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## "THINKS LIKE DANTE, HANDLES PAINTS LIKE BOCCACCIO". ABOUT HENRYK SIEMIRADZKI IN VIENNA<sup>1</sup>

The arrival of Henryk Siemiradzki in Vienna in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not a surprise to anyone. Worldwide exhibitions were held in the Austro-Hungarian capital on the Danube. There were many famous galleries and any artist who wanted to become well-known ought to make an appearance in Vienna.

Many artists appeared and stayed in Vienna for some time, usually leaving no trace in Vienna's written history. It was completely different with the visits of Henryk Siemiradzki to the city upon the Danube. Most of the articles written about Siemiradzki's concerned his artwork. This does not mean, of course, that the artist's life was not considered, but the stable family situation of the painter did not provide nutrients to the press, and therefore most of the reports concentrated on his art. His paintings were lauded far and wide as they were often exhibited in the cultural centres of Europe and beyond.<sup>2</sup> Siemiradzki's name<sup>3</sup> appears in Viennese literature and in world art publications

1] Eduard DUBSKY VON WITTENAU, *Kunst-Brief, Prag, 20 Oktob.*, "Österreichische Kunst-Chronik", 27. 10. 1888, p. 1077.

2] Siemiradzki exhibited his works in the most important European cities. He often travelled with his works and Vienna was almost always on the artistic route of his works.

3] Sometimes written as Semiradzki or Simradsky.

many times.<sup>4</sup> His name is mentioned in nearly five hundred articles. This publication presents a selection of contemporary Viennese media arranged chronologically.

The number of publications reflects the scale of interest which Siemiradzki's work inspired in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the most popular artists in the world for about 20 years after 1876.

In 1873, for the first time Siemiradzki's artwork was presented in Vienna at the World Exhibition. As we can read in the *Officieller Kunst-Catalog*<sup>5</sup> it was displayed in the central hall of the Art Hall.<sup>6</sup> In the work presented at that time, *Christ and the Harlot*, a new and fresh view of the biblical subjects was displayed.<sup>7</sup> This work made him renowned. However, it was incomparable to the fame that he achieved three years later due to his next work: *Nero's Torches*. Thanks to it, the name of Siemiradzki became famous all over the world. Even before *Nero's Torches* was shown in Vienna, *Illustrierte Zeitung* wrote: "A great movement happened in the art circles of Munich. It was caused by a picture abundant in great figures painted by a painter Siemiradzki who lives in Rome. It is 5m high and 7m wide [...] it shows a group of Christian martyrs wrapped in flammable material atop raised pyres, while the emperor and his entourage watch on, enjoying their suffering."<sup>8</sup>

The painting made an equally powerful impression when it was exhibited in Rome, which was noticed by the Vienna press informing its readers about the distinction Siemiradzki received there – the Golden Laurel Wreath presented by King Victor Emmanuel II.

The *Nero's Torches*<sup>9</sup> was presented in the Viennese Künstlerhaus at Lothringerstrasse no 9 and a ceremonial unveiling took place on

4) The main research is based on the collection of the Austrian National Library <http://anno.onb.ac.at>. Siemiradzki is mostly known through the Russian and Italian literature. His artistic presence in the capital of the Habsburg monarchy was not taken into account before.

5) *Offizieller Kunst-Catalog. Welt-Ausstellung 1873 in Wien*, Verlag der Genral Direction, Wien 1873, p. 186.

6) Ernst LEHMANN, *Bildende Kunst in der Gegenwart. Gedenkbuch an die Kunstballe der Wiener Weltausstellung*, Wien 1873, 2. Aufl., p. 152 "da lobe ich mir den Russen Semiradzki. [...] noch junge russische Maler hat in seiner *Sünderin* nicht nur eine Arbeit geliefert, welcher uns großen Coloristen verraeth, sondern die Art und Weise, in welcher er den biblischen Stoff behandelt, ist in jeder Beziehung neu und vielleicht heut zu Tage die für Heiligenbilder einzig angemessene."

7) Ernst LEHMANN, *Bildende Kunst in der Gegenwart. Gedenkbuch an die Kunstballe der Wiener Weltausstellung*, Wien 1873, 2. Aufl., op. cit., p. 152.

8) *Malerei und vervielfältigende Künste*, "Illustrierte Zeitung", 23. 09. 1876, p. 11.

9) The painting was known also as "Nero's Alive Torches" or "Christian Candlesticks".

1 November 1876.<sup>10</sup> Despite the presence of artwork of other contemporary artists, the *Nero's Torches* worked like a magnet, attracting crowds to the exhibition.<sup>11</sup> The number of articles on Siemiradzki, and reproductions of his paintings (obviously mostly *Nero's Torches*), was growing. In Enio Ranzoni's article dedicated to art, Siemiradzki's canvas almost completely dominated its content: "When looking at the work of *Nero's Torches*, it is impossible to believe that its creator worked on it only two rather than ten years. We must admit the creator has a great talent."<sup>12</sup>

The front page of the opinion-forming *Die Presse* contained a column entitled "Siemiradzki's Nero" which highlighted the struggles of German and French artists on the subject of Nero. It compares them with the "young Pole Siemiradzki" who – as we read further – "entered the cosmopolitan world of art and won him a high position".<sup>13</sup> The author critically analysed the picture, stating at the end that the painter's technical abilities are particularly admirable: "Who can paint marble and gold, relief or green shade on the fountain [...] and all kinds of clothes like him, nothing is impossible. [...] It must be also added that no other picture of Nero has attracted so much attention and admiration as Siemiradzki's *Nero's Torches*."<sup>14</sup>

Just a few days later another article was published. This time on the pages of *Welt Blatt*, who wrote: "In the large gallery in the

