

= Juliusz Słowacki =

Juliusz Słowacki (Polish pronunciation : [ˈjuljuʃ swɔˈvat ʃki] ; 4 September 1809 – 3 April 1849) was a Polish Romantic poet . He is considered one of the " Three Bards " of Polish literature – a major figure in the Polish Romantic period , and the father of modern Polish drama . His works often feature elements of Slavic pagan traditions , Polish history , mysticism and orientalism . His style includes the employment of neologisms and irony . His primary genre was the drama , but he also wrote lyric poetry . His most popular works include the dramas *Kordian* and *Balladyna* and the poems *Beniowski* and *Testament mój* .

Słowacki spent his youth in the " Stolen Lands " , in Kremenets (Polish : Krzemieniec ; now in Ukraine) and Vilnius (Polish : Wilno , in Lithuania) . He briefly worked for the government of the Kingdom of Poland . During the November 1830 Uprising , he was a courier for the Polish revolutionary government . When the uprising ended in defeat , he found himself abroad and thereafter , like many compatriots , lived the life of an émigré . He settled briefly in Paris , France , and later in Geneva , Switzerland . He also traveled through Italy , Greece and the Middle East . Eventually he returned to Paris , where he spent the last decade of his life . He briefly returned to Poland when another uprising broke out during the Spring of Nations (1848) .

= = Life = =

= = = Youth = = =

= = = Emigration = = =

Like many of his countrymen , Słowacki decided to stay in France as a political refugee . In 1832 he published his first collections of poems and his first two dramas (*Mindowe* and *Maria Stuart*) . He also met Mickiewicz again ; reportedly , Mickiewicz approached his younger colleague and shook his hand . However , Słowacki 's poems , written in the 1820s , were unpopular among his Polish compatriots , as they failed to capture the sentiment of a people living under foreign occupation . Słowacki was angered by Mickiewicz , who not only stole the limelight with his *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* (*Books of the Polish nation and pilgrimage*) , but his part three of *Dziady* (1832) cast Słowacki 's stepfather , professor Bécu , in the role of a villain . In a letter to his mother Słowacki wrote that immediately after reading that work he was ready to challenge Mickiewicz for a duel ; that did not come to pass but from that moment on , Słowacki would see Mickiewicz as his main rival . Few days later , antagonized by worsening reception of his works among the Polish émigré community in Paris , including sharp criticism from Mickiewicz , Słowacki left on a trip to Geneva , Switzerland . The French authorities denied him the right to return to France as part of a larger program to rid the country of the potentially subversive Polish exiles who had settled there .

From 1833 @-@ 36 , he lived in Switzerland . A third volume of his poems , published in 1833 and containing works from the period of the Uprising , was far more nationalist in tone , and won more recognition in his homeland . At the same time , he wrote several works featuring romantic themes , and beautiful scenery , such as *W Szwajcarii* (*In Switzerland*) , *Rozczepienie* (*Separation*) , *Stokrótki* (*Daisies*) and *Chmury* (*Clouds*) .

In 1834 he published the drama *Kordian* , a romantic drama , illustrating the soul searching of the Polish people in the aftermath of the failed insurrection ; this work is considered one of his best creations .

In 1836 , Słowacki left Switzerland and embarked on a journey that started in Italy . In Rome he met and befriended Zygmunt Krasiński , the third of the Three Bards . Krasiński is also considered the first serious literary critic of Słowacki 's work . Słowacki would dedicate several of his works , including *Balladyna* , to Krasiński . From Rome , Słowacki went to Naples and later , to Sorrento . In

August he left for Greece (Corfu , Argos , Athens , Syros) , Egypt (Alexandria , Cairo , El Arish) and the Middle East , including the Holy Land (Jerusalem , Bethlehem , Jericho , Nazareth) and neighboring territories (Damascus , Beirut) . It was a journey Słowacki described in his epic poem *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu* (" Travel to the Holy Land from Naples ") ; his other works of that period included the poem *Ojciec zadumionych* (The Father of the Plague-stricken) , *Grób Agamemnon* (Agamemnon's Grave) , *Rozmowa z piramidami* (A talk with the pyramids) , *Anielli* and *Listy poetyckie z Egiptu* (Poetic Letters from Egypt) . In June 1837 he returned to Italy , settling briefly in Florence , and moved back to Paris in December 1838 .

