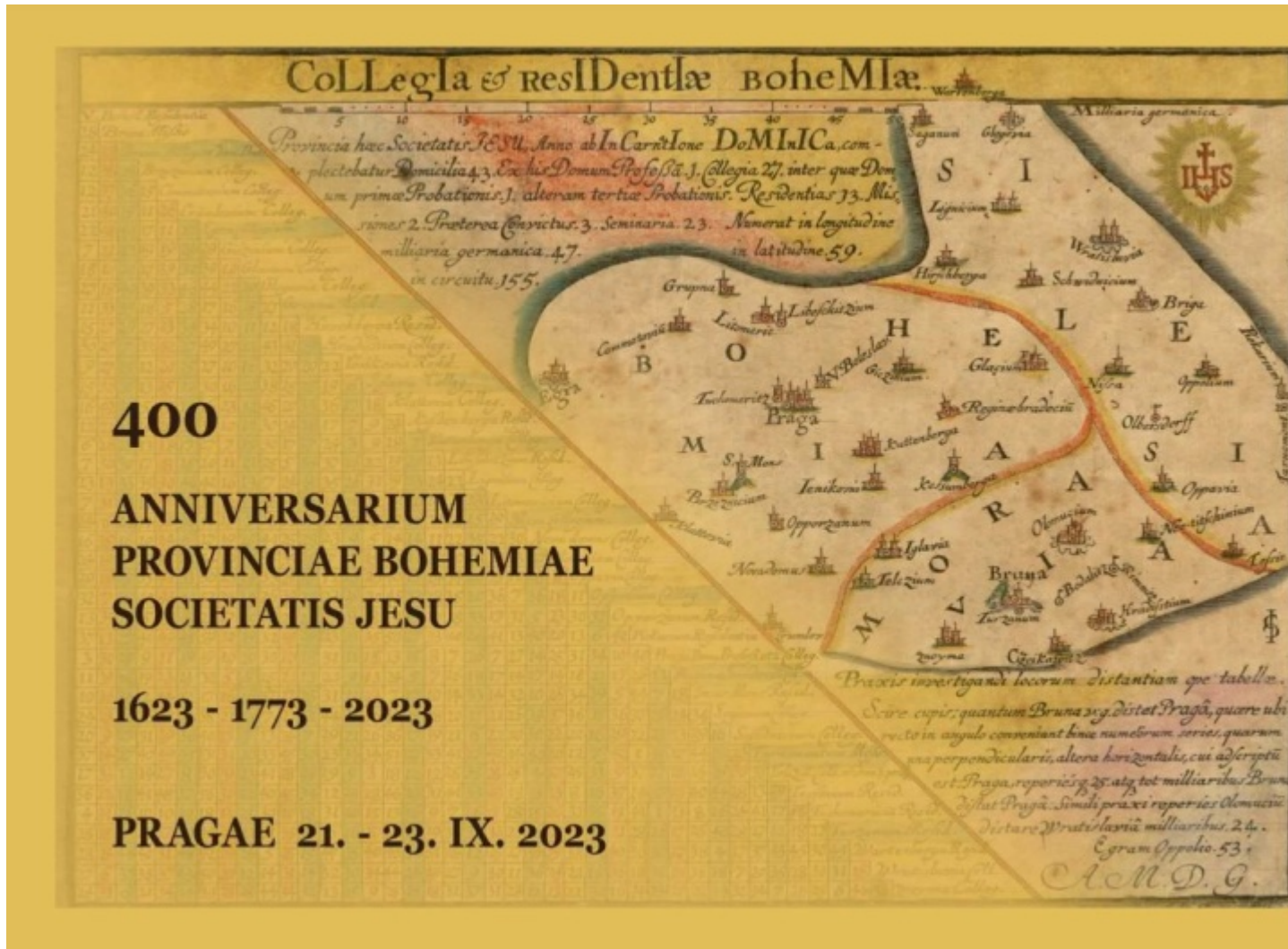


400 aniversarium provinciae Bohemiae Societatis Jesu 1623 – 1773 – 2023



Catholic Theological Faculty Charles University
invites
for a CONFERENCE
400 ANIVERSARIUM PROVINCIAE BOHEMIAE SOCIETATIS JESU 1623 – 1773 – 2023
Date and venue: 21st - 23rd September 2023
Programme

On September 23, 1623, Mutius Vitelleschi, Superior General of the Order, sent a letter to Prague proclaiming the creation of the Province of Bohemia, dividing the extensive Province of Austria. The territorial extent of the Bohemian Province

corresponded to the Lands of the Crown of Bohemia as held at the time by the House of Habsburg in their capacity as Kings of Bohemia. From the confessional point of view, it was comprised of mostly Catholic territories, a significant part of which was to undergo reCatholicization in the following years. Silesia permanently remained a place of legally sanctioned competition between Catholicism and Lutheranism. The new Province can be ethnically and linguistically characterized as Czech and German with more or less equal share of the two groups. There was also a small number of Polish speaking Jesuits from the Opole part of Silesia as well as several individuals from Lusatia or natives of today's Belgium, the Netherlands, England, and Spain. In 1623, the Province had over 650 priests, lay brothers, scholastics, and novices. Their number doubled over the following hundred years, and continued to grow, making the Province one of the largest in Europe. Its importance can be evidenced by the number of its religious houses, of the students and alumni, of the quantity of preserved literary, religious and scientific works as well as by the magnificent architecture of the churches which, together with the colleges, still dominate squares in many important Bohemian and Moravian towns. The development of the Province was disrupted around the middle of the 18th century due to the War of the Austrian Succession. As the result of the war, Silesia was incorporated into Prussia, which meant that the borders of the Province had to reflect. In 1755, the Province of Silesia was formed with religious houses in Silesia and Kłodzko. This naturally had consequences for the Province of Bohemia. It lost ten houses, one university and more than a quarter of its members. The ethnic composition of the Province changed as well, namely in favor of Czech-speaking members. The 1760s brought an increasing interest with respect to joining the Society or studying in the schools of the Bohemian Province. This development was halted by the dissolution of the Society in 1773. The Congress of Vienna provided space for the renewed Society and Jesuits returned to Prague in the middle of the 19th century. The Jesuits in Bohemia started writing a new chapter, significantly different from the preceding one.

The planned conference is dedicated to the development, life and suppression of the Province of Bohemia of the so-called Old Society, that is, to the period from 1623 to 1773 with meaningful overlaps. Its aim is to examine the Province mainly in the context of the development of the Jesuit Order in early modern Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, focusing on the functioning of the Province as a whole and of its individual members, as well as on its distinguishing features compared to other Provinces, especially those that maintained closer ties with the Province of Bohemia (Austria, Germania Superior, Gallo-Belgica, Flandro-Belgica).

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