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- 10] Accessible online: <http://www.wladimir-aichelburg.at/?s=Siemiradzki&submit=Search>, the list of exhibitions states the dates: 1.11.1876-31.12.1876 *Kunst-Ausstellung im Künstlerhaue. Heinrich von Siemiradzki: „Die lebenden Fackeln Nero's."*, Veranstalter: Genossenschaft. Eröffnung: 1.11.1876. Großer Saal im ersten Stock. Katalog: 22 x 14 cm, 16 Seiten. Monumentalgemälde. Gleichzeitig mit der Permanenten Ausstellung und der Kollektion J. Holzer. Jedoch im Katalog der Permanenten-Ausstellung vom 1.11.1876: (Permanent Exhibition catalogue, a list of presented work) Siemiradzki Heinrich von, in Rom: Ölgemälde. Die lebenden Fackeln Nero's. Ohne Kat. No., mit Begleittext nach Tacitus. Kolossalgemälde im grossen Saal (Permanente 1.11.1876, 16.11.1876). Kat. No. 1 (Permanente 1.12.1876, 15.12.1876).
- 11] It does not mean that previously Henryk Siemiradzki was an unknown artist and without any success. He was the recipient of many awards, including a scholarship, which allowed him to make an artistic journey around Europe. More on this topic in: Jerzy MIZIOŁEK, *Dirke chrześcijańska i inne tematy all'antica w twórczości Henryka Siemiradzkiego. Uwagi i rozważania*, "Sztuka Europy Wschodniej", vol. IV, 2016, p. 23 and following pages; Татьяна Л. КАРПОВА, *Генрих Семирадский*, Золотой век, Санкт-Петербург 2008, (Tatiana L. Karpova, *Henryk Siemiradzki*).
- 12] Emmerich RANZONI, *Kunstblatt*, "Neue Freie Presse", 2. 11. 1876, p. 4.
- 13] *H.Gr. Siemiradzki's Nero. Aus dem Künstlerhaus*, "Die Presse", 4. 11. 1876, (29 Jhr.), cover page and following pages.
- 14] *Ibid.* cover page and the following pages.

Künstlerhaus in Vienna, there is a large full-wall painting which was previously presented with great success at the exhibition in Munich. *Nero's Torches* (this is the name of the painting) painted by a young Polish artist named Henryk Siemiradzki".<sup>15</sup>

In turn, Karl von Vincenti wrote on the pages of *Wiener Zeitung*: "The Picture Hall on Lothringenstrasse, displays a painting that the whole of Vienna wants to see: Henryk von Simiradzki [!] *Nero's Torches*."<sup>16</sup> In the article the author delineates Siemiradzki's biography, originally from Kharkiv, a graduate of the Petersburg Academy where he received a medal and a scholarship for further education. Vicenti also reminds readers that *Nero's Torches* was preceded by other paintings, including the *Beautiful Sinner*<sup>17</sup> and the *Roman Orgy from the Imperial Era* (which was acquired by the successor to the Russian throne).<sup>18</sup> During the exhibition in the Künstlerhaus, Siemiradzki's *Torches* continuously aroused great interest and reigned supreme at the Vienna exhibition.<sup>19</sup> In the press, the artist's subsequent achievements were reported. Amongst other news, it was announced that his latest *Elegia* painting<sup>20</sup> would be displayed at the Warsaw Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts.<sup>21</sup> In *Neue Illustrierte Zeitung* (a magazine devoted to art), an article about Siemiradzki's work was published. It was titled, of course, *Nero's Torches*. Siemiradzki was rated higher than the extremely popular in Vienna Hans Makart or Jan Matejko.<sup>22</sup>

The painting *Nero's Torches* was mentioned long after it left Vienna.<sup>23</sup> A side effect of the extraordinary popularity of the painting was the popularisation of the subject of Nero's reign – this then spread into other branches of art. Back in Vienna, the theatre played "great tragedies with the motif of mass murder," showing Nero still hungry for new victims.<sup>24</sup> Even at the beginning of the following year, when discussing artistic events in Vienna, the success and the impression *Nero's Torches*

15] *Theater, Kunst, Musik, Liteatur*, "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 15. 11. 1876, p. 9.

16] Karl v. VINCENTI, *Bildende Kunst*, „Wiener Zeitung“, 21. 11. 1876 (17).

17] This is, of course, the *Christ and Harlot* painting.

18] "Wiener Zeitung", 21. 11. 1876 (17).

19] Among others: "Die Presse", 24. 11. 1876, p. 2.

20] This painting was gifted to Henryk Sienkiewicz.

21] "Neue Freie Presse", 10. 12. 1876, p. 6.

22] "Neue Illustrierte Zeitung", 1. 01 1877, pp. 6-7, images pp. 8-9.

23] Among others: "Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Tages-Ausgabe)", 15. 01. 1877, p. 11. It informed that the painting was currently on display in Berlin.

24] "Das Vaterland", 23. 01. 1877, p. 3.

made on the local audience was still remembered.<sup>25</sup> Announcements for planned future exhibitions mentioned new Siemiradzki's artwork as one of the highlights.<sup>26</sup> Particular interest was paid to a painting which had just returned from Philadelphia and was to be presented at the Austrian Society of Art, entitled: *Sale of Amulets*.<sup>27</sup>

Reviews of the subsequent works of Siemiradzki were more mixed than those for *Nero's Torches*. *Neue Freie Presse* wrote about the undoubted talent of Siemiradzki, but it also pointed out some flaws.<sup>28</sup> Just a few days earlier, *Die Presse* published a press note where the journalist felt slightly disappointed: "Three paintings by Siemiradzki, including two female head studies on a coloured background are, after *Nero's Torches*, like weak wine after a strong one."<sup>29</sup> *Morgen-Post* offered a different opinion and wrote: "From Henryk Siemiradzki from Rome, we have two studies of women's heads and a genre scene picture: *A Rest at the Well*. They attract even more attention than *Nero's Torches* that we still have in our memory."<sup>30</sup>

In a similar tone, Karl Vincenti wrote a review of the exhibition in the Austrian Art Society,<sup>31</sup> whereas *Die Presse* described it as "a valuable collection of the most distinguished painters",<sup>32</sup> listing Siemiradzki's works in the first line.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the *Morgen-Post* described the *Sale of Amulets* as a worthy successor of *Nero's Torches* on its front page.<sup>34</sup>

25] "Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung", 29. 01. 1877, title page.

26] *Ausstellung des Österreichischen Kunstvereins*, "Neue Freie Presse", 31. 01. 1877, p. 6.

27] "Neue Freie Presse", 31. 01. 1877, p. 6; *Theater, Kunst und Literatur*, "Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Tages-Ausgabe)", 31. 01. 1877, pp. 4-5; "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 2. 02.1877, p.5; "Die Presse", 9. 02. 1877, p. 11 "Also Henri Siemiradzki from Rome, known through his "Nero's Torches" is represented at the Austrian Society of Art by three pictures and one more large painting *Sale of Amulets*, which just came back from Philadelphia so it can be presented during this exhibition."

28] *Kunstblatt, Oesterreichischer Kunstverein*, "Die Presse", 11. 02. 1877, pp.13-14.

29] "Die Presse", 11. 02. 1877, pp.13-14.

30] *Kunstverein*, "Morgen-Post", 21. 02. 1877, title page.

