RHETORIC AND POETRY: THE OCCASIONAL WORKS OF THE PHILOMATHS

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SUMMARY. The article concerns the occasional poetry of the Philomaths, which has not been highly valued in historical and literary studies. This resulted from the fact that this work was regarded as not Romantic enough, although the Philomaths themselves were treated as initiators of a new movement in literature. The name day poems, letters, and parting verses did not suit the image of the onset of Vilnius Romanticism; they were associated rather with Classic aestheticism. However, the occasional poetry of the Philomaths should not be described as a kind of confrontation between Classicism and Romanticism, but as a phenomenon of Rococo literary culture and a cultural manifestation of communication among a group of friends, within the circle of a certain special rhetorical community.

KEYWORDS: rhetoric, occasional poetry, the Philomath Society, Rococo.

Among scholars who study the so-called Enlightenment-Romanticism turning point in Polish literature, rhetoric has not had a good reputation. The art of elocution had been associated with the Enlightenment (and earlier) artistic culture and manners, which Romanticism was going to overcome. If Romanticism called for freedom of expression, that means that it wanted to throw off the yoke of the rules of *ars bene dicendi* and *ars bene scribendi*. The rhetorical poetry which was written at that time, i.e., from 1815 to 1825, appeared to be something no longer current, of a past time and hence no longer interesting. It is with the tradition of this kind of literature – faithful to the rules, conventional – that the champions of Romanticism allegedly fought. In historical and literary studies, rhetoric was related to Classicism, which in turn was explicitly (and rashly) identified with the literature of the Enlightenment. Thus, the admiration of the Romantic poets was accompanied by a depreciation of the rhetorical rules and patterns prevalent in the previous period.

The center of the Romantic movement and the cradle of Polish Romanticism was Vilnius in which the Philomath Society (Towarzystwo Filomatów) (1817–1823) was formed. The members of the Society included Adam Mickiewicz, Tomasz Zan, and Jan Czeczot, authors of ballads and other poems inspired by folklore. Indeed,
they contributed substantially to the popularization of Romantic ideas, themes, and forms of expression. However, paradoxically, in the same Philomath environment non-Romantic texts emerged conspicuously. They were deeply rooted in the rhetorical tradition and the literary culture of the Enlightenment, and even in terms of number they surpassed early Romantic texts. It may be said that while the Philomath Society promoted Romantic literature it did not break its bonds with Enlightenment traditions.

This non-Romantic part of the Philomaths’ work consists of texts nowadays referred to as occasional poetry: name day poems, letters of thanks, poetical letters, parting verses, etc. In large measure it is they which constitute the two volumes of *Poezya filomatów*, published in 1922. And it is they which led their editor Jan Czubek to excuse himself to the readers for the decision to publish those reputedly not very valuable poems:

Mamy tu, powiedzmy otwarcie, wcale zbieraną drużynę; podczas gdy niektóre utwory, Mickiewicza np. i niektóre Zana, budzą w nas dziś jeszcze nie samo tylko literackie zajęcie, to inne – a jest ich część przeważna – przedstawiają tak małą wartość, że mogłyby sobie dalej pleśnieć w Archiwum, dostępne dla małej garstki zawodowych badaczy. Nie wartość też literacka rozstrzygnęła o ich wydaniu, ale wyjątkowa ważność, jaką posiadają dla historii tego jedynego w swoim rodzaju towarzystwa.

We have got here, let us say it openly, a picked out bunch; whereas some of the works, e.g., of Mickiewicz, and some of Zan, arouse in us not only literary interest, the others – and there are more of them – show so little merit that they could go moldy in the Archive, available only to a few scholars. It was not the literary value that led to their publication, but the unique importance which they have for the history of this exceptional society.

It might be presumed that it was the occasional nature of these works that seemed to the editor to be the repelling factor: dozens of name day poems, jokes, farces, seemingly completely obsolete. As for Romantic literature, which is what the Philomaths’ poems were represented as, there were very few heralds of that in what was soon to become the great achievement of Mickiewicz and what was, from the 1820s onward, associated with the Romantic school.

