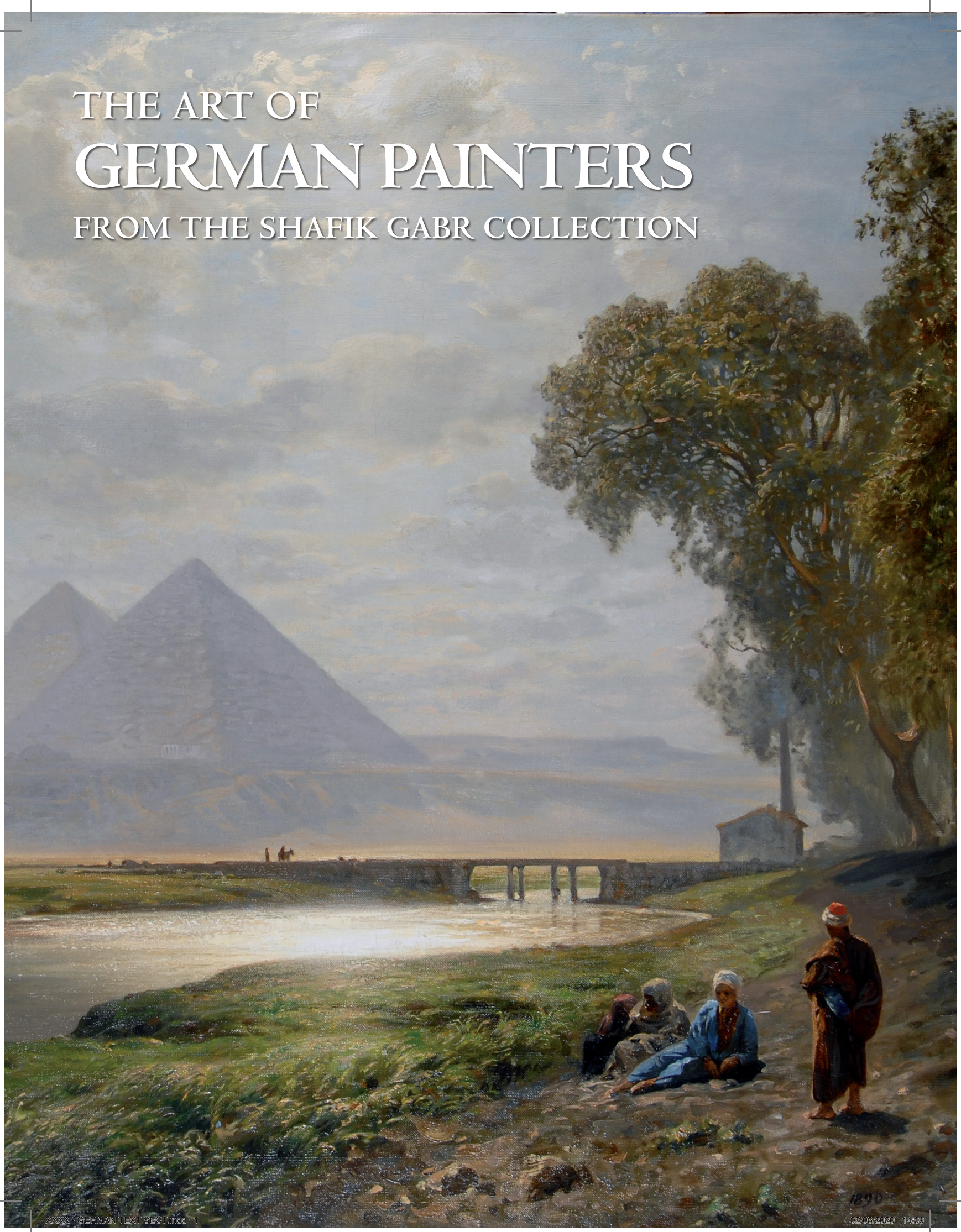


THE ART OF
GERMAN PAINTERS
FROM THE SHAFIK GABR COLLECTION



THE COLLECTION

The Shafik Gabr Collection is a physical manifestation of the collector's relationship with the world of the Orient, an appreciation of the differences as well as the similarities in American and European visions and expressions of that world, and the opportunity such a collection presents for dialogue and a developing appreciation between the Western and Oriental worlds.

Beginning with his first acquisition, Egyptian Priest Entering a Temple by Ludwig Deutsch, Shafik Gabr has, over the course of almost three decades, assembled a collection that is impressive both in its richness and variety. With a large number of works by famed Austrian artist Ludwig Deutsch, as well as some of the finest examples of work by the great Orientalist masters such as Jean-Léon Gérôme, Frederick Arthur Bridgman, Gustav Bauernfeind, David Roberts, John Frederick Lewis, Étienne Dinet and many others, the Collection has become one of the most complete and magnificent tributes to the world of Orientalism in private hands, and therefore an important collection for scholars and art lovers alike.

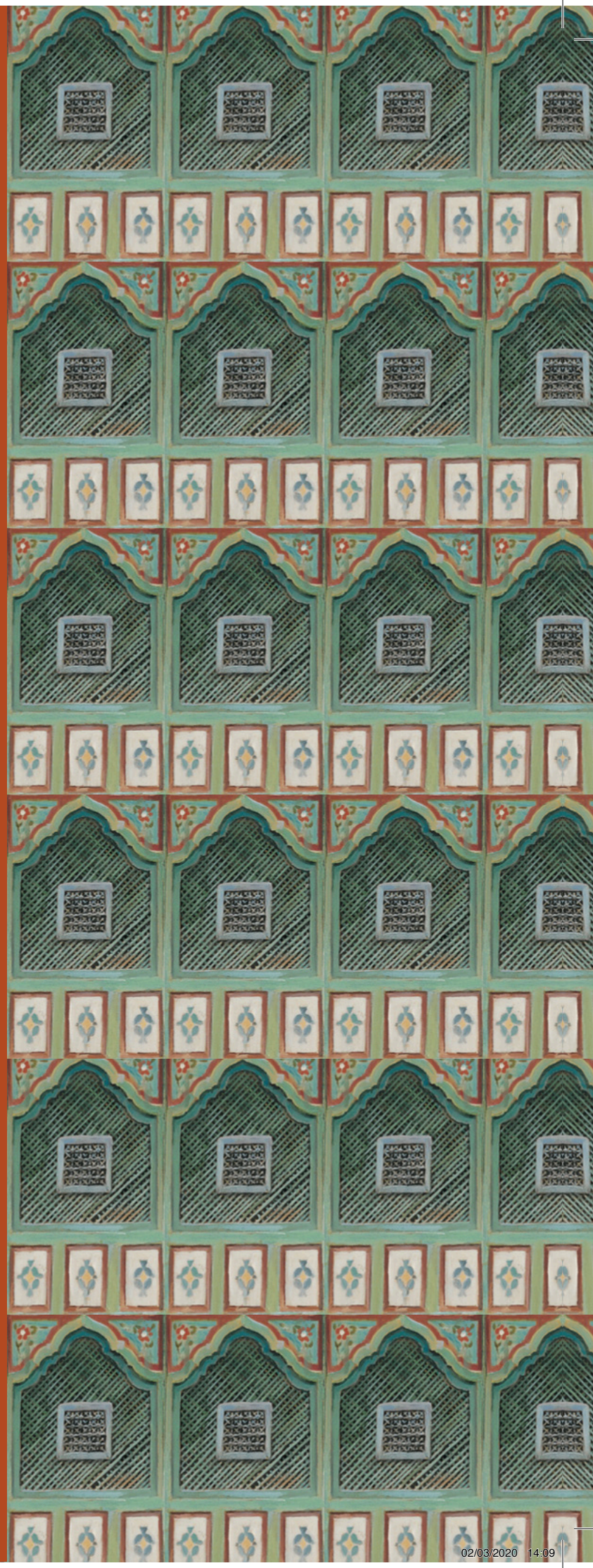
ORIENTALISM IN GERMANY

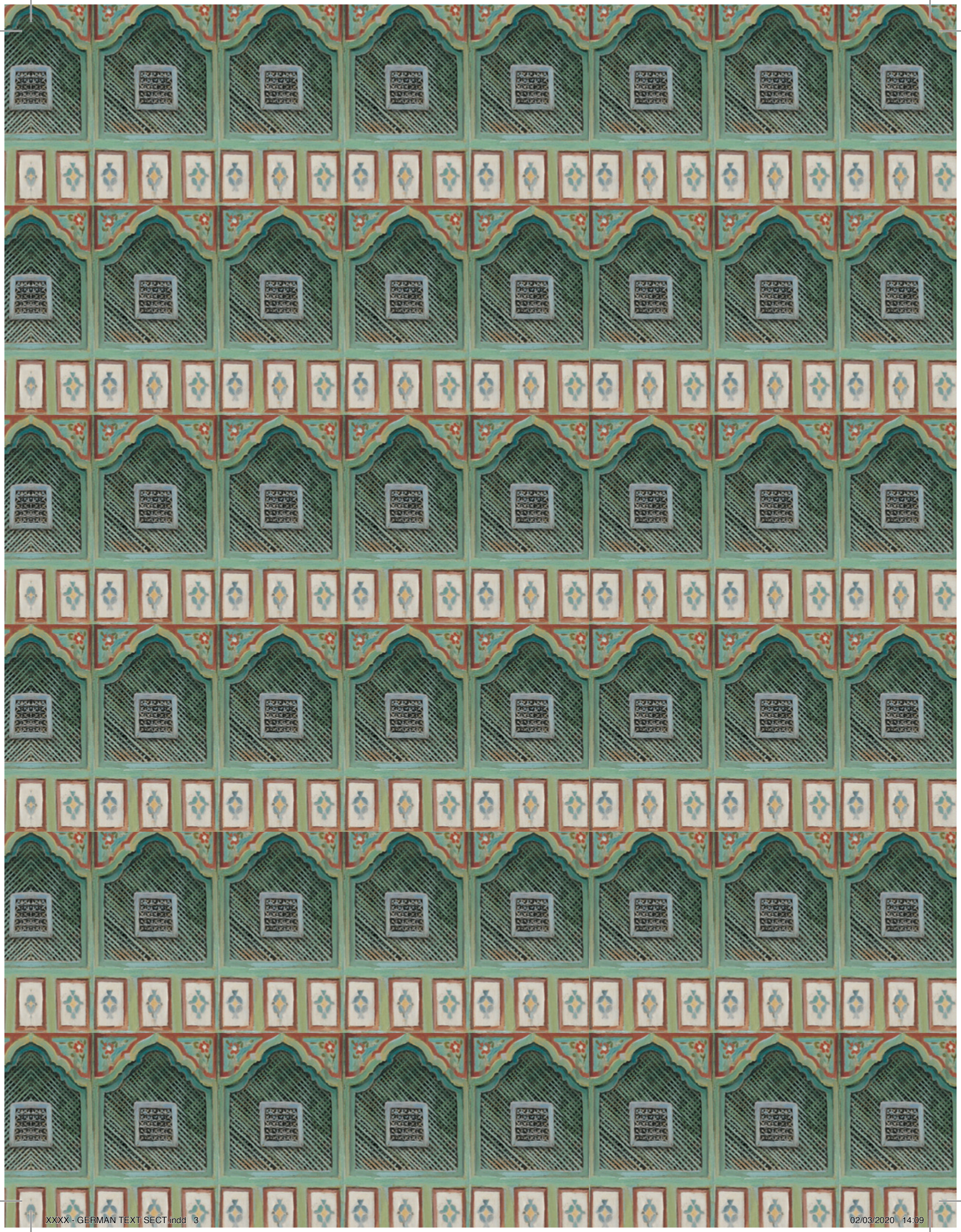
Although Germany did not have a colonial presence in the East in the 19th Century, it still prides itself on a vast and exquisite array of Orientalist art, and several of its prime examples are part of the Shafik Gabr Collection.

