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*State Tretyakov Gallery*HENRYK SIEMIRADZKI.  
IN MONASTIC SILENCE

**H**enryk Siemiradzki's name is usually associated with motifs from the history of ancient Greece and Rome. Meanwhile, the horizon of his spiritual world was much wider. In the second half of the 1880s, he produced a series of works where he developed themes of solitary life in the mountains. He was inspired by harmony of nature and the architecture of Italy's Roman Catholic monasteries and convents, the beauty of majestic vistas that open up from the height of monastic walls.

After he had settled in Rome, Siemiradzki was constantly travelling to the suburbs and to other cities across Italy. He usually tended to leave Rome in May or June, when heat enveloped the Eternal City. Siemiradzki tried to find refuge from the sizzling sunshine of the Roman summer on the seaside or in small mountainous villages of Lazio. During those summer travels, the artist made multiple sketches of the views and architecture in his albums, painted small-sized landscapes and portraits of villagers (fig. 60-61).

In the late 1880s, those impressions ultimately generated a whole series that can be named after one of the paintings that constituted part of it – *In the Silence of the Cloister* (1885-1887). The series also includes other works, such as *With Consolation and Relief (With Comfort and Assistance)* (ca. 1885), *With the Viaticum* (1889, National Museum, Warsaw), *Procession* (1880s), *On a Convent Terrace* (ca. 1890).

The scenes in those canvases take place in old Roman Catholic convents and monasteries in the mountains.

The picture *With the Viaticum* (fig. IX) seems to have been the first in that series. “Maybe, if we had searched more carefully the nearest suburbs of Rome, we would have found that landscape, because surely Siemiradzki had painted it from nature,” writes Józef Dużyk, one of Siemiradzki’s biographers.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt, Siemiradzki relied on his impressions of nature. One can assume that the setting of Siemiradzki’s monastic series is Subiaco. However, the painter was trying to avoid any distinctive features that would point to a specific location or to a particular monastery. He freely combined various details. For instance, in the picture *On a Convent Terrace* (fig. 62), there is a baroque sculptured relief featuring the Madonna with the Child, which is supported by two winged angels. The National Museum in Kraków has a drawing (ca. 1886) of a similar detail on which the author made an inscription in his own hand: “Piazza del orologio”. Siemiradzki had drawn that detail in the Piazza dell’Orologio in Rome.

The picture *With Consolation and Relief (With Comfort and Assistance)* (fig. 63) could be regarded as a continuation of the topic. “Somewhere outside Rome, [we see] ruins of some monastery or palazzo with the entrance gate and a shabby-looking decrepit wall that has a small wicket in it. Misery and poverty must be permanent dwellers of that place. A nun stands by the wicket. She is knocking on it, as she has brought relief – a large amount of staples carried by the donkeys. I remember, that picture, very expertly painted, drew our attention in Kraków, and we, young people, who had recently seen *Phryne*, could not quite fathom that sudden but brilliant leap to a contemporary realistic theme,” recalled sculptor Stanisław Lewandowski, the artist’s friend.<sup>2</sup>

The paintings *On a Convent Terrace* and *In the Silence of the Cloister* (fig. 64) depict a convent. “In one of those pictures, we can see a garden or the courtyard of a convent,” writes Lewandowski about the painting *On a Convent Terrace*. “Two nuns stand by a stone table, dressing a little orphaned girl. One of them is making plaits with her hair, and the other shows and explains pictures in a book. Silence

1] Józef DUŻYK, *Siemiradzki. Opowieść biograficzna*, Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, Warszawa 1986, pp. 445-446.

