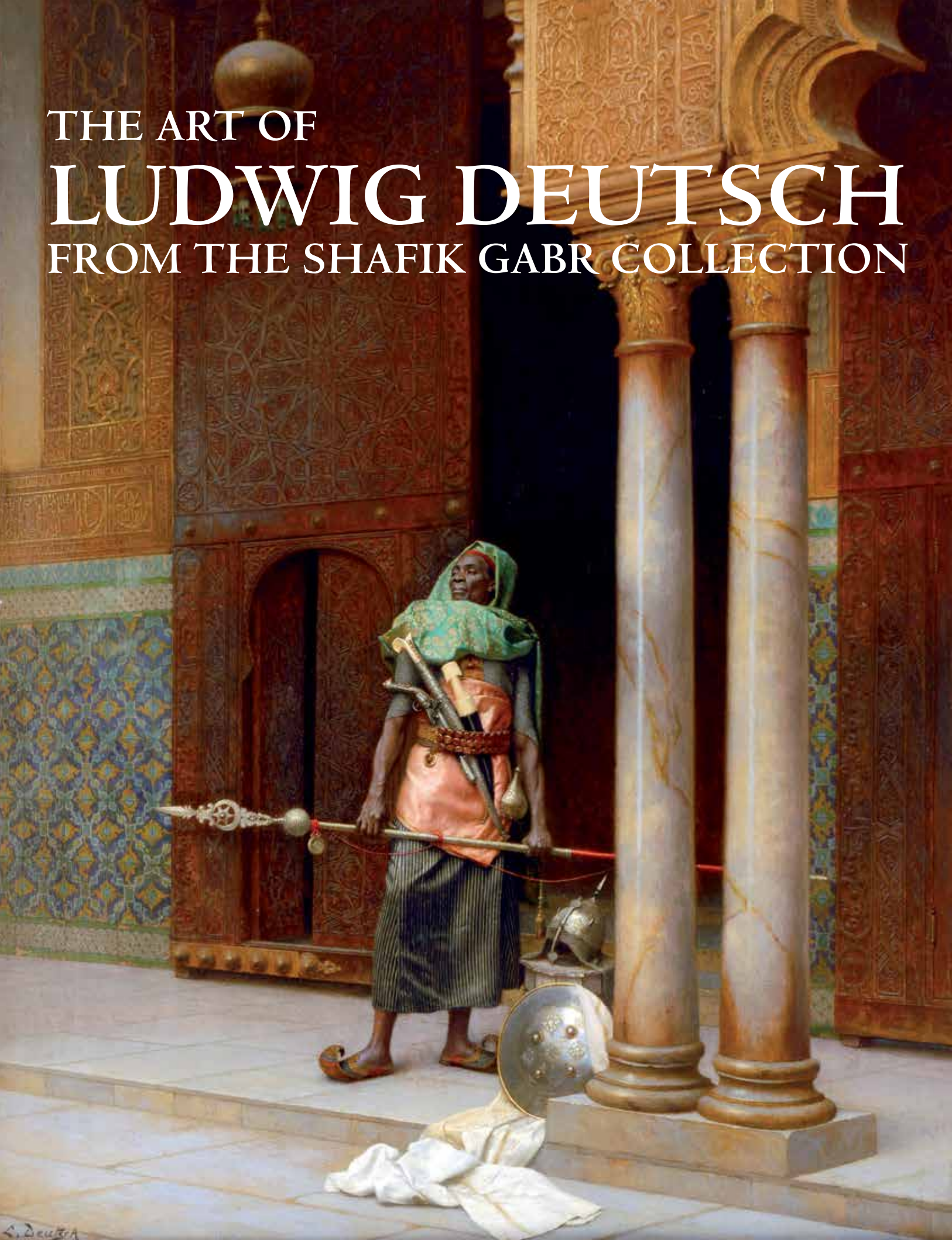


THE ART OF  
**LUDWIG DEUTSCH**  
FROM THE SHAFIK GABR COLLECTION



# 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.

## LUDWIG DEUTSCH

Born into a well-established family in Vienna in 1855, Ludwig Deutsch was the son of a financier in the Austrian court. Following his studies at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts he moved to Paris in 1878 to study with fellow Austrian Leopold Carl Müller. Deutsch soon met and began a life-long friendship with yet another fellow Austrian and artist, Rudolf Ernst, who himself would become a very successful Orientalist artist. While continuing his studies with Müller, Deutsch began to study with Jean-Paul Laurens as well. Wasting no time, the very next year following his arrival in Paris, Deutsch entered his first painting in the Salon de Paris.

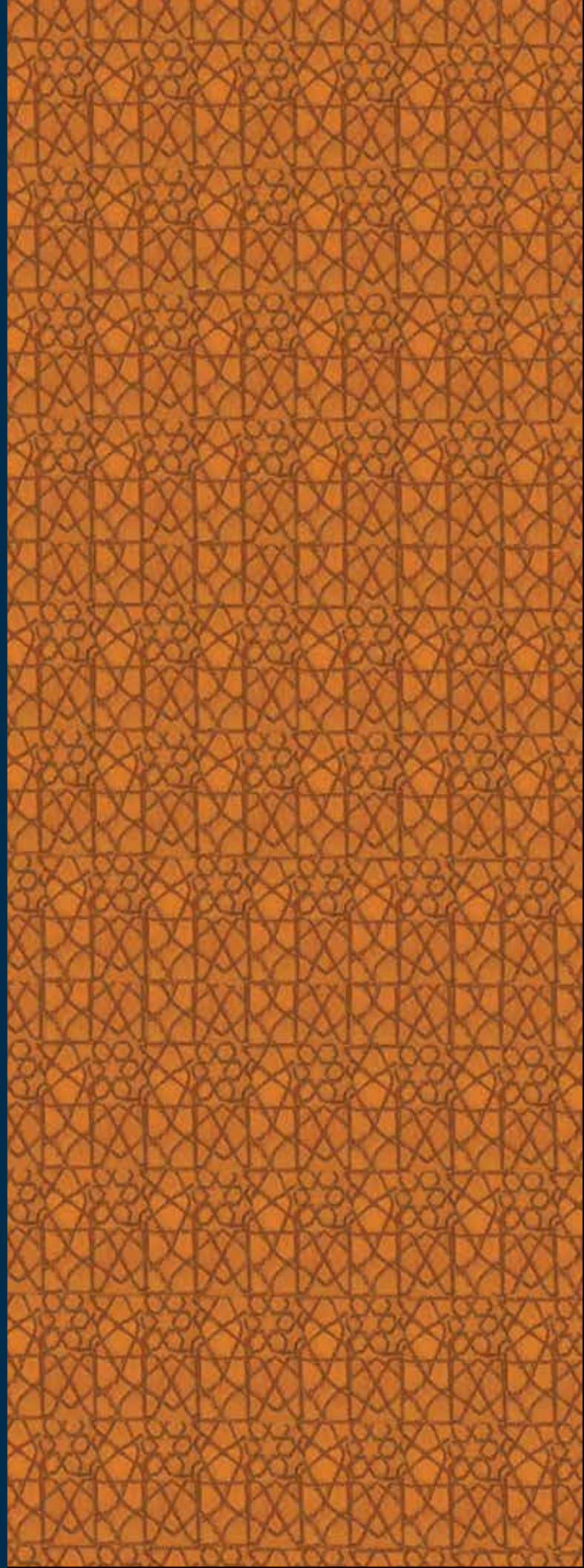
By 1881 Deutsch began to turn his attention to Orientalism and within a few years his style evolved into one of depicting Orientalist vignettes featuring individuals who characterized the occupations and pursuits typical of Egyptian culture.