31] Karl VINCENTI, *Schoene Kunste*, "Wiener Zeitung", 27. 02. 1877, p. 23 : "Siemiradzki's Heads are subjected to the beautiful effect of light but the wallpapers in the background could be skipped".

32] "Die Presse", 14. 04. 1877, p. 8.

33] "Die Presse", 14. 04. 1877, op. cit., p. 8, similarly in Cafehaus Plauderei column, "Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung", 15. 04. 1877, p. 2; In newspapers' advertisements promoting the exhibition, Siemiradzki's work *Sale of Amulets* was mentioned in the first place; between others: "Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Tages-Ausgabe)", 15 . 05. 1877, p. 16.

34] "Morgen-Post", 28. 07. 1877, front cover. „*Dead season*. [...] A great merit of the Society of Art is their current exhibition [...] where you can admire a huge picture of Siemiradzki, *Sale of*

Still under the influence of *Nero's Torches*, and thanks to the picture of *Sale of Amulets* presented in Vienna, the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* published an extensive article entitled *New Siemiradzki* by Viktor Karl Schembera on its front page. The author refers to the popularity earned by Siemiradzki as growing "from day to day" thanks to *Nero's Torches*. The author goes on to say: "He is also known in places in Europe where his paintings during his travels have not yet arrived, his fame extends from Vienna and Berlin to all sides, where the impact of his work here and there are expressed by great and righteous admiration."<sup>35</sup>

Schembera also reminds of Siemiradzki's previous work, presented at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair – *Christ and the Harlot*.<sup>36</sup> The following lines are full of admiration for the artist's skills in projecting objects, architecture, marbles and costumes. He compares Siemiradzki to Alma-Tadema.<sup>37</sup>

In the second half of 1878, the attention of media was drawn by the painting called *A Dance among Swords* which was compared on the pages of *Deutsche Musik-Zeitung* with Matejko's paintings. Both painters were accused of accumulating too many figures. At the same time, the look of the dancer's naked body was admired. The beautiful composition, the landscape and the well observed group of revellers watching the dancer were also mentioned.<sup>38</sup>

1879 was the year of Kraszewski's jubilee and it was celebrated with great solemnity.<sup>39</sup> Preparations for various exhibitions and Siemiradzki's participation in them overshadowed those celebrations.<sup>40</sup> This was, at least in part, thanks to Siemiradzki gifting possibly the most

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*Amulets*, through which you can see his great talent. [...] it is a worthy successor of the *Nero's Torches*, which was exhibited earlier by the Society."

35] Viktor K. SCHEMBERA, *Neues Siemiradzki*, "Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Tages-Ausgabe)", No. 135, 18. 05. 1877, (11 JHr.), cover page and following pages

36] *Ibid.*, cover page.

37] *Ibid.*

38] J [...]. PROSL, *Die Weihnachtsausstellung im Kunstverein*, "Deutsche Kunst & Musik-Zeitung. Central-Organ für Musik Theater, Bildende Künste & Literatur", 1879, (VI Jahr.), no. 45, 24. 11, p.193.

39] Józef Ignacy KRASZEWSKI (1812-1887). In 1879 with a great fanfare it was celebrated Kraszewski's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of creative work. The celebrations spread throughout many cities of then Europe, including Dresden, Vienna, Berlin, Altuna Goeksbo (Sweden), but the most important ceremonies took place in Krakow, of which was widely reported by the press. Among others: *Kraszewski Feier*, "Die Presse", 4. 10. 1879, p.4; "Neue Freie Presse", 6. 10. 1879, p. 7.

40] The newspapers were writing about the celebrations in great detail, including information on guests. Above others: "Neue Freie Presse", 6. 10. 1879, p. 7.

popular painting at that time in Europe<sup>41</sup> to the Cloth Hall in Krakow. This had the unintended consequence of planting the idea of creating the National Museum there. It was said that his gift became an inspiration to other Polish artists who also donated their work to the future museum in the Cloth Hall.<sup>42</sup> This sensation aroused a wave of worship for Siemiradzki. In his honour, a special procession with torches was organised which passed by his apartment in a Krakow hotel. During the march, a band from Wieliczka sang Polish songs. Thousands of people took part in the procession. When Siemiradzki appeared on the balcony, he was greeted with ovations, *Die Presse* reported.<sup>43</sup>

After this event, *Die Presse* reported that: "Staying here [in Vienna], the Polish writer [Józef Ignacy] Kraszewski and the painter Siemiradzki have been invited for an audience with His Majesty the Emperor at 10am tomorrow."<sup>44</sup> *Koło Polskie* (The Polish Circle)<sup>45</sup> in Vienna organised a ceremonial banquet in honour of Kraszewski and Siemiradzki.<sup>46</sup> It did not escape the attention of the press that Lwów (Lemberg, Lviv) did not want to "be worse than Krakow" and also organised a large fete in honour of Siemiradzki, which also included a procession with torches.<sup>47</sup> It was often emphasised in the press that Siemiradzki had, thanks to his gift, "laid a cornerstone for the construction of the National Museum."<sup>48</sup>

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- 41] According to the Viennese press, this painting evoked a wave of interest in the subject of Nero and the martyrdom of Christians, it was transferred to a theatrical stage, to a circus and the picture itself was one of the most often reproduced, published, etc.
- 42] *Gründung eines National-Museum*, "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 9. 10. 1879, No 233, p. 3.
- 43] "Die Presse", 7. 10. 1879, p. 16.
- 44] *Kleine Chronik, Wien, 12. Oktober*, "Die Presse", 13. 10. 1879, front cover.
- 45] Koło Polskie – was a political group of Polish deputies in the Austrian parliament. At that time, Poles held high positions, reaching even the positions of prime minister and ministers. Among others: *Polacy w austriackim parlamencie. W 130. rocznice, Koła Polskiego*, ed. Władysław S. KUCHARSKI, Multico, Lublin 1997.
- 46] *Kleine Chronik*, "Neue Freie Presse", 14. 10. 1879 (Bandblatt), front page ; "Das Vaterland", 15. 10. 1879, p. 3.
- 47] *Lemberg*, "Die Presse", 14. 10. 1879, p. 4; *National Museum*, "Die Presse", 14. 10. 1879, p. 9; "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 15. 10. 1879, p. 4. "All members of the Club turned up. Apart from Polish councillors, there was also Minister Ziemiałkowski [Florian], the Galician marshal Count Louis Wodzicki and several representatives of the Polish press. The honoured place was taken by Kraszewski and next to him sat Siemiradzki, on the right sat dr Grocholski, on the left, min. Ziemiałkowski, in front of the guests of honour, Prince Jerzy Czartoryski, Dr. [Franciszek] Smolka and Dr. Euzebiusz Czerkawski." An equally detailed description is given in the column: *Kleine Chronik, Wien, 20. Oktober*, "Neue Freie Presse", 21 X 1879, p. 5 and in: *Siemiradzki in Lemberg, Lemberg 18. Oktober*, "Das Vaterland", 21. 10. 1879, p. 3, "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 22. 10. 1879, p. 4.
- 48] Above others: "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 15. 10. 1879, p. 4, "Neue Freie Presse", 23. 10. 1879, p. 3.

