Baroko* (Olomouc: Muzeum Umění, 2010), pp. 189-196, here 190.

⁵⁸ Gunnar Christie Wasberg, 'Oskar Garstein in memoriam,' *Signum*, 8 (1996). This unusual figure in the Scandinavian landscape, born in China from a missionary family, was not a prophet in patria. Garstein did not obtain any relevant position in the Norwegian academia, and only recently his research has been revived by his former pupil Henning Laugerud, *Reformasjon uten folk. Det katolske Norge i før- og etterreformatorisk tid* (Oslo: St. Olav bokhandel, 2018).

⁵⁹ Claes Gejrot, 'The Scandinavian Expeditions to Rome,' in Kirsi Salonen, Anna-Stina Hagglund and Claes Gejrot (eds.), *Scandinavia and the Vatican Archives. Papers from a Conference in Stockholm 14-15 October 2016* (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien (KVHAA), 2022), pp. 11-31. These expeditions took place in a period of virulent anti-Catholicism and anti-Jesuitism in the whole Scandinavia, cfr. Yvonne Maria Werner, 'The Catholic Danger': the Changing Patterns of Swedish Anti-Catholicism - 1850-1965,' *European Studies*, 13 (2013): 135-148; Jes Fabricius Møller and Uffe Østergaard, 'Lutheran Orthodoxy and anti-Catholicism in Denmark - 1536-2011,' *European Studies*, 13 (2013): 165-189; Ainur Elmgren, 'The Jesuit Stereotype: an Image of the Universal Enemy in Finnish Nationalism,' *European Studies*, 13 (2013): 191-205; Bernt T. Oftestad, 'Norway and the Jesuit Order: a History of anti-Catholicism,' *European Studies*, 13 (2013): 209-222.

Garstein consulted the sources of the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, insofar unavailable for the Czech historians. At the same time, prevented from accessing the Czech archives, Garstein had to rely on the secondary literature on the seminary, namely Navrátil and Kroess, and therefore could not add any valuable detail to their historical inquiries.

New perspectives after the Velvet Revolution

The fall of the Czechoslovakian communist regime in 1989 brought about a paradigmatic shift in several fields, including the academic milieu. Concerning history, the first and most fruitful change created with the Velvet Revolution has been the full re-establishment of the Czech Historical Institute in Rome in 1994. This center of studies, as it has been outlined before, had been crucial for the development of numerous critical editions and studies until 1948, when it was closed by the Communists.⁶⁰ Once reopened, the institute found its home in the *Collegium Nepomucenum*, the seminary for the Bohemian priests founded by Pope Leo XIII in 1884 (originally as *Collegium Bohemicum*).⁶¹ In the last thirty years, numerous Czech historians aiming to conduct research in the Roman archives and libraries (awarded with public scholarships) have found accommodation in its rooms. Among them can be cited Tomáš Parma, one of the most relevant figures involved in Early Modern Catholic studies, including the Olomouc Pontifical seminary. In his work on the Cardinal Francis of Dietrichstein and his links with the Roman Curia, Parma provided key information on the privilege obtained by Dietrichstein to use fifteen seminary students for his diocese, and the (failed) Propaganda attempts to revoke it.⁶²

⁶⁰ Jaroslav Pánek, 'I primi venti anni dell'Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma: l'eredità di 177 anni di ricerca storica ceca negli archivi vaticani e italiani,' *Bollettino dell'Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma* 9 (2014): 13-33; Jaroslav Pánek, et alii, *Ad Fontes. Český historický ústav v Říme (1994 - 2014) v kontextu českého bádání v Itálii a Vatikánu v 19. - 21. století* (Praha-Roma: Historický ústav AV ČR, 2014).

⁶¹ Tomáš Parma, *Dal Bohemicum al Nepomuceno. La cultura ceca e la formazione sacerdotale in un contesto di scontri nazionalisti e di coesistenza* (Roma-Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2011).

⁶² Tomáš Parma, *Frantisek kardinál Dietrichstein a jeho vztahy k římské kurii. Prostředky a metody politické komunikace ve službách moravské církve* (Brno: Matice moravská, 2011), pp. 113-114, 231, 284-286, 304, 308.

