

= Scipione Piattoli =

Scipione Piattoli ( Italian pronunciation : [ ʃiˈpjɔˈne ˈpjattoli ] ; November 10 , 1749 ? April 12 , 1809 ) was an Italian Catholic priest ? a Piarist ? an educator , writer and political activist , and a major figure of the Enlightenment in Poland . After ten years as a professor at the University of Modena in Italy , he migrated to the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth , where he became associated with several magnate families ? the Potockis , Lubomirskis and Czartoryskis . He was a member of the Duchess Dorothea von Medem 's court in Courland ( Lithuania ) and of King Stanisław August Poniatowski 's court in the Commonwealth .

Piattoli was politically active in Warsaw during and after the Four @-@ Year Sejm ( 1788 ? 92 ) . He served as intermediary between the reformist Patriotic Party and King Stanisław August Poniatowski , and as an aide to the King ( 1789 ? 93 ) . He is best remembered for his participation in drafting the Constitution of May 3 , 1791 , a milestone act in the history of Polish political legislation . He was one of the organizers of the Kościuszko Insurrection against Russian influence in 1794 , which was the last armed struggle to be held under the banners of the Commonwealth . After the Third Partition of Poland in 1795 , Piattoli was interned by the Austrians for several years , together with another Polish activist of the Constitution movement , Hugo Kołłątaj . Freed in 1800 , he worked several years with Polish and Russian statesman Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski in the service of Russia , before retiring to Courland .

Piattoli was an inspiration to Leo Tolstoy , who based the figure of the Abbé Morio in War and Peace ( 1869 ) on him . He is also one of the figures immortalized in Jan Matejko 's 1891 painting , Constitution of May 3 , 1791 . In his 1980 ten @-@ page entry on Piattoli in the Polish Biographical Dictionary , historian Emanuel Rostworowski notes that , ? despite two Italian monographs ( by A.D. Ancon and G. Bozzolato ) ? , Piattoli still awaits a definitive biography .

= = Early life = =

Scipione Piattoli was born in Florence on November 10 , 1749 , to a family of painters ( father , Gaetano Piattoli ; mother , Maria Anna Bacherini ; brother , Giuseppe Piattoli ) .

In 1763 he joined the Piarist order , taking the name Urban . Some historians have questioned whether he ever took Holy Orders ; in any case he was known for a rather secular lifestyle . He taught rhetoric in Piarist schools in Massa and Corregio , and got his doctorate from the University of Florence . From 1772 to 1782 he was a professor at the University of Modena , teaching religious history and Greek . Soon he became involved in political activism , and in 1774 he published ( anonymously ) a brochure titled Saggio intorno al luogo del seppellire , which focused on the issue of hygiene and burials near churches . Also in 1774 he received permission to leave the Piarists , and resumed using the name Scipione . He would , however , keep and use the title of " the priest " ( l 'abbé ) for most of his life . By the turn of the decade , Piattoli found himself in a faction that was losing in the politics of Modena , and decided to move , giving up his professorship in 1782 .

Piattoli arrived in the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth that year , as a tutor for the sons of Piotr Potocki , a member of the magnate Potocki family . It was said in a contemporary account that his entire material wealth at that time was composed of a ? sizable library ? . Piattoli ended his service with the Potocki family around 1784 due to personal disagreements with Pelagia Potocka and Maria Radziwiłł . In the meantime , he became associated with the Lubomirski family ? Izabela Lubomirska in particular ? and through them befriended Stanisław Kostka Potocki and Grzegorz Piramowicz . Through Potocki and Piramowicz he became a member of the Society for Elementary Books in 1784 . In the Society he was tasked with writing a textbook on the history of science . Around that time he was also active in Warsaw freemasonry .

Piattoli traveled through Europe in the retinue of the Lubomirski family , including Izabela , and as a tutor of young Henryk Lubomirski . During that time he developed extensive contacts at various European courts in Courland , Austria ( Vienna ) , Italy ( Turin ) and France ( Paris ) . During his three @-@ year stay in the Lubomirskis ' Parisian residence , he was in touch with many important men of the Age of Enlightenment . He met ? often through another Florentinian , Filippo Mazzei ?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe , Thomas Jefferson , the Marquis de Lafayette , Luigi Landriani , Girolamo Lucchesini , and the Marquis de Condorcet . He also corresponded with J. G. Herder . In Poland , he developed close contacts with Ignacy Potocki and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz . From 1787 he also tutored Adam Jerzy Czartoryski , later an important politician in the Russian Empire , on whom Piattoli would retain significant influence .

= = Reformer and constitution drafter = =

Piattoli developed contacts with notable figures on the Polish political scene , initially from the group opposed to the royal faction . By the end of his stay in Paris , he likely became a supporter of reforms in France and Poland , and begun taking his first serious steps in political activism , through the involvement in the Quattuowirat , a group of magnates planning a ( never realized ) confederacy . He became a foreign member of the Société des Amis des Noirs .

Through his freemason contacts with Pierre Maurice Glayre , Piattoli won the confidence of Poland 's King Stanisław August Poniatowski , becoming his agent in Paris and , by the end of 1789 , his private secretary and librarian , although without any official title . Acting as a sort of cultural aide , Piattoli , who had strong ties to the reformist and often anti @-@ royal opposition , became an important link between the reformers ? Ignacy Potocki in particular ? and the king . In the words of a Swedish diplomat , L. Engstrom , he was ? like a tireless spring ? , constantly mediating between the two factions .