In 1879 his painting *A Dance among Swords* was presented at an exhibition by the Austrian Society of Art. It was exhibited alongside other paintings but, as the organizers noted, *A Dance among Swords* attracted the most attention of the public.<sup>49</sup>

The *Neue Freie Presse* paintings expert devoted a lot of attention to *The Dance*, writing: “this picture is seducing with its beauty, [...] and it has been enthusiastically received in the north and in the south. It is also a big improvement in comparison to *Nero’s Torches*.”<sup>50</sup>

Equally enthusiastic was the columnist in *Die Presse* where we can read that the *Dance* shows the ancient world of entertainment.<sup>51</sup> Siemiradzki’s picture attracted crowds of visitors to the Vienna exhibition, which resulted in him sending over for the exhibition another picture – *Shipwrecked Man (The Roman Beggar)*.<sup>52</sup>

One of the cultural events correspondents in Vienna noticed that *A Dance among Swords* picture by Siemiradzki is worthy of attention, and particularly the figure of a naked dancer in it. He speculated on her origin in the review he wrote.<sup>53</sup>

Mentioned above and presented a bit later at the exhibition, the painting *Shipwrecked Man* also attracted the attention of critics. The realism of the piece was noted in the *Notes on Art* and yet, at the same time, the painting was criticised for lack of depth in comparison with the works of such masters as Titian, Leonardo or Veronese.<sup>54</sup>

Austrian art critic and journalist Carl Erasmus Kleinert,<sup>55</sup> in an article in *Illustrierte Sport-Zeitung*,<sup>56</sup> dedicated a lot of column inches to the “young Polish artist Henryk Siemiradzki”,<sup>57</sup> who, after huge worldwide success of *Nero’s Torches*, deserves even more attention for his

49] Among others: [Advertisement], “Die Presse“, 11. 12. 1879, p. 11 and later issues.

50] *Kunstblatt. Malerei*, “Neue Freie Presse“, 12. 12 1879, p. 20.

51] *Feuilleton*, Aus Schönsbrunnense, “Die Presse“, 13. 12. 1879, front page.

52] “Die Presse“, 13 XII 1879, p. 11; “Das Vaterland“, 13. 12. 1879, p. 5; “Wiener Zeitung“, 13. 12. 1879, p. 4; “Neue Illustrierte Zeitung“, 21.12. 1879, p. 15.

53] *Wiener Spaziergänge*, “Neue Freie Presse“, 14. 12 1879, p. 6.

54] Just comparing Siemiradzki’s work to such excellent artists proves how highly valued he was at that time; *Kunstnotizen*, “Neue Freie Presse“, 13. 01. 1880, p. 20.

55] Carl Erasm Kleiner (1857-1933) Born in Vienna, a writer, journalist, educated art historian Among others: *Das Jahrbuch der Wiener Gesellschaft. Biographische Beiträge zur Wiener Zeitgeschichte*, ed. Franz PLANER, Wien 1929; *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, edn. der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Wien: 1954, ed. Maria STONA, *Ein Alt-Oesterreicher. Carl Erasmus Kleinert: sein Leben und Werke*, Troppau 1933.

56] Carl Erasmus KLEINERT, *Wiener Kunstbriefe*, “Illustrierte Sport-Zeitung“, 25. 01. 1880, p. 10.

57] *Ibid.*, p. 10.



latest (at the time) artwork. Kleinert refers to the works shown at the Exhibition at the Austrian Society of Art, namely to *A Dance among Swords* and *Shipwrecked Man*. The critic considers the former as "the best of work the artist has created so far"<sup>58</sup> and that it gave him great pleasure when he was in its presence. It is worth noting that these works were shown among the artwork of other contemporary artists, such as Carl von Piloty, Moritz von Schwind<sup>59</sup> or Jan Matejko, and despite such competition, Siemiradzki's work was in the forefront and aroused widespread interest.

The following year (1880) brought more reports on the artist's subsequent works. *Das Vaterland* informs us of a portrait ordered by Count Ludwik Wodzicki<sup>60</sup> who went to Rome specifically to commission the piece. At the same time, *Die Presse* reported on the artist working on a painting *The Era of Tiberius on Capri*.<sup>61</sup>

Particular attention was drawn to the picture *He and She* presented at the exhibition organised by Miethke at Neue Markt 13. *Neue Freie Presse* focused heavily on this work, praising, among other things, rich colors and accomplished craft.<sup>62</sup> Carl Erasmus Kleinert devoted a whole article to this painting on the pages of *Illustrierte Sport-Zeitung*.<sup>63</sup> He was delighted by the story of lovers and how it was presented in a charming way.<sup>64</sup>

In his next article, Kleinert saw distinct reminiscences of Siemiradzki's *Dancer* in Adrien Moreau's *Spanish Dancer*,<sup>65</sup> which was on display at the next exhibition by the Art Society.

In April 1880, *Die Presse* reported on a huge, recently completed picture by Siemiradzki – *Isaurian Pirates Selling their Booty*.

58] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

59] Moritz von Schwind (1804-1871) Austrian painter and draftsman. Among others: Michael DIRRIGL, *Moritz von Schwind. Maler in München*, Lectura-Verlag, Nürnberg 2001.

60] Ludwik Wodzicki (1834-1894) graduated in law and economics in Vienna, then in England, participant of the January Uprising 1863, a conservative Galician politician, a member of the Galician Parliament, in 1877 he became a member of the Austrian House of Lords. [Wodzicki Ludwik] *S. Orgelbranda Encyklopedia powszechna z ilustracjami i mapami*, vol. 15, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Akcyjnego Odlewni Czcionek i Drukarni S. Orgelbranda Synów, Warszawa 1903, p. 452.

61] *Theater – und Kunstnachrichten*, "Die Presse", 18. 03. 1880, p. 14.