In 1840 Mickiewicz was elected to the position of professor of Slavic literature at Collège de France ; it was one of the events that cemented his position over Słowacki in the Polish émigré community . The rivalry between the two Bards for primacy would continue till the ends of lives . In 1841 Słowacki traveled briefly to Frankfurt , but Paris would become his main home till his death . In 1840 and 1841 he wrote two notable dramas : *Mazepa* , the only of his dramas that was put on stage during his lifetime , and *Fantazy* , published posthumously , well received by critics . Over the next few years Słowacki wrote and published many works , including *Testament mój* (My Last Will) , in which he described his faith that his works would endure after his death .

Between 1841 and 1846 , he published *Beniowski* , considered by some his best lyrical poetry . Starting as a story of a historical figure , it developed into a discussion of the poet's own life and opinions . In 1842 he joined the religious and philosophical group , *Koło Sprawy Bożej* (Circle of God's Cause) , led by Andrzej Towiański . This group included , among others , Mickiewicz . Towiański's influence is credited with a new , mystical current in Słowacki's works , seen in works such as the poem *Beniowski* and the drama *Ksiądz Marek* (Father Mark) . Słowacki left the Circle a year later , in 1843 .

In the summers of 1843 and 1844 Słowacki traveled to Pornic , a resort on the Atlantic coast in Brittany . It was there , in 1844 , that he wrote *Genezis z Ducha* (Genesis from the Spirit) . This work introduced his own philosophical system that would have a visible influence on his works in his last decade . Around 1839 Słowacki put his capital into the Parisian stock market . He was a shrewd investor who earned enough from the investments to dedicate his life to his literary career ; he was also able to pay the costs of having his books published .

== Last years ==

In the late 1840s Słowacki attached himself to a group of like-minded young exiles , determined to return to Poland and win its independence . One of his friends was the pianist and composer Frédéric Chopin . Others included enthusiasts of his work , such as Zygmunt Szczyński , Józef Alojzy Reitzenheim and Józef Komierowski . Despite poor health , when he heard about the events of the Spring of Nations , Słowacki traveled with some friends to Poznań , then under Prussian control , hoping to participate in the Wielkopolska Uprising of 1848 . He addressed the National Committee (*Komitet Narodowy*) in Poznań on 27 April . " I tell you " , he declared as the rebels faced military confrontation with the Prussian Army , " that the new age has dawned , the age of holy anarchy . " But by 9 May , the revolt was crushed .

Arrested by the Prussian police , Słowacki was sent back to Paris . On his way there , he passed through Wrocław , where in mid-June he was reunited with his mother , whom he had not seen for almost twenty years . He returned to Paris in July 1848 . His poem *Papież Słowiański* (The Slavic Pope) , published in late 1848 , gained new fame a century later when it seemed to foretell the 1978 ascent of Karol Wojtyła to the throne of St. Peter as Pope John Paul II . His final dramas (*Zawisza Czarny* , *Samuel Zborowski*) , attempted to explain history of Poland through Słowacki's genesic philosophy . In March 1849 , Słowacki , his health failing , was visited three times by another Polish writer and poet , Cyprian Norwid , who later wrote about his visits in *Czarne kwiaty* (Black Flowers) . Up to his final days , Słowacki was writing poetry ; a day before his death he dictated passages of his final work , *Król i Duch* (King and Spirit) . This grandiose , visionary and symbolic poem , " summary of the entire Romantic culture " , Słowacki's masterpiece , weaving together Poland's history and its contemporary political and literary thought ,

was never finished .

Słowacki died in Paris on 3 April 1849 from tuberculosis , and on 5 April he was buried in the Montmartre Cemetery in Paris . He never married . Only about 30 people attended his funeral . Krasiński , although estranged from Słowacki in the last few years , wrote of the funeral :

Słowacki 's tombstone at Montmartre was designed by his friend and executor of his last will , painter Charles Pétinlaud @-@ Dubos ; it did not weather the passage of time well however , and in 1851 a new , similar tombstone was put in place , this one designed by Polish sculptor Władysław Oleszczyński . In 1927 Słowacki 's remains were moved to Wawel Cathedral in Poland , but an empty grave still remains at Montmartre .

