

*Michał Pędracki*

**Religioznawcze koncepcje Wacława Sieroszewskiego (1858-1945)  
na tle nauki XIX i XX wieku**

**The ideas of Wacław Sieroszewski (1858-1945) regarding the study  
of religion in the light of 19th and 20th century scholarship**

SUMMARY

The first part of the article presents the life of Wacław Sieroszewski and his ethnological work. The second part deals with an analysis of the general theory of religion that Sieroszewski sketched out in quite a distinct manner while describing his field research on Yakut and Korean shamanism. Sieroszewski's theory of religion is presented against the background of 19th and 20th century scholarship. Another issue discussed in the present article has to do with the significance of Sieroszewski's field observations. In many cases his observations undermined a number of "dogmas" prevalent in 19th-century scholarship, but even Sieroszewski himself was not always aware of that. The most important and still valid aspect of Sieroszewski's scholarly achievements, however, is that he postulated the application of an ethnological perspective in research on highly developed cultures and religions, including the European civilization at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as Christianity. Similar views began to be expressed by Western scholars only several dozen years after the publication of Sieroszewski's major ethnological work, *Dwanaście lat w kraju Jakutów* [Twelve years in the land of the Yakuts], whose first, Russian-language edition appeared in 1896. A major thesis that seems to emerge from Sieroszewski's writings is that there is a genetic link between primitive Christianity and shamanism. This thesis, if applied within the strictest definitional framework for the terms used, is still relevant today and may open up new research perspectives. The scholarly research of the 20th century has provided a great deal of evidence to support its correctness.

**Analecta – Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki**  
**[Analecta – Studies and Materials on the History of Science]**  
**XII, 2003, 1-2, 97-129**