

was not an exaggeration on Leibniz's part to write: „It is basically only you whom I can perceive among your nation as capable of enriching science”.

The Polish mathematician has not been counted as one of the most prominent thinkers and inventors of the seventeenth century, much though he deserved it. He contributed to this state of affairs himself, being more of a thinker and philosopher than a writer and editor of his own writings. Had he published these works that he intended to publish, he would have become one of the most famous figures of the time. This lack of recognition of Kochański's achievement can also be ascribed to the attitude of the Polish scientific circles, where Kochański's genius was not appreciated, or perhaps even not realized. Definitely Kochański has always been more highly assessed in Western Europe than in Poland. Even nowadays, in relation to studies on the philosophy of Leibniz, the astronomy of Kirch or the Chinese issues, the name of the Polish scientist continues to be mentioned abroad. We hope that this publication features a balanced assessment of this mathematician and *philosophus curiosus*, and that it will encourage further research.

Red.

Korespondencja Adama Adamandego Kochańskiego SJ (1657-1699). Opracował [Ed.] Bogdan Lisiak SJ przy współpracy Ludwika Grzębienia SJ [Correspondence of Adam Adamandus Kochański], Kraków 2005, Ignatianum-WAM, pp. 475.

The most eminent mathematician of seventeenth-century Poland was a Jesuit, Adam Adamandy Kochański (1631-1700). His philosophical studies at Vilnius University were interrupted by the invasion of the Muscovite army on the town in 1655. Kochański sought shelter in Germany. In Würzburg his extraordinary mathematical talent was noticed by the German erudite Gaspar Schott, who invited Kochański to collaborate on the publication of his works. Having completed his theological studies in Molsheim (1655-1657), the Polish Jesuit became a lecturer in mathematics and at the same time graduated in theology from Mainz (1657-1664). His earnest petitions to the superiors in Rome were granted: after the war he was allowed not to return to Poland, but to remain in Western Europe. He worked as a lecturer in Bamberg (1665-1666) and in Florence (1666-1669), where his knowledge was employed at the court of the Medicis. Since 1670 he lectured in the schools managed by the Czech Jesuits: at Prague University (1670-1672), at the Academy in Olomouc (1672-1675) and at their college in Wrocław (1675-1679). On the invitation of the Polish king Jan III Sobieski, towards the end of 1679 Kochański arrived in Warsaw to become a teacher of mathematics to the king's son, Jakub Sobieski. He also contributed to the decoration projects in the royal residence at Wilanów and taught mathematics in the Jesuit college. Between the years 1683 and 1690 he resided in Gdańsk, working there as a royal mathematician and librarian. In 1690, on his return to Warsaw, he supervised

the king's library there and continued to work as the king's mathematician. In 1695 he went to the Czech spa of Teplice, where he died in 1700.

Kochański's interests were manifold, but he focused on mathematics, physics, astronomy, alchemy and linguistics. He carried on academic correspondence with intellectuals from all over Europe. He did not publish much, and his treatises were included in Gaspar Schott's publications as well as in periodicals entitled *Miscellanea Curiosa Medico-Physica Academiae Naturae Curiosorum* (which was the first medical and biological journal) and „Acta Eruditorum” (which was a German academic journal in Latin, published in Leipzig by Otto Mencke). Although he prepared his main works to go to press, no individual volumes were printed, and his scarce manuscripts burned together with the National Library in Warsaw during the uprising against the Nazis in 1944.

The most significant evidence of Kochański's scientific interests and activities is his correspondence, extant in various archives and libraries. First come his learned letters to two Jesuit scientists: Gaspar Schott and Athanasius Kircher. The former was Kochański's collaborator ever since the early days of his stay in the West; with the latter he exchanged ideas for more than a decade. The preserved letters were only a fraction of their fruitful co-operation, which exerted much influence on Kochański's choice of research areas.

