

INTRODUCTION

The 24th of October 2018 marked the 175th anniversary of birth of Henryk Siemiradzki, the painter, whose origin, education and artistic and social activity united various areas of today's Europe: Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Germany, Italy and Austria (fig. 1). His painting, representing academism – one of the two main artistic options, is of key importance for the art of the 19th century in Central and Eastern Europe.

The cultural genesis of his painting is of great significance. The pre-partition lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were dominated by the tradition of Mediterranean culture, propagated by the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and, the most important at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, Wilno (Vilna, Vilnius) University. The Siemiradzki noble family came from Małopolska – Lesser Poland (from the Radom area, south of Warsaw); in the 17th century they moved to the area of Nowogródek (Navahrudak) in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where the artist's ancestors held public offices – his grandfather was a chamberlain of Nowogródek Voivodeship. The family had close contacts with Vilna University, where in 1794 Franciszek Smuglewicz, an outstanding painter who had lived in Rome for many years, founded the first Department of Drawings at the Faculty of Literature and Art. Among the students of this Faculty was the Polish national poet Adam Mickiewicz, who visited the Siemiradzki's manor house on a number of occasions. After the November Uprising of 1831, the University was closed down by the Russians.

Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich of Russia, the Viceroy (namiestnik) of the Tsar of Russia in the Kingdom of Poland, established after

the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and commander of the Lithuanian troops and of those of the Russian provinces that had formerly belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth while passing through Nowogródek met the artist's father, Hipolit, and offered him studies at the officer cadet school in St. Petersburg. After graduation, he was sent to a regiment of infantry in Novobelgorod (now Pechenihiy) near Kharkov (Kharkiv, now in eastern Ukraine). He completed his service in the rank of general.

Novobelgorod was where the future painter was born. In Kharkov, he studied at gymnasium and university, obtaining a doctorate in natural sciences (fig. 2). At the same time he studied sketch and painting with Dmitry Bezperchy, a student of Karl Briullov at the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. Knowledge of classical culture and the basics of painting opened the way for Siemiradzki to Saint Petersburg Academy. His fate and work at the Academy and after 1872, when he settled in Rome will be the subject of speeches by the conference participants.

His international debut took place at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, where he received a medal for the painting *Christ and the Harlot* (now in the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg). He received gold medals at subsequent World Expositions in Philadelphia in 1876, Melbourne in 1882 and, above all, in Paris in 1878, among others for his painting *Nero's Torches* (or *Candlesticks of Christianity*), which he donated to the city of Krakow, thanks to which the National Museum was established in 1879. The painting *Phryne at the Festival of Poseidon in Eleusis*, purchased by Emperor Alexander III from an individual exhibition at the Academy in St. Petersburg in 1889 began the collection of what is today known as the State Russian Museum. The last of Siemiradzki's great paintings, *Christian Dirce*, after a posthumous exhibition in 1903 at the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts (Zachęta) in Warsaw, was donated by the artist's wife Maria to the Zachęta collection, from where it was transferred to the National Museum. In Rome, where he exhibited his works and participated in artistic life as a member of the Academy of St. Luke, he built a villa-studio at Via Gaeta, which was visited by eminent personalities, artists and art lovers from all over the world (fig. 3-4). Ever since 1884 he spent his summers in his manor house in Strzałków near Częstochowa in Poland in which he also passed away in July 1902. Siemiradzki was laid to rest in the Polish National Pantheon in the crypt of the Pauline Church on the Rock in Krakow (fig. 5).

In the consciousness of Poles, Siemiradzki was, next to Jan Matejko, the most important Polish painter of that time. The artist exhibited his works in Krakow, Lwów (Lemberg, Lviv) and Warsaw, where his parents moved.

Siemiradzki also belongs to Russian culture. A graduate, an academician, then an honorary professor of the St. Petersburg Academy, he was recognized as the most outstanding academic painter of the second half of the nineteenth century. Throughout his life he participated in the Russian life, exhibiting in St. Petersburg and Moscow, realizing state orders for the decoration of temples and museums.

