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**HISTORIC, EXAMINATION AND  
CONSERVATION ISSUES RELATING TO  
PORTRAIT OF GUSTAV ADOLF HOLLANDER  
BY JULIUS GOTTFRIED SIEGMUND**

**INTRODUCTION**

*Portrait of Gustav Adolf Hollander* (alternative spelling *Gustav Adolf Holanders*) is a portrait of the Ältermann, i.e. president, of the Riga Brotherhood of Blackheads. The painting is also known under the title *Portrait of a Man in an Interior* and belongs to the collection of the National Museum in Poznan. The author of the painting is Riga-based artist Julius Gottfried Siegmund (1828–1909) and it is dated to the third or fourth quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The painting has been in the collection of the National Museum in Poznan since 1945. We can also assume that it was brought to the Museum shortly after the end of World War II. At that time the Museum was known as the Museum of Wielkopolska<sup>1</sup>. The painting

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1 As a national cultural institution, the Museum of Art in Poznan was founded in 1919 as the Museum of Wielkopolska in Poznan (although the idea of creating a Polish museum had been on the minds of the Wielkopolska society since the early days of the partitions of Poland. The beginnings of a large private collection had already been established before 1830). Since 1950 the official name has been The National Museum in Poznan.

Piotr Michałowski, 'Gallery of Polish Painting', *Masterpieces of Painting of the National Museum in Poznan*, ed. by Anna Dobrzycka (Poznan: Artistic-Graphic Publishing House, 1971), 15–17.

was carried to the Museum from the Poznan area, presumably from a flat or house occupied by Baltic-Germans resettled from Riga in 1939. Since then, the work has been stored in the Museum's depository being officially entered into the Museum's inventory in 1985<sup>2</sup>.

In 2021–2022, the painting underwent conservation and restoration work.<sup>3</sup> The aim of it was to protect the material substance of the painting while respecting its historical, artistic and aesthetic values. One of the issues tackled during the conservation work was to establish the history of the mysterious portrait. The biography of Julius Gottfried Siegmund, unknown painter to a wider public in Poland, was also studied. It was assumed from the beginning that every effort had to be made to find the identity of the man portrayed and the interior in which he was depicted, and to learn about the biography of the painter. The results of these activities are briefly described in the first two parts of this article.

Knowing the name of the author of the work, Julius Gottfried Siegmund, proved helpful in the historical analysis. The artist's signature can be seen in the lower left corner of the painting. The composition of the painting itself also provided a hint for the search. In one part, the painting presents a table top with a small golden bell on it, the handle of which ends in the representation of a dark-skinned man's head wrapped in a white band. This could have linked the depicted man to the Riga Brotherhood of Blackheads. The Poznan Museum's inventory card gives information about the possible origin of the work as 'Germany, Latvia/Riga'.

The third part of the article describes the results of the research carried out on the technique and painting technology applied by the artist. The analysis made it possible to gain a better understanding of the painter's workshop. All the structural

2 The National Museum in Poznan inventory number of the Julius Gottfried Siegmund painting is MNP MO 2091. The inventory card for *Portrait of a Man in an Interior* (now *Portrait of G. A. Hollander*, or *G. A. Holanders*) by Julius Gottfried Siegmund was drawn up on 19/08/1985 by Piotr Michałowski.

3 It was conducted as part of this author's Master's thesis at the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw under the supervision of professor AFA, dr hab Joanna Czernichowska, and assistants mgr (MA) Łukasz Wojtowicz and mgr (MA) Diana Kulakowska. A copy of the documentation concerning the conservation and restoration work and the historical and technological research, drawn up by mgr (MA) Joanna Dziduch, under the supervision of professor AFA, dr hab Czernichowska, reviewed by dr (PhD) Julia Burdajewicz, is held in the Library of the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. A second copy is held by the National Museum in Poznan.

layers of the painting have been described, starting with the characteristics of the canvas support, the gluing, the ground, the paint and the varnish. The results of the research are given in light of issues related to the subject of historical, 19<sup>th</sup>-century oil painting technique and technology on canvas.

It should be emphasised that the structure of the painting was established through laboratory tests, analysis of collected fixed samples, observation of the painting before conservation, during the conservation process and thorough observation of photographs under ultraviolet (UV), infrared (IR) as well as X-ray radiation (XG). Detailed laboratory examinations of the collected samples were carried out at the Department of Specialised Research and Documentation Techniques, Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. A number of microchemical tests were carried out to determine the pigments and binders used, as well as to identify the type of canvas. In addition, specialised non-invasive SEM-EDS and hyperspectral camera studies were carried out at the Inter-Academy Institute of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art (MIK) at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts<sup>4</sup>.

The fourth part of the article presents an outline of the most important conservation and restoration activities carried out on the painting. The state of preservation was extremely poor. The work aimed to stop further degradation and protect the tangibility of the painting. The conservation and restoration process allowed the painting to be preserved as close as possible to the way in which its creator wanted it to affect the viewer. However, even the best treatment of a defect can never replace the original expression of the work, although it does provide the possibility to integrate the painting layer, thus protecting its artistic value.

4 The physico-chemical and photographic research was carried out by Joanna Dziduch under the supervision of dr (PhD) Anna Nowicka and dr (PhD) Elżbieta Jeżewska and Mr. Roman Stasiuk. Research at the Inter-Academy Institute of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art located at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts was carried out by: mgr (MA) Anna Selerowicz - hyperspectral camera research and by dr (PhD) Anna Nowicka, SEM-EDS.

## BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF JULIUS GOTTFRIED SIEGMUND

Julius Gottfried Siegmund was born in 1828 in Riga and died in the same city in 1909<sup>5</sup>. As a young man, he attended the Cathedral School and received his first lessons in painting and drawing from the artists Otto Berthing (Bērtinš) and Robert Schwede. Siegmund continued his education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden in 1846, and later from 1847 to 1850 at the School of Fine Arts in Leipzig, where he became a pupil of the director of this institution professor Gustav Jäger (one of the assistants of Julius Schnorr v. Carolsfeld, a painter belonging to the Nazarene group). After leaving the Leipzig Academy, Siegmund returned to Riga, where from 1850 to 1856 earned his living by painting portraits and giving drawing lessons<sup>6</sup>. Wishing to continue his studies, he went to Antwerp, where he worked under the supervision of Joseph van Leries and Nicaise de Kayser<sup>7</sup>. Subsequently, Siegmund stayed for a short period in Paris. In the spring of 1858 he settled in Munich and then, in the autumn of the same year, in Rome<sup>8</sup>. In 1859, he briefly returned to Riga. In the same year he went to St Petersburg, where he worked until 1862. After this period Siegmund returned to Riga, where he lived and worked permanently until his death. In Riga from 1862 onwards, Siegmund owned a photographic studio. In the 1870s and 1880s he was a member of the Riga Art Society's council<sup>9</sup>.

Siegmund used various photographic and graphic techniques, but the most important part of his creative legacy is his oil paintings. He was successful in the field of portraits of contemporary figures, completing various private and institutional commissions. He also specialised in historicising portraits in the spirit of the seventeenth

5 Wilhelm Neumann, *Baltische Maler und Bildhauer des XIX. Jahrhunderts. Biographische Skizzen mit den Bildnissen der Künstler und Reproduktionen nach ihren Werken* (Riga: Graphischen Kunstanstalten v. Alexander Grosset, i/Fa.: F. Deutsch, 1902), 70–72; <http://gramatas.lndb.lv/periodika2-viewer/?lang=fr#issue:645774> [accessed 04/03/2023].

6 'Julius Gotfrīds Zīgmunds', *Nacionālā enciklopēdija*, ed. by Inga Karlstrēma; <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/134786-J%C5%ABliuss-Gotfr%C4%ABds-Z%C4%ABgmunds> [accessed 04/03/2023].

7 Jānis Siliņš, *Latvijas māksla 1800–1914* (Stokholmā: Daugava: Rosenlundstryckeriet AB, 1979), 282; <http://gramatas.lndb.lv/periodika2-viewer/?lang=fr#panel:pp|issue:644254>, 288 [accessed 04/03/2023].

8 Wilhelm Neumann, *Lexikon baltischer Künstler* (Riga: Verlag von Jonck & Poliewsky, 1908), 151; <https://kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra/publication/213667/edition/233250/content> [accessed 04/03/2023].

9 'Julius Gotfrīds Zīgmunds', *Nacionālā enciklopēdija*.

and eighteenth centuries, using various iconographic materials (engravings, photographs, sculptures) as a model and inspiration. He painted portraits of the nobility and bourgeoisie, church officials and intellectuals. He cooperated with merchant fraternities, the Great Guild, the Little Guild and the Brotherhood of Blackheads. Among other things, he produced portraits of the Ältermanns (presidents) of the above mentioned brotherhoods<sup>10</sup>.

Siegmund first exhibited his work in Riga in 1859 at the Riga Exhibition of Paintings. In 1870 several portraits painted by him were presented at the permanent exhibition of the newly founded Riga Art Society at the Riga Municipal Gymnasium and in 1871 at the exhibition organised by the Society at the Riga Polytechnic. In 1877 a large solo exhibition of his works – the Siegmund Exhibition – was held as part of the series of Master Exhibitions at the Riga Art Society in the Great Hall of Riga Polytechnic. Siegmund's work was also included in The Riga Cultural and Historical Exhibition held in 1883 at the Riga Great Guild House, as well as at the Jubilee Exhibition: Baltic Artists from Every Period, which was held in 1901 as part of the celebrations of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Riga. Many of Siegmund's works could be seen again at the Artist Julius Gottfried Siegmund and His Times, 1828–1909 retrospective exhibition at the Museum of History and Navigation in Riga in 1999, and at the Nineteenth-Century Portraiture in Latvia exhibition at the Palace Museum in Rundāle in 2008<sup>11</sup>. Siegmund was a renowned portrait painter whose paintings were popular with the public and art critics alike. His work must have been highly appreciated by the citizens of Riga. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Dom Museum accepted many portraits by this artist into its collection and permanently exhibited some of them in the museum's portrait gallery. Today, a significant part of Siegmund's artistic legacy, including 37 oil portraits, is kept at the Dom Museum, now the Riga History and Navigation Museum; several of these paintings can be seen in the museum's permanent exhibition<sup>12</sup>.

10 *Das Haus der St. Johannsgilde in Riga* (Riga: Müllersche Buchdruckerei, 1887), 23; <http://gramatas.lndb.lv/periodika2-viewer/?lang=fr#issue:645918> [accessed 04/03/2023]; *Nacionāla Muzeju Krājuma Kopkatalogs* (The Joint Catalogue of the National Holdings of Museums [JCNHM] of Latvia); <https://www.nmkk.lv/Search/SearchResultForm.aspx?SearchObjectId=0&SearchType=0&q=z%c4%abgmunds> [accessed 04/03/2023].

11 'Julius Gotfrīds Zīgmunds', *Nacionālā enciklopēdija*.

12 Ibid. Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum\\_of\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_Riga\\_and\\_Navigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_the_History_of_Riga_and_Navigation) [accessed 11/03/2022].

### DESCRIPTION AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE PORTRAIT OF GUSTAV ADOLF HOLLANDER

The *Portrait of Gustav Adolf Hollander*, oil on canvas by Julius Gottfried Siegmund, depicts the Ältermann of the Riga Brotherhood of Blackheads, who held this position from 1867<sup>13</sup>. The painting is signed in the lower left with the inscription: 'J. Siegmund p.' The painting, measures 117 × 94.5 cm and is rectangular in shape. The painting was mentioned in the 1910 *Guide to the House of the Blackheads in Riga*. According to this publication, it was presented at that time in the conference room<sup>14</sup>.