62] "Neue Freie Presse", 24 III 1880, p. 6, "Neue Illustrierte Zeitung", 4 IV 1880, p. 14.

63] Carl Erasmus KLEINERT, *Wiener Kunstbriefe*, "Illustrierte Sport-Zeitung", 11. 04. 1880, p. 235-238.

64] *Ibid.*, p. 235-238.

65] *Ibid.*, pp. 235-238.

In November 1880, the press reported on Siemiradzki's membership appointment to "The Ancient Academy of Fine Arts of St. Luke in Rome".<sup>66</sup> It also informed its readers about a reproduction of Siemiradzki's painting *He and She* in the popular *Heimat* magazine, which became almost as popular as his earlier works *Nero's Torches* and *A Dance among Swords*.<sup>67</sup>

The year 1881 brought news on another picture by Siemiradzki – *In Pursuit of a Butterfly*,<sup>68</sup> which was praised for its use of colour.<sup>69</sup> However, this work was quickly forgotten when talks on *Nero's Torches* began to appear. As was reported by *Morgen-Post*, the painting, due to its huge popularity, needs to be conserved.<sup>70</sup>

Interest in Siemiradzki's work didn't fade. *Morgen Post* reposted reports from Rome that Siemiradzki was working simultaneously on two paintings. One of these paintings was a picture showing Christ by the sea which was intended for the Evangelical church in Krakow. The special composition of the picture and the unprecedented approach in depicting the face of the Saviour were highlighted. The second painting was described as "very unusual" – it was the image of *Christian Dirce*.<sup>71</sup>

The Austrian Society of Art opened their next exhibition on 23 May [1882] where another work by Siemiradzki, *Isaurian Pirates Selling their Booty*, was exhibited. It also met with great interest and, once again, Siemiradzki's painting became a magnet attracting crowds.<sup>72</sup> The *Neue Freie Presse* devoted an entire article to praise for the painting.<sup>73</sup> Despite some minor negative remarks, this work was generally considered wonderful.<sup>74</sup> The picture did not hang alone – it was accompanied by one hundred and sixty other artworks but the *Isaurian Pirates* was called "a pearl among them."<sup>75</sup>

66] Apart from Siemiradzki, the nomination was given to Italian Cesare Maccasi and Gustav Müller, in: *Aus der Kunstwelt*, "Österreichische Kunst-Chronik", 11. 11. 1880, front page.

67] Reproduction was published in "Heimat"[Die Heimat: illustriertes Familienblatt] in VI Jahr., in 1881. *Theater und Kunstdachrichten*, "Neue Freie Presse", 12. 11. 1880, p. 7.

68] This painting fits into so called idyllic trend in Siemiradzki's *oeuvre*.

69] *Kunstblatt. Oesterrische kunst Verein*, "Neue Freie Presse", 23. 04. 1881, p. 20.

70] *Theater, Kunst und Literatur*, "Morgen-Post", 19. 09. 1881, p. 4.

71] *Theater, Kunst, Literatur*, "Morgen-Post", 16 Mai 1882, p. 4.

72] All advertisements of the exhibition published in newspapers depicted *Isaurian Pirates* by Siemiradzki as the most important painting to be seen. Among others: "Die Presse", from 20 May to 27 July 1882 and "Neue Freie Presse" during the same time.

73] *Kunstblatt*, "Neue Freie Presse", 2. 07. 1882, p. 20.

74] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

75] *Theater und Kunst*, "Das Vaterland", 27. 07. 1882, p. 5.

A great exhibition of Russian art of the latest 30 years<sup>76</sup> did not escape the attention of Viennese critics. As Leo von Fialka told us, you can see a wealth of artwork here: "of not only great talents but also great artists" and he added "it's hard to draw all the details from about 600 great pictures [...]. Siemiradzki's [*Christ and the Harlot*] painting in its form is known to all; it established his reputation as an artist in Europe, everyone knows it from numerous reproductions. [...] This is the work of a true independent talent, who [...] paints freely, according to his own soul, and copies natural, physical beauty from nature."<sup>77</sup>

In January 1883, Viennese newspapers began reposting information from the *Moniteur de Rome* which was reporting on Siemiradzki's new works – *The Funeral of a Rus' in Bulgar*, and *Aurora*<sup>78</sup> (commissioned for Yury Nechaev-Maltsov's Palace). These new works were painted at his villa on Via Gaeta in Rome.<sup>79</sup> *Montags-Revue* dedicated a whole article to a visit to the master's studio and to both paintings.<sup>80</sup>

*Die Presse* also wrote about the *Burial* on its pages. According to the author of the article, Siemiradzki painted the work following a description left by Ibn Fozzlan.<sup>81</sup> "Siemiradzki, with great craftsmanship, presented the whole "Arsenal of death" associated with a burial: gifts, swords, a pyre and fire. On the large [...] barge pulled ashore [...], the body of a Moscow hero lies on the top, dressed in a gala dress made in yellow brocade". The artist made reference to the old masters duplicating a shortcut in presenting a body so that only feet and face can be

76] *All-Russian Exhibition in Moscow in 1882* – The aftermath of the exhibition was a catalogue released in several parts, Иллюстрированный каталог Художественного отдела Всероссийской выставки в Москве, 1882, Part 1, The catalogue on pages 98 and 99 shows two works by Siemiradzki: *Alexander the Great and his Physician Philip* and *Nero's Torches*.

77] Leo von FIALKA, *Die Moskauer Ausstellung. II. Erste Gruppe: Bildende Künste*, "Neue Illustrierte Zeitung", 23. 06. 1882, p. 3.

78] *Aurora* was a project of a ceiling in a palace which belonged to Yury Nechaev-Maltsov. in St Petersburg in: *Theater und Kunstnachrichten*, "Neue Freie Presse", 18. 01. 1884, p. 7.

79] A detailed press release from the master's studio is not unique, nor should arise any surprise. His atelier in Rome, on via Gaeta, was open to visitors (at least once a week) and it was even marked in visitor guides of that time like *Baedeker*, as a sight that must be visited during a visit to Rome.

80] *Theater und Kunst*, "Montags-Revue aus Böhmen", 28. 01. 1884, p. 7.