He reached a high status in Rome, hence the place of today's meeting, but also in Vienna and the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

After the artist's death, in 1903 the first monograph *Henryk Siemiradzki* by Stanisław Roman Lewandowski was published (Warsaw-Kraków 1903 and 1911) and the aforementioned *Exhibition of Henryk Siemiradzki's Paintings* was organized in Warsaw. Subsequent exhibitions were held at the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1939, at the Museum of Art in Łódź at the turn of 1968 and 1969, and in Krakow *The Henryk Siemiradzki that we do not Know. An Exhibition of the Gift Received from the Family (Henryk Siemiradzki jakiego nie znamy. Wystawa daru otrzymanego od rodziny)* at the National Museum in 1980 and at the Museum in Stalowa Wola in 2008. The exhibitions showed only works from Polish collections. The next exhibition at the Museum in Stalowa Wola in the same year *Henryk Siemiradzki in Lwów* showed works from the Lviv National Art Gallery.

Although Siemiradzki never ceased to be written about, the signs of interest in his work appeared after the publication of Prof. Maria Poprzęcka's book *Academism (Akademizm)*, Warsaw 1977), and later in the 1980s thanks to Józef Dużyk's book *Siemiradzki. The Biographical Novel (Siemiradzki. Opowieść biograficzna)*, Warsaw 1986), in which the author included extensive excerpts from the artist's correspondence, as well as thanks to articles by Dr. Piotr Szubert, who undertook an attempt to compile a catalogue of the artist's works. Extensive research into the artist's work began after 2000. Pavel Klimov released the album *Генрих Семирадский*. (Moscow 2001), Dr. Franciszek Stolot published a small monograph *Henryk Siemiradzki* (Wrocław 2001), and Daria Lebedeva – a book of the same title (Moscow 2006).

On the centenary of his death, in 2002, the first conference devoted to the artist – *H. Siemiradzki's Creative Personality in the Context of*

the National and World Culture (Творча постать Г. Семирадського у контексті вичизняно та світової культури) was organized in Kharkiv with the participation of Polish and Russian researchers. The second conference with the same title took place in 2009.

Many publications in Poland and Russia presented the artist's work against the background of late academism, as well as in connection with the international artistic community in Rome. Most prominent among them was the catalogue *Compelled by Beauty. Russian Academic and Salon Art from 1830 to 1910 (Пленники красоты. Русское академические и салонное искусство 1830-1910-х годов)* edited by Dr. Tatiana Karpova (Moscow 2004, 2006, 2011).

In 2008 in St. Petersburg, Tatiana Karpova published the first full monograph *Генрик Семирадский – Henryk Siemiradzki*, significantly expanding the catalogue of works, prepared by the late Piotr Szubert.

Conferences of Polish and Russian art historians *Poland – Russia: Art and History* in Warsaw in 2012 and *Polish and Russian Artists and Architects in the Art Colonies Abroad and in Political Exile 1815-1990* in Toruń in 2013 allowed to establish contacts between the communities of both countries. Discussions on Siemiradzki's work and his role in the Polish and Russian art, which took place at that time, led to cooperation and preparation by the Polish side of a research project devoted to Siemiradzki, with the substantive support of Russian researchers.

International research project *Henryk Siemiradzki: Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings* developed by the Polish Institute of World Art Studies (*Korpus dzieł malarskich Henryka Siemiradzkiego*) was approved by the National Programme for the Development of Humanities of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and its implementation period covers the time from 16 September 2015 to 15 September 2020.

It is the second catalogue of works by a 19th-century Polish artist, created independently of exhibitions. The first one was the *Jan Matejko. Oil Paintings. Catalogue* edited by Dr. Krystyna Sroczyńska (long-term curator of the Polish National Museum in Warsaw) and Prof. Jerzy Malinowski, which was published in 1992.

The project, due to its scope, has an international and inter-institutional character. The Polish Institute of World Art Studies coordinates the documentation work and oversees its progress with respect to its

content. It is responsible for catalogue notes (entries), as well as the substantive editorship of the corpus and its publication.

In connection with work on the Catalogue, an international research team has been formed. Polish partners are the National Museum in Krakow and the National Museum in Warsaw. They are in possession of the largest sets of Siemiradzki's paintings and sketches in Poland, as well as of the documentation of his work and activities.

The Russian partners are the State Institute of Art Sciences and the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. Also the Museum of the Academy of Arts and The State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg collaborate on the project.

The partner in Rome is Pontificio Istituto di Studi Ecclesiastici, where the archive of the artist and his family is located (correspondence and collection of photographs).