The man portrayed is shown in the foreground of the painting, in *en trois quarts* view (Fig. 1). He is an elderly man whose age is emphasised by his baldness and greying sideburns. He is dressed in an outfit designed according to the fashion of the time<sup>15</sup>. He is wearing a black tailcoat, trousers, a fitted waistcoat, a white shirt with a stiff collar. The model's left hand, wearing a grey glove, is supported by a sword hanging at his side. The right hand is placed on the top of a piece of furniture, at the edge, as can be seen in the lower left corner of the painting. On the little finger of the ungloved right hand a large ring is visible (which, according to the convention of the time for wearing jewellery, could be a symbol of election to the office of President of the Brotherhood of Blackheads)<sup>16</sup>. On top of the piece of furniture lies a book in a red binding with gold edges. A gold bell with a handle ending in a decoration in the shape of a dark-skinned man's head with a distinctive white band is visible next to it. Also depicted are a white inkwell with a quill decorated with the figure of a standing dark-skinned man holding a gold cartouche, and two other white vessels.

13 Herbert Spliet, *Geschichte des rigischen Neuen Hauses, der später sogen. König Artus Hofes, des heutigen Schwarzhäupterhauses zu Riga* (Riga: Ernst Plates, 1934), 372; <http://gramatas.lndb.lv/periodika2-viewer/?lang=fr#panel:pp|issue:643537|page:412> [accessed 04/03/2023].

14 Among the paintings in this room were also portraits of Ältermann Percy von Jacobs, Ältermann Georg Renny, King Frederick I of Sweden, Charles X and Tsar Nicholas. Constantin Mettig, *Führer durch das Haus der Kompagnie der Schwarzen Häupter zu Riga* (Riga: Druck von W. F. Häcker, 1910), 25; <http://gramatas.lndb.lv/periodika2-viewer/?lang=fr#panel:pp|issue:642846|article:DIVL14|page:1> [accessed 14/05/2021].

15 Małgorzata Mozdzyńska-Nawotka, *On fashion and outfits* (Wrocław: Dolnośląskie Publishing House, 2004), 191, 196, 197.

16 In the portrait of Ältermann G. Rennijs painted in 1832, the then President of the Brotherhood of Blackheads wears a very similar ring. *Melngalvju Nams*, ed. by Silņa Māra (Riga: SIA Rigas nami, Rigas vēstures un kuģniecības muzejs, 1995), 241.

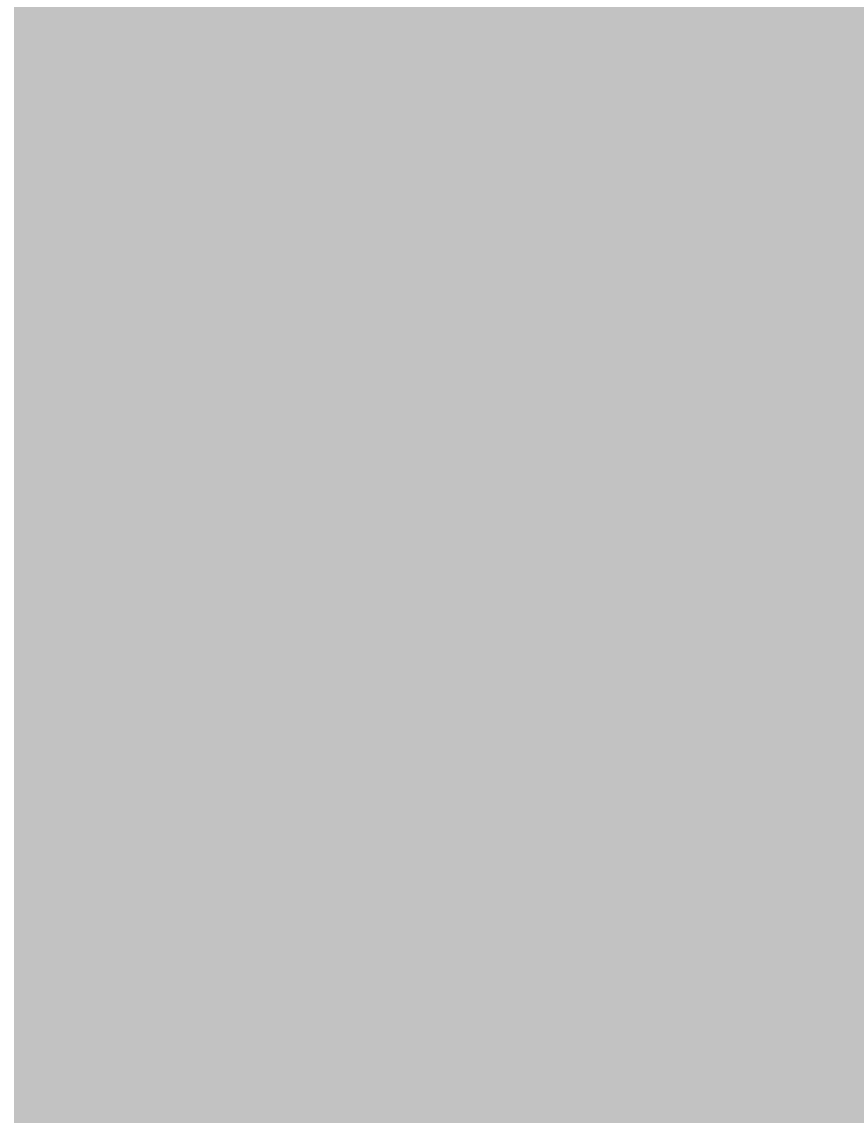


FIG. 1. JULIUS GOTTFRIED SIEGMUND, *PORTRAIT OF GUSTAV ADOLF HOLLANDER*, OIL ON CANVAS, 3<sup>RD</sup>/4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, REPHOTOGRAPHED IN 1929 BY MATISS PLUKA. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEGATIVE DERIVES FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LATVIA (INV. NO. NEG. NR. 19556).

