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## Introduction

Volume I brings together articles devoted to the origins of dissolutions as well as their course and significance in Cracow (in the last years of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and during the brief period of Austrian rule in 1796–1809), and in the territories annexed by Austria and Russia. Articles dealing with sources illustrating these dissolutions and with the fate of the cultural heritage of the dissolved monasteries are to be found in Volume III.

Worthy of note is an interesting presentation of “Reformation-related” dissolutions in the 16th century as well as dissolutions of monasteries carried out in France and Russia in the second half of the 18th century. We are happy to be able to present the background and the course of Josephinist dissolutions in the Austrian Empire, especially in Bohemia. There is also a comprehensive analysis of dissolutions carried out in the Cracow area.

The articles published in the volume are particularly valuable because of their authors’ detailed knowledge of the source material kept in the Polish archives as well as the archives found beyond our eastern border, especially in Lviv and Vilnius. By comparison, their knowledge of archive documents kept in Vienna’s Österreichisches Staatsarchiv is much less thorough; the collection in question remains practically outside academic circulation. Perhaps at least to some extent this state of affairs will be changed by studies undertaken as part of a research project entitled *Cultural heritage of dissolved monasteries on the territory of former Poland and in Silesia in 18th and 19th centuries: fate, significance, cataloguing* (Ministry of Science and Higher Education programme “National Programme for the Development of Humanities” for 2012–2016), a project the purpose of which is to make an inventory of these archive resources. Their first result is an inventory compiled by Gregor Ploch and published in Volume III.

In the present volume particularly worthy of note, given the rarity of this type of approach, is an interesting article by Fr. Roland Prejs, in which the author tries to compare dissolutions carried out under the 1810 decree (in Silesia) and under the 1864 *ukase* (in the territories annexed by Russia).

The variety of topics, ways of presenting them and research methods applied by the authors make the volume interesting to every reader. At the same time, we can hope that the volume will be an important contribution to the study of the origins, course and significance of dissolutions of monasteries towards the end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and in the territories annexed by Austria and Russia.

Colour illustrations accompanying the articles as well as a complete bibliography from all four volumes can be found in Volume IV.