81] Known also as Ibn-Fadlān, (Ahmad Ibn Fadlan lub Ibn Fozzlan) – a 10<sup>th</sup>-century Arab traveller who wrote travel journals which were popularised thanks to the translation made by Martin Christian FRÄHN, *Ibn-Fozzlan's und anderer Araber Berichte über die Russen älterer Zeit. Text und Übersetzung mit kritisch-philologischen Anmerkungen nebst drei Beilagen über sogenannte Russen-Stämme und Kiew, die Warenger und das Warenger-Meer, und das Land Wisu, ebenfalls nach arabischen Schriftstellern*, Kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, St. Petersburg, 1823.

seen.<sup>82</sup> As was highlighted by the journalist, Siemiradzki managed to make the event more atmospheric by shrouding the whole scene in fog.<sup>83</sup> Schoenthan expressed his appreciation for the artist's ability to present a whole story so distant from the contemporary to author's time and culture, and making all efforts "to build a bridge between his art and understanding his artistry."<sup>84</sup> Later on, the painting's purchase by the History Museum in Moscow was covered in detail.<sup>85</sup>

At the end of April 1885, the newspapers were briefing readers about a new painting: "The famous Polish painter Henryk Siemiradzki, [...] completed a new painting commissioned by Count Aleksander Przeździecki.<sup>86</sup> The painting depicts the death of the martyrs Saint Timothy and Saint Maura [*Martyrdom of St. Timothy and St. Maura, his Wife*]." <sup>87</sup>

The completion of another monumental work was reported by *Neue Freie Presse* at the end of February 1886: "Siemiradzki has just completed his latest large-size painting, on which Christ is depicted in Maria's house. This colossal painting will go to Berlin and will also be presented in Vienna."<sup>88</sup>

Siemiradzki was heavily name-dropped in an article about Rome in the *Österreichische Kunst-Chronik*, where his picture of *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* was positively reviewed.<sup>89</sup>

During a visit to Krakow in connection with the national exhibition organised there, the *Wiener Zeitung* correspondent offered a description of the city and reports from the exhibition. He remembers the ideological creator of the Krakow collection: "the art exhibition, which has got valuable artwork, owes its creation a few years ago to the generosity of the Polish artist. [...] Siemiradzki's *Nero's Torches* – it's a monument of patriotic thinking and it will always be like that."<sup>90</sup>

82] Paul v. SCHOENTHAN, *Neues von Siemiradzki und Böcklin*, "Die Presse", 6. 04. 1884, front page.

83] Ibid.

84] Ibid.

85] Ibid.

86] Aleksander Narcyz Przeździecki (1814-1871) historian, writer, publisher, traveller, an author of *Podole, Wołyń, Ukraina. Obrazy miejsc i czasów* (Wilno 1841 I-II), in: Andrzej BIERNACKI, Aleksander Narcyz Karol Przeździecki. Accessible online: <http://www.ipsb.nina.gov.pl/a/biografia/aleksander-narczyk-karol-przezdziecki>.

87] *Theater, Kunst und Musik*, "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 30. 04. 1885, p. not numbered.

88] *Vereins und Kunstnachrichten*, "Neue Freie Presse", 25. 02. 1886, p.5; The canvas was very popular for a long time and joined the group of Siemiradzki's most often reproduced paintings.

89] *Die Jubilaums-Ausstellung in Berlin*, "Österreichische Kunst-Chronik", 31. 06. 1886, p. 4.

90] *Die Landesausstellung in Krakau*, "Wiener Zeitung", 10 IX 1887, p. 19.

Moritz Nierenstein from *Neue Freie Presse* also wrote about the exhibition in Krakow and mentioned Siemiradzki alongside Matejko and Rodakowski when he said they must be considered as "world works of art".<sup>91</sup> Wilhelm Erner, joined the group of admirers by writing "Cloth Hall is showing an exhibition of paintings. There are masterpieces of Polish art exhibited; masters such as Matejko [and his] *Prussian Homage* and Siemiradzki with his *Nero's Torches*."<sup>92</sup>

The International Jubilee Art Exhibition (Künstlerhaus, Lothringerstrasse 9, Wien) was opened in March 1888 and various press articles were published about the exhibition. One of the more extensive was published in *Die Presse*. Its author writes: "in one of the filled rooms, which could be a cornerstone of good-neighbourly relations, partly Italian, partly other countries [...], where Siemiradzki's work is the most significant *Night in Pompeii (Firefly)*. [It presents] a serious scene on an ancient street, where a couple in love flees from death, accompanied only by a glow-worm which brightens the deep darkness. This composition is full of ambience and poetry; the festive landscape together with the outlines of ancient monuments create a strong composition, but free from all sentimentality. The picture allows us to regret that so few works in our proximity come from this genius master."<sup>93</sup>

*Firefly* was very well received and later welcomed at the exhibition in Munich. A Viennese press reporter, Ludwig Ganghofer, noted "[here is] an extremely poetic *Firefly* by Siemiradzki."<sup>94</sup> The same author was, at the same time, very critical of Matejko's picture of *The Maid of Orleans*.

The International Exhibition in Prague provided another positive platform for Siemiradzki: "An artist who could perform equally well solo, the creator of *Nero's Torches*, Siemiradzki. His last work determines that he thinks like Dante and handle paints like Boccaccio. He is Anacreon among painters".<sup>95</sup>

The columnist from *Letters on Art*, when describing the works by Siemiradzki focused on *After the Example of the Gods*, when he said

91] Moritz NIERENSTEIN, *Kunst-Brief. Erste große polnische Kunstausstellung*, "Österreichische Kunst-Chronik", 8. 10. 1887, p. 3.

92] Wilhelm ERNER, *Feuilleton. Ausstellungen in Bregenz, Bozen und Krakau 1887*, "Wiener Zeitung", 10. 01. 1888, pp. 2-4.

93] I. Feuilleton. *Jubiläums-Kunst-Ausstellung. IV. Italien-England-Belgien*, "Die Presse", 7. 04. 1888, pp. 1-4.

94] Ludwig GANGHOFER, *Die internationale Kunstausstellung in München*, "Neue Illustrierte Zeitung", 23 IX 1888, p. 5.

95] *Kunst-Brief; Prag, 20 Oktob.*, "Österreichische Kunst-Chronik", 27. 10. 1888, p. 1077.