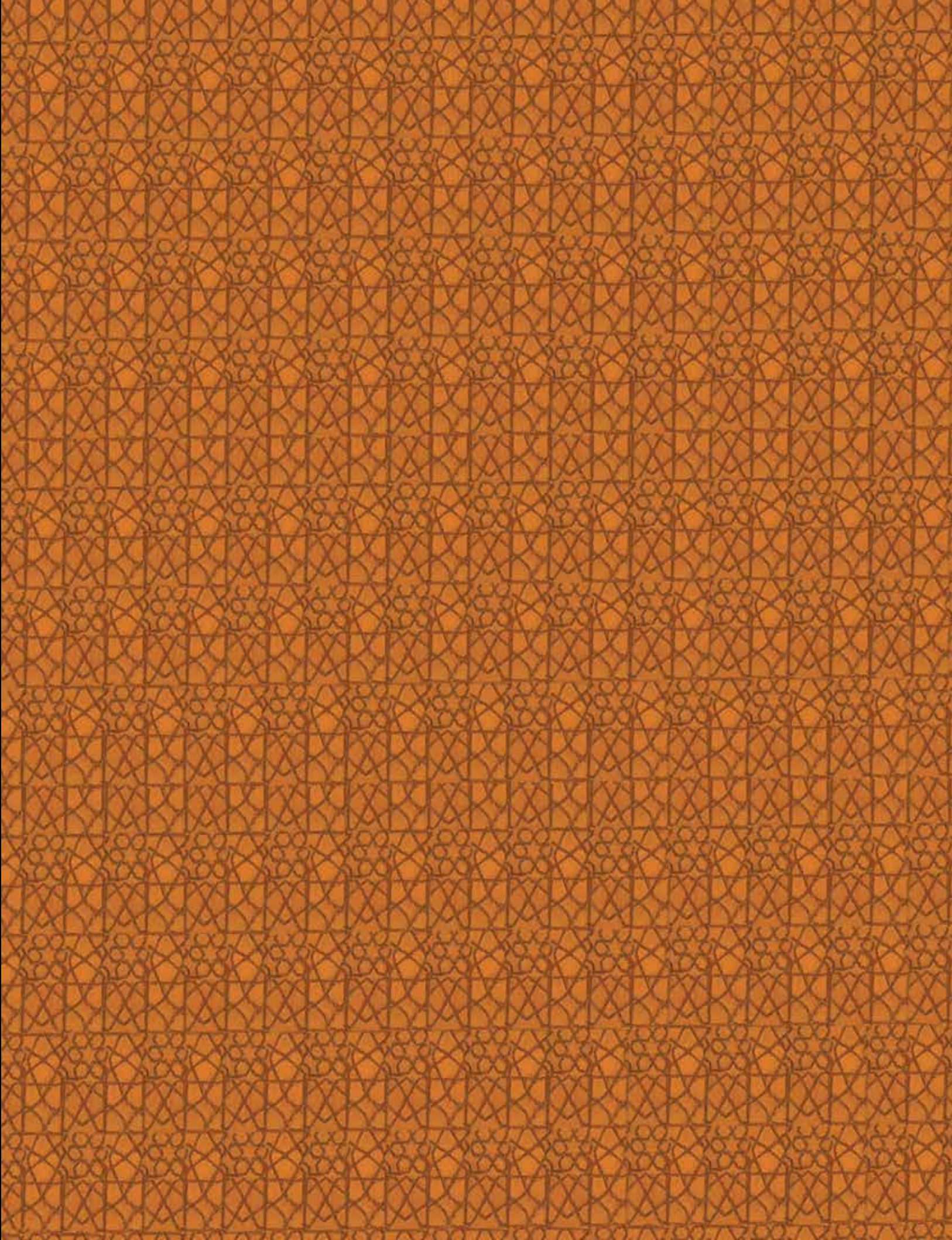
During several trips to Egypt Deutsch amassed a huge number of objects, including: tiles, furniture, arms, textiles, and costumes, which combined with his use of photography helped insure the accuracy and detail of the archaeological and material culture for which his works became so well known.

In 1900, Deutsch was awarded a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris and soon after he received the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.

After a long and illustrious career as a one of the great Orientalist artists, Ludwig Deutsch died in Paris in 1935 at the age of 80.

Front cover, *The Palace Guard*.





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Opposite: *The Lamp Lighter* (detail)

# INTRODUCTION

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## **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.*

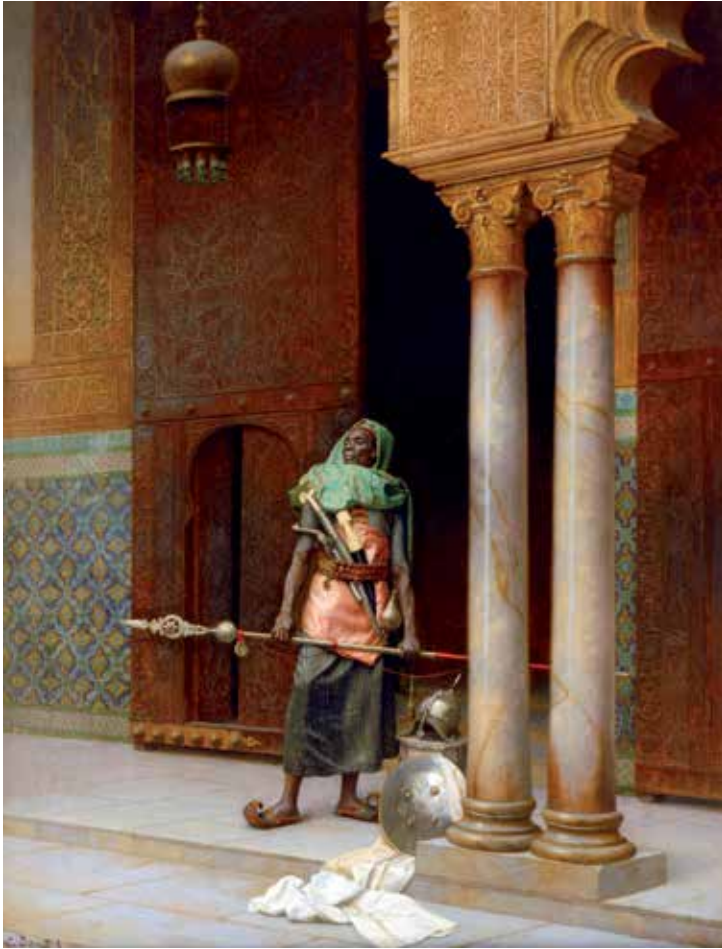
\*definition by M. Shafik Gabr

**D**edicated to an artist with an outstanding œuvre, who holds a special place in the Shafik Gabr Collection, I am proud to present a brief overview on the art of Ludwig Deutsch, perhaps the most unknown and one of the most brilliant artists of the 19th century. I must admit that the art of Ludwig Deutsch has a special place not only in my collection but also in my heart, as this is the artist responsible for the fact that I started collecting Orientalist art in the first place. It came to be that twenty-five years ago I was walking down a road in Paris on a sunny spring afternoon and a painting caught my eye in a gallery. The painting in question was *Egyptian Priest Entering a Temple*.

From the colour shade of the walls, to the immaculate transcription of the hieroglyphs and the pose of the priest, all of the details were depicted with faultless accuracy. At that time I knew very little about Orientalist art, but I was instantly drawn to the painting and fascinated by the amazing amount of detail and realism that adorned it. Twenty-five years, many hours of research, and seventeen Deutsch paintings later, this fascination still holds me in its grip.

If we turn to the characters that appear in Deutsch's paintings, they have a particular quality that makes them unique in the artist's œuvre, and truly reflects his style. The realism is unmistakable, especially in their dress, objects, accessories, and architecture that surround them. It reaches the extent that even the instrument 'ood in *The Mandolin Player* is depicted with the correct seven strings, as opposed to the European version of the instrument, the lute, which has eight. The Kufic script in *The Philosopher* is transcribed without a fault. The figures in the paintings are people that Deutsch would have seen on his trips to Egypt in 1885/86, 1890 and 1898.

These are examples of painstaking precision with which Deutsch painted his characters. Yet at the same time they manage to transcend the bare *individual* realism and become concepts and eternal images - scholars, musicians, scribes, guards. Not only are they types of people of the Arab world, they are also *universal human beings*. In the gesture of a devout man in *At the Door of the Mosque*, to the curiosity of the newsreaders in *A Gathering Around the Morning News*, the peacefulness of the 'ood player in *The Mandolin Player*, the stealth of the soldiers in *The Nubian Guard* and *The Palace Guard*, the pensive gaze of *The Philosopher*, casual complacency of *The Smoker* and the experienced, patient



*The Palace Guard*

narrative of the painting, and thus become *dramatis personae* in their own right.

Deutsch's paintings are one of the most pursued in the world of Orientalist paintings. Their rarity and quality command great respect by collectors and achieve high prices at auctions. Deutsch's dedication and commitment speaks volumes in his paintings as he created a bridge of artistic understanding between East and West.

I mention only a few of the individual characteristics in Ludwig Deutsch's style and I leave the rest for you to find out whilst reading the booklet that unfolds before you. My wish is that Deutsch's characteristic eloquence inspires you as much as it continues to inspire me."

M. Shafik Gabr

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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://eastwest-dialogue.org>.

# LUDWIG DEUTSCH

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AUSTRIAN (1855–1935)

Ludwig Deutsch ranks among the best of the nineteenth-century Orientalists. Today his work is highly sought after for its exceptional detail and precision, which at its best verges on a virtual *trompe l'œil* level of photographic realism; yet his brushwork still bears a lush, painterly richness. Deutsch is especially known for his images of standing guards and sentries, as well as his diverse depictions of daily life in Cairo, from scholars in their study, to street scenes depicting narghile smokers, merchants and street entertainers. Though never a teacher with the kind of influence or following of a Jean-Léon Gérôme or fellow Viennese, Leopold Müller, he did spawn a number of imitators especially among other Austrian expatriates living in Paris. Deutsch was a private man who has sometimes been described as a hermit. Today very little is known about him. The kinds of personal correspondence, letters and journals that one so often takes for granted when researching other artists do not seem to be readily available in any museum archives. For a painter as prolific as he was, enjoying four productive decades as an active, exhibiting artist, that so little is known about him is certainly a testament to the privacy in which he lived his life.

