

## GLADIATOR—CHRISTIAN—NORWID

## S u m m a r y

The ancient Rome belongs to the most important cultural sources of Norwid's work. The aim of this article is to analyse the significance of the motif of gladiator in the writings of Norwid. The article examines poems *Spowiedź* [*Confession*] and *Spartakus* [*Spartacus*] and also fragments from other texts in which appear paraphrases of the well-known words that according to the popular opinions were used by gladiators to greet emperor: *Ave, Caesar, morituri te salutant*. The poet regarded bloody Roman circus games as a sign of deep depravity of the ancient Rome and a gladiator as an involuntary, heroic and lonely actor of them, who was aware of the moral degradation of the spectators. The motif of gladiator often functions in the works by Norwid as an *exemplum* used by him to speak about such problems of his time as: the role and status of a poet in the 19th century, Christian attitude towards apostatic civilization and the key issue of the truth. Norwid's gladiator is often a poet, Christian and simultaneously Norwid himself.

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**Key words:** Christian, Christianity, exemplum, gladiator, Norwid, poet, truth, ancient Rome.