

Grobowce Galileusza czyli o pośmiertnym życiu bohatera nauki

The sepulchres of Galileo Galilei or about the posthumous life of the hero of science

SUMMARY

The article describes the struggle for erection of the splendid tomb for Galileo Galilei in the Florentine Basilica of Holy Cross and for publication of the all works of this great astronomer. Galileo's funeral in 1642 took place furtively in a little niche under the belfry of this basilica, because Galileo was regarded as a heretic condemned by the Holy Office in 1632. Vincenzo Viviani – the pupil and friend of scholar – was combating against that opinion and was striving for a rehabilitation of his master. He presented him as a very pious man who didn't define the Copernican conception as a clear hypothesis; for that reason Galileo was fairly condemned by the Church, but after all he recognized his guilt sincerely and he was cleared of it by the public recantation of own views. This conciliatory thesis was adopted by many Catholic scholars as a line of defence of the famous astronomer, but Viviani could only place two great plates (commemorating Galileo) on the fronton of his own palace in Florence. This situation changed in the 1720s when the new grand duke of Tuscany Gian Gastone began to fight for the reduction of the church power and for the enlargement of the states prerogatives (under the influence of the Enlightenment and of Florentine freemasonry). The funeral of Galileo in a splendid tomb an 12 March 1737 accentuated the state's independence of the Church, though the court was obliged to accept two conditions of the Holy See: a burial without a funeral oration and the sepulchre without a statue of philosophy (that image might be an allusion to the essence of the research by Galileo).