

INTRODUCTION

The papers which have been gathered in this volume show several research problems connected with Polish Romanticism from the perspective of European contexts. *Colloquia Litteraria* is a periodical relying on the assumption that the history of literature is a continuous process, developing over time. Such an approach allows us to see works of art in a historical perspective, and more widely in a cultural perspective, and in the light of developments in such areas as genealogy, poetics, theory of literature, but also in reference to the tradition of academic research and achievements in the art of interpretation.

The papers in this volume deal with detailed problems of the works of the greatest poets of Polish Romanticism: Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki and Zygmunt Krasiński. A separate volume of *Colloquia Litteraria* is devoted to the works of Cyprian Norwid, a fact which should be stressed here because without this poet the map of Polish Romanticism would not be complete. The papers published in this volume are devoted to important problems of Polish Romantic literature, among others, references to the tradition and literature of the Middle Ages, influences of the gentry (szlachta) culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Enlightenment period and Western European tradition. This volume also includes academic papers on Polish poets connected with Ukraine and Lithuania, and on ideological and religious tendencies which shaped Polish Romanticism. It is worth remembering at this point the 'radiation' of culture and art of the first half of the nineteenth century on contemporary literature

(papers dealing with these issues have been published in English in another volume of *Colloquia Literaria*).

The culture of Polish Romanticism is specific, which can be seen against the background of European Romanticisms. The plural form 'Romanticisms' can be defended through reference to the complex cultural changes in this period, and the tendency towards individual expression and uniqueness can be seen both on the national and individual levels. This period was particularly important for Polish culture. It influenced both the second half of the nineteenth century and also, to a considerable degree, contemporary culture. Polish Romanticism is an important source, not only in terms of aesthetics (it was a period of masterpieces), but also of axiology, which allows us to understand the directions of the development of literature and culture.

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