This booklet explores the works of Gustav Bauernfeind, Ferdinand Max Bredt, Albert Joseph Franke, Carl Haag, Ernst Koerner, Leopold Carl Müller, Adolf Seel and Carl Werner.

Apart from their country of birth, what all these artists have in common is that they were not "armchair Orientalists" but they actually visited the places in the Middle East which they painted. Whether depicting everyday scenes, ancient archaeological sites, or studies of the local people, they immersed themselves into the culture and society of the countries they visited. This enabled them to achieve authenticity in their paintings, as well as respect not only by their contemporaries, but future generations of artists and art lovers alike.

Cover: Ernst Koerner, *The Pyramids at Gizeh, Morning*





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THE ART OF
GERMAN
PAINTERS
FROM THE
SHAFIK GABR
COLLECTION

E. M. BREDT
Tunis.



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INTRODUCTION

Orientalism*

The art of face-to-face engagement between East and West, of listening, looking, and learning with the objective of understanding cultural, religious, and ideological differences to allow for a better world by constructing bridges of understanding between all the peoples of this Earth.

**definition by M. Shafik Gabr*

It is a pleasure to present in this booklet the works of eight outstanding artists in the Shafik Gabr Collection. These are Gustav Bauernfeind, Ferdinand Max Bredt, Albert Joseph Franke, Carl Haag, Ernst Koerner, Leopold Carl Müller, Adolf Seel and Carl Werner. One thing they all have in common, as you might have guessed from the title, is that they are all Orientalist painters from Germany.

Another thing that these painters have in common is that all of them spent a considerable amount of time in the Middle East, immersing themselves in the culture and getting to know the people, the architecture, the customs and the culture – first hand, and in-depth. And this, as I have said so many times when talking about the travelling Orientalists in my collection (and the German Orientalists in the Shafik Gabr Collection are no exception), is the core of their success and the authenticity of their paintings.

They were marked by deeply personal experiences in the places they visited – for example, Bauernfeind's simultaneous pride and slight annoyance with the locals in Damascus when they kept surrounding him with their curiosity every time he went into the city to paint and make sketches. This experience is shown in his *Street Scene, Damascus*, where Bauernfeind depicted himself, a stranger from the West, inciting curious looks and questions from the citizens of Damascus. However, this painting for me also has a deeper meaning. It is an actual depiction of two civilizations, East and West, but in a way that is warm, mutually respectful, fascinating and enticing.

Unlike many “armchair Orientalists” who mainly painted harem scenes and depicted women only as objects of desire, the German Orientalists in the Shafik Gabr Collection treat their female characters differently. Take, for example, Ferdinand Max Bredt. His noblewoman in *In a Courtyard, Tunis*, is portrayed by paying full attention to her character and pensiveness (shown both by her stance and her facial expression). Adolf Seel's *Oriental Beauty in a Palace* is not there simply for the “male gaze” – she is an assertive, wealthy woman who is aware of her power and status.

The depth of characters can also be felt in Leopold Carl Müller's paintings – whether depicting a little boy or an old man. In his works there is softness, compassion and genuine curiosity about the people that the paintings portray.



Gustav Bauernfeind, *A Street Scene, Damascus* (detail)

The German Orientalists were also fascinated with the ancient architecture and monuments of the Middle East, such as the pyramids and the temples. But even here there is a special touch. Ernst Koerner, to take an example, had a special way of portraying not only the famous monuments, but also the local people interacting with them or observing them, in an air of total serenity and a feeling of belonging. This way, he shows a connection and a natural lineage between the ancient and the modern Egyptians.

The importance of these artists cannot be stated enough. Apart from the iconographic characteristics and idiosyncrasies I have mentioned, they are all characterized by exceptional skill, immaculate attention to detail, and impressive command of light and texture. This combination of style, skill, and deep understanding of their subjects is what, in my opinion, makes these painters true icons of German Orientalism.

M. Shafik Gabr

The mission of one of the Shafik Gabr Foundation's initiatives—*East-West: The Art of Dialogue*—is to promote greater mutual understanding by building bridges between emerging leaders from Egypt and the US, by instigating dialogue and the exchange of ideas between these two cultures. Established in 2012 in response to the increasing tensions building between the East and West, the Foundation sponsors and fosters exchanges between emerging leaders from Egypt and the US, and each year adds new countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Lebanon, Jordan, and Bahrain. For more information, please visit <http://eastwestdialogue.org>

GUSTAV BAUERNFEIND

GERMAN (1860–1921)

A STREET SCENE, DAMASCUS

Signed and inscribed 'G. Bauernfeind Damaskus-München' (lower right)

Oil on panel

20¼ x 26¾ in. (51.4 x 68 cm.)

Painted in Munich

Provenance:

Borghesi & Co., New York

Private Collection, Switzerland

Sale, Christie's, New York, 19 April 2006, lot 10

Mathaf Gallery, London

Richard Green, London, 2007

Literature:

Alex Carmel & Hugo Schmid, *The Life and Work of Gustav Bauernfeind, Orientalist Painter 1848–1904* (Stuttgart: Dr. Hauswedell & Co., 1990), pl. 139 (illustrated)

Hugo Schmid (ed.), *Gustav Bauernfeind: Die Reise nach Damaskus 1888/1889* (Tübingen and Basel, 1996), p. 114 (illustrated)

Alex Carmel, *In the Land of the Blue Skies: The Story of Gustav Bauernfeind, Orientalist Painter, 1848–1904* (Haifa, 1999), fig. 17 (illustrated)

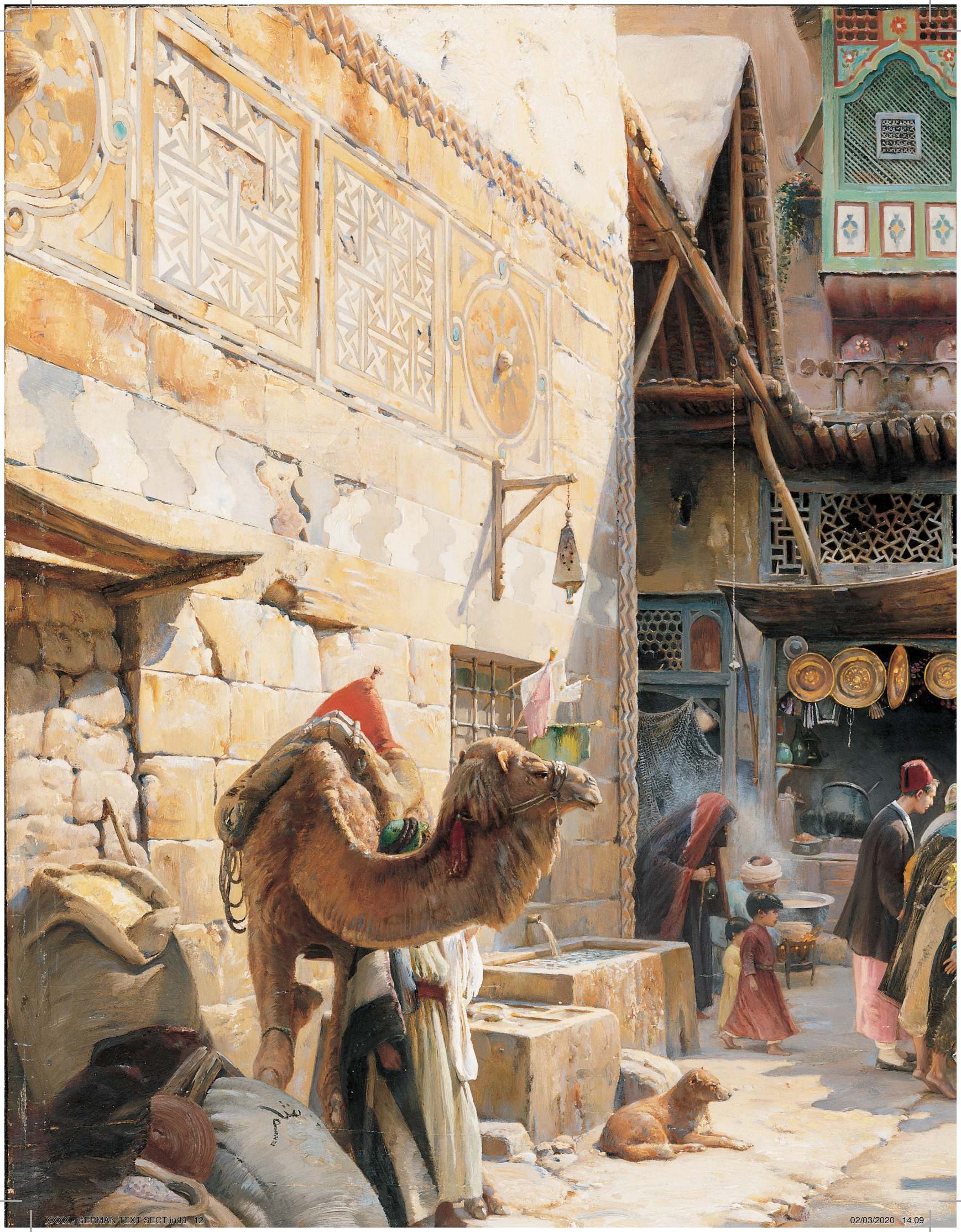
Olga Nefedova, *A Journey into the World of the Ottomans: The Art of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671–1737)* (Skira, 2009), p. 63, p. 66 (illustrated)