The catalogue will include three comprehensive volumes: Volumes I and II will contain notes (entries) concerning individual works and their versions (with illustrations), a list of exhibitions, bibliography, manuscript sources (mainly the artist's correspondence), an extensive glossary with an overview of the content, iconography, symbolism, style and reception of the work, a list of oil sketches, drawings, also photographs of models and technical and conservation comments. Volume III will include studies of Siemiradzki's works and activities, as well as bibliography. The catalogue will be published in Polish and English.

In addition, there will also be prepared studies: *Painting Workshop of Henryk Siemiradzki*. After the completion of the project (and with the use of different financing), a several-volume publication *Correspondence of Henryk Siemiradzki* is planned, including digitised and indexed letters written in Polish to the family from the Roman Pontificio Istituto di Studi Ecclesiastici, as well as, among others, writings in Russian from the archives and libraries of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Work on the project covered a wide range of documentation in the field of history of art, archaeology, museology, which became the basis for interdisciplinary research on the artist's painting against the background of European art and intellectual culture of the 19th century.

An important part of the research is the analysis of technology and technique behind Siemiradzki's paintings and the materials he used. The research of the painter's workshop was started already in 2012 in the National Museum in Krakow as a separate project, to be continued as part of the *Henryk Siemiradzki's Corpus of Painting Works*.

Scientists from the National Museum in Warsaw, the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg joined the project. It is essential for the conservator to cooperate with chemists, physicists and experts in other fields, such as dendrology. Exhibitions of Siemiradzki's works, such as *Searching for Arcadia* from the collections of the Lviv National Art Gallery at the National Museum in Krakow in the summer of 2016, are also helpful.

The findings of the research were presented mainly in the volumes of the yearbook *Sztuka Europy Wschodniej/Искусство Восточной Европы/The Art of Eastern Europe*, the yearbook of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies: volume IV (2016) – *Henryk Siemiradzki i akademizm (Henryk Siemiradzki and Academism)*. Volume V (2017) – *Co znajduje się w obrazach Henryka Siemiradzkiego (What is in the Paintings of Henryk Siemiradzki)* contains materials from the conference held on 21-22 April 2017 at the National Museum in Warsaw.

The jubilee year of the 175th anniversary of the artist's birth in 2018 started in December of the previous year with the exhibition *Henryk Siemiradzki and Colony of Russian Artists in Rome. (Генрих Семирадский и колония русских художников в Риме)*, prepared by Pavel Klimov in the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, accompanied by an extensive catalogue. The second exhibition *Compelled by Beauty. Henryk Siemiradzki and Artists of Late Academism. (Пленники красоты. Генрих Семирадский и художники позднего академизма)* opened in September 2018 at the Historical-Artistic Museum in Serpukhov near Moscow. The State Tretyakov Gallery was the co-organizer, and the author of the exhibition and the editor of the catalogue was Tatiana Karpova.

On 12-13 April 2018, in connection with the anniversary, an international conference *The Henryk Siemiradzki that we do not know* was organized at the National Museum in Krakow, with its title referring to the donation to the museum made by the artist's family in 1979.

In October, in connection with the anniversary, the National Museum in Warsaw organized a series of *Meetings with Siemiradzki*, presenting mainly researches carried out by this institution.

The international conference *Henryk Siemiradzki and the International Artistic Milieu in Rome* will close the jubilee year dedicated to the artist.

I hope that the research and publication of the catalogue raisonné will allow us to determine the place of Henryk Siemiradzki's work in

European painting of the 19th century and will provide an impulse for new and extensive research into the art of that time.

I would like to thank all participants of the conference. I do this on behalf of the conference's organizers: the Polish Institute of World Art Studies in Warsaw and Polish Academy of Sciences Scientific Center in Rome as well as co-organizer – POLONIKA the National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad. The conference was prepared on behalf of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies by Dr. Maria Nitka in cooperation with Dr. Agnieszka Kluczevska-Wójcik and Dr. Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska.