The second remarkable transformation occurring in the former Eastern bloc in the 1990s has been the removal of political censorship and control over academic research projects. Therefore, international cooperation has been revived and allowed to deliver results without ideological biases. These coordinated research efforts have produced noteworthy outcomes, furthering the historiography on Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Modern era. Among these endeavours, the critical editions published by Alena Pazderová,⁶³ István György Tóth,⁶⁴ and the series *Acta Nuntiaturae Poloniae*⁶⁵ are indisputably of primary relevance. Similarly, behind the ambitious plan of Lenka Veselá to track the books plundered by the Swedish army in the Bohemian Lands during the Thirty Years War,⁶⁶ there is a successful partnership with the Scandinavian academics, as Peter Sjökvist.⁶⁷ Moreover, a greater academic integration of the Central European region has been supported by the CEEPUS network since 1993, while the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 opened up new mobility opportunities and financial resources for both domestic and international scholars.

Besides this institutional drive, there has been a genuine interest within the Czech academic community (and few notable foreign historians)⁶⁸

⁶³ Alena Pazderová, *Epistulae et acta nuntiorum apostolicorum apud imperatorem 1592–1628. Tomus I.: Epistulae et acta Caesaris Speciani 1592–1598, pars IV.–V., Januar 1595 – December 1595* (Prague: Archivum Nationale, MMXXII).

⁶⁴ István György Tóth (ed.) *Litterae missionariorum de Hungaria et Transilvania (1572-1717)* (5 vols., Roma-Budapest: Római Magyar Akadémia - Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközösség (METEM) - Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 2002-2008).

⁶⁵ Polska Akademia Umiejętności, "Acta Nuntiaturae Poloniae,"

<https://pau.krakow.pl/index.php/pl/wydawnictwo/publikacje-on-line/acta-nuntiaturae-polonae>.

⁶⁶ The Swedish Booty of Books from Bohemia and Moravia 1646-1648 Bibliographic and Informational Portal, <https://knizni-korist.cz/en/about-the-portal/>.

⁶⁷ Jonas Nordin, Gustavs Strenga, and Peter Sjökvist (eds.), *The Baltic Battle of Books Formation and Relocation of European Libraries in the Confessional Age (c. 1500–c. 1650) and Their Afterlife* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2023).

⁶⁸ Francesco Gui, *I gesuiti e la rivoluzione boema. Alle origini della guerra dei trent'anni* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1989); Paul Shore, *The Eagle and the Cross: Jesuits in Late Baroque Prague* (St.Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2002); Domenico Caccamo, 'La Propaganda fide, la chiesa boema e la tolleranza ad tempus di Valeriano Magni,' in Sante Graciotti, Jitka Křesálková (eds.), *Barocco in Italia, Barocco in Boemia: uomini, idee e forme d'arte a confronto* (Roma: Il Calamo, 2003), pp. 121-143; Alessandro Catalano, *La Boemia e la riconquista delle coscienze: Ernst Adalbert von Harrach e la Controriforma in Europa centrale (1620-1667)* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e Letteratura, 2005), translated into Czech in 2008.

towards the Catholic past of the Bohemian Lands, particularly with regards to the Society of Jesus. To date, this enthusiasm has resulted in two well-attended international conferences,⁶⁹ valuable critical editions,⁷⁰ countless articles and monographs, and ultimately several museum exhibitions.⁷¹ The leading authorities in this booming historiographical field have been Anna Fechtnerová (who conducted research in the hostile communist atmosphere),⁷² Ivana Cornejová (a crucial figure in the aftermath of 1989),⁷³ and Katerina Bobková-Valentová, (arguably the most prominent contemporary historian in the Bohemian Jesuit studies),⁷⁴ and, among the art historians, Michal Šroněk.⁷⁵ Notwithstanding these achievements, Jakub Zouhar has issued a gloomy forecast for this research area, endangered by the inclination of most students towards Contemporary history, and their decreasing competences to comprehend primary sources (mostly in Latin and German).⁷⁶

This lay excitement for Catholic history was accompanied by the professional and unfeigned dialogue with ecclesiastical historians, and reinforced

⁶⁹ Tomáš Slavický, 'Bohemia Jesuitica 1556-2006, mezinárodní konference Jezuité v českých zemích: Praha 25. - 27. dubna 2006,' *Hudební věda = Musicology = Musikwissenschaft*, 43/3 (2006); 331-333; Petronilla Cemus (ed.), *Bohemia Jesuitica 1556-2006* (2 vols., Praha: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Karolinum, 2010); Historický ústav AV ČR, v. v. i., '400 anniversarium provinciae Bohemiae Societatis Jesu 1623 – 1773 – 2023,' <https://www.hiu.cas.cz/udalosti/400-anniversarium-provinciae-bohemiae-societatis-jesu-1623-1773-2023-5>

⁷⁰ Kateřina Bobková-Valentová (ed.), *Consuetudines. Assistentiae Germaniae I.* (Praha: Historický ústav AV ČR, v. v. i., 2011).