2] Stanisław LEWANDOWSKI, *Henryk Siemiradzki*, Gebethner & Wolff, Kraków 1904, p. 104.

reigns around them, but it is a free, quiet and happy silence” (S. Lewandowski).<sup>3</sup> The girl is sitting on a stone table that rests on a Corinthian capital, a vestige of some ancient building. Details hailing from the Antiquity were initially used at the Convent of St. Scholastica in Subiaco. “And deep below, the arches of Nero’s Villa – with demons no doubt galore,” Vernon Lee, who visited Subiaco in 1897, wrote in her book *The Spirit of Rome: Leaves from a Diary* (1906).<sup>4</sup>

“In the other picture, entitled *On a Convent Terrace*, two women in monastic garments stand leaning on a balustrade railing,” writes Lewandowski. “The younger looks away from the book and rosary in her hand, and lets her eyes travel far beyond the convent walls, contemplating the city stretching below. Beside her stands an age-bent old lady who mumbles a prayer with her eyes half-closed. For her, the future is of no significance anymore, and she does not recall the past. In front of them, a young postulant lights a lamp before the Madonna’s statue.” (S. Lewandowski)<sup>5</sup>

*Procession* (fig. 65), a small-sized study for a composition that was never produced, is also related to the monastic series. One such procession was observed by Pavel Muratov (1881-1950), a Russian art historian, who visited Subiaco in 1908: “The St. Trinity Day found us in that ancient church town. One by one, processions of Sabina residents were walking along its streets on the way to the Santuario della Santissima Trinità (Shrine of the Most Holy Trinity) near Vallepietra. [...] A choir’s plangent signing resounded far and wide in the clear mountain air, even drowning the incessant roaring of the Aniene.”<sup>6</sup>

As we have mentioned above, it is not worth looking for precise matches of architectural details in the paintings constituting Siemiradzki’s monastic series with real monuments, because he painted those details from memory or from cursory sketches, synthesizing diverse *plein air* impressions. The scenery depicted by Siemiradzki is the closest match to the views of Subiaco, where a Benedictine cloister is situated in the Aniene River valley. Like a swallow’s nest, it is perched on a precipitous cliff among the green Sabine Hills. The Benedictine monastery in Subiaco is a special place. This unique monument

3] Ibid.

4] Vernon LEE, *The Spirit of Rome: Leaves from a Diary*, (1.edn. 1906) Floating Press, Auckland 2013, p. 22.

5] S. LEWANDOWSKI, op. cit., p. 104.

6] Павел П. МУРАТОВ, *Образы Италии* (PAVEL MURATOV, *Images of Italy*), издательство Республика, Москва, 1994, p. 302.

of spiritual and artistic legacy of Christian culture is the birthplace of the entire Western monasticism. The cave Monastery of St. Benedict is situated in Lazio, 80 km from Rome on the way to Naples. To reach the Monastery of St. Benedict, one should climb from the Abbey of St. Scholastica up a narrow path running along the cliffs hanging over the rapid stream of the Aniene. The monastery consists of two cave churches cut inside a rock, one above the other, and a few chapels connected to each other by numerous galleries.<sup>7</sup> The name “Subiaco” stems from the suburban villa of *Sublaqueum* (meaning “under the lake” in Latin) built by Emperor Nero (54-68) on the shores of three artificial lakes.<sup>8</sup>

“Nero was once attracted by that lucid and rapid stream, that freshness of summer in the mountains, and he built a villa of his here”, writes Pavel Muratov. “Nero was very clever in selecting locations for his palaces. In the Middle Ages, that aesthetics of nature was inherited by monks and nuns. In the East and West, in Russia and in Italy, a great deal of monasteries and convents were built with a deep respect of and affection for the view that opens up from the windows of monastic cells or the refectory. That view was the only luxury that even the most austere hermits let in their lives. St. Benedict, who founded the first Western monastery here, in Subiaco, preserved the tradition of his Oriental predecessors. The Aniene narrow valley that winds at the foot of the hill on which his *holy cave* is perched is no less stunning than the broad Umbrian valley seen from the heights of Assisi.”<sup>9</sup>

