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Previous Rector of the Jagiellonian University

### THE INSTITUTIONS HOSTING THE 2ND ICESHS:

#### The Jagiellonian University

THE LAST KING OF THE PIAST DYNASTY, Casimir the Great founded the University, *Studium Generale*, in Cracow (Kraków), the capital of the Polish Kingdom, by his act dated on May 12, 1364. Initially the University had only three out of four classical medieval faculties: law, medicine and liberal arts (*Artes Liberales*). The development of the University practically stopped after the death of its founder in 1370. Further real development occurred in the last decade of the 14<sup>th</sup> century; existing documents show that the University became acting again around 1390. In 1397 the faculty of theology was created and in that way the University became a full range medieval university having all the four classical faculties.

The first king of the Jagiellonian Dynasty, Władysław Jagiełło renovated and extended the University by his act dated on July 26, 1400, according to the last will of his wife, the Queen Jadwiga (died in 1399; now the saint of the Catholic Church), who donated her personal property as the legacy for the University.

It is worthy to notice that the present name of the University of Kraków follows from the name of the renovator, not the founder.

The middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century was marked by a significant acceleration of the development of the University (*Academy*). Programs (curricula) and several elements of the inner structure were changed. In 1491 Nicolaus Copernicus (Mikołaj Kopernik) became a student of the Kraków University. During the five decades 1470–1520 more than 14 300 students enrolled the University.

Next centuries cannot be characterized univocally by expressing either a general positive or a negative opinion. Some excellent periods interweaved with difficult and — sometimes — sad ones. Some bright moments were results of reforms of the whole Polish education system implemented by Hugo Kołłątaj and Jan Śniadecki. The general framework of these reforms was outlined in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the “Commission of the National Education” (in Polish: *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej*) which can be considered as the ministry of education (probably the first such ministerial type institution in the world). Unfortunately the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century became the tragic time of the partitions of Poland which lost its independence for more than 120 years.

Poland regained the freedom after the First World War. The new period of development was broken in 1939. The Nazi occupants arrested professors of the Jagiellonian University and the Kraków Academy of Mining on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1939 and jailed them in concentration camps. Many of them died there, those who saved their life were coming back to Kraków in 1940 and 1941. All Polish higher education institutions (as well as secondary schools !) were closed by occupants. However the University worked as an “underground university” (as well the University of Warsaw, Technical University of Warsaw / *Politechnika Warszawska* / and the University of Poznań acting in Warsaw).

Starting from 1945, the Jagiellonian University is again one of the best Polish universities.

Presently it consists of 15 faculties: Law and Administration, Philosophy, History, Philology, Polish Studies, Physics and Astronomy and Applied Computer Science, Mathematics and Computer Science, Chemistry, Biology and Earth Sciences, Management and Social Communication, International and Political Sciences, Biotechnology, Medicine, Pharmacy, Health Care. There are more than 3600 academic staff (including almost 500 professors) and about 42 000 of students.

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