“both the drawing and the entire composition, as well as the colour is so good, so delicate and so full of charm that, if it was an illustrated newspaper, it would not be a shame to show it as illustrated verses.”<sup>96</sup>

At the end of 1888, another large painting by Siemiradzki was presented at the Austrian Art Society in Vienna: *Chopin Playing Piano in Prince Radziwill's Salon*.<sup>97</sup> As reported by the Viennese press: The Christmas Exhibition of the Society is very popular and so *Young Chopin in the Berlin's Salon of Prince Radziwill* was presented in the first gallery of the exhibition alongside other important paintings.<sup>98</sup>

1889 began very successfully for Siemiradzki. *Die Presse* wrote that “the well-known Russian painter Siemiradzki”<sup>99</sup> completed a huge painting in his atelier on Via Gaeta 1 during the Christmas period. The painting is already on its way to St. Petersburg and it is thought it will tour through the most important European cities. The painting shows *Phryne in Eleusis* [*Phryne at the Festival of Poseidon in Eleusis*]. The article offered a detailed description of the scene, highlighting the dynamics of its composition and the applied colours in extremely bright tones. The beauty of the main character, who was being undressed at the shore for a swim in the sea, was admired.<sup>100</sup>

*Phryne in Eleusis* was exhibited in Vienna in 1890. Whole press columns were again devoted to the artist. Siemiradzki was described as a poet, creating new paths of art and breaking boundaries. An anonymous columnist wrote: “There is a so-called *poetic* shape in him that stands far from *rational*; he combines, in a beautiful and brilliant way, the latest techniques with antique scenes and his works have gained a truly artistic life.”<sup>101</sup> The painting achieved great success. Despite this, words of criticism and accusations of being academic appeared for the first time: “how similar are these academic, not without beauty

96] *Ibid.*, p. 1077.

97] Jacek Malczewski's *Poles Sent to Siberia (Rest at the Mine)* and *The death of Polish Woman Sent to Siberia (Ellenai)* were also presented at the same exhibition; “Neue Freie Presse”, 2 XII 1888, p. 12; “Die Presse”, 5. 12. 1888, p. 12.

98] *Die Weinachts-Ausstellung des Österreichischen Kunstvereines*, “Wiener Presse”, 17. 12. 1888, p. 3.

99] Although Siemiradzki declared himself as a Polish painter, he was often described as a Russian painter. Such information repeatedly appeared in the press, even press correction did not make any change: “Answering your wish, we hereby print a correction that the painter Siemiradzki is not a Russian, but a Pole.” in: “Die Presse”, 19. 01. 1889, p. 12.

100] *Ein neues Bild von Siemiradzki*, “Die Presse”, 11 I 1889, p. 9 and “Deutsches Volksblatt”, 23. 01. 1889, p. 7.

101] *Kunstbriefe. Bartels, Siemiradzki und Andere*, “Österreichische Kunst-Chronik”, 15. 04. 1890, p. 245.

[scenes]" – wrote Emmerich Ranzoni.<sup>102</sup> For the first time, Siemiradzki's academism was reproached.

In December 1891, the press reported on the completion of another work by Siemiradzki. We read: "As of yesterday, the entire intelligentsia of Rome's pilgrims to Villini, where the well-known painter Siemiradzki has presented his latest – a huge religious picture of the *The Ascension of Our Lord*. The painting is intended for the church of the Resurrectionists."<sup>103</sup> "This work will tour around Europe. The Roman press is full of praise for this work of art."<sup>104</sup>

One piece of rarer information that became public, and caused sensation, was not connected with art but rather with Siemiradzki's personal interests. It was his connections with Eusapia Palladino – a world famous Italian medium. She was a frequent visitor to Siemiradzki's villa in Rome. She also visited him in Krakow, where she held a special séance. The Viennese public was kept informed in great detail by well-known Polonia activist Dr Henryk Monat who also reported on her meetings with Dr Julian Ochorowicz in 1893.<sup>105</sup>

This was soon to be forgotten, as publicists focused their interests on a new work being created in the master's atelier – canvasses for the great stage curtains. The curtains designed for the theatre in Krakow were shown in 1894 for the first time. A detailed report recorded its reception and admiration expressed by crowds of pilgrims flocking to see them: "The stage curtains for the Krakow theatre, which were painted by the Polish painter Henryk Siemiradzki in Rome, [...] attracted thousands of people to the eternal city's Aquario Romano. The opening of the exhibition was attended by Margaret<sup>106</sup>, the queen of Italy and an admirer of Siemiradzki's talent. [...] She not only visited the exhibition, she also called in to the artist's workshop, where she spent an hour looking at other paintings and praising the artist."<sup>107</sup>

When the stage curtains were finally installed, they became a visitor attraction for Viennese residents staying in Krakow. The visits of

102] Emmerich RANZONI, *Münchener Jahresausstellung*, "Neue Freie Presse", 5. 08. 1890, pp. 1, 2-3

103] Jerzy MIZIOLEK, "Wniebowstąpienie Chrystusa" Henryka H. Siemiradzkiego w kościele przy *via San Sebastianello* w Rzymie: kilka uwag o Zgromadzeniu Zmartwychwstańców i Mikołaju Gogolu, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki", 2007, (Year 69), no. 3/4, pp. 249-258.

104] *Theater, Kunst, Literatur*, "Wiener Montags-Journal", 14. 12. 1891, p. 6.

105] Henryk MONAT, *Aus der Welt der Wunder*, "Neues Wiener Journal", 19. 12. 1893, pp.1-3.

106] Margherita Maria Teresa Giovanna di Savoia (1851-1926), Queen of Italy between 1878 and 1900, wife of Umberto I of Italy.

107] *Der Vorhang für das Krakauer Theater*, "(Neuigkeits) Welt Blatt", 14. 03. 1894, p. 7 and p. 15.

well-known personalities were reported at length. Austrian's Finance Minister, Ignaz von Plener, travelled to Krakow in 1894. The visit was summarised in the magazine *Architect*: "Without doubt, the main stage curtains painted by Polish painter Henryk Siemiradzki in Rome was a great attraction [of the theatre]. The stage curtains are actually a huge wonderful painting of around 100sqm and is wholly a result of the individual work of the master; it arouses great interest among both art connoisseurs and laymen. No visitor should miss the visit to the theatre so as not to lose the opportunity to admire this Polish work of art."<sup>108</sup>

At the beginning of 1900, the presence of Siemiradzki's work was reported on at the Jubilee Exhibition in Frankfurt and, although there were no paintings on display, photographs made by the Society of Photography in Vienna were. Among other works, *Nouvelle-Statue* was displayed.