The editor of *Poezya filomatów* thus found himself in an uneasy position. On the one hand, he published the literary legacy of the Philomath Society which, for nearly hundred years, has been called the avant-garde of Polish Romanticism.

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On the other hand, he must have admitted that what survived from the the Philomaths’ work showed “so little merit” that it “could go moldy in the Archive”. The only solution to this problem was, consequently, the edition of *Poezya filomatów*, but with an introduction indicating that we have to do with low-grade poetry. The thing is that the editor probably assessed this literature from the perspective of Mickiewicz’s masterpieces and with the knowledge about these works which later dominated in Polish literature. Against such a background and according to those knowledgeable about Romantic aestheticism, the works emerging in the Philomaths circle was not able to make a favorable impression.

Yet is that one-sided Romantic approach justified when it comes to the analysis of non-Romantic occasional poetry? For it is not Romantic conventions which are the latter’s initial reference, but the literary culture of the Enlightenment, or – more broadly put – certain patterns, norms, and literary styles that formed in pre-Romantic periods. It is difficult to appreciate the Philomath's works without going back to that earlier tradition. In fact, while Romanticism to some extent modulates the reception of texts created around 1820, it cannot be the only source of both assessment criteria and categories. Nor can this be left to Classicism, the current too frequently confronted with Romanticism and sometimes too easily identified with the aesthetic and ideological formation of the Enlightenment. In my opinion, in order to assess the Philomaths’ occasional poetry honestly, the appropriate categories should be used, for the type (occasional poetry) and not for the two compared currents (Classicism and Romanticism). The other issue is what kind of relation this type is entering into with one or the other current; i.e., in what way does occasional literature function in the range of subjects, ideas, and genres from Classicism, and how is it used by Romantic poets? Finding this out will be possible only when we analyze the specificity of those occasional poems.

Here I have used the vast expression “Enlightenment literary culture.” By this notion, apart from many more different phenomena, I understand, among others, works of occasional poetry in their historical variants and given their social circumstances. It may not be a precise formula, but it allows avoiding the risk of connecting one phenomenon (for instance, occasional poetry) with the other (for example, Classicism). Thanks to its lack of definition, it does not force any perspective of the description and the arbitrary introduction of the assessing criteria. This freedom will be useful in order not to incorporate the occasional poetry in the context of phenomena which do not suit it and which are situated in a different dimension of literary life (the turn of the Enlightenment). Masterpieces announced *urbi et orbi* are one thing; and poems emerging in a circle of friends or poetical letters exchanged among them, quite another. To my mind, Jan Czubek, who assessed the Philomaths’ poetry negatively, did not regard the difference of the dimensions
in social and literary life. At the same time, the notion “Enlightenment literary
culture” allows us to locate the occasional poetry of the Philomaths in a certain
period and to refer it to the way of functioning of these kinds of work in a given
period. It cannot be denied that the Philomaths’ “iambic metre” is a continuation
of the traditions cultivated in the Enlightenment, so approximately, when it comes
to Polish literature, in the second half of the 18th century.4

The occasional poetry of the Philomaths is a part of developed communication
between peers. It emerged in a circle of friends concerned with self-education and
with the scholarly activities of the whole Society. Functions and aims should, there-
fore, be associated with the given people, human relations, and situations in certain
place and time. That is why, along with description of the panegyrics, name day
poems and rhymed jokes, it is worth to keep in mind not the canon of the aesthetic
values then valid, but the pragmatic dimension of these literary utterances and
their role in the life of that student organization.