Prof. Dr. Jerzy Malinowski

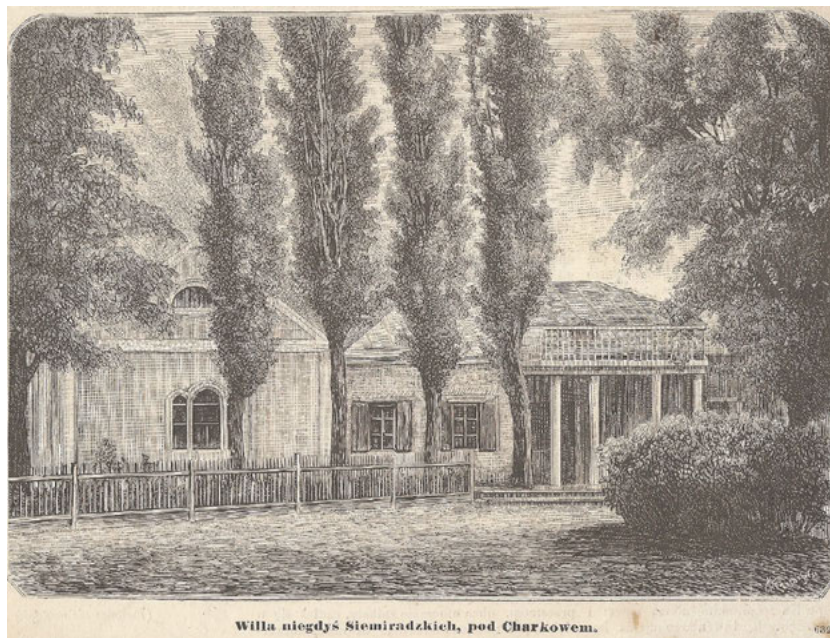
President

Polish Institute of World Art Studies

JERZY MALINOWSKI



1. Henryk Siemiradzki, *Self-portrait*, after 1876, oil on canvas, 80 × 55 cm, National Museum, Krakow. Photo Museum.



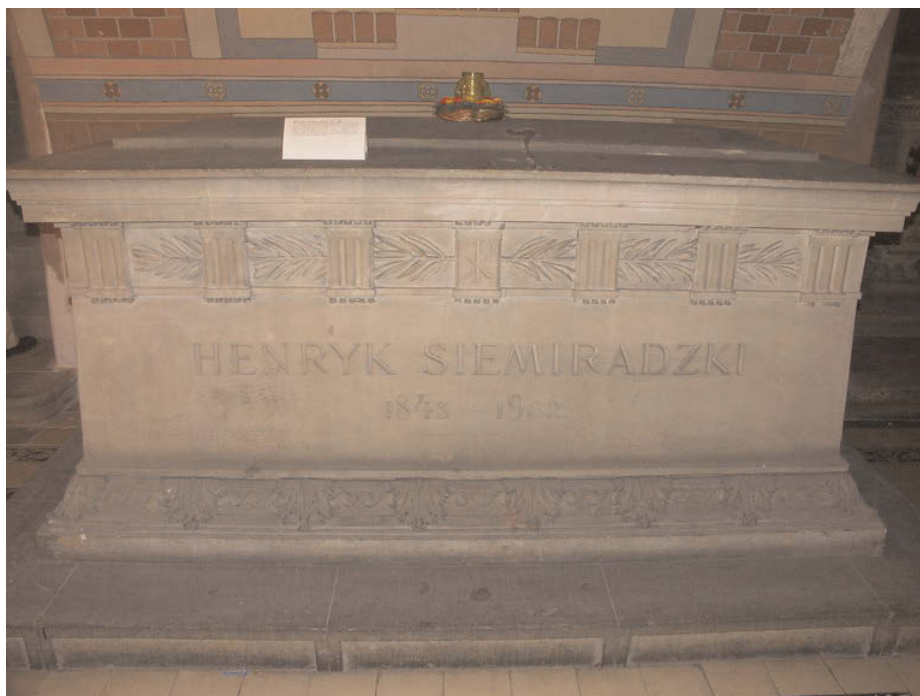
2. Villa of Siemiradzki's Family near Kharkov, woodcut by Alfred Kühlewein "Tygodnik Ilustrowany", 1877, no. 101 (1. 12), p. 337.



3. Photograph of Henryk Siemiradzki and his children in Rome, 1888, National Museum, Krakow, no. inv. MNK XX-f-33857. Photo Museum.



4. Photograph of Henryk Siemiradzki's villa at Via Gaeta 1. MNK-f-27010. Photo Museum.



5. The grave of Henryk Siemiradzki. Crypt in the Pauline Church on the Rock in Krakow. Photo in public domain.