= = Work = =

Słowacki was a prolific writer ; his collected works (*Dzieła wszystkie*) were published in 17 volumes . His legacy includes 25 dramas and 253 works of poetry . He wrote in many genres : dramas , lyrical poems , literary criticism , letters , journals and memoirs , fragments of two novels , and a political brochure ; he was also a translator . His letters to his mother are among the finest letters in all Polish literature .

Although the majority of his works were in Polish , he tried his hand at several works in French language (*Le roi de Landawa* , *Beatrice Cenci*) . Many of his works were published only posthumously , often under arbitrary titles , as Słowacki never named them himself . He also left notes on works that he never began or never completed . Słowacki is also considered the father of modern Polish drama .

Polish literary historian Włodzimierz Sztyrcl divides Słowacki 's work into four periods : Wolter 's circle (pseudoclassicism) , Christian ethic , Towiański 's ethic and genesic ethic . Other scholars offer slightly different periodizations ; for example dividing his works into a classical period , a Swiss period , a Parisian period and a genesis period . Jarosław Țawski combines Towiański 's period with the genesic ones , speaking of a " mystical " period . Overall , Słowacki 's early work was influenced by Byron and Shakespeare , and included works that was often historical in nature , like (as in *Maria Stuart* or *Mindowe*) , or exotic , Oriental locales (as in *Arab*) . His work took on a more patriotic tone following the failed November Insurrection of 1830 ? 1831 . His final works are heavy in mystical and philosophical undertones . In the 1840s he developed his own philosophy , or mystical system , with works such as *Król @-@ Duch* and *Genesis z Ducha* being an exposition of his philosophical ideas (" genesic philosophy ") according to which the material world is an expression of an ever @-@ improving spirit capable of progression (transmigration) into constantly newer forms . As Țawski notes , his philosophical works can transcend clear boundaries of simple literary genres .

Słowacki 's works , situated in the period of romanticism in Poland , contain rich and inventive vocabulary , including many neologisms . They use fantasy , mysticism and symbolism and feature themes related to Poland 's history , essence of Polishness , and relation to a larger universe . Țawski , enumerating the main characteristics of Słowacki 's writings , notes first that he was a " creationist " , in the sense of creating new meanings and words (many of his characters bear names he invented himself , such as Kordian) . Second , he notes that Słowacki was not only inspired by works of others , from poets and writers to scholars and philosophers , but that his texts were often a masterful , ironic @-@ grotesque polemic with other creators . For example , Słowacki was so impressed by Antoni Młczyński 's *Maria* that he wrote a sequel to it , *Jan Bielecki* . Likewise , Kordian is seen as building on William Shakespeare 's *Hamlet* , and as Słowacki 's response to Mickiewicz 's *Dziady* . This Țawski calls " ivy @-@ like imagination " , comparing Słowacki 's approach to that of an ivy , growing around works of others and reshaping them into new forms in a sophisticated literary game . Third , Słowacki was a master of irony ; he used it not only on others , but on himself , and even on irony itself ? the " irony of irony " .

= = Legacy = =

After his death , Słowacki acquired the reputation of a national prophet . He is now considered to be one of the " Three Bards " (wieszczs) of Polish literature . Słowacki was not a very popular figure in Paris , nor among his contemporaries . He wrote many dramas , which can be seen as his favorite genre , yet he was a playwright who never saw any of his work performed on stage (only Mazepa was staged during his lifetime , and not in his presence) . His works , written in Polish , dense with Slavic myths , philosophy and symbols , were difficult to translate to other languages . Słowacki 's unpopularity among other Polish émigrés can be attributed to his unwillingness to pander to contemporary tastes ; and in particular , his refusal to comfort his compatriots , shaken by the loss of Polish statehood and the failure of the November Uprising . Słowacki 's ironic and sometimes pessimistic attitude was not appreciated by his contemporaries , nor was his denial of Polish uniqueness .