The Philomaths’ culture of communication included not only poems delivered
but also speeches declaimed, discussions held, papers read, and academic articles
and reports given. According to the extensive evidence gathered within the frame-
work of the so-called “Philomaths’ Archive,” all of these events were of a ritualized
character.5 Some of them resulted directly from the regulations of the organiza-
tion (the so-called acts); the others, from the customs established in the group.
This ritualization affected the occasional poetry as well: some forms of expression
recurred (“iambs,” name day poems), as did the structures of textual organization
and stylistic devices. The Philomaths constructed a rhetorical community, some-
thing which is possible only when its members accept each other and apply certain
rules of mutual communication; agree with the norms and regulations; and regard
the conventional forms of expression as useful and desired. The norms existed not
only in regulations and in academic treatises but also in the rhyming art, especially
in the one that aims at the integration of the community. It is advisable to read
the poetry of the Philomaths not as a set of individual artistic achievements, but as
a corpus of evidence of the poetry written for the internal use and pleasure of the
Society’s members.

The occasional poetry of the Philomaths in its different types confirmed the
basic assumptions of the rhetorical style: it was based on monologues; the sender

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5 See: Materiały do historii Towarzystwa Filomatów, t. 1. Oprac. Szpotański S., Pietraszkiewiczowa S. Kraków:
Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1920; t. 2. Oprac. Szpotański S., Pietraszkiewiczowa S. Kraków: Polska
Akademia Umiejętności, 1921; Towarzystwo Filomatów. Oprac. Łucki A. Ibid.; Wybór pism filomatów.
Oprac. Witkowska A. Ibid.
addressed the given group of listeners in order to impress them and to make them react; and it also formulated its message according to the current communicative situation. In this area, the artistic output of the Philomaths proves to be an excellent example of the practical implementation of the rules and hints of rhetorical theory (at that time called “the art of speech”) being taught at the university. And Vilnius, as an academic center, had in fact a long tradition of teaching the theory of *ars bene dicendi*, dating back to the 16th century (first in the Jesuit College, then in the Vilnius Academy and University). Describing and assessing the Philomaths’ occasional poetry, it is well to keep in mind this kind of rhetorical tradition rather than the turn from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, in which the rules of speech are fighting the losing battle. What is more, one must bear in mind the specificity of the Philomaths’ poems: many of them were to be delivered or sung, not to be printed or read. “Iambs” written on paper probably do not present themselves as effective as they sounded when declaimed during friendly name day meetings. The edition from 1922 retained that artistic work, but it could not reconstruct the whole communicative situation. From somewhere else we know that the different artistic defects of the text can be covered up with an appropriate acting arrangement.

I am not going to describe in detail the separate techniques and figures of speech that are present in their poetry. More interesting for me is making the rhetorical style functional in the given genres of poetical expression among friends. Therefore, I would like to show the individual types and genres of occasional literature which allow the creative use of rhetorical devices.

– Name day and personal poems. This group includes all the single, individual works; for example: Aleksander Chodźko’s *Wiersz na imieniny Tomasza d. 21 grudnia 1822*, Aleksander Adamowi, Adam Mickiewicz’s *Do Czeczota*, or Teodor Łoziński’s *Uczta pożegnalna dla Jarosza i Mariana*. Here we can also put – and that is probably the most interesting genre – texts which feature a dialogue with each other and have been prepared with the thought of their introduction in the course of ritualized poetical speeches. An example is the set of poems written for Adam Mickiewicz’s name day and entitled *Adamowe*. At the beginning, there is a note by Jan Czeczot:

> Odprawiły się [imieniny – T.J.] roku 1818 grudnia [31] w s. w pałacu jenerała Paca w Oficynie. Był zrobiony z papieru transparencik, wyobrażający po jednej stronie bezmien, na którym zawieszone ukazywały się różnych pism, rozbieranych przez Adama,

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tytuły; po drugiej stronie, pod drzewkiem palmowem siedzących dwoje geniuszków grających na fletiach, nad drzewkiem zaś jaśniał napis Oktawa, albowiem dla wyjazdu Adama do Sołecknik Wielkich na kilka dni święta Bożego Narodzenia biesiada nasza nie mogła się w dzień święta Adamowego odbyć. W pośrodku transparentu oświeconą była cyfra Adamowa.

