

Idee humanitarne w czasopismach polskiego Oświecenia

The humanitarian thought in the journals of Polish Enlightenment

SUMMARY

The humanitarian thought of Cesare Beccaria is also present in the papers published in Polish journals in the years of the reign of king Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764-1795). Particularly important are the works published in “Monitor” and in “Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne” (“The Nice and Useful Entertainments”). We can find there the most significant elements of the Beccarian concepts: the rules of the special prevention (in which education of convicts was of utmost importance), the rule of an adequacy of punishment in proportion to a crime, the idea of the fight against the corrupt jurisdiction system and arbitrary decisions of many judges, finally – the demand of the act of lifting the capital punishment and its exchange for the obligatory work for society. In Polish journals of those times the influence of church law is to remark, particularly in the case of punishment for suicides, persons killing kings and duellists which was contrary to the ideas of the lawyer from Mediolan. Instead in those publications the typically Polish problem of beggary (not important for Beccaria) was widely described.

The series of 17 papers published in “Monitor” in 1776 takes a distinct position in that subject. It was a Polish adaptation of the German anonymous work *Zur Minderung des menschlichen Elends (For Alleviation of Human Misery)* published in Gdańsk in 1775. It was adapted by Lorenz Mitzler de Kolof – the editor-in-chief “Monitor”. The book, as we can find out reading it, was a Polish alteration of Cesare Beccaria’s work *De delitti e delle pene*. We can call it a secondary reception of the Italian legal thought which came to Poland not only directly but also from neighbouring countries, particularly from Germany.

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