Born in Vienna on 13 May 1855, Ludwig Deutsch's early artistic training came from Karl Meyer at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, beginning in 1872. Deutsch is also believed to have studied with Anselm Feuerbach, the famous history painter, from 1875 to 1877. In one of the few anecdotes known about his life, it is said that after Feuerbach retired, Deutsch and another future Orientalist, Jean Discart, tried to join the atelier of the Orientalist master, Leopold Müller - but they were turned down. Nevertheless, Deutsch may have already had his eyes on Paris, the final destination for countless European and American artists in the late nineteenth century.

Deutsch seems to have had some displeasure with life in Vienna, and after leaving for Paris he broke all contact with his place of birth for many years. One source indicates he came from a Jewish family.<sup>1</sup> Whether Deutsch's rejection of Vienna had anything to do with the city's escalating anti-Semitism, or if it was purely from his experiences trying to establish himself as an artist, is at present unknown.

Ludwig Deutsch arrived in Paris in 1878. Despite his self-imposed exile from Vienna, he does seem to have associated with a number of other Austro-Hungarian expatriate painters living in Paris, like Johann Discart, Arthur von Ferraris and his lifelong friend Rudolf Ernst. These artists all seem to have influenced each other; their depictions of Cairo street scenes, from standing guards to coffee drinkers, all bear an original look that became unique to the 'Austrian School' of Orientalists.

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1) Martina Haja and Günther Wimmer, *Les Orientalistes des Écoles allemande et autrichienne* (Courbevoie/Paris: ACR Édition, 2000).

Deutsch established a studio in the Pigalle area of the tenth arrondissement. Later he changed his address to 11 Rue Navarin, which was listed as his home and studio in Paris Salon catalogues from 1885 to 1905. He would eventually also establish a studio in the south of France. Settling into Paris, Deutsch studied under Jean-Paul Laurens, an accomplished history painter who focused on premodern subject matter, from the Bible to the Middle Ages; Laurens's paintings and murals today bear the monumentality of modern Hollywood period pieces. Deutsch's first submission to the Salon des Artistes français in 1879 reflected Laurens's influence as a historical painter; the work was entitled, *Doña Jeanne Bohorques, Martyr of the Inquisition*. Certainly Laurens's influence in depicting the theatrical and dramatic can be seen in Deutsch's later work of fierce sentries and contemplative scribes - all of which are infinitely cinematic.

It did not take long for Deutsch to take an interest in Middle Eastern subject matter. His earliest Orientalist works are dated 1881. Most sources seem certain that Deutsch took at least three trips to Egypt, in 1886, 1890 and 1898 - though it has been suggested that he might have travelled to the Middle East as early as 1883. The artist won Gold Medals both at the 1892 Salon and at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900. Deutsch was also awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur by the French Government.

The variety of Deutsch's work in the Gabr Collection is an ideal cross section of the motifs and themes for which the artist is celebrated today. First, there are the standing guard images, arguably his greatest legacy, represented with *The Palace Guard* and *The Nubian Guard*. Deutsch especially excelled at this genre, creating images of such astounding detail that they are a barrage of textures and surfaces - gold, marble, leather, wood, steel, silk and skin. Usually imposing, always dramatic, these guard images allowed Deutsch to create a kind of stage overflowing with nuances - a figure, weapons, tile work, brass pots, book stands, water pipes, rugs, carved woodwork and calligraphy, all placed before an imposing entranceway, creating something of a theatrical presentation, like a guard of honour assembled to impress foreign dignitaries. The background architecture of both *The Palace Guard* and *The Nubian*



*The Nubian Guard*



*The Fortune Teller*

*Guard* bears a strong resemblance to numerous Moorish structures within Andalusian Spain like the Alhambra in Granada or the Alcazar in Seville.

*The Fortune Teller* and *The Mandolin Player* represent another subject for which Deutsch is well known - what might be called 'quiet interior' genre scenes. Such settings, often inside mosques or apparently private homes or palaces, have a mellow, introspective quality, reflecting Deutsch's acute sensitivity to the spiritual atmosphere often felt when inside traditional Islamic interiors and architectural spaces. These paintings are most often comprised of a single figure, reading, contemplating, smoking a water pipe or playing a musical instrument.

*The Fortune Teller* shows three figures clearly of different ethnic types: the long-bearded figure is certainly Arab, the standing figure looks African, and the man with his back to the

viewer appears rather light skinned, like a Turk or Circassian. In *The Mandolin Player*, it is probably the same model that Deutsch used in *The Philosopher*, *The Fortune Teller* and *The Smoker* - a tall, slender Arab, with delicate features and a long beard. *The Mandolin Player* bears a similar feeling to *The Fortune Teller* as a mellow, moody interior scene. Both contain divans or day-beds in a soft-lit space, suggesting a quiet sanctuary inside some inaccessible palace or seraglio. This motif of a solitary figure playing an instrument, usually a rabab or mandolin, was depicted in other works by Deutsch, though not to the same frequency as his standing guards and thoughtful scribes. The lighting is softer and more tranquil than some of his other work where intense colour overpowers the viewer.

Deutsch's often-imitated street scenes mostly depict the shops and alleys of Cairo, which anyone who has been to the city will recognise instantly. Here they are represented with *The Street Merchant*, *The Lamplighter*, *The Smoker*, *The Antique Dealers*, *Reading the Letter*, *Outside the Door of the Mosque* and *A Gathering Around the Morning News, Cairo*. They all show the dusty stone architecture and street facades of the old quarters of Cairo, comprising sites such as present-day Darb al-Ahmar and the famous Khan el-Khalili. This section of Cairo is a labyrinth of centuries-old historical mosques, exteriors and doorways that are either surprisingly over-restored or intriguingly yet tragically decrepit.

In *The Street Merchant*, the man sells his goods (apparently pita bread and produce of some sort), seated on a stone *mastaba* in front of a building facade; Deutsch's rendering of all the surfaces - heavily scuffed,



*The Street Merchant*

artist's quiet interior scenes. The same setting and perspective in *Reading the Letter*, in which two figures sit on a bench in front of a doorway, can be found in some of Deutsch's best paintings. Variations of this image show a smoker or a scribe, sitting on the same bench, hand to chin, deep in thought, eyes fixed on the distance. In *The Smoker*, the seated man smokes a *chibuk* pipe in front of a café with a small vessel of coffee resting on an octagonal table in front of him. The same cherry-coloured wooden *mashrabiya* lattice on the entrance to the café appears in other Deutsch images as well. Here, the artist explores the broken tile-work and disrepair mixed in with the sumptuous decorative work so characteristic of Cairo both then and now. *The Antique Dealers* is very reminiscent of the shop stalls with displayed weapons found in various paintings by Jean-Léon Gérôme.

Finally there is *Egyptian Priest Entering a Temple*, a rare image for the artist, recreating a scene from ancient times. Depicting a man stepping into the entranceway of an ancient Egyptian temple, complete with hieroglyphics, this image is linked to a genre within Orientalism made famous by other artists like Jean-Léon Gérôme, Frederick Arthur Bridgman and Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. Inevitably though, some of Deutsch's work was its own kind of historical Orientalism - for many of his standing guards recall an earlier epoch - the golden age of the Islamic empires under the mighty caliphs. Except for the matchlock pistols, Deutsch's standing-guard paintings look more like twelfth-century warriors than anything one might have seen in 1890s colonial Cairo. The westernisation of military clothing and weapons had long been under way during the nineteenth century.

softened and worn down by time, layered with a patina - suggests the passage of time. *A Gathering Around the Morning News, Cairo* has many figures closely grouped together, most likely outside a café. The figure on the far left, dressed in black, is superbly rendered. Holding a heavily tarnished brass kettle and a vase, with a faded, red silken garment draped over his arm, the figure is executed with a classical, painterly virtuosity; in Deutsch's hands, this everyday image of a man takes on a sculptural strength of form. As in *The Fortune Teller* there is a clear diversity of ethnic types in the image, suggesting the heterogeneous population of Cairo.

*The Smoker* and *Reading the Letter* fall into several categories. Although they are Cairo street scenes with the traditional building facades Deutsch always depicted, they also have the same peaceful, private feeling as the



*The Offering*

Around 1909 Deusch began experimenting in looser, Post-Impressionist styles. Some of these later paintings have an almost Fauvist colour palette. This was not an uncommon occurrence; whether through fascination or obligation, many of the artists who had been masters of academic realism did, later in life, dabble in the various Modernist styles that were taking over the art world. Deusch's later, looser work often seems clumsy and unnatural - when compared to the quality of paintings created between 1880 and 1905.

It is assumed that Deusch left France during the First World War due to the official hostilities between France and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He might possibly have gone to North Africa during the war. After World War I he returned; his work reappeared once more in Paris at the Salon of 1919. Having gained French citizenship, from then on Deusch signed his name 'Louis,' rather than 'Ludwig' - a sure indication that he had some unresolved issues with his Austrian origin. Records indicate that the artist continued to exhibit paintings in Paris up until 1925. He and his friend Rudolf Ernst were also regular visitors to one another's studio up until their last days. These are at present the last known facts about the artist.