Po wprowadzeniu Adama, nie wiedzącego o tych aparatach, do izby, w której urządzone były, krzyknęliśmy: „Vivat Adam! Vivat Oktawa”, a Tomasz zaczął czytać:

Hruk, stuk, puk, grom...

Wtem Jan przerwał i czytał:

Ułożyliśmy się z Zanem:
On miał być początkiem fety,
Ja miałem być końca panem
I przynieść wiersze na wety.

[The name day – T.J.] was celebrated on December [31] 1818 v. s. in the palace of General Pac, in the outbuilding. There was a little paper banner depicting on the one side some titles of papers gathered by Adam, on the other – two little genius minds playing the flutes under the palm tree; above the tree there was a caption: an Octave, because Adam went to Sołeckniki Wielkie for a couple of days during Christmas and our feast could not take place on the day of Adam’s holiday. In the middle of the banner the number of Adam was illuminated.

After the introduction of Adam, who did not know anything about this, to the room, we shouted: “Viva Adam! Viva Octava!”, and Tomasz started to read:

Knock-knock, thunder…

Then Jan stopped and read:

We agreed with Zan:
He would have been the start of the feast,
I – the end of it
And bring the poems.

(...)

Then, the long monologue part appears which concerns the name day and the circumstances of the poem recitation. At last it is said:

Słuchajże, Tomasz zacznie, ja jego odmienię,
A tak w części ugody nastąpi spełnienie.

Tomasz więc zaczął czytać:
Huk, stuk, puk, grom, piorun, pył, wrzawa, kurzawa!
Nieudolny orator z winszowaniem stawa
Temu, którego święta dziś płynie oktawa.
(...)

Listen, Tomasz will start and I will substitute for him,
In that way, we shall meet in the middle.

So, Tomasz started to read:

Bang, knock-knock, thunder, lightning, dust, racket, clouds!
A bungling orator wishes you all the best
To the one for whom the sacred Octave is.
(...)

Zan, who spoke after Czeczot, praises Mickiewicz as a poet and the young man
loved by girls, and then he, again, gives the floor back to Czeczot. Then, Czeczot
reads *Śpiew: Leszek i Goworek*, finishing with the wishes of eternal friendship with
Mickiewicz. After that Czeczot wrote down:

Nie pomnę, czy już po drugiego spełnieniu było kielicha, czy więc drugi kielich dodał
Adamowi rezonu i większej śmiałości; ale zdą mi się, wyższą, milszą były zapewne od
wina pobudką wewnętrzne uradowanie i czułość, że się Adam odkrył w tej chwili z
improvizatorstwem, bardzo mało znanem, na imieninach Tomasz po trzech nawet, czy
czterech kielichach. Od tego to czasu zaczyna się kariera Adamowej improwizacyi, która
zawsze po dwóch kielichach następuje (...).

I cannot remember, if it was after the second toast, so that it gave Adam more self-as-
surance and courage, but I think that the higher and nicer than wine cause was the joy
and affection, because Adam showed off his improvisation, very little known, on Tomasz
name’s day only after three or four glasses. From that time Adam’s improvisation career
after two glasses starts (...).

Just after this note, there is a record of Adam’s improvisation, then the notice
about the applause and about another glass of wine being drunk by the celebrating
person. After the toast, Mickiewicz rhymed again. Next, Czezot performed with
*Antokolska przechadzka* and *Wierszyk do Adama*. And later on we have another note
about Zan who repeated his poems in honor of Mickiewicz.

Z tym wierszem skończyła się i wino. Byliśmy niektórzy i w dobrym rezonie (...).

With this poem the wine finished. Some of us were in a very good mood (...).

The following lines are the rhymes of Mickiewicz directed personally to Czeczot
and Zan, one more note made by the writer and the final one of Adam’s poems.

