

---

# Main Lecture

---

## Solemn crowning of Marian images at Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth during XVIII century in the context of the Catholic world

**Professor Irena Vaišvilaitė, Faculty of History, Vilnius University**

*Prof Vaišvilaitė, born 1954, holds doctorate degrees in the fields of art and church history. She served as Lithuania's Ambassador to the Holy See and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to UNESCO.*

The lecture starts at: **15:30**, [join](#) .

### **Annotation of the lecture:**

Solemn crowning of Marian images by so called Popes crowns starts in 1631 by crowning of the image of Madonna delle Febre in Saint Peter's basilica in Rome.

Initiated by pious Marquise Alessandro Sforza Pallavicini, who bequested to the Chapter of Saint Peter considerable capital for honoring the most ancient and revered Marian images with golden crowns, the ceremony was initially aimed at Rome and Pontifical State, but in 1650, by crowning of image of Mother of God of Constantinople in Palermo, permissions to crown starts to be requested and granted in other states of Italy.

First crowning outside of Italy was achieved by Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at 1717 for image of Częstochowa, the most venerated image in Kingdom of Poland. The request for crowning was presented by king August III (August der Starke) and sustained by the cardinal protector of Polish-Lithuanian state Annibale Albani. Almost immediately followed request by bishop of Vilnius for crowning of the most important image of Lithuania – Mother of God of Trakai. Permission was granted and crowning was organized in 1718. Next request in 1720 came from duke Johan Frederic Sapieha, who requested crowning of image in the church of his estate of Koden. Five years later the nobility and clergy of Rutenia and Volyn requested crowning of image in Podkamen. Next yet year request from Greek-Catholic monastery in Zirowicy reached Rome and the granted crowning became the great event for Greek-Catholic Church in Lithuania and Poland. Until the dissolving of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, 29 images were solemnly crowned by accord from Chapter of Saint Peter in Rome and by Popes granting special indulgences for the occasions. Crownings were not only religious events, but impressive artistic, social and political enterprises, organized by elites, involving all social strata and accompanied by powerful communication campaigns.

In lecture I will present how solemn crownings as ceremony evolved during 17 century and explore how in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth crownings were related to regional and confessional identity, to the aim of international recognition and representation, and how they were marked by idea of transferring Royal authority to the Mother of God in weakening state, that by 1795 disappears from maps. But under foreign rule the idea of Mary – Queen of Poland survives as mean of national and state identity.

My research is based on very rich sources from Archive of Chapter of Saint Peter basilica. In future I intend to compare crownings in Lithuania and Poland with crownings, that took place in Moravia and Bohemia, beginning from 1735, by crowning of the Image of Mother of God in S. Thomas church in Olomouc. It was second crowning in the Empire, first taking place in Friuli, in 1718.

[Return](#)