Gustav Bauernfeind, arguably the most skilled of the German Orientalists, was initially trained as an architect. Following his graduation from the Stuttgart Polytechnic Institute, he first joined the architectural office of Professor Wilhelm Bäumer and later that of Adolph Gnauth, where he made the transition from architect to painter. After having difficulty selling German village scenes, he took the advice of his friends and colleagues and decided to visit the Middle East and alter the manner of his painting in accordance with the contemporary vogue.

Bauernfeind made three trips to the Orient before finally settling in Jerusalem in 1896: the first to Egypt, followed by trips to Palestine, Lebanon and briefly Syria, during the years 1880–81. His sister and brother-in-law were living in Beirut at the time, and prior to his trip, they sent him a letter describing the area:



A Street Scene, Damascus





“Everything which is in our power to do to make the Orient pleasant and interesting shall be done. Of course, I must tell you beforehand, you will find Syria to be no Italy. No such abundance of architectural art treasures are to be expected here; all the same, I should think that in spite of this, an artist could find a worthwhile field for his studies here, and would not regret his journey. Beirut perhaps has the least to offer – in very great contrast to the highlands, which do not lack for ruined stately homes and castles. Damascus, too, is at all events interesting; I haven’t been there yet, but from what I’ve heard tell it is a city whose Oriental character is still the least diluted by European civilization.”¹

In 1884, during his second trip to the Middle East, Bauernfeind properly discovered Damascus. This second journey, which would last more than three years, was the most extensively documented by the artist. He recorded his impressions of the people and the region and his day-to-day experiences in the Syrian capital. In a letter to his mother dated early 1885 the artist described Damascus as “a city which has hardly been touched by civilization”. He clearly had been captivated by the unique aspect of this ancient city which was also home to one of the world’s greatest mosques: the Ummayyad Mosque. This mosque later became one of the artist’s major sources of inspiration and subject of some of his most beautiful works.

In *A Street Scene, Damascus*, the artist narrates his personal experience in the city. The composition depicts him in a street surrounded by locals, all gathered around him in obvious curiosity. The focus of the composition is the artist himself, sketching as was his wont in the streets of the Syrian capital. He is surrounded by an intent group of men in varied and colourful costumes, who close in around him, curious and somewhat concerned. The artist himself has paused in his work, pencil raised as if answering a question put to him by one of the on-lookers. This circle of interest defines the composition. It begins as a tight knot pressed up against the artist himself and radiates outward to the two women standing across the street, too timid to approach the group immediately surrounding the artist, to the mother who reaches for her two curious children as if to pull them back from the strange foreigner, to the child who hangs out of the window in order to view the scene from above. This circle of curiosity even includes the camel in the foreground that has turned his head as if he too is interested in the unusual scene taking place in the street.

Without doubt one of the most important and interesting works in the artist’s oeuvre, *A Street Scene, Damascus*, illustrates the details of Bauernfeind’s journey to Damascus as recorded in his letters and diary. Despite the fact that there are no exact records of this specific painting, there are passages in the aforementioned letter to his mother which express striking similarities to the scene that is being depicted, and which point precisely to details such as the hat he is wearing and the locals’ reactions:

1) A. Carmel and H. Schmid, *The Life and Work of Gustav Bauernfeind, Orientalist Painter 1848-1904*, Stuttgart, 1990, p.91.

“I am almost known everywhere in the city [Damascus] as the M’Sauer (painter), a triumph that does credit to my activity. It is an absolute delight to see how inquisitively these folk follow the doings of Europeans, and what hilarious comments they often make regarding the subject. My travelling hat has elicited a number of these. Some are quite amazed that I should have a parasol on my tarboosh (the red hat they wear); others called me the Father of the Casserole (Abu Ashereh) because my hat looked like I’d clapped a pot on my head...”²

Bauernfeind had begun his visit to Damascus during the winter, which made it difficult for him to paint anything while he was there on account of the lack of light. *A Street Scene, Damascus*, must have therefore been painted in the artist’s studio in Munich around 1887, after his return from this second journey. There is a single wood engraving that is recorded of this work and that was later illustrated in 1896 in *Über Land und Meer* (Vol. 76, p. 465) and in 1897 in *Illustrierte Welt* (Vol. 45, p. 81). There is however no mention of the present painting being sold in the artist’s estate sale, which probably means he had already sold it to one of his clients in London or America. It had long been thought that *A Street Scene, Damascus* was lost or perhaps even destroyed during the war. The only record there was of it, apart from the engraving, was a photograph which appeared in various books (cf. literature).

Clearly a key work, *A Street Scene, Damascus*, incorporates all of the elements for which Bauernfeind is most famous: his exceptional understanding of the architecture, his minute attention to detail and, most of all, his beautiful use of colour and light. It could also perhaps be seen as the precursor to Bauernfeind’s street scenes. One of his most famous paintings from 1890, *Street Scene in Jaffa* is very similar in composition. Jaffa was the industrial metropolis of Tel Aviv where Bauernfeind spent part of his time during his trips to the Middle East.

Gustav Bauernfeind later decided to settle in the German Templar Colony in Jerusalem in 1896, where he spent his last years. Alex Carmel writes: “No one abroad – that is in his homeland – could have anything to teach him any more. He alone, as no other ‘Faranji’ painter before him, had fully experienced the place first hand.”³

2) Ibid., p. 98.

3) Ibid., p. 121.

FERDINAND MAX BREDT

GERMAN (1860–1921)

IN A COURTYARD, TUNIS

Signed and inscribed 'F. M. Bredt./Tunis.' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

46½ x 30¾ in. (118 x 78 cm.)

painted in Tunis

Provenance:

Richard Green, inventory no. AX 131 WH

Private Collection, London

Sale, Christie's, London, 25 November 2009, lot 1

Exhibited:

Munich, Königlicher Glaspalast, *Münchener Jahresausstellung von Kunstwerken aller Nationen*, 1891, cat. no. 2813

Ferdinand Max Bredt is regarded as one of Germany's foremost Orientalist painters of the nineteenth century. Like many of his compatriots who were interested in the world of the Orient, he travelled extensively in Greece, Turkey and Tunisia, recording his journeys on both paper and canvas.

His works often depict everyday life in the harem and its inhabitants, luxuriant scenes graced by richly attired odalisques. Alternatively, he depicted women chaperoned in an outdoor setting against a backdrop of exotic architecture. As in the present work, the defining characteristic of the artist is a profound sense of languor and softness, achieved through a wonderful sense of contour and gentle colours.

Like many of his peers, the artist made use of authentic artefacts to lend an aura of reality to these otherwise fantastical scenes. As a precise draughtsman, Bredt had a keen eye for detail which enabled him to capture the intricacies of the local architecture with beauty and grace, before placing his naturalistically styled figures in the foreground.

The present painting portrays an Oriental noblewoman in Tunis enjoying a relaxing afternoon in the courtyard. She is lost in thought, dreaming whilst holding a fragrant branch with flowers. The light is limpid and bright and the costumes of the women clearly echo the virginal white of the buildings. Bredt displays his exceptional skill at calibrating tonal contrasts to generate atmospheric effects that are absolutely true to time and place. The heat of this luminous day in the courtyard is almost palpable, accentuated by the strong interplay of light and the serene and languid nature of these figures, sheltering in welcome shade.



In a Courtyard, Tunis

ALBERT JOSEPH FRANKE

GERMAN (1860–1924)

THE BARBER'S SHOP

Signed, inscribed and dated 'A-J- Franke-München 86' (lower right)

Oil on panel

12¾ x 17¼ in. (32.5 x 43.7 cm.)

Painted in Munich in 1886

Provenance:

Sale, Sotheby's, London, 23 November 2010, lot 29

There is little information about Albert Joseph Franke's artistic career. He was a member of the Munich Artists Association (Künstler-Genossenschaft) and regularly exhibited at the Munich Glass Palace. His paintings at the exhibition were also regularly sent to Düsseldorf and Berlin. He painted primarily the interior scenes of the eighteenth century Rococo era.

As part of his studies, Franke travelled widely in North Africa between 1885-1890, and the artistic results are well-chosen subjects sensitively executed. These made him a well-respected Orientalist painter. Rather than focusing on historical scenes or landscapes, he decided to concentrate his efforts on genre scenes. He wanted to show images of everyday life in the Orient – dress, customs and activities, bustling streets, and traditional architecture. In all these Franke showed an acute sense of precision and detail.