Thus, we deal not with the separate texts, but with the notation of group
performances, or the quasi-theatrical declamations and improvisations, adapted
to a very simple scenario (this is shown by paratextual notes). Thus post factum they were named by the Philomaths themselves and commented upon with the order of speaking and the circumstances in which the work was presented. In the archive of the Philomaths, some of the speeches do not have any titles; sometimes, after a given poem, there is only a surname of the next orator. Nevertheless, all the voices create a kind of a poetical fugue. Only when gathered together do they make a coherent work, as if they were a dramatized poem. In this way they were also treated by the Philomaths’ scribe: all the sequences of the name day poems are entitled: Tomaszowe, Adamowe, Jeżowe, Onufrowe. This is an example of a group work, in which in the foreground we can see the addressee, not the author.

– Situational poems. Here there are poems written suddenly on the spot, not planned but spontaneous. They are texts which can be presented at once, in connection with some unpredicted emergency or social event, often unimportant. In contrast to the name day poems, situational poems do not form any group ritual. They are due to one specific stimulus and do not need any kind of continuation or supplementation. They are no longer part of a dramatized poem, but a sort of social gesture. For instance, Czeczot’s Wiersz do Adama Mickiewicza posłany przy zapomnianym kluczu, 1820, stycznia 5, z Wilna, or Wiersz z okazji nakazu golenia wasów, kandydatom stanu nauczycielskiego od rządu uniwersytetu w 1819 wydanego, napisany. The improvisations of the Philomaths ought also to be named situational texts, as, again, written by Czeczot; for example, Wiersz na ozdrowienie Adama. 1819 r. maja 4. now. kalen.

In situational poems, there is a pretextual attitude towards the artistic work, which is a characteristic of the Rococo. This means that the stimulus for the writing might be, as Teresa Koskiewiczowa put it, any “fragment of the world”7: an event, a thing, a gesture, a word. That’s the opposite of what we can find in high situational poetry (hymns, songs, odes, poetical letters): the most readily described were insignificant or ordinary phenomena (or, by a poetical re-working, the ordinary thing was described as an extraordinary one). It was possible to manifest the fact that the writing is going to be about completely nothing, as Czeczot in Wiersz do Franciszka Malewskiego:

Chce się pisać do ciebie i nie chce się razem:
Chce się, bo to do ciebie, nie chce się, bo o czym?
Myśl u biesa! a pisać to tak nie ochoczym,
Że podobno zapomnę już jeździć Pegazem.

I want to write to you, and at the same time I do not want to:
I want to, because it is to you, I do not want to, because I have nothing to write about.
The thought is the devil’s! And I am writing it so unwillingly,
That I may forget how to ride Pegasus.

However, I do not want to miss that chance
And, with a sonnet, as I can see now, to beautiful Szczorsy we will go
And you there, as a carcass, under the linden trees we will see,
Filled with the gases of the lazy Favioniuses.

More important than the topic was the addressee of the poem, or – to put it differently – the funny presentation of the relations between the author and the addressee, and the fact of writing as a social gesture. The texts were often laced with good humor, but not always. In the archive of the Philomaths, there is Wiersz pożegnalny by Adam Dziewiętkiewicz. We might guess that it is an early Romantic example of funeral or graveside poetry. In fact, it is not. Dziewiętkiewicz, being gravely ill, simply wrote this poem just before his death (it was read during the meeting of the Friends’ Association on April 3, 1820; Dziewiętkiewicz died in the same year, on May 26).

– The feast poems. This genre in close to the name day poems, but in this case our attention is concentrated not on a particular person, the addressee of the poems, but on the motives of a common game, most often Bacchus-like, i.e. involving alcohol. In this Anacreontic type of occasional poetry, the main heroes are wine and its god – “Bach.” Therefore there are conventional and repetitive adorations of group rapture and earthly pleasures. The tone of these poems is more earthy than that in name’s day poems: instead of lofty, sophisticated exclamations in honor of the main guest, there are short slogans full of praise encouraging everyone to take part in the feast. By and large, the texts are to be sung (sometimes with the musical notes added). In this category we might mention: Precz, precz, nudy, troski!..., Bądzy, bracia, wesel! by Czeczot; Pieśń filaretów by Antoni Odward Odyniec; and Cztery toasty by Mickiewicz (this last poem proves that even in feast poetry there is no omission of scientific issues: in this case there are references to “light, warmth, magnetism/ And electric rays”).