Ludwig Deutsch died in Paris on 9 April 1935, at the age of 80. Like many academic artists of the nineteenth century, he had long outlived the popularity of his style and genre. He was still a bachelor with no known family. The notion that he died at 80 - unmarried and with no children - suggests a loneliness which may very well have been true. There is certainly something sad that a man with such sumptuous gifts for rendering colour and form should have lived and died quite alone; but one may also recall that such an epitaph describes many painters, including Leonardo da Vinci, an artist who believed that only in solitude could a man achieve anything profound, having written: "Only solitude provides the necessary freedom." Leonardo da Vinci is said to have written this phrase repeatedly in his notebooks throughout his life, as though to remind himself. Expanding on this theme in an even more ruthlessly efficient manner, he wrote:

"If you are alone you belong entirely to yourself... If you are accompanied by even one companion you belong only half to yourself, or even less, in proportion to the thoughtlessness of his conduct; and if you have more than one companion you will fall more deeply into the same plight."

This half monastic, half misanthropic world-view is one that many artists, consciously or not, seem to have lived by throughout the centuries. But whereas Leonardo da Vinci's hermitic nature did not prevent a richness of anecdotes and personal detail about his life from being known to historians, Deutsch's privacy seems to have prevented even basic biographical knowledge from surviving for posterity. There are none of the pithy quotes, or tales of decadent behaviour and carousing, which are often so intertwined with an artist's legacy and fame that the stories become inseparable from the art - whether it is Van Gogh's madness, Toulouse Lautrec's addictions, Caravaggio's drunken brawls, Picasso's womanising or the countless eccentricities of painters throughout history. What we are left with is only Deutsch's art, which fortunately speaks for itself in loud and dramatic voice.

# THE ANTIQUE DEALERS

Signed, 'L. Deutsch' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

28½ x 32 in. (72.4 x 81.3 cm.)

## Provenance:

Private Collection, London

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, London, 12 June 1996, lot 101

Mathaf Gallery, London, 1996

**T**hough many Orientalist paintings seem to strive for timelessness, both in their conservative academic technique and their (often deliberately) antiquated subject matter, others, such as Deutsch's *The Antique Dealers*, possess a strikingly modern sensibility.

Illuminated by the bright light of Cairo's afternoon sun, two bearded men barter over a nineteenth-century Turkish belt. The ends of the belt are encrusted with semi-precious stones and raised metal decorations, while the strap is adorned with elaborate metallic embroidery. It seems the man on the left is the potential purchaser of this fine accessory, as he considers it most intently. The wide horizontal stripes of his cotton and silk scarf, wrapped securely around his shoulders, suggest that it was woven on a treadle loom by the men of Kerdassa, or one of the other small weaving villages near Cairo. The man on the right gestures offhandedly in his direction, his carnelian signet ring catching the light. "Buy the belt if you wish," he seems to say, "I have made you my best offer."

In front of the men is a glass case, in which several more treasures are displayed. Such sophisticated pieces of furniture were becoming common in the Khan el-Khalili and Cairo's other, smaller bazaars, in response to the growing number of tourists who wandered through. Set outside the architectural niches in which Cairene shops were often contained, amidst a disparate array of metalware, textiles, inlaid boxes and other traditional local goods, these sturdy cases enabled acquisitive passers-by to inspect an orderly arrangement of exquisite objects at their leisure. The merchants, on the other hand, could rest assured that neither dust nor careless fingers would injure their delicate wares. The blue-and-white ceramic tile here, for example, in the shape of an eight-pointed star, is probably thirteenth-century Persian or fourteenth-century Central Asian. A chip or crack could hardly be afforded in an object with such an impressive pedigree (it should be mentioned that the eclecticism of the items in this image is historically accurate: the late nineteenth century saw both an unprecedented influx of imported goods into Cairo and a new appreciation of historical pieces, which had become the favourite souvenirs of European travellers).

The explicit topicality of *The Antique Dealers* is one of the qualities for which Deutsch is best known, and may be considered a hallmark of his art. Similar 'signatures' of the artist are also to be found: a miniature version of Deutsch's favourite motif - an elegant copper ewer - is housed within the merchant's glass case, for example, and the Qajar helmet and shield hanging on a *mashrabiya*, or turned wood screen, connect this work with several other paintings in the Shafik Gabr Collection.



# AT THE DOOR OF THE MOSQUE

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1886' (upper right)

Oil on Panel

16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> in. (41 x 26.5 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1886

## Provenance:

Murrieta sale, Christie's, London, 14 May 1892, lot 61

Thomas Mclean

Private Collection, London

Anonymous sale, Bonhams, Dubai, 11 May 2009, lot 66

This is one of three paintings by Ludwig Deutsch which take as their subject aspects of Muslim religion and which not only complement others in the Gabr collection,<sup>1</sup> but also show a growth in the artist's own perception of Islam.

*At the Door of the Mosque* was completed in Paris, in 1886, just after what might have been Deutsch's first trip to Egypt. He was obviously struck by Muslim piety and by the magnificent Islamic monuments located along the Darb al-Ahmar, but as this painting indicates, his understanding of Islam was observational only. There is no mistaking the pattern of the bronze door at the entrance to the mosque. It is identifiable as the door taken from the madrasah-complex of Sultan Hasan (c. 1360) by Sultan al-Muayyad Shaykh<sup>2</sup> for his own great mosque-complex built in 1415-20, located just inside the Bab Zuwayla, the southern gate of the medieval core of Islamic Cairo. The faithful rendering of the star pattern of the half-open door was undoubtedly due to on-the-spot sketches or photographs. The surrounding details of the architecture, however, are less authentic: the stone bands - blue instead of red or black - and the tile insert in the tympanum and over the corner column reveal artistic expedients or elements from other buildings.

A man emerges from the mosque. A shawl drapes his shoulders, perhaps to warm him on a late evening or in winter. His gesture, upraised arms with open palms, is that of the *du'a*, a gesture frequently made as a personal and spontaneous part of prayer. Deutsch has observed it well, the gesture is commonly made to thank God.

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1) See paintings by J. L. Gérôme, A.L. Mielich, C. Mouchot and Otto Pilny.

2) Caroline Williams, *Islamic Monuments in Cairo: The Practical Guide* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008), pages 65-70, 160-162.



# EGYPTIAN PRIEST ENTERING A TEMPLE

Signed and dated 'L. Deutsch 1892' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

18½ x 13½ in. (47 x 34.3 cm.)

Painted in 1892

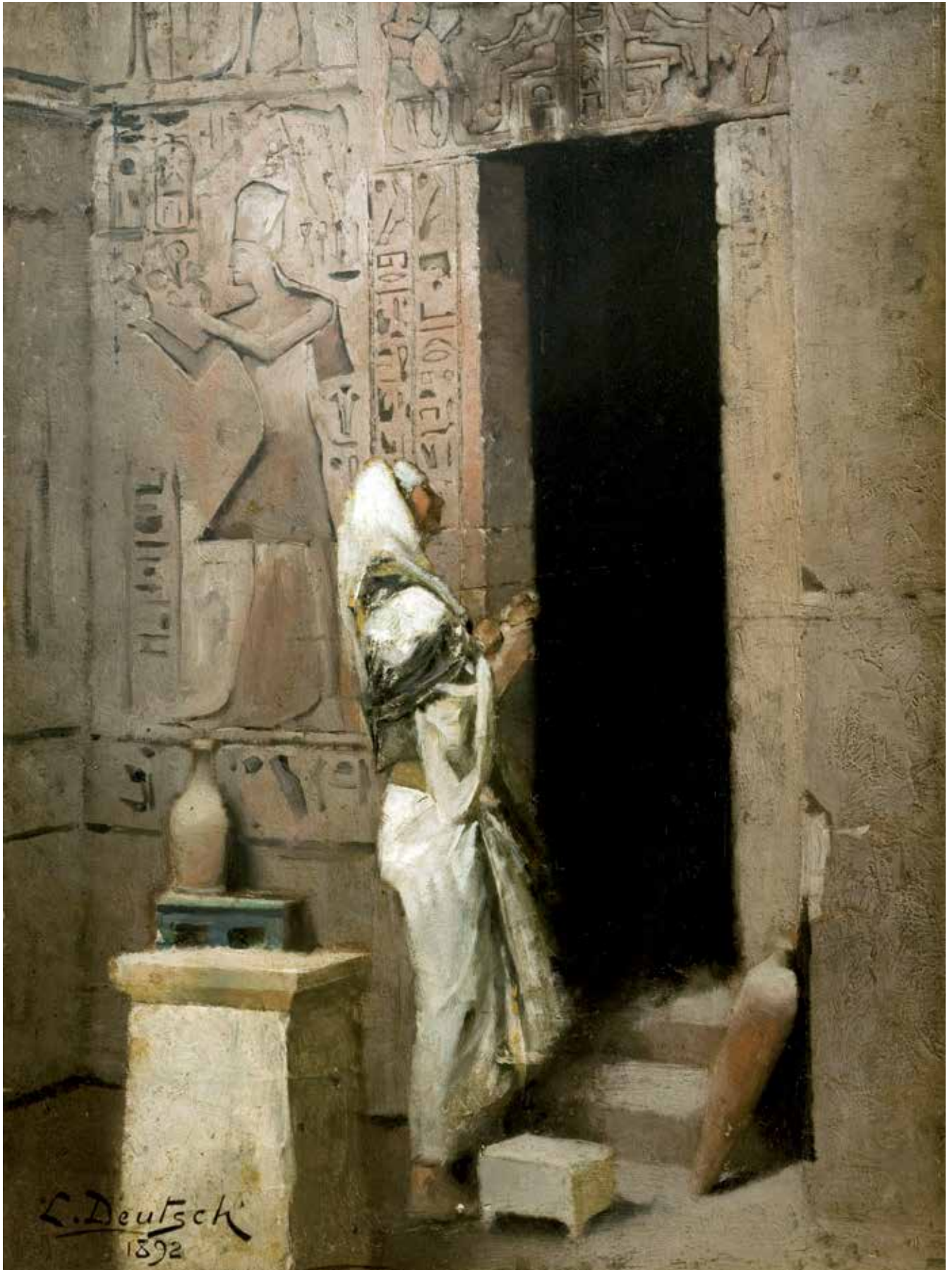
## Provenance:

Anonymous sale, Étude Tajan, Paris, 18 June 1993, lot 232

The depiction of ancient Egypt was a well-established tradition by the time Deutsch painted this painting in 1892. Napoleon's ill-fated expedition to Egypt in 1798 had produced the *Description de l'Égypte*, the most comprehensive illustrated 'handbook' to Egypt, and the spirit of scientific study and observation that it embodied only intensified as the nineteenth century wore on. In addition to the 'objective' approach of European scholars and artists, there was also a growing fascination with the ancient Egyptians themselves - their spectacular riches, their mysterious religious beliefs, and the exotic rituals, costumes and architecture that comprised their daily life.

In Deutsch's work, these two trends - realist and romantic - eloquently intertwine. The individual hieroglyphs that he has taken such pains to record are, in fact, correct, and the action of the priest is accurate as well. He is shown, with hands raised, in one of the innermost rooms of the temple, accessible only to individuals of his rank. There he would bring offerings to the gods, drawn on the temple wall. (The details of the carvings suggest that the temple dates from the Late Period, or Dynasties 21-30.) Interestingly, given the spectacular renditions by his peers, Deutsch has left the walls unpainted. Though anachronistic in terms of his subject matter, this is likely how they would have appeared in the nineteenth century, when Deutsch would have known the site.

In many ways, this unassuming work is the most important in the Shafik Gabr Collection. It was the first painting that Shafik Gabr purchased, and was the impetus for the formation of one of the most significant collections of Orientalist art to exist in private hands. Deutsch's painting marks a beginning of another kind, as well. Though unusual in his oeuvre for its ancient Egyptian subject matter, it is an early example of what would become Deutsch's most recognised theme - the figure of a man set against an ornate doorway.



# THE FAVORITE

Signed, inscribed, and dated L. Deutsch 1906 Paris (lower left)

Ink and Inkwash on Paper

12 x 9 in. (30.5 x 22.5 cm.)

## Provenance:

Private Collection, Germany

Anonymous sale, Artcurial, Paris, 18 May 2016, lot 9

In *The Favorite*, Deutsch provides a rare glimpse behind the heavily guarded doors of his best-known Orientalist paintings. An upper-class harem woman, dressed in vaguely Egyptian clothing, but given an added gloss of Ptolemaic splendor, gazes outward toward the viewer. The delicate positioning of the fingers of her right hand suggests that she has been caught in the middle of some unseen act or en route to an unknown destination - possibly one within the harem or the boundaries of a private home. The exact nature of the event is left to speculation, however, and Deutsch's own encounter with this woman remains a mystery as well: was this portrait based on an earlier sketch made during his Middle Eastern travels (Deutsch traveled to the region in 1885-6, 1890 and again in 1898), even despite the strictures surrounding access to the harem and the women inside, or is this a study of one of the many Arab models that Deutsch found in Paris and who regularly sat for his Orientalist works?

Though the context of this image's creation is unclear, its formal qualities are instructive and revealing. The precision of line and attention to anatomy help to explain the nearly photographic quality of Deutsch's finished paintings: a consummate draughtsman, the roots of Deutsch's intensely realistic style lie in his rigorous academic training and study of the human form. (Upon his arrival in Paris in 1878, Deutsch studied with the history painter Jean-Paul Laurens [1838-1921], and perfected his trademark style.) The absence of colour in this work also makes a useful point: though the vibrant, saturated hues of Deutsch's paintings often serve to accentuate his expert documentation of ethnic costume and accessory, Deutsch's black and white sketches are just as compelling in their accuracy - and, even in their pared down simplicity, as visually seductive as well.

Deutsch's classically detailed compositions would give way shortly after this sketch was made to a Post-Impressionistic approach, with looser brushstrokes and a more animated application of paint. The significance of *The Favorite* in Deutsch's vast oeuvre becomes all the more pronounced, therefore, as a final example of one signature style before its transition to another.



# THE FORTUNE TELLER

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1906' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

31¼ x 25¼ in. (80.6 x 64.1 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1906

## Provenance:

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York, 26 May 1983, lot 78

Borghesi & Co., New York

Private Collection, Switzerland

Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, 14 June 2006, lot 13

Painted at the apogee of Ludwig Deutsch's career, in one of the artist's several Paris studios, the present work is extraordinary not only for the artist's customary attention to detail, but also for its dramatic chiaroscuro and subtle brushwork. No other work in Deutsch's oeuvre shows such a powerful grasp of light and shade. Usually in the artist's paintings the transfer from light to shadow occurs further back in the picture plane, and is expressed as a relatively sudden transition, with a uniform light defining the foreground. Here, Deutsch illuminates the scene dramatically from the right, defining his figures not only with the clarity of line for which the Orientalists are traditionally famed, but also moulding them with light and shade, and with subtle, varied brushwork. The overall effect is to soften the composition, and to focus it on the central figures.

The theme of fortune-telling was a popular one in Orientalist art; Deutsch repeated the present composition in 1927, and the subject was rendered also by other artists, including Deutsch's close friend Rudolf Ernst. The practice, which stretches back to times prior to Islam, was still common on the streets of Cairo in the late nineteenth century, and Deutsch would have been familiar with it either from photographs or from one of his three recorded visits to the Egyptian capital. Similar in concept to the Western idea of fortune-telling from tea-leaves, the Middle Eastern practice of using rice or sand is based on the belief that patterns in the grain alluded to significant future events.

Painted at a time when Deutsch was moving from a photorealistic to a looser style, the present work combines the best elements of both: the extraordinary attention to detail of the former, but rendered softer and less austere by the latter to create overall a painting of great drama and intimacy.

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1) See Rudolf Ernst's, *The Egyptian Fortune Teller* in the Shafik Gabr Collection.



# A GATHERING AROUND THE MORNING NEWS, CAIRO

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Le Caire 1885' (upper right)

Oil on Panel

24 x 17½ in. (61 x 44.5 cm.)

Painted in Cairo in 1885

## **Provenance:**

Rayner MacConnal, London

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York, 26 May 1983, lot 77

Borghini & Co., New York

Private Collection, Switzerland

Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, 14 June 2006, lot 12

Deutsch produced a few works based on figures reading, such as seen in *Reading the Letter*. In *A Gathering Around the Morning News, Cairo*, he focuses on the expansion of newspaper circulation in nineteenth-century Egypt, which was believed to have helped significantly raise the level of literacy in the country.

*A Gathering Around the Morning News, Cairo* shows a group of men gathered in Cairo's famous bazaar Khan el-Khalili. It was painted two years after the artist's first trip to Egypt, during his most productive period, and was based on a smaller variant he had done in 1883. The present work would be the finished version of the earlier one.

With some exceptions, the majority of Deutsch's paintings after 1883 were based on scenes of everyday Cairene life. These contrast strongly with his more formal paintings, which typically showed a single - often ceremonial - figure, set starkly against a lavish background, such as his palace guards. In the present work, Deutsch renders great nuances of expression, and the relationship of each figure to the other is carefully worked out. The mood is informal; the artist has contrasted a fleeting moment with the implied permanence of the background architecture.



# THE INSPECTION

Signed and dated 'L. Deutsch 1883' (upper right)

Oil on Panel

15<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (40.3 x 27.3 cm.)