Due to his association with the reformers , in conservative Rome he became infamous as a staunch supporter of revolutionary ideals and was accused of " democratism " . Vatican diplomats criticized the king for hiring such a " revolutionary " , but the king defended Piattoli quite vividly . In any case , many such claims were exaggerations or rumours spread by his political enemies : according to one such rumour , Piattoli was alleged to incite crowds in France to kill the king . In reality , Piattoli supported the Monarchiens of the French Revolution 's early stages , but more in the direction of peaceful transformation into a constitutional republic than the regicidal excesses .

Between 1790 and 1792 , Piattoli was sent on several sensitive diplomatic missions for the king to Berlin and other places . He was involved in the negotiations of the Polish @-@ Prussian alliance . He collaborated with Ignacy Potocki , helping draft many texts connected with Potocki 's work in the Sejm , the legislature of the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth . He was also an active supporter of Poniatowski 's plan for a hereditary succession . Piattoli , as Poniatowski 's secretary and a resident of the Royal Castle in Warsaw , has been credited with winning the King over to the idea of social reforms and with playing a part in the drafting of the Constitution of May 3 , 1791 . The exact nature of Piattoli 's role in regard to the Constitution remains uncertain ; modern historians disagree to what degree he was an executor , a mediator , or an initiator . He played a role in convincing the King to collaborate with the leaders of the Patriotic Party on drafting a constitution . He might have prepared or expanded drafts of the document , based on discussions among the principal authors , including the King , Hugo Kołłątaj ( another politically active Roman Catholic priest ) and Ignacy Potocki . At a minimum , he seems to have helped catalyze the process . Historian Emanuel Rostworowski describes him as a vital secretary @-@ editor , who certainly participated in related discussions and influenced both Potocki and the king , and calls Piattoli 's quarters in the Royal Palace a ? creche ? of the constitution . Piattoli was , finally , involved in the final preparations for the vote that took place during the Sejm session on May 3 .

Later that month he became a founder of the Friends of the Constitution . He was active in various political causes and worked closely with other key figures in Poland such as Hugo Kołłątaj . He became a trusted adviser to Dorothea von Medem , Duchess of Courland . He supported reforms to improve the status of the burghers and Jews .

= = Final years = =

During the War in Defence of the Constitution in 1792 , Piattoli found himself on another diplomatic mission to Dresden , where he stayed after the Commonwealth 's defeat at the hands of Imperial

Russia resulted in the Second Partition of Poland . In Dresden and nearby Leipzig , Piattoli was active in the circles of Polish patriotic emigres , who included Potocki and Kołłątaj . In 1793 he officially parted ways with Poniatowski , receiving a letter in which he was discharged from his service . In 1794 he was involved in the preparations for the Kościuszko Insurrection against Russian influence , and in negotiations with the newly republican France , in which Polish reformists proposed an alliance with France , promising to turn Poland into a second republic in Europe . At the same time , he was involved in much more conservative negotiations with Russians .

In July 1794 he and several other activists were exiled from Leipzig , and Piattoli was soon arrested by the Austrian authorities . After the failure of the Kościuszko Insurrection later in 1794 , many prisoners were set free , but Piattoli was kept imprisoned , together with Kołłątaj , as the Russian authorities insisted that the two were " extremely dangerous " . Hence , even after the final Partitions of the Polish -Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 , Piattoli was kept interned in Prague by the Austrian Empire authorities until 1800 , despite requests for his release from Poniatowski and even Napoleon Bonaparte . His release in 1800 seems to have been the result of efforts of the Czartoryski family and Duchess Dorothea .

After his release he returned to Dorothea 's Courland court , where he served as a tutor for her daughter . Around 1803 he began cooperating with Adam Jerzy Czartoryski , who was now working for the Russian authorities . Around that time , he and Czartoryski authored a plan for a European federal organization of states intended to prevent armed conflicts and to maintain perpetual peace . Piattoli , through Czartoryski , briefly worked in the diplomatic service and administration of the Russians , too . Like Czartoryski , Piattoli tried to push for a more lenient and friendly attitude towards Poland at the Russian court , but with little success .

In 1807 Scipione Piattoli returned to Courland . There he finally settled , abandoned the priesthood , and married one of the ladies of the court . In his final years in Courland he was involved with Courland 's educational system , and hoped to pursue some scientific studies , a lifelong dream for which he never found enough time . He died of a lung infection in Altenburg on April 12 , 1809 . He was buried in a park in Löbichau .

= = Remembrance = =

Piattoli was an inspiration to Leo Tolstoy , who based the figure of the Abbé Morio in War and Peace ( 1869 ) on him . He is also one of the figures immortalized in Jan Matejko 's 1891 painting , Constitution of May 3 , 1791 . In his 1980 ten -page entry on Piattoli in the Polish Biographical Dictionary , historian Emanuel Rostworowski notes that , " despite two Italian monographs ( by A.D. Ancon and G. Bozzolato ) " , Piattoli still awaits a definitive biography .