Another monumental stage curtain was being produced around this time. The recipient was to be Lviv theatre. *Neue Freie Presse* wrote: "H. Siemiradzki has completed another commission – a curtain for the Lviv theatre. Before he sent it off to its destination, it was displayed in a great room in Acquario Romano so fans of art could admire it there."<sup>109</sup> It was praised for its "Roman wealth" and for being "full of symbolism in a classic style"<sup>110</sup>. The newspaper continued "Siemiradzki explained to us, that with the help of the Hellenistic landscape, he built a delightful composition with a temple". After a detailed description, including the human figures, we read "the landscape presents a suitable background for the groups of people."<sup>111</sup>

Reviews were more mixed than with the Krakow curtains – "The work influences by its own decorativeness, but openly speaking, as a theatrical decoration does not seem to be a successful work" – reviewed a columnist known as RDF in *Freie Presse*.<sup>112</sup>

The ink had not dried on many of the reviews of Lviv's curtains when the world of art was shaken by the news of the artist's death. The *Wiener Zeitung* was one of the first magazines to publish

108] *Das Stadttheater in Krakau vom Architekten k.k. Prof. Jan Zawiejski*, "Der Architekt", 1898, p. 9.

109] R.d.F., *Theater- und Kunstnachrichten*, "Neue Freie Presse", 20. 06. 1900, p. 10.

110] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

111] R.d.F., *Theater- und Kunstnachrichten*, "Neue Freie Presse", 20. 06. 1900, p. 10, The Lviv's stage curtain is now considered to be more favourable to the rather extremely well received stage curtain from Krakow those days. This criticism is probably a result of general dislike of academic art and lively critique of Siemiradzki's work in the country.

112] *Ibid.*, p. 10.



information on the artist's death. The gazette contained an extensive obituary of Siemiradzki, including a biography and a short dossier.<sup>113</sup> It gave an overview of the artist's best works, according to the then Viennese press. A similar obituary was published on the same day by *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*<sup>114</sup> and *Neues Wiener Journal*.<sup>115</sup> Newspapers wrote, among other things: "With him, the personality (or individuality) of modern Polish art, which was easily recognizable elsewhere in Europe and in America, has disappeared. His artistic name had a good undertone and, apart from Matejko, no other Polish artist is so well known." It included his biography and a synopsis of his most well-known artworks. It particularly mentioned *Nero...*, which opened the doors to the international fame. It also listed what it felt were Siemiradzki's most important pictures: including *Christ and the Harlot*, *The Vase or the Woman?* (which it said was the second most popular painting), *A Dance among Swords*, *Phryne at the Festival of Poseidon in Eleusis*, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, *The Last Supper* (in the church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow), *Christ Calming the Storm* (in the Evangelical church in Krakow), the ceiling paintings of the *Aurora*, *The Spring* (in the Nechaev-Maltsov), palace in St. Petersburg) and, finally, the main stage curtains in the theatres in Krakow and Lviv. He was called a Polish Piloty, although it was emphasised that he was never a student of Karl Theodor Piloty (professor and director of the Academy of Arts in Munich). Often, Siemiradzki was compared to Lawrence Alma-Tadema.

After Siemiradzki's death, articles on his work were not published so often. During World War I, there was an exhibition of Polish paintings in Vienna organised by the Galician Committee for Refugees. The adverts announced that works by Jan Matejko, Artur Grottger and "the world renowned" Henryk Siemiradzki would be on display. Despite this, he was represented only by some small sketches for his picture *The Vase or the Woman?*. Nevertheless, these were well received.<sup>116</sup> At the same time, the Polonia newspaper (published in Vienna)

113] (*Henryk von Siemiradzki †*), "Wiener Zeitung", 25 VIII 1902, "Wiener Post", 25. 08. 1902, No. 195, p. 6

114] "Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Tages-Ausgabe)", 26. 08. 1902, p. 5.

115] "Neues Wiener Journal", 7. 08. 1902, p. 10-11 – Here, the last hours of Siemiradzki's life were given in detail. "At 11pm he demanded a piece of paper and wrote down as follow: "I do not demand anything from the world anymore ... I feel a physical wish to die .... I would still like to live for my family... I am asking for forgiveness for my mistakes." After he wrote it, he fell asleep for few minutes, then agony began, and at 2am he died".

116] *Polnische Malerei. Die Ausstellung im Künstlerbale*, "Neues Wiener Journal", 13. 04. 1915, p. 9.

published a tragic article titled *Destruction of Polish properties in Ukraine*: “A castle in the country estate of count Adam Orłowski in Kuryłówka (district Lityn, Podolia) has been destroyed along with its extremely valuable collection. A famous picture *Sword Dance* [*A Dance among Swords*] by Henryk Siemiradzki, which was displayed in the palace has been saved by Ukrainian commissioner Stepuja and has been transported to Kamieniec Podolski (Kamianets-Podilskyi).”<sup>117</sup>

In more recent times, the Viennese press has reported information from the Dorotheum Auction House<sup>118</sup> where his artworks, or even copies of his artwork, were reaching prices higher than expected.

Siemiradzki’s name is deeply ingrained in Austria’s art community and this can be seen in the article by Edwin Baumgartner of 8 October 2018, published in the *Wiener Zeitung* under the title *Defamation (Rufmord! Vor 1950 Jahren beging Kaiser Nero Suizid – sein Beispiel lehrt den Umgang mit Fakten und Fake News)*, which talks about history from Nero’s time and was illustrated with Siemiradzki’s painting *Nero’s Torches*. Baumgartner mentioned that Henryk Siemiradzki established the stereotypical perception of those times in European minds.<sup>119</sup>

In this paper, I wanted to focus mainly on articles published by Viennese press during Siemiradzki’s life. The statistical review outlines the years when most articles and information on Siemiradzki’s art and life was published. He was a regular guest in the Viennese press from 1876 to the mid-80s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Articles about him appeared most frequently in *Neue Freie Presse*, and less frequently in *Die Presse* and *Wiener Zeitung*. His name appeared regularly in *Österreichische Kunst-Chronik* from 1879 to 1911. Occasionally, articles on Siemiradzki were published in other magazines such as *Das Vaterland*, *Illustrirte Sport Zeitung* or *Neues Wiener Journal*. 34 press companies in Vienna wrote about him and his name appeared there nearly 500 times. From the huge success which *Nero’s Torches* brought him in 1876 and, until his death, his name didn’t disappear from the newspapers’ pages.

Transl. Anna Cudnowska

117] *Vernichtete polnische Güter in der Ukraine*, “Polen – Wochenschrift für polnische Interessen“, 1918, vol. 2, p. 224.

118] Dorotheum – Auction house founded in 1707 by Emperor Joseph I and until now it remains the largest, German-speaking auction house in the world.

119] Accessible online: [https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/mehr\\_kultur/969757\\_Rufmord.html](https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/mehr_kultur/969757_Rufmord.html);