St. Benedict, together with his sister St. Scholastica, founded 12 small fraternities in the vicinity of Subiaco, and became their common abbot. Of all coenobitic abodes founded by St. Benedict, only the Abbey of St. Scholastica, which is located lower than the Abbey of St. Benedict, still exists.<sup>10</sup> The Abbey of St. Scholastica used to be a convent, but later was converted into a monastery, when it was forbidden for convents to be situated outside cities.<sup>11</sup> St. Scholastica is believed to

7] Архимандрит Августин (Никитин), *Субиако – колыбель западного монашества* (Augustin ARCHIMANDRITE (Nikitin), *Subiaco: The Cradle of Western Monasticism*) in: “Нева” (Neva), 2011, No. 2. Accessible online: <http://magazines.russ.ru/neva/2011/2/aa15.html>

8] Ibid.

9] П. МУРАТОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

10] А. АВГУСТИН, *op. cit.*

11] С.П. ШЕВЫРЕВ, *Итальянские впечатления*, (S. P. SHEVYREV, *Italian Impressions*), Академический Проект, Санкт-Петербург 2006, p. 480.

have founded the first convent in Western Europe. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, that area was much loved by the artists who were part of Rome's international colony. Joseph Anton Koch, Carl (Karl) Blechen and Aleksandr Ivanov all painted their landscapes there.

It is a well-known fact that St. Benedict was the founder of the monastery as an institution that had a clear-cut structure and rules. St. Benedict had authored the famous Rule, which was destined to regulate the life of most monasteries of the Western Church for many centuries. The words of the Rule, "We believe that the Divine Presence is everywhere", were sure to resonate with what Siemiradzki had in his heart. The Rule emphasizes the importance of nurturing humility, which, according to St. Benedict, is more essential than austerity. Let us recall some of the 72 provisions of St. Benedict's Rule: "To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; To love thy neighbour as thyself; To honour all men; To chastise the body; Not to seek after luxuries; To refresh the poor; To visit the sick; To bury the dead; To console the sorrowing; Not to forsake charity; Not to be proud; Not to be slothful; Not to be a murmurer; To attribute any good one sees in oneself to God and not to oneself; To desire everlasting life with all spiritual longing; To keep death daily before one's eyes; To know for certain that God sees one in every place; To dash upon Christ one's evil thoughts the instant they come to one's heart; To fulfil the commandments of God daily by one's deeds; To love chastity; To reverence one's seniors; To love one's juniors; Never to despair of God's mercy."<sup>12</sup> St. Benedict sought and achieved harmony between manual or intellectual labour and the divine worship in monastic life. He was especially insistent on monks having "discretion, the mother of virtue". "*Ora et labora*" ("pray and work") was St. Benedict's golden rule. Full abandonment of one's own free will, emancipation from reflection on what should or should not be done, possibility of having complete peace and quiet in one's soul without any exertion or wavering of mind, just strictly following the Rule, are the key ideas of the Benedictine Rule.

The pictures of Siemiradzki's monastic series seem to illustrate the Rule of St. Benedict. Siemiradzki's world is hierarchically built. Its pinnacles are crowned by monasteries built in the hills, and there is nothing above them but mountain tops, heaven and the Creator of all

12] Accessible online [https://www.solesmes.com/sites/default/files/upload/pdf/rule\\_of\\_st\\_benedict.pdf](https://www.solesmes.com/sites/default/files/upload/pdf/rule_of_st_benedict.pdf), pp. 5-6.

things. The characters in the pictures of the series either live within the walls of mountainous monasteries, contemplating the hustle and bustle of the worldly life in the valley, or go down below to bring “consolation and relief” to the laymen. However, there is no insuperable boundary between the worlds of the sacred and the profane. The openness and mutual permeability of the two worlds is very important. The monastery (or the convent) and the monks (or nuns) do not live in isolation, always immersed in devotional contemplation. They educate and teach an orphaned girl, they go down to the village to administer the viaticum to a dying person, they visit the sick and the poor, they bring food on the back of their donkeys – not only words of consolation. Siemiradzki’s characters are proponents of active goodness.