We can presume that the book shown on the table is *The Golden Book of the Brotherhood*, published in 1721<sup>17</sup>. The book contained a list of important visitors to the Brotherhood House and members of the association. The bell depicted on the table was most likely related to the duties performed by an Ältermann. Perhaps as president, he began the proceedings of the Brotherhood by ringing the bell. It is probable that Gustav Adolf Hollander served as the president until 1881, when Percy von Jakobs was elected to the position<sup>18</sup>.

Hollander is depicted in the interior of the representative assembly hall of the Riga House of the Blackheads. On the left side of the model the characteristic wooden casing of the hall's entrance door can be seen, with architectural divisions delineated by pilasters and a niche in which armour is set. On the right side of the figure, in the background, the painter has depicted a fragment of a portrait of Gustav II Adolf, King of Sweden. As a matter of fact the portrait of Gustav Adolf was created from funding from one of the members of the Brotherhood, P. Denker, in 1697<sup>19</sup>. It was accomplished by an unknown painter.

The *Portrait of Gustav II Adolf*, along with other portraits of European rulers, was displayed in the assembly hall of the Riga House of the Blackheads. These paintings, were framed in gilded, richly decorated frames that were separate works of woodcarving art<sup>20</sup>.

Ältermann Hollander's representational portrait commemorates the social function that he held for many years. He can be seen as a figure continuing the tradition and historical development of the Brotherhood. The depiction evokes the memory of his contribution to the fraternity. Despite the fact that photography existed at the time, the decision was to produce a traditional oil portrait. A realistic portrait was commissioned, attempting to reflect both the physical and psychological features of the model. The painting was intended for a public place, serving a representative, commemorative and informative function.

17 *Melngalvju Nams*, 227.

18 Spliet, *Geschichte des rigischen Neuen Hauses der später sogen. König Artus Hofes, des heutigen Schwarzhäupterhauses zu Riga*, 372.

19 Ojārs Spārītis, 'Collections of the Blackheads house', *Melngalvju Nams*, ed. by Silņa Māra (Riga: SIA Rīgas nami, Rīgas vēstures un kuģniecības muzejs, 1995), 132.

20 *Melngalvju Nams*, 261.

The *Portrait of Gustav Adolf Hollander* found its way into the collection of the National Museum in Poznan in 1945, or shortly thereafter. The painting was brought from the area of the city of Poznan or its environs, presumably from a flat or house occupied by Baltic-Germans displaced from Riga in the winter of 1939, as mentioned earlier. The fate of the painting between 1939 and 1945 is unknown. Presumably, it was lost or deliberately left behind by its owners fleeing from the eastern front. It was probably not stored in any of the post-war repositories of displaced cultural property. Objects collected in these places usually bore traces of marking (inscriptions or stamps specific to the repository). Siegmund's painting has no such markings.

The *Portrait of Gustav Adolf Hollander* is an important iconographic reference for the history of Riga. It is closely linked to the centuries-old history of the Brotherhood of Blackheads and the history of the city. The fact that it was displayed in the House of the Blackheads demonstrates the positive perception of the person depicted, assuming of course that this painting is not a replica of the original work, although there is no evidence of this. We do not know how the painting was transported to the territories of the Second Polish Republic, which was incorporated into the Third Reich at the beginning of World War II. The House of the Blackheads' collection was not only partially destroyed as a result of the war, but was also divided and dispersed in adverse circumstances. Many of the original paintings presented in the Brotherhood House before 1939 perished in flames during the building fire in 1941. Only some of the interior furnishings were saved<sup>21</sup>.

#### TECHNIQUE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE PAINTING

The portrait of Gustav Adolf Hollander is an oil painting on canvas. The structural layers of the painting show a rather uncomplicated stratigraphic arrangement, limited to glued canvas, a thin, single or double layer of ground and an equally very thin layer of paint. Due to the lack of previous conservation or restoration work on the painting, no secondary materials have been added. The only added

21 *Melngalvju Nams*, 260.

elements are inscriptions and a sticker with inventory number of the Museum in Poznan<sup>22</sup>.

The original canvas is a plain-weave linen, spread on stretcher bars made of pine. Due to the high regularity of the linen canvas structure, we can presume that it is mechanically woven. In hand-woven canvases, as a rule, the ratio of warp to weft was approximately constant. For 2/3 of the warp there was 1/3 of the weft. In the case of the canvas we analyse here, the ratio is almost 1:1. This is probably due to the fact that the machine pushing the weft threads into place is much stronger than on a hand loom allowing more weft threads to be beaten<sup>23</sup>.

It is worth noting that in oil painting, linen canvases (but also hemp, jute and cotton) were the most popular support used in 19th-century painting, although cardboard and plywood were also used. Canvas production underwent profound changes during the 19th century with the advent of machine production. The mechanisation of production increased the range of fabrics. Several dates are considered landmarks for the invention of the mechanical loom, but it was not until 1822 that mechanical weaving was put into practice at Roberts' works in Manchester<sup>24</sup>. In Germany, mechanical looms began to operate in Chemnitz in 1845<sup>25</sup>.

The canvas of Siegmund's painting was probably stretched and fixed onto the wooden frame with pincers and fastened with hand-forged nails (although machine-made nails were known at the time)<sup>26</sup>. The nails had flat heads of uneven shape and size with the shank flattened on four sides.

The canvas of the painting in question was pasted with a very thin layer, probably of glutinous glue. The ground is a mixture of lead white with a binder. Tests carried out showed that the binder could

22 A comprehensive research report on the technique and technology of the painting can be found in two copies of the conservation and restoration documentation available in the Library of the Conservation Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and in the National Museum in Poznan, respectively.