⁷¹ Eva Novotná (ed.), *Čeští jezuité - cestovatelé a objevitelé. Katalog výstavy k 450 výročí příchodu jezuitů do Prahy.* Praha 21. 6. 2006 - 22. 9. 2006 (Praha: Geografická knihovna PpF UK, 2006); Kateřina Bobková-Valentová, Jarmila Hlaváčková, Hedvika Kuchařová (eds.), *Knihovna jezuitské koleje v Telči: katalog výstavy* (Praha: Historický ústav, 2020); Vlastivědné muzeum v Olomouci, "Chrám moudrosti a Symboly moudrosti představí počátky olomoucké univerzity 05. 10. 2023 – 11. 02. 2024," <https://www.vmo.cz/vystavy/232/chram-moudrosti-a-symboly-moudrosti-predstavi-pocatky-olomoucke-univerzity>.

⁷² Anna Fechtnerová (ed.), *Rectores collegiorum Societatis Iesu in Bohemia, Moravia ac Silesia usque ad annum MDCCLXXXIII iacentum* (2 vols., Praha: NK, 1993); cfr. also Jakub Zouhar, 'Historical Research in the Czech Republic between 1974 and 2019 on the Pre-Suppression Society of Jesus,' *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 89/178 (2020 II): 467-498, especially 473-475.

⁷³ Ivana Čornejová, *Tovaryšstvo Ježíšovo. Jezuité v Čechách* (Praha : Mladá fronta, 1995); cfr. Also Zouhar, 'Historical Research,' 479-480.

⁷⁴ Kateřina Bobková-Valentová, *Každodenní život učitele a žáka jezuitského gymnázia* (Praha: Karolinum, 2006).

⁷⁵ Michal Šroněk, Katerina Horníčková (eds.), *Jesuit Art and Czech Lands, 1556-1729. Missionizing through the Arts* (Lanham-Boulder-New York-London: Lexington Books, 2023).

⁷⁶ Zouhar, 'Historical Research,' 495.

by the sympathetic attitude of the ecclesiastical hierarchies. This has greatly favoured the *désenclavement* of the studies on the Society of Jesus and the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, previously dominated by the religious members of these institutions.⁷⁷ An eloquent consequence of this new interaction between academia and the Catholic Church has been the opening in 1998 of the Archive of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (until 1908 known as the Inquisition),⁷⁸ and the full-accessibility for scientific purposes of other historical religious archives, which is nowadays granted without moral and confessional biases: indeed, the demand from the researchers has become so pressing that these institutes must be contacted months beforehand to consult a manuscript.⁷⁹

This rapprochement has put an end to decades (if not centuries), of heated political and confessional debates, eventually remodelling the cultural memory of several nation-states that had shaped their identity on a virulent anti-Catholicism. In this sense, an invaluable contribution has been made by the European Union and its cultural heritage policy.⁸⁰ The emphasis on the common European values and tradition, while apparently unrelated to historical research, has nonetheless accelerated the process of overcoming the national historiographical paradigms. As in the case of the Czech Republic, the process of re-evaluation of traumatic (for the national consciousness) historical

⁷⁷ An emblematic case is the above-mentioned volume of Giovanni Pizzorusso, published on the 400th anniversary of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, which gathers 18 journal articles, conference proceedings and public lectures held and published throughout his long academic career devoted to the study of the Congregation. Andrea Trenta, 'Giovanni Pizzorusso, Propaganda Fide I: La congregazione pontificia e la giurisdizione sulle missioni,' *Folia Historica Bohemica*, 38/1-2 (2023): 145-148.

⁷⁸ Michaela Valente, 'Nuove ricerche e interpretazioni sul Sant'Uffizio a più di dieci anni dall'apertura dell'archivio,' *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 66/2 (2012): 569-592, here 570.

⁷⁹ Since the access is free of charge, these archives rely on copy services as additional sources of income (as in the period of the Historical expeditions taking place between the 19th and 20th century). In this sense, there is also an economic incentive to divulgate the content of these archives.