Taking up Siemiradzki’s monastic series as a subject of study, we need to explain his attitude to religion and the Church. The Siemiradzki remained Roman Catholic and cherished Polish national traditions. When he found himself far away from home, in St. Petersburg, during his first years at the Academy of Arts, the painter was very homesick, longing for the atmosphere of his ancestral home. In letters to his relatives he recalled, with sadness and fondness, the Easter table with the blessed Easter cake and pudding, painted eggs, the fragrance of almonds and lemons pervading the house. At the same time, we know that in the 1890s the artist took interest in the occult, and organized spiritualistic séances at his place. A. Wysocki quotes Siemiradzki as saying: “I’m a believer and I go to church. [...] But I admit there are certain forces in the universe that are concealed and have not been studied yet, forces that exist by God’s will and could reveal deep-seated mysteries of past life and afterlife for us, if they were properly explained and researched.”<sup>13</sup>

Siemiradzki created a lot of works commissioned by the Church. Here we are going to mention just a few of them. In 1870, he painted a composition called *Crucifix* for the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Kharkiv (the cathedral still exists, but Siemiradzki’s work perished). He worked at the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow (1875-1879); his most important work there, *The Last Supper* (1879), an altarpiece, deserves a special mention. In 1882, the artist painted another altarpiece, *Christ Calming the Storm*, for the

13] Quoted in: ВИТА В. СУСАК, *ФЕНОМЕН СЕМИРАДСКОГО* (VITA.V. SUSAK, *Siemiradzki's Phenomenon*), in: *XIX век, Целостность и процесс. Вопросы взаимодействия искусств* (*The 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Integrity and Process. Issues of Interaction Between Arts*), Москва 2002, p. 254.

Church of St. Martin in Kraków. He also produced the *The Resurrection* image for the All Saints Church in Warsaw (1880s, not extant), and, in 1891, he created a composition called *The Ascension of Our Lord* for the main altar of the church of the Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Rome. In 1887, the artist was planning to go to Palestine to collect material for *Carrying the Cross*, a painting he wanted to produce, but the journey never materialized.

Siemiradzki saw the emotional appeal of a temptation as a topic for his artistic endeavours, and he also addressed the ambivalence of human nature. In 1886 (at about the same time when he started to work on the monastic series), the artist painted *The Temptation of St. Jerome* (private collection). Unlike many of his predecessors in the history of European art who had painted St. Jerome as a gaunt old man with a white beard, Siemiradzki followed the facts of the saint's life as they are described in hagiography: In reality, the saint retired for a time to the desert of Chalcis when he was 33. Siemiradzki seems to illustrate St. Jerome's words known from one of his letters to Eustochium: "How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling-place [...], did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome [...] Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid beavies of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting; yet my mind was burning with desire [...]. I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, I watered them with my tears, I wiped them with my hair: and then I subdued my rebellious body with weeks of abstinence."<sup>14</sup>

In the paintings of the "old monasteries" series and related canvases, the key theme that excited Siemiradzki was continued: The meeting of, and dialogue between, ancient Rome, with the Colosseum and the ruins of the fora, and Rome as the capital of the Roman Catholic world, with the Papal Basilica of St. Peter. Subiaco monasteries are situated in Lazio, a region of Italy that is first and foremost associated with Rome,<sup>15</sup> the capital of Christianity, the Eternal City, which had been the capital of the entire Western world for ages.

Quite often, peculiarities of this or that phenomenon can be understood by comparing them to their likes. I would like to draw

14] St. Jerome, *Letter XXII. To Eustochium*, 7. *Select Works and Letters*. The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series II. vol. 6. The Early Church Fathers.

Quoted after: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf206.v.XXII.html>

15] Rome is the capital of Lazio.



a comparison between Siemiradzki's series featuring old Roman Catholic monasteries in Italian mountains on the one hand, and the Russian situation on the other; he could not help associating himself with Russia, because he had a Russian passport and regularly contributed his works to art shows in Russia, frequently came to Moscow and St. Petersburg.