We might notice the contamination of a name day poem with a festive one, as in Zan’s poem Do p. Franciszka [Malewskiego] d. 4 października 1818 r. v. s., in which the laudatory, solemn 13-sylabic metre suddenly – just after the phrase
“for which I blame heaven” – breaks and changes into an irregular pattern characteristic of the inn-like feast poetry. The key word is, of course, “blame” (Polish “winię” sounding like “wine”), which was associated by the inspired singer with wine and made his tone Bacchanalian. A historian, who probably would not be interested in Zan’s work – in fact one of many of that kind – apart from Anacreontic jokes and funny descriptions of the bard’s enthusiasm, would miss one peculiar detail:

Ach, długo pamiętam: owe
Onufrowe
Pod stół wyskakują korki,
Z szyjek butlicy wychodzi para,
Pijane na wierzchu skaczą paciorki.
Cztery, cztery – sama miara.

Oh, I do remember these
Onuphriuses
Under the table the corks go
From the necks of a bottle there is a steam
Drunk beads at the top jump
Four, four – the measure itself.

It is difficult to willingly translate this secret symbol, “forty and four” from the third part of Dziady, through the youthful feast poetry of Zan, but it is also inappropriate to ignore it. It was also possible to contaminate the situational poem with the name day’s one. During the Philomaths’ honey feast (there’s no mead here, just honey) the poetical praise of honey was connected to the celebration of Zan’s name’s day. The texts that are included in that ceremony are called, in the archive, as Walka miodowa, a razem Tomaszowe. That we have to do with situational poetry is proved by the Czeczot’s introduction:

Razu jednego byliśmy w kilku u Dionizego na miodzie, który opowiadając awanturę miodu, jak go przed niedźwiedziem, barć wydzierającym, obroniono, zapraszał Tomasza do napisania tego miodu pochwały. Tomasz wzbraniał się od napisania. Jan, będąc wówczas pierwszy raz u Dyionizego, nieznajomy jemu i niezapraszany do pochwał, wyzywa Tomasza, który po ociąganiach się przyjmuje wreszcie wyzwanie; i tak stanął pojedynek miodowy.

Once upon a time few of us were at Dionizy’s place to drink some honey. Dionizy told a story about it – as he tried to grab it from the bear and he was defended. He encouraged Zan to write a praise of that honey. Tomasz refrained from the writing. Jan, being for the first time at Dionizy’s, not known to him and being not invited to any praising, challenges Tomasz, who after being reluctant, accepts it; and the honey duel was done.
The protagonists of the poetical show were both Tomasz Zan and honey. In the whirl of artistic associations there also were other “fragments of the world” around which the active thought of a poet revolves. The essence of this kind of work is not the praising of real heroes, but the act of creation itself, making poems for the entertainment of friends. The subject of such a game may be everything, provided that it can be presented in a light form:

Pochwalić tylko nasz miód trzeba było,
Skądże pochwałą miałem wziąć dla niego?
Ugryzłem mnichów, plotłem, co się śniło,
Bo nic mi na myśl dziś nie szlo lepszego.

To praise our honey was enough,
But from where for it to take the praise?
I bit the monks, I driveled what I dreamt,
Because nothing better came to my mind today.

Finally, this “honey struggle” leads to praising “the firkin, in which the honey was put.” The firkin was praised by Zan who, by the way, depicted an image of common things immortalized in it:

Somewhere else they sell leather from linden for the sandals,
Wheat, barley, rye, pea, broad bean, dairy products.
The Muscovites sell soap, fish, iron,
Poleszuki wijuny, garlic, and fat.
The leatherworker puts on the wheel his hat, the locksmith his scythe,
The tailor unwinds scapulars, ribbons,
The gold altar, officials, the sacred treasure of worship
Lies next to instruments, pins, fishing rods, razors.
(...)
Oh, if you could know what else there was engraved,
And what was hidden for good,
If you alone do not want to see the bottom of the firkin!
Nowadays, the description will probably associate with Wojski’s story about the dinner tableware from Pan Tadeusz and draw our attention to the heroic-comic element in the work of Mickiewicz and other Philomaths. Yet, in this case, it is not the heroic-comic element which seems to be the most important (although its existence in Poezya filomatów is undoubted), but the lightness of the subject and the humorous tone.