⁸⁰ Cfr., for instance, the purpose of the "European Heritage Label sites," introduced in 2013: "European Heritage sites are milestones in the creation of today's Europe. Spanning from the dawn of civilisation to the Europe we see today, these sites celebrate and symbolise European ideals, values, history and integration. [...] These sites bring the European Union and its citizens closer together. "European Heritage Label sites,"

<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/initiatives-and-success-stories/european-heritage-label>.

watersheds as the arrival of the Jesuit order in the country, or the battle of the White Mountain,⁸¹ has been smoothed over by a new-found sense of belonging to the shared European household.⁸² The repercussions of this revolutionary change of perspective to historical research have not unfolded yet in their entire magnitude, as the so-called Erasmus generation is still gradually attaining research positions in the various national academic communities.

Conclusion

The aftermath of the Velvet Revolution has opened up unprecedented opportunities to conduct research on a topic, the Olomouc Pontifical Seminary, which until then suffered significantly from cultural barriers, economic hardships, ideological obstacles and political interferences, as it has been observed in the state-of-the-art review section.

Primarily, since the demise of Communism and the reunification of Europe, scholars have gained admission to virtually all European archives (lay and ecclesiastical). By contrast, as this article has demonstrated, the unavailability of archival sources had been the norm for almost but all the historians involved in the Olomouc Seminary. In this sense, future research could finally dare to resume and amend the critical editions ended abruptly with the death of their curators (Navrátil, Kollmann). There is also the occasion to consult sources merely hinted at in the previous literature (Kroess), while the time is probably ripe for compiling a comprehensive seminary students' list⁸³ that would go beyond the single national groups (Florovksij, Hojda, Garstein)

⁸¹ Tomás Knoz, 'The Phenomenon of the White Mountain in the Process of Modern Czech National and State Formation,' in Francesco Gui, Tomáš Parma, Andrea Trenta (eds.), *Santa Maria della Vittoria. Una testimonianza fondamentale della storia europea* (3 vols., Roma: Veat Tipografica, 2024), vol. 2, pp. 129-144.

⁸² Jaroslav Pánek, 'Jsme všichni v Evropě na jedné lodi,' as quoted in James R. Palmitessa (ed.), *Between Lipany and White Mountain. Essays in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bohemian History in Modern Czech Scholarship* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 39

⁸³ The edition of the Olomouc University *matriculae* provides the momentum for a similar venture, cfr. Libuše Spáčilová, Vladimír Spáčil (eds.), *Nejstarší matrika olomoucké univerzity / Die älteste Matrikel der Olmützer Universität (1576) 1590–1651* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2016); Libuše Spáčilová, Vladimír Spáčil (eds.), *Matricula olomoucké univerzity Matricula der Olmützer Universität (1636–1637) 1652–1729* (2 vols., Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2023).

or historical turning points (Kollmann). Ultimately, the possibility to visit both the Roman and Czech archives might result in unexpected archival findings and a breakthrough in stages of the Olomouc Seminary already extensively investigated (Lukács).

Secondly, the free mobility and the ample room for cooperation among European scholars finally allow scholars to explore intricate historical events and characters linked with more than one country, as it was the norm for the seminary's students and Central Europe in the Early Modern era. Following the virtuous example of Lenka Veselá, several obscure moments in the history of the seminary, as the fate of its students during the Estates' Insurrection or the Swedish occupation of Olomouc, could be illuminated by the joint-efforts of a multinational research team. Correspondingly, the relationship between the Olomouc Seminary and other Catholic educational institutions in Central and Eastern Europe, partially examined for the case of Hungary,⁸⁴ would benefit from an international approach.

Ultimately, the renewed historical interest in Early Modern Catholicism, the overcoming of confessional and political prejudices, and the feeling of a common European identity, could form the basis for long-term research projects on the Pontifical Olomouc Seminary. While previous research on this topic has been characterised by lack of international collaboration and excessive methodological individualisation (especially concerning the critical editions), in prospect, the involvement of various scholars from various European countries (integrated in the Erasmus and CEEPUS network) in the creation of a database/biographical dictionary of the seminary's professors and students, might be a feasible and advantageous initiative for all parties concerned.

⁸⁴ Eszter Kovács, *"Légy cseheknek, pártfogója, magyaroknak szószólója..." Cseh–magyar jezsuita összefüggések a kezdetektől 1773-ig* (Budapest: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2015).