When Siemiradzki's aesthetic *credo* was taking shape in the 1860s, the Russian art of democratic vein was dominated by anticlerical trends. First of all, I suggest that we recall in this connection some of the works of Vasily Perov (1833-1882), the leader of Russian art of the 1860s: *Easter Procession in a Village* (1861, State Tretyakov Gallery), *Tea-Drinking in Mytishchi near Moscow* (1862, State Tretyakov Gallery), *The Meal* (1865-1876, State Russian Museum), *Dividing the Inheritance in a Monastery (Death of a Monk)* (1868, State Tretyakov Gallery). Perov denounced the vices of the clergy: gluttony, excessive drinking, greed, hypocrisy, indifference to the poor and subservience to the wealthy classes of society, absence of sincere and deep belief in God.

In Perov's best-known work among those listed above, *Easter Procession in a Village*, a disorderly drunk procession walks against a cheerless and gloomy rural landscape after a festive Easter service, carrying their icons and holy banners. With harsh realism does Perov render not so much the physical but the spiritual squalor and bareness of those people. The picture produces a frightening impression – frightening by that depiction of life where humans have nearly degenerated to the state of brutes.

Spiritual values are represented in the picture as shattered, perverse, distorted. The image of Christ turned upside down, a chipped icon held by the singing woman in the foreground symbolize the neglect of the “divine image” by the people inside themselves, the loss of guiding landmarks in their lives, disbelief reigning both amongst the people and the clergy alike, helplessness of the Church when it faces moral poverty and genuine, appalling penury of its flock. Although the holy banner features The Eye of the Omniscience and The Raising of Lazarus, which Perov scholars interpreted as a hope for the future revival of the people,<sup>16</sup> the imagery of the canvas does not inspire any optimistic hopes. Landscape plays an important part in instilling the

16] Василий Г. ПЕРОВ, *Творческий путь художника* (Vasily PEROV, *The Artist's Creative Career*), Moscow 1997, p. 58.



melancholy and despair coming from the painting. Its elements – the barren tree swaying in the bitter wind, the overcast low sky, the swampy mud on the ground – seem to echo the general mood of the picture.

Ilya Repin interpreted his character in the same anticlerical spirit: His *The Archdeacon* (1877, State Tretyakov Gallery) is a portrait of a clergyman, i.e. a person administering spiritual guidance, but essentially a very materialistic individual. In the tableau *Religious Procession in the Kursk Province* (1881-1883, State Tretyakov Gallery), the people's procession depicted by Repin in that monumental multi-figure composition transforms into a generalized image of Russia trudging along her Way of the Cross and “always waiting for God's grace.”<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion to this rather sketchy review, we can say that between the 1860s and the 1880s, the Russian art of Democratic Realism did not seek spiritual values under the vaults of churches or inside monastic walls. It either criticized Church office as an institution that was ridden by the same vices as other institutions of the society, or treated monasticism and various unofficial religious movements as a form of escapism and protest against the existing social order. For Perov, one and the same pole of society is represented by monks, *Khlysts* (Хлысты, “Whips”) and revolutionaries “dead branches of the people's tree” (using a metaphor of Gleb Pospelov, a renowned historian of Russian art).<sup>18</sup> In other paintings and drawings, such as *The Wanderer* (1870, State Tretyakov Gallery), *A Female Itinerant in a Field (On the Way to Eternal Bliss)* (1878, Nizhny Novgorod State Museum of Arts), *A Holy Fool (God's Man)* (1875, Kiev National Museum of Russian Art), *A Female Holy Fool Surrounded by Itinerant Women* (1872), *Ecstatic Ritual of Khlysts* (1879-1880), *Before Taking the Veil* (1879, State Tretyakov Gallery), Perov was mesmerized by people who found themselves isolated from the society, be it voluntarily or reluctantly. They are no longer under society's control and are therefore free, but their freedom came at a price; it is both a challenge to, and a judgement of, social order, which is so profligate and cruel as it looks with disdain on a weak, poor, sick person, or a person too vulnerable or too emotional. The artist wants to approach those

17] Григорий Ю. СТЕРНИН, Елена В. КИРИЛЛИНА, *Илья Репин, 1844-1930* (Grigory STERNIN, Elena KIRILINA, *Ilya Repin. 1844-1930*), Аврора, Санкт-Петербург 1996, p. 24.

