



Antoni Dębiński, Joanna Misztal-Konecka,
Wojciech Szczepan Staszewski,
Karol Adamczewski (eds.),
*Profesorowie Prawa Katolickiego Uniwersytetu
Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II*
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The professors of law at the Catholic University of Lublin, in their search for educational and scientific role models, studied the biographies of their masters. Their biographies and academic achievements were analyzed for various purposes. Sources compiled in such a way were used in presentations at scientific conferences and for the presentation of memorial books or published to honor the memory of professors who passed away. The main intention of the authors was to prepare a publication to “honor the creators and masters of the school of law at the Catholic University of Lublin.” (9) They were initially staff that came from other university centers, especially the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv. Many of them were graduates of the Catholic University of Lublin. The publication in question, *Profesorowie prawa Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II*, is the third edition on the initiative of Rev. Prof. Antoni Dębiński who, together with Wojciech Sz. Staszewski and

Monika Wójcik, prepared and published a collection of biographies of the professors who have already passed away.

The first collective publication appeared in 2006, followed by another one two years later. The third from 2024, on the other hand, in 2024, contained the biography of Prof. Elżbieta Szczot who passed away on March 10th, 2024. Elżbieta Szczot was a dedicated professor of the Catholic University of Lublin and her professional life was connected with the Faculty of Law, Canon Law and Administration. She prepared the list of Deans, whose portraits decorate the Faculty Council Hall and in 2005 was responsible for the preparation of the comprehensive (228 pages) *Faculty Handbook* (The Publishing House of the Catholic University of Lublin, 2005). It should also be mentioned that in 1999 A. Dębiński published a text titled: "Prawo w Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim. Historia i współczesność" (Lublin, RW KUL 1999). Both of these publications provided relevant information related to the functioning of legal studies at the Catholic University of Lublin. Obviously, the publication presenting the biographies of law professors is neither the only one nor the first publication in Poland dedicated to the academics and history of law faculties. This has been done previously by the Universities of Kraków, Wrocław and Poznań, among others.

The title of the publication indicates the close connection between the lives of law professors and the history of the University, the Church and Poland. The authors of the rather substantial publication (775 pages) described both the scientific, social and political activities of the particular people, as well as their lives firmly rooted in the history of the Fatherland. Using archival sources to demonstrate scientific achievements in the publication encourages the recipient to consider it more deeply. The book consists of an introduction from the editors, both included in the first, second and third editions, a historical outline of the Faculty (pages 11–18), and 82 biographies of professors, as well as an index of names. It should be acknowledged, however, that the publication refers only to professors and omits other employees of the Faculty, whose contributions to its functioning and development was also very important.

A brief historical outline of the Faculty by Antoni Dębiński, the Dean of the Faculty in the period between 2004 and 2012, is divided into sections related to the changes in the name of the Faculty, as it has already had as many as five different names in its more than 100 years of history: the Faculty of Canon Law and Moral Sciences and the concurrent section of Law in the Faculty of Law and Social and Economic Sciences, the Faculty of Canon Law and Legal Sciences (since 1984), the Faculty of Canon and Secular Law (since 1989), and finally the Faculty of Law, Canon Law and Administration (since 1999). This historical outline is followed by biographies that are an essential part of the publication. The authors adopted an

alphabetical arrangement for their publication to let the readers familiarize themselves with the 82 biographies of law teachers at the Catholic University of Lublin, who were often masters for many generations of students. The first publication from 2006 included the presentation of 39 selected profiles of professors who had already passed away. The dates of birth and death, as well as the merits for the Church, the State or science were taken into consideration. As the editors themselves noted: “the list of the presented biographies was agreed upon with the heads of the departments of the Faculty of Law.” (10) This particular presentation of the profiles of individual professors was based on their merits. The third publication contains the biographies of professors from all fields of law despite the fact that they were members of different Faculties in the interwar period. It also did not matter how long someone had been associated with the University.

Biographical articles are of scientific value as they are accompanied by extensive bibliographies. They all consist of three parts. The first presents a biography, the second concentrates on educational, social and political activities, and the third is dedicated to the scientific achievements of the presented person. On the one hand, this may arouse the interest of the reader seeking information about a particular person. On the other hand, we can find, at least partially, an answer to a topic relevant from today’s perspective and concerning the foundations of the school of law at the Catholic University of Lublin, as well as its impact on the history of the State and the Church. However, there is some concern regarding the approach to the presented issue. The book introduces the facts from the lives of the professors in a purely reporting manner without referring to the prevailing realities at the historical moments that shaped both the individuals and the history of the Polish state. It should be admitted, however, that this is justified by the goal that the editors of the publication set for themselves, namely the “raw” presentation of facts about the selected figures. It should also be acknowledged that presenting individuals in relation to various political situations during the period between the First and Second World Wars, the immediate post-war period, the socio-political changes of the Polish People’s Republic, and the political and economic transformation of the Third Republic is not easy, especially in the case of numerous authors describing one or a few scholars. Therefore, this way of approaching and presenting individual figures seems to be justified. Perhaps, however, the publication lacked an in-depth introduction of the social and political background relating to the more than 100-year-long history of the Catholic University of Lublin and its department[s] of law.

The comments introduced by the reviewers, which led to corrections and justified amendments, are a valuable aid to subsequent editions of the publication. Particularly noteworthy is the review by A. Redzik titled “Uczni juryści w dziejach KUL”

and included in *Państwo i Prawo* 9/2007. A. Redzik conducted such an in-depth analysis of the included biographies that, when all comments were taken into account, the existing descriptions were expanded and the publication as a whole was improved. Owing to the reviewer's recommendations, some incomplete or even erroneous information was corrected, and some suggestions were made about what to pay attention to in future publications.

Equally interesting, although less in-depth, are the reviews by J. Flaga ("Profesorowie miarą wielkości uniwersytetu" included in *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 49/2006), H. Olszewski ("Profesorowie Prawa Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego" in *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne* 59/2007) and M. Wrzosek ("Uwagi recenzyjne poświęcone księdze o profesorach i wykładowcach prawa w Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim" in *Profesorowie prawa Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II* edited by Antoni Dębiński, Wojciech Sz. Staszewski and Monika Wójcik, and published by the Publishing House of the Catholic University of Lublin in 2008, *Studia Prawnicze KUL* 40/2009, no. 4, pp. 139–160).

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