23 Bogumiła Rouba, 'Canvases as painting support', *Protection of Monuments*, 38 (3–4) (1985), 224.

24 Ibid., 233–234.

25 Iwona Szmelter, *Issues of the lining of paintings on canvas supports* (Warsaw: Scientific Journal of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw), 95.

26 Tom Wells, 'Nail Chronology: The use technologically derived feature', *Historical Archeology*, 32 (2) (1998), 92; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25616605> [accessed 05/03/2023].

be either oil or an oily emulsion. The ground is present over the entire area of the canvas, including the edge area outside the paint layer. It is laid thinly in two stages, as evidenced by the analysis of stratigraphic sample sections taken from the painting.

As the ground is also present on the edges of the canvas, there is a high probability that the canvas was primed 'factory-made', sold from a roller by the metre and then cut to the size of the stretcher bars. In the 19th century, painters commonly acquired primed, ready-made canvases. The increasing takeover of the production of painting materials by specialised craftsmen also resulted in a marked decline in artists' interest in the process of preparing grounds. Canvases were primed immediately on the stretching bars in various formats, or sold from the roller by the metre. The first method was more popular in the second half of the 18th century and first half of the 19th century. After the mid-19th century, with the monopolisation of the production of painting materials by large specialised companies, the cumbersome transport of canvases on stretching bars was more often abandoned and a system of priming sheets sent back to the recipient in the form of rolls was adopted. As a rule, canvases sold from rolls were covered with emulsion, and mixed and oil-based grounds (due to their greater flexibility)<sup>27</sup>.

It is difficult to say what the organisation of the trade in art materials was like in the 3rd and 4th quarters of the 19th century in Riga, due to the lack of literature available to the author of this article. It is possible that some were produced locally and some imported from Western Europe or the Russian Empire. On the other hand, per analogiam, it can be noted that, for example, in the Polish lands at that time, painting materials were sold by specialised factories such as R. Aleksandrowicz, R. Drobner and August Biasion in Krakow, or Hirszel in Warsaw. In Germany, the best-known companies selling ready-made painting frames for artists were Schachinger & Herrmann, Dr Franz Schoenfeld & Cp., H. Schmincke & Co<sup>28</sup>.

The paint layer of the *Portrait* has a uniform thickness. It is applied smoothly and very thinly. The brushstroke is not visible, the paint

27 Bogumiła Rouba, *Technical structure of 19th century paintings on prime commercial canvas and the problems of their conservation* (Torun: Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, 1988), 18–19.

28 Dariusz Markowski, *Issues of technology and technique in the paintings of Jacek Malczewski* (Torun: Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, 2002), 68–69.



FIG. 2. A SAMPLE TAKEN FROM THE PAINTING SHOWING A LAYER OF GROUND, A THIN LAYER OF PAINTING LAID DOWN IN TWO STAGES, AND VARNISH. PHOTO: ANNA NOWICKA. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF WORKS OF ART AT THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN WARSAW, DEPARTMENT OF SPECIALIST RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTARY TECHNIQUES.

was laid over the form of the depicted objects and the portrayed figure. The avoidance of any unnecessary accidental brushstrokes is evident. The artist was probably working with a soft-bristled tool. Only in some places, within the face and parts of the figure's clothing or objects placed on the table top, do delicate, isolated, impastos occur (Fig. 2).

It must therefore be inferred that the paints were mixed on the palette. The suitable colour, without underpainting, was laid on the ground. The foreground of the painting representation is elaborated in a vividly detailed manner in relation to the background. Siegmund first developed the background parts with darker and subdued colours. He then emphasised the modelling of the figures and objects in the foreground gradually, starting from the position of the shadow parts towards the highest lights. The artist used mainly warm colours.

The contrasting points for the whole composition, which is kept in shades of brown, are the white shirt and pale face of the man portrayed, which are placed in the central part of the painting. The composition is based on the academic method of building a painting, that is, in the *chiaroscuro* convention (from shadows to lights, in only a few thin layers).

Pigments such as lead white, bone black, iron pigments, cobalt blue, a mixture of cinnabar and iron red (presumably haematite) were detected. The painter also used mascot (although research has not ruled out the presence of organic yellow either) and neapolitan yellow, which was combined with lead white. The paint binder was vegetable oil.

Examination with the Headwall hyperspectral camera revealed a preparatory drawing beneath the paint layer. It was unobservable in the photographs in visible light. On the reflectograms obtained during the examination this drawing was apparent in the frame of the painting hanging in the background. This was indicated by the graphic outline of the ornament and the edges, probably made in pencil (as indicated by the character of the lines). Very slight compositional changes have also been detected, such as a displacement of the hand resting on the sword or a change in the arrangement of the material of the tailcoat sleeve. Hyperspectral imaging also showed the painting technique, including brushstrokes and the sequence of layers, for example the bell standing on the table was painted on top, below it is the modelling of the sleeve (Fig. 3A–B).

The artist applied a varnish of natural resins, i.e. damar or mastic, which was confirmed by UV-induced luminescence photographs of the painting layer and a stratigraphic examination. The varnish layer was also visible in the cross-section of the sample taken from the painting, which was particularly evident in the photograph of the sample in UV-induced luminescence.

## CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

The painting's state of preservation before conservation was very poor. The canvas had undergone processes of deterioration as a result of a complex combination of mechanical damage (i.e. invasive actions during World War II), chemical and physical damage, through

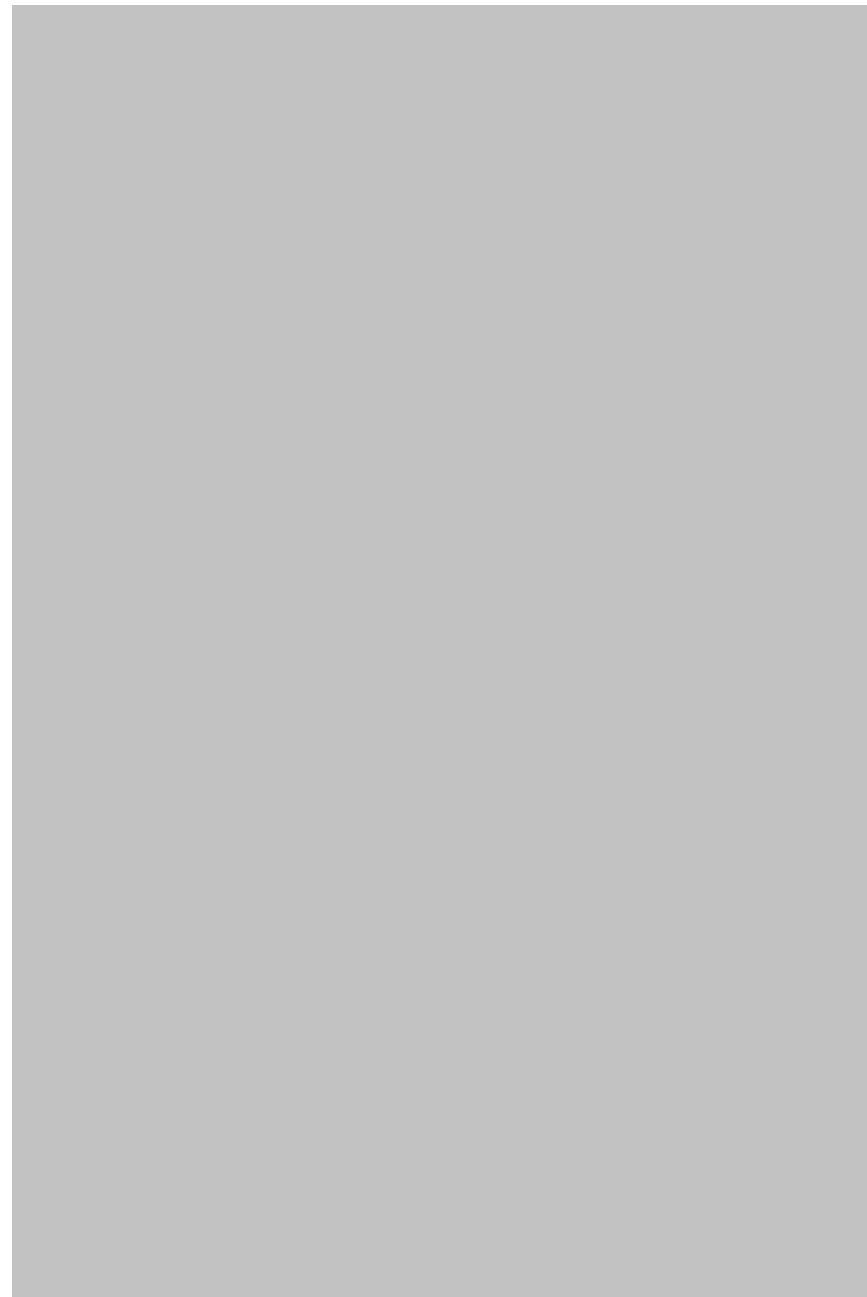
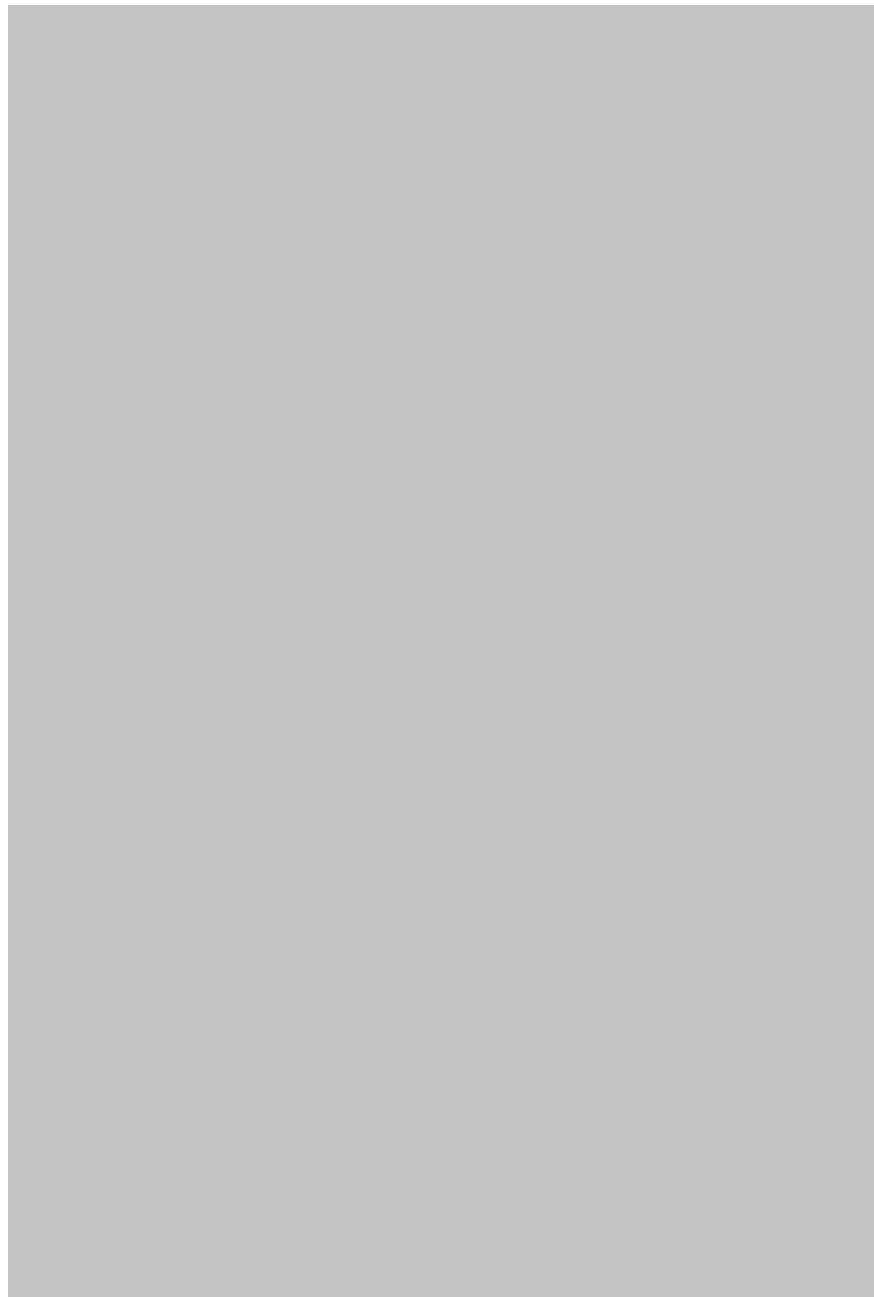


