

To Mieczysław Mantyka from the Editors

From 1972, Mieczysław Mantyka, a historian by profession and by avocation, was for forty years the director of the Stefan Żeromski Municipal Public Library in Zakopane. Holding this honourable position, he continued a tradition begun by such distinguished individuals as Stefan Żeromski, Piotr Chmielowski and Jerzy Gawliński, who rendered great service to the Library. As the director of the Library, Mieczysław Mantyka was not only an official, a brilliant administrator of an important cultural institution, who cared for its development, but also an important figure in the cultural landscape of Zakopane. A distinguished scholar studying the cultural, economic, social and political life in Zakopane, he has published valuable works on these subjects, dealing with rarely raised, though by no means niche problems concerning various aspects of communal life in Zakopane. The significance of his publications goes far beyond their regional importance. His achievements were recognised by the jury of the Władysław Reymont Literary Prize, who awarded him a honorary distinction for his monograph *Z kart historii zakopiańskiego cechu* [*A History of the Zakopane Guild*] (Zakopane 2007).

The statement that Mieczysław Mantyka is an eminent expert on many issues associated with Zakopane does not give full justice to all his achievements as a historian, achievements confirmed by valuable publications, including a monograph devoted to his workplace: *Z dziejów zakopiańskiej biblioteki 1900–2000* [*A History of the Zakopane Library 1900–2000*] (Zakopane 2000). Mieczysław Mantyka also became famous as an important organiser of cultural activities in Zakopane, with the significance of his achievements in this field again going far beyond the Zakopane-Podhale region. He was a member of the editorial team of *Podtatrze*, a periodical highly regarded for its valuable publications devoted to various mountain-related issues, throughout its existence (1975–1989), serving as its editor-in-chief between 1986 and 1989. In this period he published a number of valuable works devoted to the history of Zakopane (e.g. *Z dziejów miasta Zakopanego 1933–1939* [*A History of the Town of Zakopane 1933–1939*], 1983) and described important “Zakopane episodes” from the history of Poland in the 20th century (*Zakopiańskie narodziny Niepodległej* [*The Birth of the Independent Poland in Zakopane*], 1989). It is also worth bearing in mind that as a long-time member of the Town Council (1973–1988) and its deputy chair he took great care of various cultural matters. When he ceased to be a councillor, the town decided not to finance *Podtatrze* anymore.

The “Literary Thursdays” hosted by Mieczysław Mantyka became famous all over Poland. In this case Mieczysław Mantyka proved to be much more than just a continuator of a tradition — his initiative, good manners and erudition made it possible for participants in these meetings (the number of which is estimated at

nearly seventy thousand) to meet such eminent figures as, for example Władysław Bartoszewski, Walery Goetel, Konrad Górski, Gustaw Holoubek, Stanisław Lem, Agnieszka Osiecka, Witold H. Paryski or the highly popular Wiktor Zin.

Mantyka's work has been to a large extent authentically community-oriented. He himself drove famous people to meetings with children in villages in the Podhale region: it was thanks to him that children from the village of Dzianisz could meet the famous Bohdan Tomaszewski! Mieczysław Mantyka's directorial office was not only his workplace, but also a literary-cultural salon bringing together writers, poets, well-known journalists, artists, scientists and athletes (e.g. Stanisław Maruszak). It is, therefore, not surprising that Mieczysław Mantyka has been greatly liked by people of the highlands. This warmth is manifested in the fact that the present volume of *Góry — Literatura — Kultura* [*Mountains — Literature — Culture*] is dedicated to him on his ruby jubilee.