18] See: Глеб Г. ПОСПЕЛОВ, *Боярыня Морозова. Перспектива* (Gleb POSPELOV, *Boyarina Morozova. A Perspective*), in: Василий СУРИКОВ, *Близкое бытие* (Vasily SURIKOV, *Close Past*), Москва 2009, p. 38.

people, to understand what they get from their life experience that is so unconventional and weird for the common man. Across his entire career, Perov seemed to be painting the Purgatory (he most likely understood earthly existence as one), and he showed the trials and tribulations that humans are going through in their lives. His *Female Itinerant* and *Holy Fool*, who had drunk a full cup of suffering, look like they are about to enter another state – “eternal life.” But there is not an ounce of serene optimism in those pictures; instead, they show a painful grimace of Perov’s doubt and disbelief in the future “eternal bliss.”

In Perov’s graphic sheet *Dispute About Faith. A Scene in a Railway Car. Students Talk to a Monk* (1880, State Tretyaykov Gallery), we do not find anyone the author sympathizes with, as he is equally aloof to the trivial Nihilism of the enthusiastically arguing students and to the impenetrable detachment of the elderly monk. But, at the same time, Perov has in his legacy a series of heartfelt works (some of them were made for churches) based on Evangelic themes: *Christ and the Virgin from the Sea of Life* (1867, State Tretyakov Gallery), *The Savior* (second half of the 1860s, State Tretyakov Gallery), *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* (1878, State Tretyakov Gallery), *Descent from the Cross* (1878, State Tretyakov Gallery), *First Christians in Kiev* (1880, Kiev Picture Gallery National Museum). Like many members of the *intelligentsia* in his time, Perov probably distinguished between faith and church, and he saw the calling of a true believer in good deeds, in solicitous care about one’s neighbour, rather than in following church rituals; he thought it was possible to believe in God and pray to God without the mediation of the Church.<sup>19</sup>

We will not find that obvious contrast and opposition between religion and Church in Siemiradzki’s *oeuvre*; he was not averse to the ritualistic side of church life. On the contrary, he was peering into that world – with respect, awe, sympathy, soulful immersion into the silence, quiet, harmony, severe tenor of monastic life, its canon adjusted by ages. In that respect, he was close to the Russian artist of another generation – Mikhail Nesterov (1862-1942), Vasily Perov’s disciple.

In a series of paintings about monastic life – *The Hermit* (1888-1889, State Tretyakov Gallery), *By the Ringing of Church Bells* (1895, State Russian Museum), *The Great Taking the Veil* (1898, State Russian

19] Perov’s father, Baron Kridener, was a member of the Key to Virtue Masonic lodge. There are reasons to believe that he introduced his natural son to the concepts and ideas of the Russian Freemasonry. See: B. ПЕРОВ, op. cit., pp. 19-22.

Museum), *Silence* (1903), *A Little Fox* (1914), and many others – Nesterov managed to achieve “what nobody did in secular painting – to capture a prayer born in human soul.”<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, Nesterov began to work on his series of pictures “from monastic life” in the late 1880s, at about the same time as Siemiradzki. Nesterov’s picture *The Hermit* (1888-1889) was first exhibited at the 7<sup>th</sup> art show of the Society for Travelling Art Exhibitions (1889-1890) and was purchased by Pavel Tretyakov. “My little old man revealed to me some secrets of his life. He talked to me, opened up the mysterious world of hermitage, where he, happy and content, delighted me with his simplicity, his acceptability to God,” the artist recalled.<sup>21</sup> The paintings *Silence* (1903) and *A Little Fox* (1914) were created under the impressions received during a journey to the Solovetsky Monastery in 1901: “in the North, by a Freezing Sea, there live God’s people, holy elders. [...] They live in peace and quiet, they are in no hurry. [...] They are surrounded by forests where birds are singing and wild beasts are carousing. [...] That earthly paradise is so beautifully created.”<sup>22</sup>