Painted in 1883

## Provenance:

Private Collection, New York

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York, 4 November 2010, lot 7

Deutsch is believed to have first travelled to Egypt in 1883. Other trips were to follow, and for the next thirty years he based his Orientalist genre subjects on the sketches he had made on the spot while in the country, and upon the large collection of artefacts he brought back with him to his studio in Paris. This painting is dated 1883 and it must have been made while the richness of fabrics, the profusion of architectural decoration, the multitude and variety of objects for sale in the bazaar were still new to his eye.

It is a handsome composition. A Nubian stands and inspects a Persian war helmet while behind him and to his side he is surrounded by the textures and colours of a wooden geometric door, glazed tiles, embroidered brocade and a mixture of arms, metalwork and inlaid furniture. In the carefully rendered sheen of the textiles, the shine of the metal, the gleam of mother-of-pearl and the glitter of gold, Deutsch captures the West's fascination with the visual appeal of Eastern culture and the remarkable craftsmanship of objects.

The subject matter of this painting is also possibly a forerunner of what became genres in themselves: the collector or merchant amidst a variety of Oriental craft products,<sup>1</sup> and the series of guards, elaborately armed, standing post.<sup>2</sup>

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1) See Deutsch, *The Antique Dealers* (note the Qajar helmet); R. Ernst, *Reading*; Discart, *The Connoisseurs* (though set in North Africa, not Egypt); and three paintings by R. Weisse in the Shafik Gabr Collection.

2) See Deutsch, *The Nubian Guard*, *The Palace Guard* (note the Qajar Helmet); Discart, *The Harem Guard*; R. Weisse, *The Guard* (note helmet) in the Shafik Gabr Collection.



# THE LAMPLIGHTER

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch, Paris 1900' (lower right)

Oil on Panel

22¼ x 17¼ in. (56.5 x 43.8 cm.)

Painted in 1900

## Provenance:

Lt. Colonel Walter Graham Murray, D.S.O., Twyford House, Twyford, Hampshire, England (circa 1900)

Thence by descent

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York, 24 April 2009, lot 14

After his trip to Egypt in 1888, Deutsch painted *The Lamplighter* in his Paris studio in 1900. Deutsch was a solitary person, and it is not known how much he knew about Islam and what his deliberate intentions might have been in creating such a moving religious and cultural image. Nevertheless a great deal can be read into the painting.

On the face of it the subject of this genre scene would seem to be a simple act of religious housekeeping: the lamplighter fills one of the lamp's glass vessels with the oil in which a lighted wick will float. However, Deutsch's meticulously rendered setting and details seem to bring out deeper cultural layers.

The setting itself is that of the madrasah in the complex built by the Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri (1503), the last flowering of Mamluk art located on the main ceremonial artery of Cairo's medieval nucleus.<sup>1</sup> The lamplighter is positioned in the central inner court with a view of lateral *iwan* behind him. The rich arabesque carving of the soffit of the horseshoe arch, the marble panels of the dado, the bitumen-filled inscription of its border and the decorated wooden frame of door identify the setting. An ovoid marble jar supported by a turtle-shaped base sits in one corner of the *iwan*. This was the medieval water cooler. The provision of water for the thirsty, since the days of the Prophet, has been praised as a charitable and noble act in Islam.

Central to the composition is the lamplighter, who is preparing the lamp to give light. In the imagery of the Qu'ran light is one of the metaphors for God and nowhere is this more explicit than in the Light verse (Q. 24, v. 35) which begins: "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth," and ends with: "Light upon Light; God guides to His light whom He will." Whether intentional or not, Deutsch has intuitively highlighted in this painting two basic elements of Islam: light as guidance and water as mercy.

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<sup>1</sup> Caroline Williams, *Islamic Monuments in Cairo: The Practical Guide* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008), pages 166-169.



## LEARNED ADVICE

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1895' (lower right)

Oil on Panel

28 x 30½ in. (71.1 x 77.5 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1895

### Provenance:

Frost & Reed, London

Dr John Williamson, Tanzania

Private Collection, Canada (acquired from the above in 1975)

Anonymous sale, Christie's New York, 26 January 2011, lot 55

The inspiration for *Learned Advice* came from Deutsch's various trips to Egypt over a twenty-year period from about 1883 to 1904. In this composition, Deutsch reflects the visual stimuli he had received from Cairo's architectural tradition as well as from its luxurious furnishings.<sup>1</sup>

The setting for this painting is a sumptuous residence in Cairo. All of the elements - the marble pieces and inlays of steps, panels and inserts; the porphyry column with its tulip-like base; the large candlestick - belong to the religious and domestic architecture of the early Mamluk period, i.e. the fourteenth century. Two men dominate the composition. One, with dagger in his cummerbund and sword upon the tabouret in front of him, reclines with lowered head and clenched fists against the rich and golden hued fabrics that cover his divan. In front of him stands an *alim*, a religious scholar and his learned instructor, perhaps a Sufi sheikh and a descendant of the Prophet as indicated by the green wrap of the blue-tasselled red *fez* he wears. The plainly robed man points decisively to the book open on the carved stand on the floor between them. The text division into paragraphs tells us it is not a Qur'an, but no more.

Is this merely a scene of religious instruction or advice, or does it go deeper into admonition of a ruler who is not following proper precepts?

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1) The silken coverings on the divan will appear again in *The Mandolin Player*, while the blue-and-red framed carpet will be part of *The Philosopher*, both in the Shafik Gabr Collection.



# THE MANDOLIN PLAYER

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1904' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

20¼ x 23¾ in. (51.4 x 60.4 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1904

## Provenance:

Anonymous sale, Phillips, London, 19 November 1996, lot 52

Mathaf Gallery, London, 1997

## Literature:

Olga Nefedova, *A Journey into the World of the Ottomans: The Art of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671–1737)* (Skira, 2009), p. 25 (illustrated), p. 63

The year 1904 was a defining moment in the history of Orientalism. It saw the birth of Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* and the death of the undisputed master of the genre, Jean-Léon Gérôme. Deutsch's work, painted in Paris in this year, seems to unite these disparate events in its eloquent combination of a musical subject and its meticulous, academic style.

The instrument that the man plays is an 'ood, recognised by its wide body, short neck and seven double strings (though the title of the work specifies a mandolin, these typically had eight strings; Deutsch correctly depicts the 'ood with seven). In the 'definitive' edition of *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, published in London in 1860, Edward William Lane explains the 'ood as follows: "The 'ood [derived from the Arabic word for 'wood'] is a lute, which is played with a plectrum. This has been for many centuries the instrument most commonly used by the best Arab musicians, and is celebrated by numerous poets." (p. 361)

Though Lane does not expand on this description of the 'ood, Deutsch's contemporaries would have known it well. Since at least the seventeenth century, European artists and travellers had delighted in descriptions of Middle Eastern women singing and playing these stringed musical instruments. From 1900, moreover, the 'ood had gained even broader cultural appeal, due in part to the revival of interest in historical music and, at the same time, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch genre painting.

Surrounded by the golden sheen of sumptuous fabrics, the man leans into his ornately carved and inlaid instrument, the folds of his striped silk *qumbaz* gently falling over its wooden body. The loop and knot fastenings of his *qamis* are just visible beneath his beard - just one instance of the impeccable detail for which Deutsch is rightly known. The plectrum that the man holds, and with which he strums his tune, is made from a bird feather. It is a fitting allusion to song, and to the melodious sounds of nature. Indeed, with light streaming in from the left hand side of the composition, it is easy to imagine that a window has been opened, allowing the man a view out-of-doors.

The inclusion of seventeenth-century tiles from Damascus, which create an elaborate blue and white pattern on the wall, would have had a particular resonance for European audiences as well. Immensely popular in the late nineteenth century, these tiles were quickly finding their way into personal collections and private homes.







# MORNING PRAYERS

Signed and dated L. Deutsch Paris 1902 (upper left)

Oil on Panel

25¾ x 20¼ in. (65 x 51.5 cm.)