One of the finest examples of Franke's Orientalist genre paintings is *The Barber Shop*. The dome and the minaret of the mosque in the background identify this scene very specifically. They belong to the Mosque of Abu Dhahab in Cairo, an Ottoman structure of the late eighteenth century located west of the main entrance of al-Azhar Mosque University, known as the Gate of the Barbers. The mosque was originally built as a madrasa (educational institution) to host the increasing number of students that were coming to study in the Azhar University from all over the world, and it is considered the fourth mosque to be built in Cairo according to the Ottoman style of architecture. The mosque was built by Amir Mohamed Beh Abu El Dahab, one of the leaders of Egypt during the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

In this painting, Franke depicts an act that has both hygienic and practical aspects. Al-Azhar is Egypt's foremost centre of Sunni Islamic learning, as well as being one of the oldest universities in the Islamic world. Young men lived and studied there, entering the institution through the double-arched Gate of the Barbers. Lice have been a problem in those times, and shaving men's heads was the way of avoiding them. The area around al-Azhar, with hundreds of male students of religion, was a good venue for barbers.

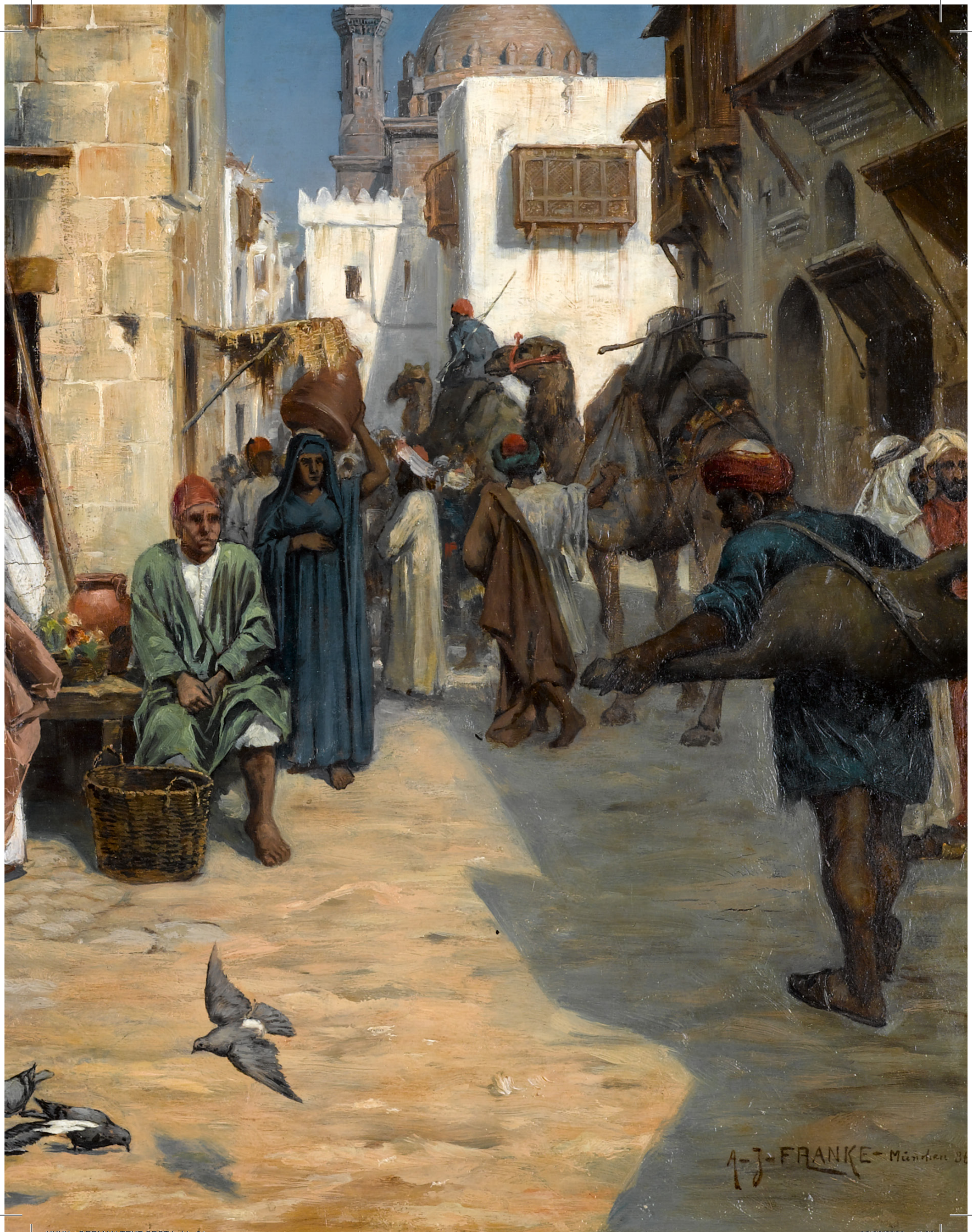
The men in the scene display a variety of head coverings, linked to their social standing. The white-bearded barber wears a simple turban. He shaves the head of an African, while his companion, an Arab with his head covered by a scarf and a cord to hold it in place (*kufiya* and *'aqal*), seems to supervise. To the right, the seated man's head covering is a felt cap worn by the *fellaheen*, or peasants.

The shadows suggest that the scene is taking place in the morning, and traffic on the street is lively: a woman with a water container on her head goes to the *sabil*, or water dispensary; a *saqqa*, or water carrier, with a full goatskin, looks at the shaving operation; camels pass the nearby *wikala*, or commercial establishment; pigeons peck in the street, and a dog naps in the sun.



The Barber's Shop





ALBERT JOSEPH FRANKE

THE GUARDS

Signed A. J. Franke (lower right)
Oil on panel
15.3 x 11.4 in. (38.8 x 29 cm.)

Provenance:

Swiss private collection
Sale, Koller Auctions, Zurich, 28 September 2018, lot 3217
Darnley Fine Art, November 2019

Albert Joseph Franke began his painting studies at the Royal School of Arts and Crafts in Wrocław and continued his studies at the Royal Academy of Arts in Munich with Otto Seitz, Alois Gabl and Wilhelm von Lindenschmit the Younger. In the period from 1885 to 1890, he travelled to Egypt and North Africa, where he made many drawings as ideas for his paintings.

Perhaps the best paintings of Franke were his Orientalist genre scenes, which he specialised in. His attention to detail was matched by his draughtsmanship with each texture, be it silk, marble or glass, perfectly studied and rendered. The rich and distinct costumes and customs of the Orient provided ideal inspiration for Franke to display his mastery of colour and form. In *The Guards*, Franke depicts the colorful figures of the Arnauts, or Albanian soldiers.

The viewer's eye is immediately drawn to the standing figure with his white turban, his richly colored red gold and black outer garments, and the voluminous frills of his skirt. The leg gear is also elaborate – a red and gold combination equally designed to protect and to impress. The gun slung over his shoulder, and the gold sword and daggers tied to his waist are no less decorative.

Franke depicts his main character with grace and respect. He is in a state of alertness and readiness shown by his stance and his weapons (even if his eyes do seem a little pensive) – unlike his colleagues behind him, engrossed in smoking a *hookah* or smoking pipe and playing a game of chess.

In *The Guards*, Albert Joseph Franke demonstrates his skills in the fields of ethnography and detailed costume study, as well as skilled portraiture. The allure of the painting is further enhanced by Franke's mastery in depicting the colour and texture of the drapery, as well as the detailed architecture of the interior.



The Guards

CARL HAAG

GERMAN (1820 - 1915)

THE RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN, PALMYRA

Signed, dated and inscribed: Carl Haag. / Palmyra 1859. lower right
Watercolour over traces of pencil, heightened with bodycolour, scratching out, stopping
out and gum arabic
30 1/8 x 52 1/4 in. (76 x 132 cm.)

Provenance:

The Fine Art Society, London, by 1968
Probably purchased from the above by private owner
Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 April 2019, lot 18

Literature:

Walter Karbach, The International Carl Haag Society, <https://www.carl-haag.de/en/>
Walter Karbach and Catherine Allison, Carl Haag: *Victorian Court Painter and Travelling
Adventurer Between Orient and Occident* (Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2019).

Exhibited:

London, Old Watercolour Society, 1860, no. 105

Born in the area of Franken, Erlangen in 1820, Carl Haag went to art school in Nuremberg, and soon became in demand as a portrait painter within aristocratic circles.

For a year he studied at the Royal Academy in London in 1848 and, within two years, he became an extraordinary member of the Royal Watercolour Society, where he exhibited and sold his works for many years. In Tyrol, in 1852, Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha became aware of him and recommended him to his sister-in-law, Queen Victoria. For the following years Carl Haag frequently stayed at her castle Balmoral in Scotland documenting the life of the Royal Family in the Highlands.

In the autumn of 1858, Carl Haag departed for a long journey in the Orient, where he stayed for two years. In Cairo he moved into a studio flat in the Coptic quarter with his friend and painter Frederick Goodall whom he had met in London the year before. Together the two men explored the many facets of Egyptian life, rising early on horseback and searching the surrounding landscape for suitable subjects to sketch. When the scorching temperatures became too unbearable, they returned to the house to work up their sketches into paintings. With the exception of the distractions of flies as well as the widely held fear of the Bashi Bazouks, the irregular troops of the Ottoman empire who were infamous for looting and lack of discipline, Haag wrote in letters that he had fallen in love with Egypt.

When Haag first heard about the ruins of the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra he is said to have exclaimed “If I am a ruined man forever, or if I must walk there in Bedouin sandals, I must go to Palmyra!” In October 1859 he made the acquaintance of Sheikh Medjuel el-Mezrab and his English wife, Jane Digby, formally, Lady Ellenborough (1807-1881). The Sheikh was the leader of the Sebbah tribe and he granted Haag permission to travel to Palmyra and paint the ruins of Queen Zenobia’s ancient city. Haag, not wishing to squander the opportunity he had, executed a watercolour on a grand scale. He captured the temples, graves and palaces in numerous watercolours which are mainly in London’s Victoria & Albert Museum and in the Royal Collection.