Whereas Mickiewicz followed the Messianic tradition and in Konrad suggested that Poland 's fate was in the hands of God , Słowacki 's Kordian questioned whether his country was not instead a plaything of Satan . However , the same work has God and the Angels watching over Poland and the Earth . In Anelli , Słowacki 's describes the tragic fate of Polish exiles in Siberia , painting a gloomy vision of Poland 's destiny ; the same topic was taken by Mickiewicz in the Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage as a call for Poles to spread hope and spirituality across Europe . While a small circle of his friends talked about his wit , perseverance and inspiration , in popular memory he was a " sickly man of weak character " , egocentric , bitter due to his failed rivalry with Mickiewicz . Mickiewicz himself wrote of Słowacki 's work as a " beautiful church , but without God inside " .

After his death , Słowacki gained a cult @-@ like status in Poland ; in particular , in the cultural center of Kraków . Several obituaries and longer articles appeared in the Polish press upon Słowacki 's death . His works , many of them published posthumously for the first time , found growing acceptance among a new generation ; an 1868 work noted that " Słowacki took the fancy of the Polish youth . He was its singer , its spiritual leader in the full meaning of the term " . Through undoubtedly a poet of the romantic era , he was increasingly popular among the positivists and the authors of the Young Poland period in the late 1800s and early 1900s . His works were popularized by other writers , such as Adam Asnyk and Michał Bałucki , and his dramas were shown in theaters . He became a major literary figure for the new generation of Polish writers . He also became respected abroad ; a 1902 English language book edited by Charles Dudley Warner noted that " the splendid exuberance of his thought and fancy ranks him among the great poets of the nineteenth century " .

In 1927 , some eight years after Poland had regained independence , the Polish government arranged for Słowacki 's remains to be transferred from Paris to Wawel Cathedral , in Kraków . He was interred in the Crypt of the National Bards , beside Mickiewicz . Słowacki 's interment at Wawel Cathedral was controversial , as many of his works were considered heretical by Polish Catholic @-@ Church officials . It took almost two decades and the backing of Józef Piłsudski , for whom Słowacki was a favorite poet , to obtain the Church 's agreement to interring Słowacki at Wawel Cathedral . At the 1927 ceremony , Piłsudski commanded :

Several streets and schools in modern Poland bear Juliusz Słowacki 's name . Three parks are dedicated to him : in Bielsko @-@ Biała , in Łódź and in Wrocław . (Polish) There are several monuments of Juliusz Słowacki , including ones in Warsaw (2001) and Wrocław (1984) .

Among the most notable landmarks bearing his name is the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre in Kraków , and the Juliusz Słowacki Museum in Kremenets , Ukraine , opened in 2004 at his family 's former manor house . In 2009 the Polish Sejm (parliament) declared that year , the two @-@ hundredth anniversary of Słowacki 's birth , to be the Year of Juliusz Słowacki .

= = Selected works = =

= = = Drama = = =

Balladyna (1835 , published 1839 , performed 1862)
Fantazy (1841 , published 1866 , performed 1867)
Horsztyński (1835 , published 1866 , performed 1871)
Kordian (1833 , published 1834 , performed 1899)
Ksiądz Marek (Father Marek , 1843 , published same year , performed 1901)
Ksiądz niezłomny (The Constant Prince , after Pedro Calderón de la Barca , 1843 , published 1844 , performed 1874)
Lilla Weneda (1839 , published 1840 , performed 1863)
Maria Stuart (1830 , performed 1862)
Mazepa (1839 , published 1840 , performed in Hungarian 1847 , performed in Polish 1851)
Sen srebrny Salomei (The Silver Dream of Salomea , 1843 , published 1844 , performed 1900)
Samuel Zborowski (1845 , published 1903 , performed 1911)

= = = Poetry = = =

Anielli (1838)
Arab (1830)
Lambro , powstańca grecki (Lambro , a Greek insurgent , 1833)
Beniowski (1841 ? 1846)
Genezis z Ducha (Genesis from the Spirit , 1844)
Godzina myśli (An Hour of Thought , 1832 ? 1833)
Hugo . Powieść krzyżacka (Hugo . Teutonic Order Novel , 1830)
Król @-@ Duch (The Spirit King , portions published 1847 , published in full 1925)
Ojciec zadumionych (The Father of the Plague @-@ stricken , 1838)
Podróż do ziemi świętej (" Voyage to the Holy Land " , 1866)
Testament mój (My Last Will , 1839 ? 1840)
W Szwajcarii (In Switzerland , 1835 , published 1839)
Wacław (1838)