Alfred Bader fonds

Chemistry and Art
More Adventures of a Chemist Collector

Adventures II -
Menzel

Menzel

For some years now I have been working with an able gallery in Munich, the Galerie Arnoldi-Livie, owned by Angelika and Bruce Livie, she a charming Bavarian, he an American of Scottish descent. Both are great fun to be with and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with them and greatly appreciate their wonderful hospitality every time we visit Munich.

Isabel and I visit them each year when we are in Munich and we have all been pleased that they have recently sold two of ABFA's works to German museums. I was very interested when, about a year ago Angelika told me about a most beautiful painting by Adolph von Menzel which was in the museum in Dresden, but which might possibly bereturned to the heirs of the previous owner, Estella Meyer, neé Goldschmidt. In 1935 Mrs. Meyer was forced to sell the painting to the museum in Dresden at a price well under its actual value. She was later deported to Auschwitz where she died in 1942.

Menzel's *Sunday Afternoon in the Tuileries Gardens* ([fig.]) was painted in 1867, after Menzel had visited Paris for the world exhibition. He may well have been inspired by Manet's *Concert in the Tuileries Gardens* painted in 1860 and now in the National Gallery in London.

The Arnoldi-Livies were very interested in the painting. They thought that if Dresden did return the painting the heirs might decide to sell it. When I realized the beauty of the painting, illustrated in the major books on Menzel, I agreed that I would be willing to consider purchasing it and I would then entrust its sale to the Livies. Early in March 2005 Angelika and Bruce told me that the museum in Dresden had decided to agree to the restitution in order to avoid a lengthy lawsuit with the eight heirs who were being helped greatly by the Jewish Claims Conference. However, it was important to the museum that the painting continue to be exhibited in Dresden until it was sold and that the eventual buyer, probably a museum, should consider lending the Menzel from time to time in exchange for one of Dresden's great paintings. What museum – be it the Metropolitan in New York or the National Gallery in London would not be glad to show one of Dresden's wonderful Bellottos or some other of Dresden's great paintings? Wishful thinking? Perhaps. But my hope was that this beautiful Menzel might come to London. I could just imagine how stunning Menzel's *Tuileries Gardens* would look next to the National Gallery's Manet!

I learned that Christie's in London was reported to have offered the heirs a three million Euros guarantee, but how quickly would they be paid and would the museum in Dresden be helped with a possible exchange? With whom?

While we were in Vienna the first week of June, Angelika called me and put me in touch with Dr. Markus Stötzel, the heirs' lawyer near Marburg. In a very pleasant negotiation by telephone we agreed on a price, and then met Dr. Stötzel in the Arnoldi-Livie gallery

in Munich on June 15, signed the contract and arranged for the prompt wire transfer of the funds.

There followed a great deal of publicity, all of it correct and to me very surprising. The Morgenpost in Dresden even showed photographs of the Livies, of me as a 13 year old and with Isabel standing before Herstmonceux Castle, and even of a Bellotto in the museum in Dresden. The publicity was not limited to Dresden or to Saxony; even Germany's greatest newspaper, the Frankfurter Allgemeine, published an article on June 17th! (Fig.) The gist of all the stories was that an 81 year old Jew, a dealer and collector, driven from Vienna in 1938, has helped the heirs, the museum in Dresden, and hopefully the museum that will acquire the painting.

Ende gut, Alles gut – after the Livies have found the right buyer.

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