Using the influence of the English watercolourists that he held in high regard and in and in particular Joseph Mallord William Turner, Haag imbues the work with a rich, hazy light all a slightly different tone as the eye wanders around the canvas. His depiction of the bright light of the desert sun shining through the gaps in the temple is particularly astonishing and transcends any watercolour that Haag painted during his trip. No doubt it would have been received to great aplomb by the Victorian audience fascinated by the architecture of the region when the work was exhibited at the Royal Watercolour Society in 1860.¹



The Ruins of the Temple of the Sun, Palmyra

1) Harry Edmonds, Watercolours From Carl Haag’s Important Tour of the Levant, Apr 25, 2019, <https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/an-innocent-abroad-carl-haag-his-important-tour-of-the-levant>





ERNST KOERNER

GERMAN (1846–1927)

THE PYRAMIDS AT GIZEH, MORNING

Signed and dated 'Ernst Koerner 1890' (lower right)

Signed, inscribed and titled on a label on the stretcher

Oil on canvas

39¼ x 59 in. (100 x 150 cm.)

painted in 1890

Provenance:

Rittergutsbesitzer Simon, Lossow, near Frankfurt-an-der-Oder

(purchased from the artist in 1920), thence by descent

Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 June 2010, lot 129

The ancient monuments of Egypt captivated numerous Orientalist artists in the nineteenth century, resulting in a flood of topographical paintings and drawings in European galleries and exhibition rooms. The best of these managed to seamlessly blend scientific accuracy with an evocative sense of place, thereby creating valuable historical documents that were also alluring works of art. Koerner's travels to Egypt in 1873–74 and several times thereafter inspired a range of topographic pictures, each of which reveals an archaeologist's fascination with the country's Pharaonic architecture and a painter's romantic point of view.

Veiled by clouds and softened by early morning mist, the Pyramids of Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure act as both the backdrop and the focal point of Koerner's work (though difficult to determine with certainty, these mortuary structures were likely built between 2600 BC and 2500 BC).

These pyramids are towering ancient messages, both to Egyptians and to visitors from all over the world, that here in the Nile Valley humanity has come to a large threshold in the development of its achievements. Here we find two largest of over one hundred Egyptian pyramids. The largest one, often called the Great Pyramid, was built by Khufu, who is believed to be the son of Sneferu, the founder of the 4th dynasty. Directly southwest of the Great Pyramid is the pyramid of Khafre, Khufu's second son (Khufu's first son's pyramid was, for reasons unknown – perhaps a family rift – built several miles north, on a high ridge at Abu Roash). Smaller and spaced further apart is the third pyramid (that of Menkaure, the son of Khafre and grandson of Khufu), which strikes an informal balance with the larger two on Giza's western horizon. Together these three pyramids of Giza stand like sentinels in a great northeast – southwest diagonal.

Koerner's formal training as a landscape painter is evident throughout this composition, particularly in the demarcation of space: there is a clear foreground, middle ground and background. The artist's use of *repoussoir*, moreover, through the trees on the right, immediately recalls the classical landscapes of the great seventeenth-century French painters Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain, whose works the well-schooled Koerner must have known. It is the ability of Koerner to conflate this idealised European landscape tradition with a specific Egyptian panorama, however, that suggests his originality and sets his talent apart.

The picture is painted from a point slightly north and east of the Pyramids, perhaps in Kerdassa, the village at which the caravan route to Siwa began. A canal – possibly the Mahmoudiyeh – divides two grassy, verdant banks. Koerner's contextualisation of his ancient subject is unusual in nineteenth-century art. Rather than isolating the Pyramids, in order to emphasise their historical import, the artist has chosen to bring them into the present day. The little village to the left and the group of peaceful *fellaheen* on the right remind the viewer that the same Egyptian civilisation that built these awesome structures continues to thrive today.



The Pyramids at Gizeh, Morning





ERNST KOERNER

THE TEMPLE OF SETI I, ABYDOS

Signed and dated 'Ernst Koerner 1925' (lower left)

Oil on canvas

39½ x 55½ in. (100.5 x 141 cm.)

painted in 1925

Provenance:

Private Collection

Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 May 2008, lot 94

Ernst Koerner was a German landscape painter. He studied primarily in Berlin before travelling throughout Europe, the Baltic Sea area and finally Egypt which became a great source of inspiration in his works and made him a renowned artist. Koerner found the support of several monarchs, including Emperors Wilhelm I and Wilhelm II. He was the recipient of numerous awards: Vienna 1873, Philadelphia 1876, Melbourne 1889, and Berlin 1891. Koerner's compositions often focused on ancient Egyptian architecture such as the Pyramids, the Sphinx and famous temples such as for *The Temple of Seti I, Abydos*.

Abydos is located west of the Nile, between the valley and the desert, forty miles west of Dendera. It became a burial ground of the ancient kings of Egypt from predynastic times and thus an important religious centre. It is particularly associated with Osiris, the "Lord of Abydos", whose mysteries were celebrated there annually. The ritual re-enactment of Osiris's death and resurrection brought pilgrims from all over Egypt.

The temple of Seti I at Abydos is a mortuary temple; Seti is actually buried in the Valley of the Kings. Situating the temple on the hallowed ground of Abydos enabled Seti to participate magically in the resurrection of Osiris forever. Seti's temple was completed by his son and successor, Rameses II. This gave Rameses the opportunity to demonstrate his piety – and to carve his cartouches on yet another building.

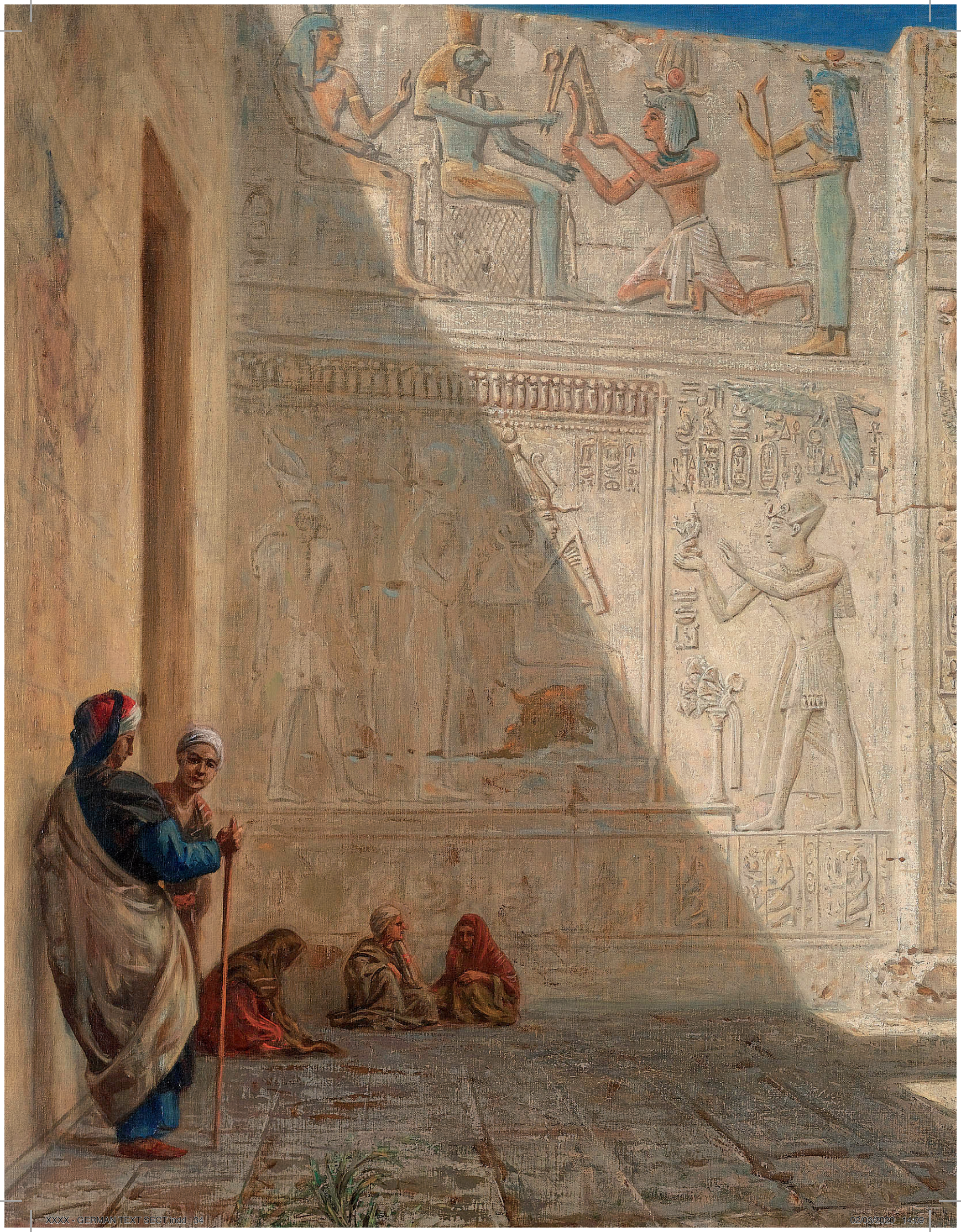
The temple facade is heavily restored. The inner part, especially the chapels dedicated to Seti, Ptah, Re-Harakhty, Amun-Re, Osiris, Isis and Horus, was completed during Seti's lifetime and is beautifully decorated in the fine relief carving which is typical of his reign.

This temple seems to have had a great effect on Koerner as he did several versions of it. In each version of the painting, he showed a keen understanding of architectural features and perspective, while creating a poetic atmosphere through the application of colour and light.

As seen here and also in *The Pyramids at Gizeh*, Koerner does not just paint landscape and ancient buildings, but also breaths life into them by including people in his paintings. These serve both a stylistic purpose (to show proportion) as well as an iconographical one, to show contemporary Egyptians as worthy successors to their ancestors.



The Temple of Seti I, Abydos





LEOPOLD CARL MÜLLER

GERMAN (1834–1892)

THE COTTON SPINNER

Signed 'Leopold Carl Muller' (lower right)

Oil on canvas

34½ x 25 in. (87.5 x 63.5 cm.)

