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Editorial: Homo politicus et res publica

The scientific journal of the Institute of Political Science and Public Administration at Ignatianum University in Cracow was established in 2010 and was first published as a biannual and since 2013 as a quarterly. With this issue, we celebrate our golden anniversary – the publication of the 50th volume of the “Horizons of Politics”.

From the very beginning of the journal’s existence, the main objective of its Editorial Board was an in-depth reflection on *homo politicus* and *res publicae*. The successive issues were dedicated to these themes and at first focused on analyses of diverse aspects of man’s political nature and social and political systems and more recently on the origins and status of power generally and political power.

The aim of this anniversary volume is to reflect on traditionally fundamental issues in the philosophy of politics: man’s political nature (*homo politicus*, *zoon politikon*, *animal politicum*) and the state understood as *res publica*, and thus distinct from all *res privati*.

The idea of man’s political nature derives from classical Greek philosophy and was first formulated in Presocratic reflection, in which it was expressed primarily in perceiving man and politics through the prism of the *arche/archaiia*. Both the life of individuals and the life of *poleis* were subordinated to the same principles that governed the entire world. This idea took its most mature form in the Pythagoreans’ philosophy and was emblematically illustrated by the tripartite division of the cosmos: 1. *macrocosmos*, i.e., the world as a whole; 2. *cosmos*, i.e., the level of the city-state (the Spartans called their *polis* cosmos); and 3. *microcosmos*, i.e., the level of the individual, in which the soul (*psyche*) was the guiding factor.

Undoubtedly, the broadest reflection on the politicality of human nature was offered by Aristotle. In his *Politics*, this philosopher from Stagira explained man's political nature by referring to the genealogy of the *polis*. The family (household – *oikos, oikia*) was the first community born out of man's natural inclinations (which humans share with other living organisms) to have offspring. He treated the family as the union of a male and a female for the purpose of having children. He mentioned another aspect of the household – the master-slave relationship – which he also treated as natural. The family came into existence – or rather the household came into existence – as he wrote, “for the supply of man's everyday wants”. The village commune (*kome*), which was the colony of the family, was the first community to transcend the needs of everyday life. And finally, as the culmination of the entire process, the *polis* appeared – it was in the *polis*, treated as an autarkic community, that human nature was realised. A prominent feature of the *polis* was the establishment and implementation of justice, which introduced an additional aspect to the political nature: the purpose of the *polis* was not merely to secure life but to contribute to, using Aristotle's words, “a perfect and self-sufficient life”. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, the founder of the Lyceum discussed man's inherent politicality also in an ethical context, linking it to friendship and the concept of *to ergon tou anthropou* – a peculiar and specifically human goal that can be achieved in communal action. This goal, in which human nature was fully actualised, was to build a political community based on justice. In this way, in Aristotle's philosophy ethics and politics became inseparable aspects of the same human nature. Its most practical manifestation was the realisation of *to koine sympheron* – the common interest or, as Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote in his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* – *bonum commune*, the common good. Thus, the concept of man as *zoon politikon* also laid the foundations for the idea of *res publicae*.

The thinker who took over most of Aristotle's ideas regarding human nature and the purpose of the state was Saint Thomas Aquinas, who adapted them to the Christian doctrine. He assumed that man was by nature *animal politicum et animal sociale*. The purpose of the state was the realisation of *bonum commune*, to which he assigned, in accordance with the doctrine of the Church, a transcendent dimension. The teaching of Saint Thomas became the foundation of

Catholic social teaching, which has retained the thesis that political life is natural and is inseparably linked with ethics crowned with the category of the common good.

However, Aristotle's concept was criticised already in antiquity by some philosophical schools, e.g., Epicureanism and Cynicism, and in later periods by some denominations of Christianity. Machiavelli renounced the thesis of the inseparability of ethics and politics, but the real attack on Aristotelianism in European political reflection came from Thomas Hobbes, who rejected the thesis of the political nature and limited the purpose of the state by stripping it of its ethical and transcendent dimensions. Most modern and contemporary branches of political philosophy seem to follow the path set by the author of *Leviathan*. Does this mean, however, that the ideas of *animal politicum* and the classically conceived *res publica* have ultimately lost their significance in both intellectual and socio-political life?

In an attempt to answer this question, the editors of this issue want to analyse the relevance of these traditional categories both in the philosophy (theory) of politics and in its practical aspect. They hope the articles published in this volume will contribute to the analyses of the problem by indicating several approaches to it and by initiating broader discussion in this area.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The maxim *Tempus est optimus magister vitae* (time is life's best teacher), attributed to the Roman philosopher Cicero, perfectly expresses the short but rich history of the scientific journal "Horizons of Politics". Thanks to all those who work with us: authors, reviewers, editors, typesetters, translators, readers, and many others, we are able to 'learn life', realise our 'scientific dreams', and achieve ambitious goals. On behalf of the entire Editorial Board, we would like to thank you very much. Let us wish each other better and wise lives.

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