## Provenance:

Sotheby's, New York, 29 May 1980, lot 107

The Fine Arts Society, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner circa 1981

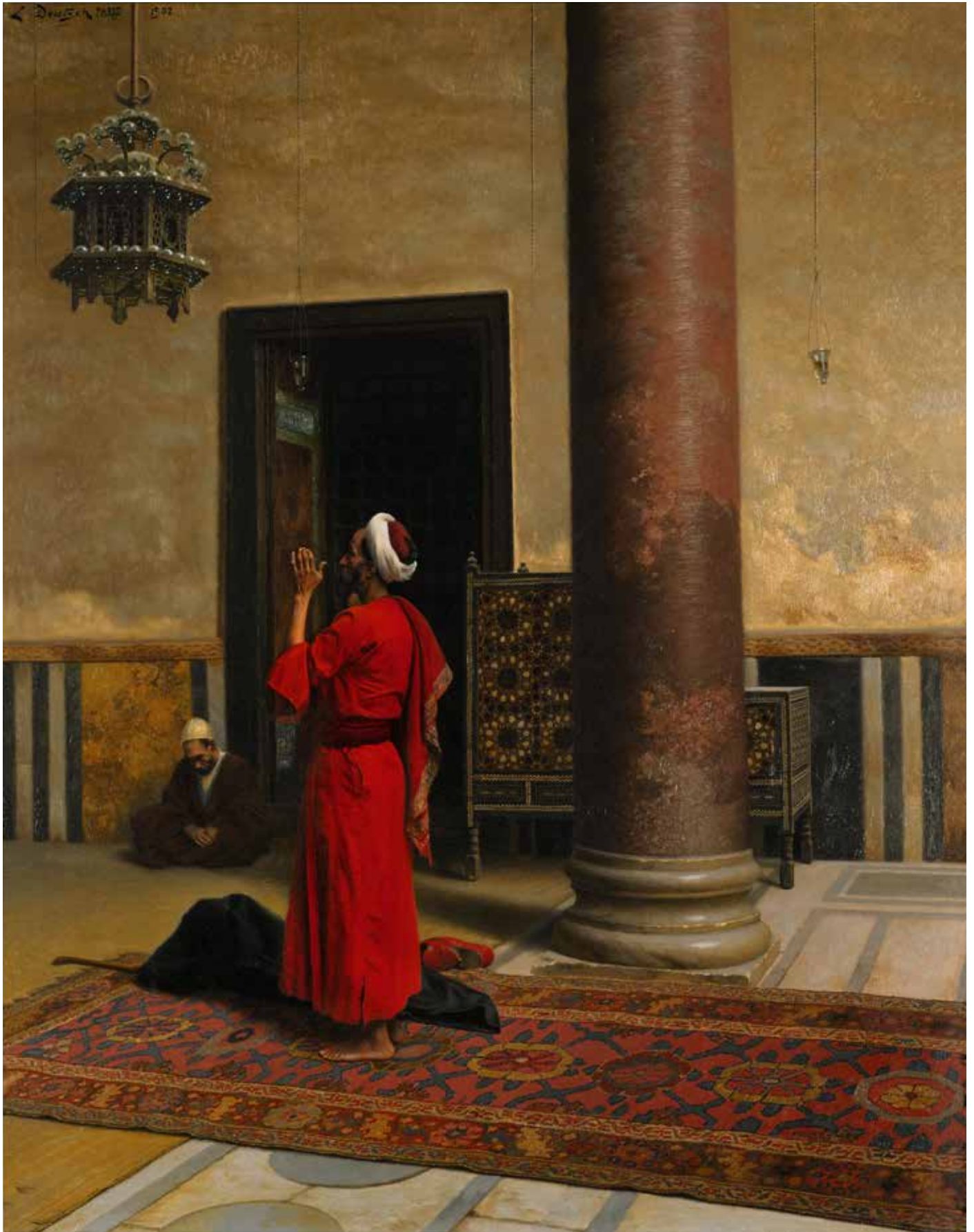
Sotheby's, London, 19 April 2016, lot 9

## Literature:

Martina Haja and Günther Wimmer, *Les Orientalistes des Ecoles allemande et autrichienne*, Paris, 2000, p. 200, illustrated

In *Morning Prayers*, Ludwig Deutsch presents an iconic image in Orientalist art. The subject had become a favorite among nineteenth-century Orientalist painters and writers by at least the 1860s, due in large part to the influential compositions of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), in which the distinctive religious architecture of the Middle East was evocatively paired with the figure of the praying Arab man. Deutsch's ability to reimagine and reinvigorate this familiar trope, and transform it into a signature piece within his own expansive oeuvre, provides some indication of why his paintings were so popular during his lifetime, and why they remain among the most coveted works of Orientalist art at auction today.

The man in Deutsch's painting demonstrates one of the many expressive postures associated with *saláh*, or the ritual of Muslim prayer. Performed five times a day - the morning prayer being the third in the series - this sequence of symbolic poses was most thoroughly described by the Arabic linguist and Orientalist scholar Edward William Lane (1801-1876), in his highly acclaimed *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1860). Lane's book proved immensely popular during his lifetime and was widely distributed throughout Britain, Europe, and America; almost immediately, Western artists began to use its text and numerous engravings as a sourcebook for their own Orientalist compositions. The upraised arms and open palms of the figure here would have been performed near the beginning of the prayer sequence, as an illustration by the author makes clear (fig. 1). This particular posture appears to have been a favorite of Deutsch's, as it is repeated in another of his prayer paintings in the Shafik Gabr collection, painted in 1886 (cf. *At the Door of the Mosque*). Indeed, the composition of *Morning Prayers* as a whole may be regarded as a version of Deutsch's most



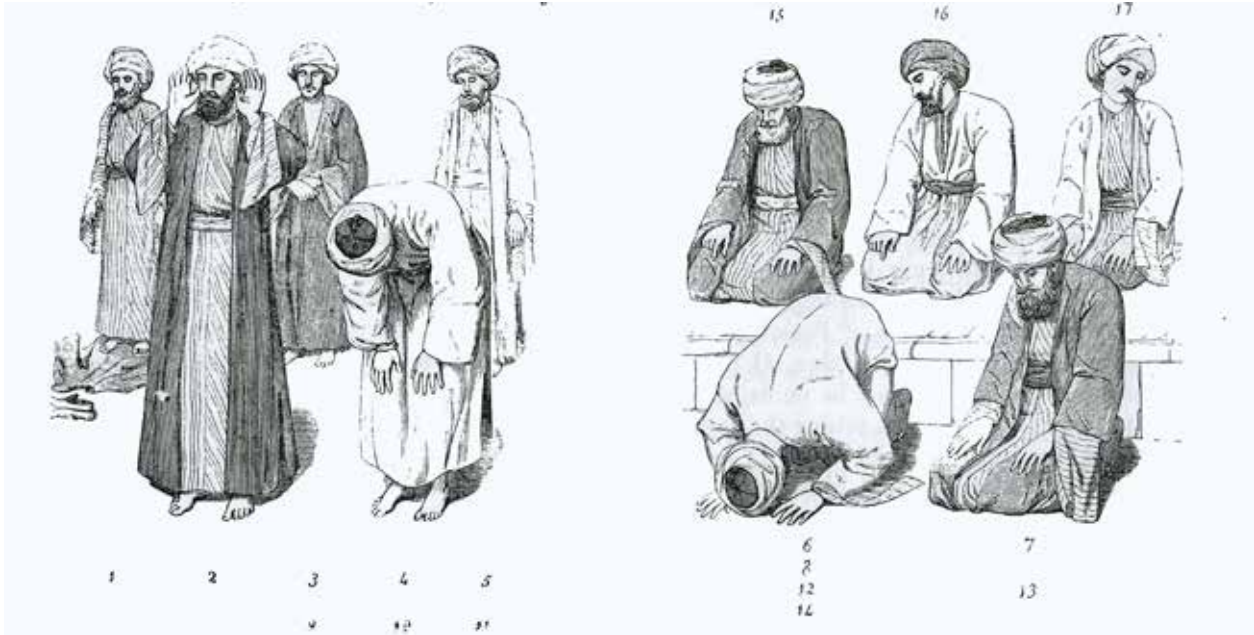


Figure 1

Sequence of symbolic prayer poses described by the Arabic linguist and Orientalist scholar Edward William Lane (1801-1876), in his highly acclaimed *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1860)

widely recognized and personally satisfying works, with a single figure silhouetted against an entrance or doorway, and surrounded by various still-lives and incidental vignettes.

The accuracy and clarity with which the artist has recorded this scene, even years after his Middle Eastern travels were over (Deutsch had visited the region in 1885-6, 1890 and again in 1898), suggests the use of photographs, as well as a reliance on Lane's influential tome. Deutsch had in fact by this time filled his studios in Paris (between 1885 and 1905 on the rue Navarin) and the south of France with a vast library of photographic images acquired from the well-known Cairo studio of G. Lékégian (see Ken Jacobson, *Odalisques and Arabesques: Orientalist Photography, 1839-1925*, London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 2007, p. 250). These aides memoires, along with an impressive array of souvenirs, artifacts, and sketches made on site, as well as a revolving troupe of émigré Arab and African models in France, allowed Deutsch to create paintings that were at once compellingly realistic and highly wrought.

The tension between scientific observation, imagination, and personal introspection is witnessed in *Morning Prayers* first in the precision of the rendering of the mosque and next in the broader messages that Deutsch takes care to suggest. The red granite Ptolemaic column, striped dado, and mother-of-pearl inlaid *dikkah*, or bench, help to identify the site as the Cairene funerary madrasah of Barquq (ca. 1384-6) in the Bayn al-Qasreyn, and more specifically, a view of the south side of the *qibla iwan* (see fig. 2 for a view from the other side; note that Deutsch has altered the base of the column for aesthetic interest). Though probably studio props rather than décor witnessed *in situ*, the hanging pendant lamp, Syrian in origin, and the carpet upon which the man stands, positioned to face the *mihrab* and the

direction of Mecca, are equally exacting in their detail. (The latter bears a *mina khani* blossom and trellis pattern characteristic of contemporary Persian Sauj Bulagh rugs.) Not content to provide a mere architectural portrait, however, Deutsch adds an additional, more meaningful gloss. The seated figure in the background, with his humble dress and pose, suggests the inclusivity of this space, and the role of the mosque as a common ground and meeting place for all classes and ranks. Audiences' appreciation of Deutsch's sensitivity to the subject, and their own recognition of the universality of the meditative practice that he portrays, is evidenced by the sheer number of similar prayer paintings Deutsch created and sold, and the series of awards and honors that he received around the time of this work's execution - he was awarded a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle in 1900, and was made Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur by the French government shortly thereafter.