Provenance:

Private Collection, Austria

Sale, Sotheby's, London, 27 June 2007, lot 122

Leopold Carl Müller was born in Dresden, Germany, on 9 December 1834. His initiation to the world of art started early on as his father, who owned a lithograph store, gave him drawing lessons when he was a child. Two of his sisters also studied painting, thus Müller's background was always linked to art.

In 1873, he decided to take his first trip to the Orient and chose Egypt as his destination. Not much is known as to why he decided to go there in particular. However, given the impact Egypt had on the rest of the Orientalists, it is no surprise that Müller was to fall in love with the place and its inhabitants. He travelled to Cairo, Upper Egypt, Alexandria, and returned to Europe a few months later via Turkey. He initially began painting from studies once back in his studio in Vienna or Venice, and later started painting in situ during his subsequent travels to Egypt. His ability to paint on site is, without a doubt, what helped him capture with such precision the essence of everyday life scenes in nineteenth-century Egypt.

Müller's works very quickly attracted attention. The Prince of Wales, whom he met in the mid-1870s, introduced him to the owner of the famous French Gallery, Henry Wallis, who decided to show his work in London. In 1887 he became a teacher at the École des Beaux-Arts in Vienna and amongst his students were famous Orientalists such as Franz Kosler, Carl Wilda and Johann (Jean) Discart.

The Cotton Spinner is a great example of Müller's oeuvre as it not only illustrates his interest in authentic Cairene scenes, but also the master's precise attention to detail. The old man, absorbed with his spindle, sits cross-legged amid the clutter of an urban nook. The detail and haphazard realism of the setting (the flaking limestone, the spun thread, the various woods) make the painted image seem like a product of photographic realism. Only the red of the turban and the blue of some wrap provide colour; without them this portrait is also a fine study in the tonal values of the browns, beiges and yellows of stone, wood, ceramic and cloth. This concentration on authentic faces, realistically rendered and carefully composed, is characteristic of Müller's larger paintings.¹

1) Caroline Williams, 'Orientalist Images Inspired by Egypt: a Nineteenth-Century Overview', in Shafik Gabr, *Masterpieces of Orientalist Art: The Shafik Gabr Collection*, A.C. Rafif, ed., Paris: ACR Édition, 2012, p. 20.



The Cotton Spinner

LEOPOLD CARL MÜLLER

AN INNOCENT SMILE

Signed, dated and inscribed 'Leopold Carl Müller 1885 Vienna' (lower left)

Oil on panel

12½ x 8¾ in. (31.5 x 22 cm.)

painted in Vienna in 1885

Provenance:

Dorotheum, Vienna, 15 October 2008, lot 602

Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 June 2010, lot 163

Leopold Carl Müller visited Egypt nine times between 1873 and 1886, and since he often stayed several months, he was referred to as “Egypt” Müller. This portrait belongs to the later period of his career, a period in which he produced some of his best single-figure studies, just before his eyesight began to decline.

The painting focuses on a prepubescent village boy, as indicated by the ‘ritual tuft’,¹ a lock of hair on the crown left after the rest of the head has been shaved. Leaving a tuft on a boy is a hair-style that dates back to both tribal Arabia and Pharaonic Egypt. The boy’s clothing also indicates his village origin: the *zaaboot* – the long full shirt open from neck to waist with wide sleeves – which frames his face, and the *taqiya* – a knitted skull cap of undyed wool – which it covers.

Müller was noted for his sensitive studies of real Egyptian people.² This is a sympathetic portrait of a young boy – appealing and unburdened – captured before any potential hardships of adulthood and the realities of peasant and village life.

1) H. H. Ayrout, *The Egyptian Peasant*, translated and introduced by John Alden Williams (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005), pp. 68, 70.

2) Cf. Müller, *The Cotton Spinner*, in this Collection.



An Innocent Smile

ADOLF SEEL

GERMAN (1829–1907)

ORIENTAL BEAUTY IN A PALACE

Signed and dated 'A. Seel 1883' (lower left)

Oil on panel

38 1/2 x 28 1/3 in. (98 x 72 cm.)

Provenance:

Private collection, Germany

Sale, Duesseldorfer Auktionshaus, Düsseldorf, February 2012, lot 43

Galerie Ary Jan, 2013.

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Martina Haja and Günther Wimmer, *Les orientalistes des Écoles allemande et autrichienne*, ACR Edition, 2000

Adolf Seel was a German painter who trained at the Düsseldorf Academy of Arts. As a traveller painter, Seel went to Spain, Portugal, Italy, but also the Orient and especially Cairo and Palestine.

His painting *Oriental Beauty in a Palace* is a perfect example of Seel's skill and attention to detail. Attesting to his attention to detail is the Arabic inscription which appears on the central column above the marble – the inscription is actually Seel's signature and date, written in perfectly correct Arabic.

Furthermore, the rich colours and textures of the draperies and carpets are impressive, as well as the architecture of the interior and Seel's treatment of glass and marble. In the centre of the painting is a true Oriental beauty, with her elaborate clothes made out of what seems like silk and lace, adorned with a headgear and gold jewels. By her side is a tray containing different kinds of fruit, and a *hookah* or smoke pipe. In the forefront of the painting is a mother-of-pearl inlaid tabouret on top of which are two vessels and a cup. An instrument is almost hidden to the left side in the back. This is an '*ood*', an instrument which had been used by the best Arab musicians of the time, and which was celebrated by numerous poets.

We do not know if the woman depicted is an '*ood*' player herself, however it is clear that she is a woman of certain affluence. Far from a typical odalisque, she is an assertive, wealthy woman who is aware of her power and status.



Oriental Beauty in a Palace

CARL WERNER

GERMAN (1808–1894)

THE INNER PROPYLAEUM, PHILAE

Signed and dated 'C. Werner. f.1867.' (lower left)

Watercolour heightened with white and arabic gum on paper laid down on card

17¼ x 27¼ in. (43.8 x 69.2 cm.)

executed in 1867

Provenance:

Arthur Tooth & Sons, London

Sale, Christie's, London, 18 June 1998, lot 201

Literature:

Martina Haja & Günther Wimmer, *Les Orientalistes des Écoles allemande et autrichienne* (Courbevoie/Paris: ACR Édition, 2000), p. 172 (illustrated)

Carl Friedrich Heinrich Werner was born on 4 October 1808 in Weimar. He initially learned to be a carpenter, studied law, and took architecture classes before realising that painting was in fact his vocation. In 1832 the director of the Kunstakademie of Leipzig (Academy of Fine Arts) noticed him and sent him to Italy on a scholarship. After taking a few trips around the country, he decided to settle in Rome where he stayed for almost twenty years. He married the daughter of Scottish artist George A. Wallis and moved to Venice in 1851 where he started a watercolour studio and trained students.

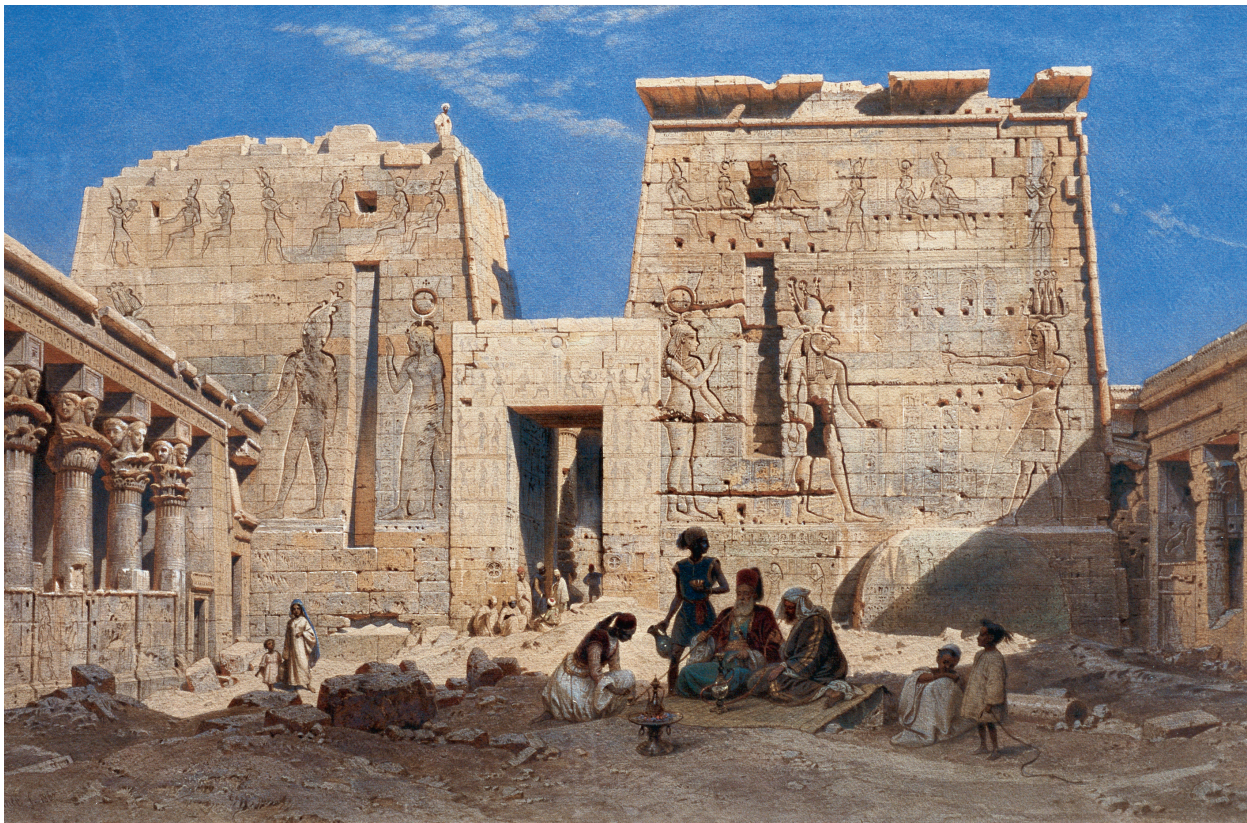
He began painting Orientalist subjects after visiting Spain during the winter of 1856-57. Following this trip he painted a series entitled *Views of the Alhambra*, and decided in 1862 to travel to the Orient: first to Palestine, then to Egypt. He returned to Egypt two years later and travelled along the Nile all the way to Abu Simbel. He later visited Jaffa, Jerusalem, Beirut and Damascus and brought back several sketches from his trips.

