

The aim of the project is to analyze the hitherto unknown archival sources related to the biography of Stanislaus Konarski (1700-1773) and to give access to them through complete critical edition. Those sources concern the trial for heresy which was opened in 1769 against Stanislaus Konarski in Rome. The critical edition and divulgation of those sources with their translation from Italian and Latin to Polish and the appropriate commentary will allow to establish new facts concerning the important years of life of Konarski, when after few decades of creative work and many publications he had to face the risk, that his recent publication “Christian thoughts on the religion of the honest men” will be put on the index of prohibited books.

Description of the research. The postulated research will include gathering of the archival sources which were found in the archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in Vatican (former Congregation of the Holy Office, where the trial of Konarski was conducted), and which were so far unexplored in historical research dedicated to Konarski. In two archival fonds there is a complementary documentation of the process in the form of original handwritten material – from the accusation against Konarski, written by the apostolic nuncio in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, to other sources: theological analysis of the accused book, its translation into Italian (also hitherto unknown to the scholars), the final verdict of the Congregation and reaction of the accused. Some documents are preserved in two or three copies, therefore they must be compared in order to establish the original and distinguish it from the earlier draft version or a mere copy. Such documentation, duly established and put in order, will be the basis for transcription, translation and edition with a commentary describing the context of the trial. The commentary will deal with the genesis of the book “Christian thoughts on the religion of the honest men”, procedure followed in the Roman Curia in the 2nd half of the 18th century in case of suspected heresy, finally the explanation will be given to all aspects of those documents which would offer a difficulty in correct understanding (personal and geographical names, theological terminology, aspects of functioning of the Roman Curia, etc.).

The rationale for the research. Stanislaus Konarski is one of the most eminent figures of the Polish intellectual life in the 18th century. The existing historiography has dealt with his trial in Rome only superficially, because of the inaccessibility of the archive of the Congregation of the Holy Office (today Doctrine of Faith). Biographers of Konarski, trying to explain the trial and its aftermath, relied on their own conjectures, often erroneous. For example, all the existing biographies of Konarski explain wrongly the genesis of the Latin translation of the book “Christian thoughts on the religion of the honest men”. The importance of Stanislaus Konarski for the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth calls for the correction and completion of his biography, based on the new sources, so far unknown to the historians. Additionally, rather rare case of the trial of a Polish author for heresy, especially in 18th century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, makes it reasonable and scholarly interesting to offer a complete edition of the pertaining sources, with their translation and commentary.

As the result of the project, the biography of Stanislaus Konarski will be completed with a detailed description of the origin of the trial against him in Rome, its various stages and aftermath. The knowledge about the quality of theological discussions in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 2nd half of the 18th century will increase. Transcription, translation and edition of the archival sources will allow the broad accessibility of the documentation, important for the biography of Stanislaus Konarski, including the existing so far only in a handwritten form Italian version of his work “Christian thoughts on the religion of the honest men”.