

Marek Zgórnjak, „*Batory*“ *Matejki w Paryżu w roku 1874*,  
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### *Matejko's Báthory in Paris in 1874*

#### **Abstract**

The article focuses on the exhibiting of Jan Matejko's painting *Báthory* at the Salon in Paris in 1874. It was already the fourth time Matejko had exhibited in Paris since his debut in 1865, and the second time (after the Salon of 1870), where he was 'hors concours', having already been awarded medals. In 1873 the presentation of eleven of his paintings at the Vienna World Exhibition proved to be a success. *Báthory* was also well-received in Paris, although it was Matejko's last indisputable success there: in the following years, despite obtaining the medal of honour at the World Exhibition of 1878, he began to receive mainly negative reviews. This article outlines the context of the 1874 Salon and highlights the political issues relating to history painting. The assessment of Matejko's painting is based on the reviews of approximately twenty-five authors. *Báthory* received a great deal of acclaim for being one of the best historical paintings at the Salon at a time when this genre was undergoing change and visitors were less and less interested in it. Matejko was most frequently compared to Puvis de Chavannes, whose decorative compositions were synthetic and symbolist in nature. Due to the tendency towards 'historical reconstruction' Matejko was classified as an 'archaeologist' alongside Alma-Tadema and J.-P. Laurens. However, on the whole, the general public tended to prefer the historical genre paintings of the type produced by Gérôme, and the subject matter of *Báthory* was not received positively: the French were either indifferent to it, or they did not understand it. Lengthy articles of several reviewers (e.g. G. Lafenestre, L. Gonse, P. de Saint-Victor) did little to help.