The core of Kochański's correspondence is twenty-four letters addressed to Gottfried Leibniz and fourteen sketches of Leibniz's replies. This correspondence comes from the years 1670-1671 and 1691-1698. It aroused much interest among Polish academics. The most important letters were published as early as a century ago by Samuel Dickstein in his journal *Prace Matematyczno-Fizyczne* (1901-1902).

From 1675 Kochański conducted unbroken correspondence with Andreas Müller (1630-1694), a German linguist, orientalist and sinologist. It pertained chiefly to the problems of the Chinese language. Müller valued Kochański's opinions very highly, so he published the letters from 1675 in the pamphlet called *De invento Sinico epistolae nonnullae amoebaeae inventoris et quorundam Soc. Jesu patrum aliorumque literatorum* (Coloniae 1675). Nothing is known about their exchange of thoughts except for what was included in the six published letters, though from Kochański's correspondence with Leibniz it is inferred that more letters circulated almost until Müller's death.

The third major source of information is Kochański's correspondence with the Gdańsk astronomer, Jan Heweliusz (1611-1687). It amounts to thirty-four letters of different length which reflect both scientific and personal problems encountered by both correspondents.

Astronomy was also the subject-matter of Kochański's correspondence with Gottfried Kirch (1639-1710), a German astronomer, publisher of „Ephemerides” and contributor to „Acta Eruditorum”. The number of extant letters is twenty-eight. Fifteen of them were recently published by Detlef Döring, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Gottfried Kirch und Adam A. Kochański 1680-1694* (Berlin 1997).

The National Library in Warsaw owns an attractive collection of thirty-one letters sent to Kochański by various scientists in the years 1669-1690. The first letter in the collection was written by Giovanni Battista Riccioli in Bologna on

27th July 1669. It is followed by letters of fifteen other people, including an interesting letter written by Athanasius Kircher, dated 1678.

The remaining letters contained herein were gathered in various archives and libraries in Poland and abroad. All in all, the volume embraces 163 letters, over half of which have never been published before.

This publication presents Kočański's correspondence in chronological order because its topics frequently overlap and because it can thus demonstrate the development of Kočański's interests and research projects. So as to facilitate the reader's acquaintance with the letters, each of them is supplemented with a short summary in Polish.

Red.

L' esperienza tragica come iniziazione: Lev Šestov [*Tragic experience as initiation: Lev Shestov*] is the title of the doctoral thesis written by Aleksander Posacki SJ under the supervision (*promotor*) of Professor Eduard Huber SJ at the Philosophy Faculty of the Gregorian University in Rome. It was published in Cracow by Ignatianum in 2004 (209 pages).

The aim of Aleksander Posacki's study is to reveal the internal dynamic of Lev Shestov's thought. Starting from the assumption that Shestov's way of thinking is „subjective” and „existential”, the author strives to „think” along with Shestov, to understand him from the inside, as it were, rather than the outside, and to enter into the internal rhythm of Shestov's thoughts and experiences. In order to carry out this hermeneutic enterprise, he also refers to Shestov's correspondence, particularly to that which betrays a polemical approach to other philosophers, such as N. Bierdiayev or M. Buber. Thus Posacki's study is original from the very outset, for, as the author declares in his introduction, no such combination is to be found in the literature in many languages that is listed in the very full bibliography. In the most recent edition of his study (2004), the author has extended this bibliography still further and brought it up to date, accommodating work written in a variety of languages since the time that he defended his thesis (1995). One may also note the fact that a study written and published in Italian has a certain degree of international significance.

In the context of an interpretation intended as outlined above, it is essential that the terminology be taken from source. For this reason Posacki draws on all Shestov's works in their original language (Russian), though he sometimes makes use of Italian translations as an acceptable secondary source, from the standpoint of knowledge acquired from the original texts. The author also has recourse to foreign accounts of Shestov's thought, mainly in Italian, French, English and Russian, and this is clearly evident in the text of his study. By these means we are made acquainted with the degree and character of the reception of Shestov's thought in different countries and cultures, which gives the study additional cognitive value.

In interpretations by different authors, a variety of viewpoints on Shestov's thought is evident. Many of them fail to understand him, imprisoning him in

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