The Inner Propylaeum, Philae was most probably executed from a detailed sketch he made during his second trip to Egypt. The island of Philae, dedicated to the goddess Isis, is situated just above Aswan on the Nile. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was one of the most untouched Egyptian historic sites and its legendary beauty drew countless visitors, among them many artists. Edward Lear, in a letter to his sister in 1854, wrote of Philae: "It is impossible to describe the place to you, any further than saying it is more like a real fairy-island than anything else I can compare it to."

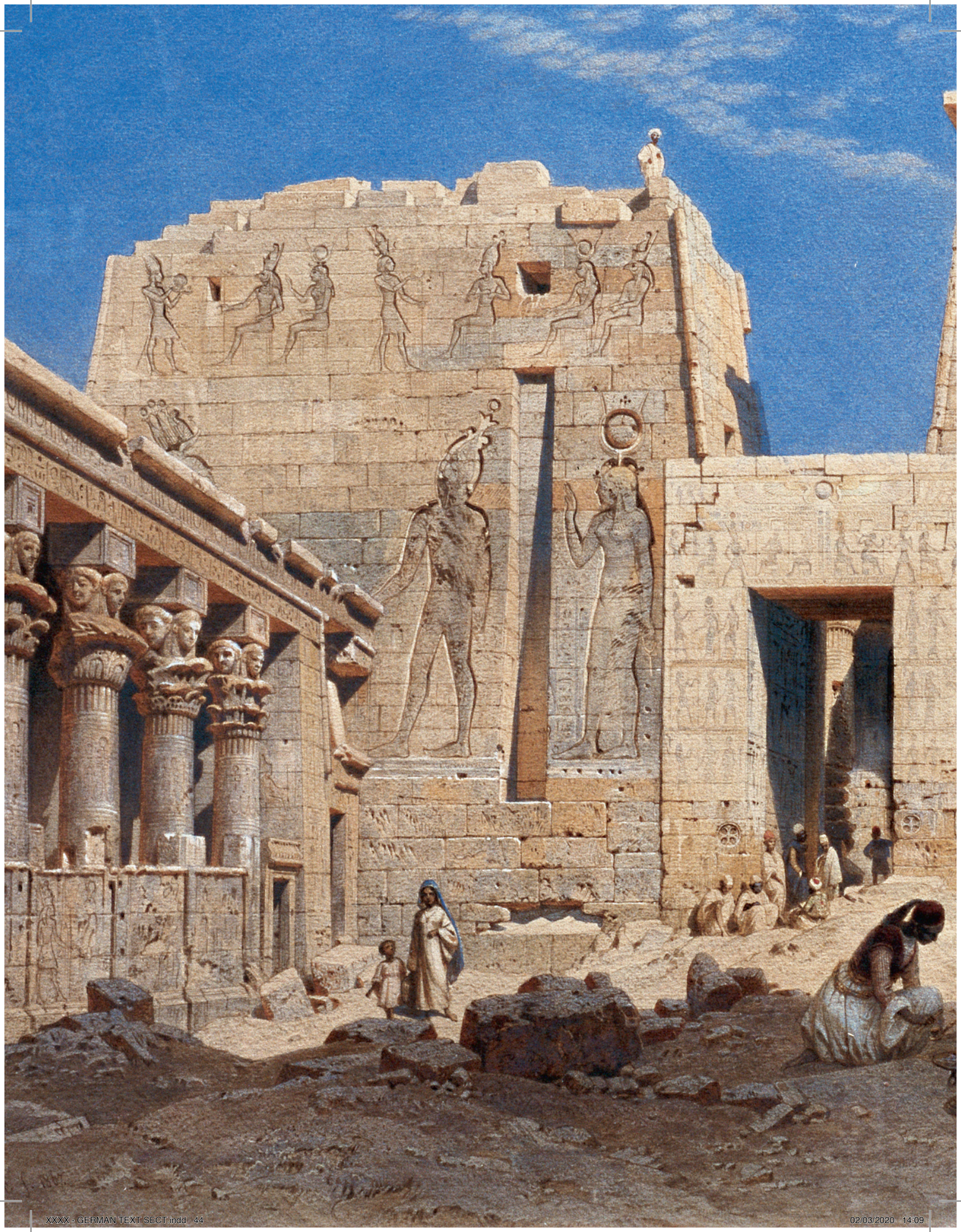
In the present work, Werner masterfully captures the clarity of light flooding the propylaeum, or vestibule, of the temple. He contrasts the daily business of the foreground figures with the gilded majesty of the temple walls and their eloquent testimony to civilisations past, inscribed, as they are, with the prayers to Isis of countless pilgrims. Spanning the gap between meticulous, relished detail and surface design, he achieves – in the juxtaposition of the sunburnt ochre of the stone and the rich azure of the sky – a painting of the purest, almost abstract, beauty.

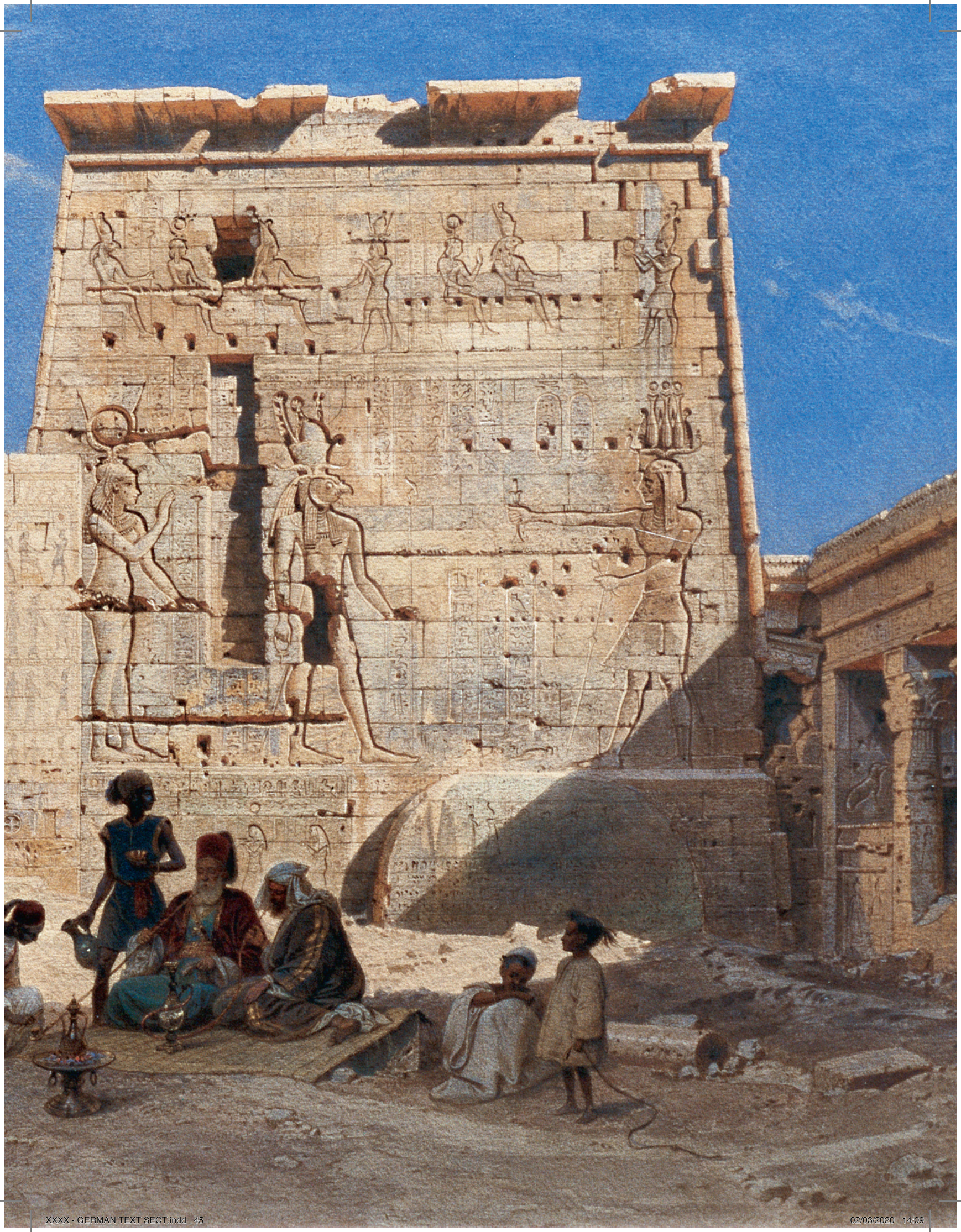
But Werner does not only masterfully depict the propylaeum. By also painting the local people in the foreground smoking, drinking tea, or simply having a walk or in a state of reflection, he creates a connection between modern Egyptians and their ancestors and ancient heritage.

Werner has also keenly observed the Egyptian character. In the lone figure of the man, who has climbed to the top of the left pylon and unobserved looks down upon the encounter below, Werner has humorously elevated the innate curiosity that marks many Egyptians.