Nesterov and Siemiradzki are painters of two different generations, but they are similar in their willingness to capture the harmony of silence and seclusion of monastic life, special “devotional sentiment.” Nesterov’s characters are represented in the state of contemplation or prayer, their impeccable kindness is emphasized, as even wild beasts are not afraid of leaving forest thickets and approaching them. Siemiradzki was more interested in other aspects – not mystic revelations or devotional epiphanies, but active or proactive charity nurtured by Roman Catholic faith and monasticism.

Stanisław Lewandowski, Siemiradzki’s friend and the author of the first monograph about him, hinted that the artist had first tackled “monastic theme” under the influence of some intimate emotional experience. He stressed pre-eminence of those paintings in the artist’s *oeuvre*. But, irrespective of particular facts of biography, the monastic

20] Ольга Д. АТРОШЕНКО, *Преподобный Сергей Радонежский и тема святости в живописи М.В. Нестерова* (Olga D. ATROSCHENKO, *Venerable Sergius of Radonezh and the Theme of Holiness in M.V. Nesterov’s Paintings*), in: Михаил Нестеров. В поисках своей России. К 150-летию со дня рождения (Mikhail Nesterov. In Search of His Own Russia. To the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of His Birth), eds. Галина С. Чурак et al, Государственная Третьяковская галерея, Москва 2013, pp. 49-62.

21] Михаил В. НЕСТЕРОВ, *Воспоминания* (Mikhail V. NESTEROV, *Memoirs*), Советский художник, Москва 1989, p. 104.

22] Михаил В. НЕСТЕРОВ, *Письма* (Mikhail V. NESTEROV, *Letters: A Selection*), Искусство, Ленинград 1988, p. 261.

series is perceived as an integral part of Siemiradzki's legacy. The pictures of Siemiradzki's monastic series are also idylls in their own way, only they are not from Antiquity but belong to the Christian universe. Developing that series of pictures, Siemiradzki discovered his ideal in monastic life regulated by a strict canon and in everyday good deeds of charity. This series is like a natural counterpart to Siemiradzki's other series, "idylls of the Antiquity," and another important stage in his spiritual life.

## HENRYK SIEMIRADZKI. IN MONASTIC SILENCE



60. Henryk Siemiradzki, *An Italian Landscape with a Donkey on a Road*, 1880s, oil on wood, 26.6 × 36 cm, National Museum, Warsaw. Photo Museum.



61. Henryk Siemiradzki, *A Mountain Dweller from the Sabine Hills*, ca. 1889, oil on canvas, 41.3 × 31.5 cm, private collection. Photo Polswiss Art.



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62. Henryk Siemiradzki, *On a Convent Terrace*, 1886, oil on canvas, lost. Photo in: Stanisław, Lewandowski, Henryk Siemiradzki, Gebethner & Wolff, Warszawa, Kraków 1904, fig. 71.



63. Henryk Siemiradzki, *With Consolation and Relief (With Comfort and Assistance)*, ca. 1885, oil on canvas. 57 × 118.7 cm, private collection. Photo Agra-Art, Warsaw.

## HENRYK SIEMIRADZKI. IN MONASTIC SILENCE



64. Henryk Siemiradzki, *In the Silence of the Cloister*, before 1891, oil on canvas, 60 × 130 cm, private collection. Photo collection.



65. Henryk Siemiradzki, *Procession*, 1880s, a sketch for an unproduced composition, oil on canvas, 24 × 42 cm, private collection. Photo Tatiana Karpova.