FIG. 3A-B. IMAGES TAKEN DURING THE HYPERSPECTRAL CAMERA EXAMINATION, PHOTO: ANNA SELEROWICZ. PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF WORKS OF ART AT THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN WARSAW, INTER-ACADEMY INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF WORKS OF ART. HEADWALL HYPERSPECTRAL CAMERA OPERATION, DESCRIPTION OF TEST RESULT, AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNA SELEROWICZ.





FIG. 4. J. G. SIEGMUND, *PORTRAIT OF GUSTAV ADOLF HOLLANDER* BEFORE CONSERVATION, OIL ON CANVAS, 3<sup>RD</sup>/4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. PHOTO: ROMAN STASIUK, 2021.

inadequate storage during the war and post-war periods, and because of the painter's negligence during the creative process.

The front of the painting had been cut with a sharp tool in several places, and the tears ran in different directions and at different angles. The edges around the defects in the canvas were ragged, rolled and

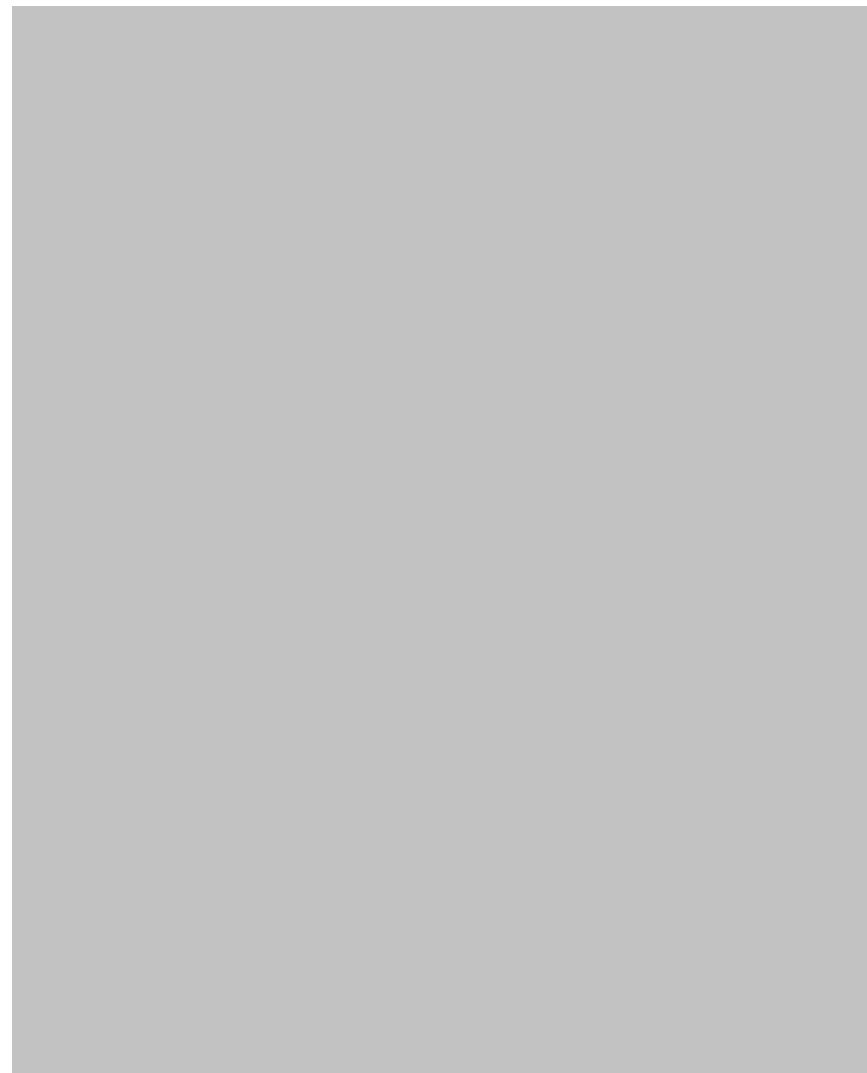


FIG. 5. J. G. SIEGMUND, *PORTRAIT OF GUSTAV ADOLF HOLLANDER*, AFTER CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION PROCESS, OIL ON CANVAS, 3<sup>RD</sup>/4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. PHOTO: ROMAN STASIUK, 2021.

the paint layer crumbled. Over time, the gaps created by the cuts had widened considerably. The degradation of the canvas support had continued for many decades. The damaged painting remained extended on the original stretcher bars for about 75 years (Fig. 4).