The Inner Propylaeum, Philae





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Emily M. Weeks

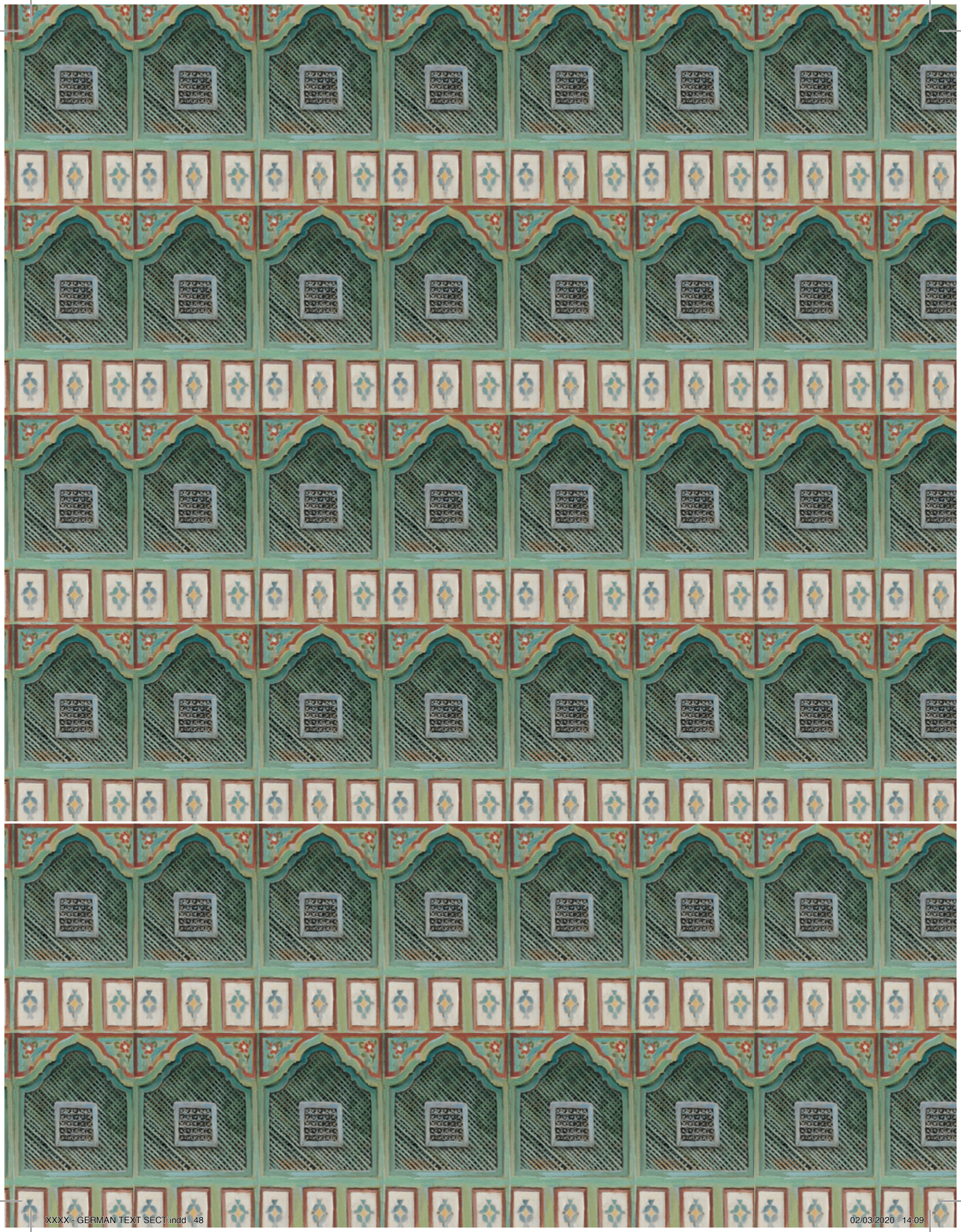
Contributed the essay for the painting *The Pyramids of Gizeh, Morning*.

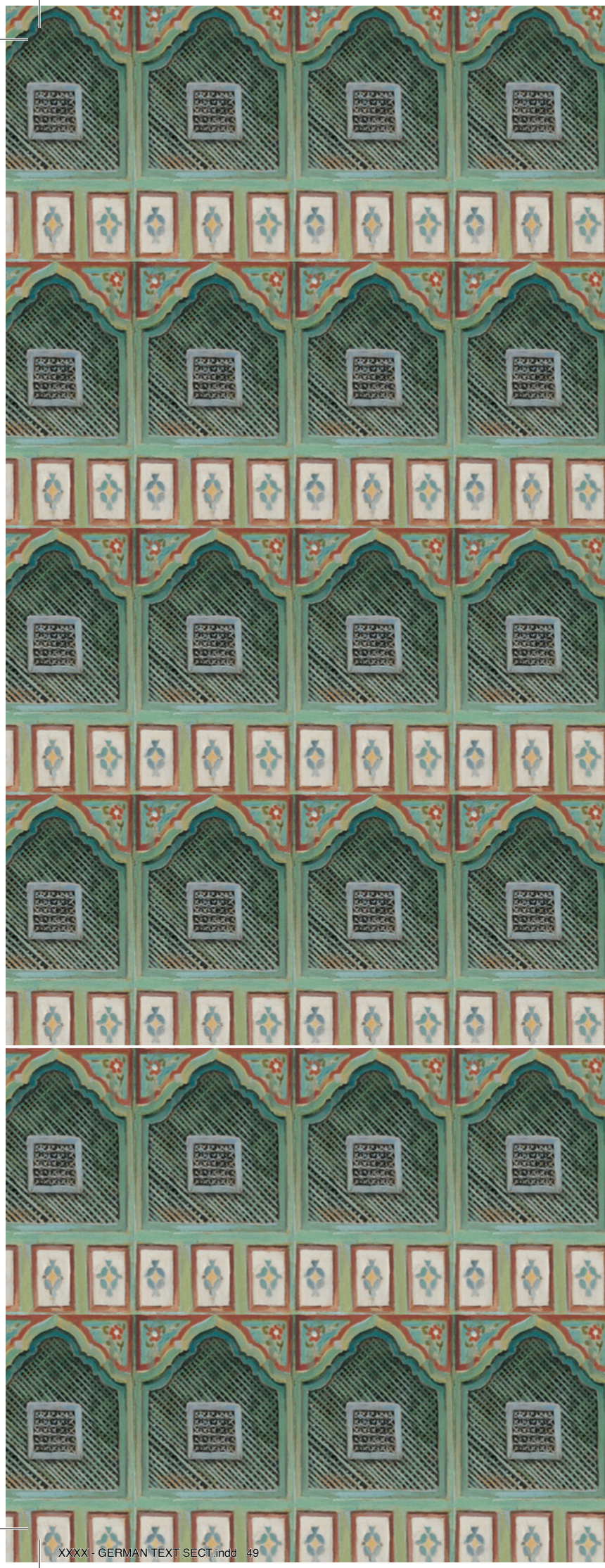
Emily M. Weeks received her Ph.D. from the Department of the History of Art at Yale University. Currently she is an independent art historian and consultant for museums, auction houses, and private collectors in America, Europe, and the Middle East. Her areas of expertise include Orientalism and nineteenth-century British and European visual culture; she is also the acknowledged expert on Jean-Léon Gérôme. Dr. Weeks has also organized and contributed to a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions. Her extensive list of publications includes contributions to scholarly anthologies, academic and popular journals, books on Orientalist art, numerous exhibition and auction catalogues, and content for museum websites. Dr. Weeks's first book, *Cultures Crossed: John Frederick Lewis (1804-1876) and the Art of Orientalism*, was published by Yale University Press in 2014. A book on Orientalist picture frames and a revised catalogue raisonné for Gérôme are forthcoming.

Caroline Williams

Contributed the essays for the paintings: *The Barber's Shop* and *An Innocent Smile*.

Caroline Williams has been focusing on Egypt since 1962, when a visit to Cairo and the Nile led her to graduate studies in Middle East history (Harvard University) and Islamic art and architecture (American University in Cairo). Her publications and research interests range from *The Islamic Monuments in Cairo: The Practical Guide* (now in its 7th edition) to articles on the European artists (Pascal Coste, David Roberts, John Frederick Lewis, Jean-Léon Gérôme) and photographers (Francis Frith) who discovered Egypt in the nineteenth century, and most recently, a study of contemporary Egyptian painters.





Mr. Shafik Gabr, Chairman and Managing Director of the ARTOC Group for Investment & Development, is a renowned leader in international business, one of the world's premier collectors of Orientalist art, and an accomplished philanthropist.

ARTOC, established in 1971, is a multidisciplinary investment holding company with businesses in infrastructure, automotive, engineering, technology and real estate, over the past three years focusing on technologies, both startups and mature companies plus bioscience.

Mr. Gabr is the Chairman and a founding member of Egypt's International Economic Forum, member of the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum and serves on Yale University President's Council on International Activities. Mr. Gabr is a Founding Member of the Wilson Global Advisory Council and Member of the Metropolitan Museum's International Council. Mr. Gabr serves on the Advisory Boards of Omega Capital, Stanhope Capital, LLP, The Middle East Institute and the Global Advisory Council of the Mayo Clinic. Mr. Gabr is also a member of the Friends of Fletcher, Tufts University. Mr. Gabr was a founder of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt in 1982, serving as its first Egyptian President from 1995 until 1997.

Among Mr. Gabr's numerous awards are the Foreign Policy Association's award for Corporate Responsibility (2009), the Meridian Global Citizen Award (2014), the Middle East Institute's Visionary Award (2014), the American University in Cairo's Global Impact Award (2015), the College of Mount Saint Vincent's Saint Vincent de Paul Award (2016), the Drew University's Peacebuilder Award (2016), and the Policy Direction and Leadership Award from the London Center for Policy Research (2017).

Through the Shafik Gabr Social Development Foundation, Mr. Gabr is helping to improve education and health throughout his native Egypt. In 2012 Mr. Gabr established in the US the Shafik Gabr Foundation which launched in November 2012 the East-West: The Art of Dialogue initiative (see www.eastwestdialogue.org) promoting exchanges between the US and Egypt with the purpose of cultural dialogue and building bridges of understanding.

Mr. Gabr holds a BA in Economics and Management from the American University in Cairo and an MA in Economics from the University of London.

Back Cover: Leopold Carl Müller, *An Innocent Smile*