In a fact, the whole occasional work of the Philomaths can be described as being light, and, from time to time, as a farcical joke. The feast poems are full of youthful play; the situational poems revolve around ostentatiously trivial topics. The pathos of the name day poems proves to be feigned: the tribute is paid not to heroes and distinguished citizens, but only to student colleagues. It is easy to recognize in these texts the conventions of hymns, songs, and odes, but the high genres are treated in a parodic way.

The lightness and humor of the Philomaths’ poems is clearly visible in comparison to the occasional literature of that time published in the cultural press: poetical letters, odes, paeans, etc., written in honor of real national heroes. This serious occasional work functioning in the sphere of the public word, like the Philomaths’ poems, was based on the rhetorical style. However, there is a basic difference between the public performances of the poets-orators and the Philomaths’ poems: the former fulfilled the tasks of the given genres (a hymn, ode, poetical letter) and had a certain persuasive function. The rhetorical devices ornamented the poetry, the primary aim of which was to teach (docere) and to touch the audience (permovere). The other made use of high genres not to form any types of attitudes but – thanks to the parody, persiflage, stylization – for the play and social entertainment (delectare). So, though the serious hymns or paeans in honour of Tadeusz Kościuszko or Alexander I belonged to the same type of occasional poetry as “iambs” composed for Tomasz Zan or Józef Jeżowski, we can speak about two different variants of the work. In the first case, it was all about the benefit of the community (nation); in the second, about ludic aims (of the group of friends). It is the difference between the Classicism and the Rococo. When classic literature connects the art with the morality, Rococo wants to please. When hymns or songs were a group (national) poetical ritual, the “iambs” worked in the circle of know people.

It turns out that ars bene dicendi and ars bene scribendi in the occasional poetry of the Philomaths cannot be situated within the classical aesthetics, definitely not only in it. The normative regulations in the field of poetic and rhetoric might have been used and re-used also in the aesthetics of Rococo. Thus, there is no need to think about this phenomenon against the background of so-called Enlightenment-Romanticism turning point. It is not good to assess the “iambs” from the
perspective of the Romantic demands of free creative expression, originality and unhindered poetical imagination. It is worth, however, to examine these poems as a small work, a specific form of communication within a group, not a widely understood national literature. Only from that kind of perspective the occasional poetry of the Philomaths becomes intriguing phenomenon of the culture of the word. And, this is the reason for which these poems should not grow moldy in the archive.

Translated by Marta Radwańska

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RETORIKA IR POEZIJA: FILOMATŲ PROGINIAI KŪRINIAI

SANTRAUKA. Straipsnis skirtas filomatų proginei poezijai, kuri aukštai nevertinama istorijos ir literatūros studijose. Toks požiūris susiklostė, nes šiems kūriniams trūksta romantikos, tačiau nepaisant to filomatai laikomi naujo literatūros sąjūdžio iniciatoriais. Jų kurti vardinių cilėraščiai, laiškai, eiliuoti atsisveikinimai neatitiko įvaizdžio, vyravusio Vilniaus romantizmo pradžioje, o kur kas labiau siejosi su klasikine estetika. Vis dėlto į proginę filomatų poeziją reikėtų žiūrėti ne kaip į klasicizmo ir romantizmo susiūkimą, bet griežiau kaip į rokoko literatūrinės kultūros aprašą ir kaip į grupei drugų įprastą literatūrinę komunikavimo būdą tam tikroje ypatingoje retorinėje bendrijose.

RAKTĄŽODŽIAI: retorika, proginė poezija, Filomatų draugija, rokokas.