The greatest challenge of the conservation work was to stabilise the canvas support, which carries the structural layers of the painting and thus also its symbolic content. During conservation and restoration activities, emphasis was placed on removing the causes of deterioration.

At the very beginning dust and dirt were cleaned off of the painting using a soft, broad brush and microfibre cloth, after which the painting was removed from the original stretcher bars. Conservation works began with an initial assessment and description of the painting's state of preservation. Photographic documentation of the front and reverse of the painting was carried out, in addition to which characteristic sites were selected from which to take samples for physical and chemical analysis (the results of which are described above, in the subsection concerning painting technology).

The most important activities carried out during the conservation and restoration process should be listed. Firstly, dirt was cleaned off of the reverse and the front was cleaned of dust, dirt and darkened varnish. Secondly, the deformation of the canvas was removed using pressure, temperature and moisture. Thirdly, local repairs were made to the canvas and the lining process was completed. Fourthly, ground losses were filled and missing parts of original paint layer were retouched. Local repairs to the canvas support took a very long time. The method used for this consisted of pulling together the edges of the largest tears and the gaps which had widened due to deformation of the canvas<sup>29</sup>. It turned out that some of the gaps between the tears could not be reduced. In addition, there were also numerous losses within the canvas into which areas canvas prostheses were glued. Defects were supplemented with analogous pasted linen fabric (of identical weave and similar weight) and reinforced. In addition, the lining procedure (attaching a new canvas support to the back of the original one by using adhesive) was very important. The presence of these elements will reduce the possibility of the canvas deforming in the future.

29 The size of the tears was reduced using *der Trecker* machines fitted to the auxiliary stretching bars on which the painting was stretched temporarily. The operation of the *der Trecker* device was described by professor Winfried Heiber in *The Thread-By-Thread Tear Mending Method, Alternatives to Lining; the structural treatment of paintings on canvas without linings*, ed. by Mary Bustin, Tom Caley (London: United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 2003), 37. The module of the *der Trecker* machine has been made in the Painting Conservation and Restoration Studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw based on the descriptions of professor Heiber. The module was made of aluminum in several sizes by mgr (MA) Łukasz Wojtowicz.

Once the work was completed, the painting has been re-stretched on the original bars (which had also undergone conservation). Written documentation of the whole process was prepared and the painting was sent for transport to the National Museum in Poznan (Fig. 5).

## CONCLUSION

Julius Gottfryd Siegmund's painting created a number of issues. Having found its way to the conservation workshop, it became the reason for the activity and interest of those involved in telling its story and saving its material substance. This activity made it possible to recall the identity of the person portrayed and caused the painting to re-emerge in the viewer's consciousness as a work of art and not merely a relic of the past. By saving the material structure of the painting it was possible to preserve the content of the symbolic culture encoded in it. Exploring its history has helped us understand and seek past worlds inaccessible to us on a daily basis, and to reflect on the future of the object itself.

Initially, the historical content of the painting was unknown. It presented a portrait of an anonymous man in an unknown interior. What helped to establish the identity of the portrayed person was the knowledge of the author of the work, the approximate place of origin and the bell depicted in the painting, the handle of which was decorated with the head of a dark-skinned man wearing a white headband. It was suspected that the figure depicted might be linked to the Riga Brotherhood of Blackheads. In addition, the interior was reminiscent of a representative hall in the House of the Blackheads in Riga. It would not have been possible to confirm these suspicions and establish further details without mail contacts with the authorities in Riga.

Historical research has made it possible to identify the person depicted in the painting, as well as the interior against which he was depicted, and thus to approximate the year of creation. Despite the attempt at historical analysis, many threads of the painting's history remain unexplained, above all, how it was transported from Riga to the Polish territories occupied by the Third Reich, and its wartime and post-war fate before it reached the Poznan Museum. It would also be interesting to investigate its pre-war past. Historical sources might be found in the Latvian archives. Nevertheless, it was

possible to establish the most relevant facts, allowing for possible further research. In the context of the history of the painting, the history of the Riga Brotherhood of Blackheads, and the fate of the Baltic-Germans during World War II, seem very interesting, along with associated displaced property, including works of art.

As a result of the research, the artist's workshop became known. Full conservation and restoration work was also carried out. The results of the work were satisfactory. In conclusion the conservation treatment and the restoration work have allowed the painting to be preserved as closely as possible to the way in which the artist wanted to affect the viewer.

**JOANNA DZIDUCH:** HISTORIC, EXAMINATION AND CONSERVATION ISSUES RELATING TO *PORTRAIT OF GUSTAV ADOLF HOLLANDER* BY JULIUS GOTTFRIED SIEGMUND

**KEYWORDS:** OIL PAINTING; CONSERVATION; FABRIC SUPPORT; TECHNOLOGY; ART HISTORY; GUSTAV ADOLF HOLLANDER; JULIUS GOTTFRIED SIEGMUND

### SUMMARY

The aim of this article is to provide an overview of historic, technique and technology research, as well as conservation process, relating to the oil painting on canvas entitled *Portrait of Gustav Adolf Hollander* (formerly known as *Portrait of a Man in an Interior*), dated to the third or fourth quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by Julius Gottfried Siegmund, originally from Riga. The painting has belonged to the collection of the National Museum in Poznan since shortly after the end of World War II in 1945.

As a result of historical research accomplished during the conservation and restoration of the painting at the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 2021–2022, it was possible to establish the identity of the man portrayed and the place represented in the painting. The painting was referred to as *Portrait of a Man in an Interior* in the Poznan Museum's inventory card written in 1985.

During the complex process of conservation work, a detailed study of painting technique and technology was also carried out. This allowed for a better understanding and broader knowledge of the artist's workshop.

The steps taken aimed at rescuing the historic substance of the work of art and making the painting present once again in the consciousness of the viewer, which due to its history is now the common heritage of Latvians, Germans and Poles.

### CV

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