Figure 2: Detail of the interior of the Cairene funerary madrasah of Barquq in the Bayn al-Qasreyn

## THE NUBIAN GUARD

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1896' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

25¾ x 18¾ in. (65.5 x 47.5 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1896

### Provenance:

Arthur Tooth and Sons, London

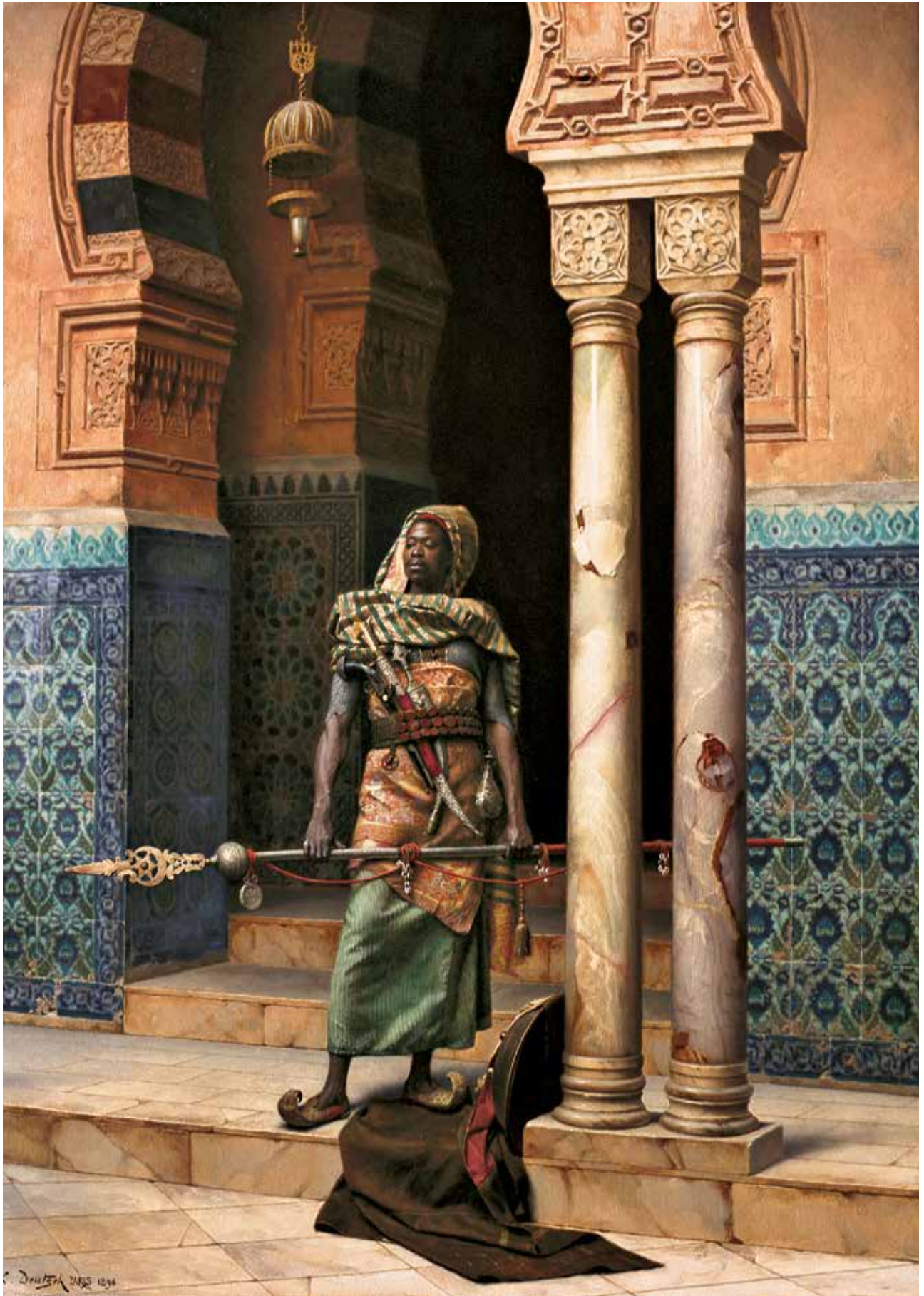
Newman Ltd, London

Mathaf Gallery, London, 1996

The popularity of Deutsch's guard paintings is suggested not only by the sheer number of works he produced of this type (or versions thereof), but also by the repetition of certain compositions to satisfy his seemingly insatiable audiences. Deutsch's uncanny ability to replicate favourite motifs, and yet invest each of them with a sense of novelty and immediacy, was aided by the manner in which he composed each painting: Deutsch employed a small number of African and Arab models in Europe, and regularly drew from the many sketches he had made on his trips to the Middle East. Like his friend and fellow Orientalist painter Rudolf Ernst (1854–1932), Deutsch used the new technology of photography to perfect his compositions, amassing a notable collection by the 1890s. (Deutsch might have referred to his photographic library for some of the details in *The Nubian Guard*.)

Unlike Ernst and other of his Orientalist colleagues, however, Deutsch rarely suggests an anecdote in his figurative compositions. The evaluative gaze, penetrating psychology and confident stance of the male figure in *The Nubian Guard* are typical of Deutsch's best works. Often, these stoic figures represent a hybrid fantasy of sorts, as they are dressed in a mixture of the traditional, medieval regalia of the Islamic warrior and the slowly modernising uniform of nineteenth-century guards and military personnel. Similarly, the architecture in Deutsch's works intentionally fails to cohere: meticulously painted blue and white Iznik tiles from one mosque might adorn the archways of another - or even one that does not exist at all.

Deutsch's artistic liberties, and his apparent aversion to intricate story-lines, do not diminish the profound symbolism of his works. In the placement of so imposing a figure before an entranceway, for example, Deutsch alludes to the formidable barriers that faced European travellers, as they sought to unlock the secrets of the Middle Eastern world.



## THE OFFERING

Signed 'L. Deutsch L. Deutsch Paris 1897 (lower right)

Oil on Panel

24¼ by 31½ in. (61.5 x 80 cm.)

### Provenance:

Doig, Wilson & Wheatley, Edinburgh

Acquired from the above by the family of the present owners circa 1900, thence by descent Sotheby's, London, 23 April 2013, lot 10

In *The Offering*, Deutsch provides a brilliant example of his thoroughly modern approach to Orientalist subject matter, while also featuring those compositional details and techniques that had already, by the 1890s, made his name. Isolating and scrutinizing particular moments in time, Deutsch's paintings can be seen today as verging on the photographic and the cinematic, seamlessly combining the spectacular and the static into what appear to be scenes from a film still. Deutsch's process may have been partially indebted to the works of France's greatest Orientalist painter, Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), whose own paintings were often marked by both high drama and a chilling frigidity. Indeed, Deutsch even repeats - here and throughout his oeuvre - that artist's archaic use of a wooden panel in order to achieve some of the saturated hues and intense colours that Gérôme made famous, and that, in Deutsch's hands, add an additional, and befitting, Technicolor gloss.

To the right stands a Nubian sentinel, silhouetted against a portal or entranceway. He sports an Ottoman *yataghan*, a *kindjal* dagger, a powder flask, and an Ottoman flintlock pistol in his substantial belt. Deutsch's predilection for depicting such impressive figures, with their evaluative gazes, penetrating psychologies, and confident stances, was a major theme throughout his art, as numerous paintings attest. Often, these stoic figures seem to represent a hybrid fantasy of sorts; they are dressed in a mixture of the traditional, medieval regalia of the Islamic warrior and the slowly modernizing uniform of nineteenth-century guards and military personnel. Such play between the historical and the highly topical was typical of Deutsch, who often laced his compositions with references to current events and contemporary issues.

The four Arab men who form a procession across the foreground of Deutsch's painting may be considered a signature of the artist as well. Clad in swathes of vibrantly coloured robes, the textures and surfaces of which are rendered in the most exquisite detail, they carry the exotic souvenirs and studio props that Deutsch had gathered during the course of his Middle Eastern travels. These would reappear, in various permutations, in numerous compositions throughout Deutsch's long and prolific career. (Deutsch's eclectic mix of objects in this and others of his paintings was in fact historically correct: the late nineteenth-

century saw both an unprecedented influx of imported modern goods into the Middle East - Egypt in particular - and a growing appreciation for historical pieces, which would become the favorite mementos of European travelers. The seated figure on the left in *The Offering*, eyeing a ceramic vessel, is suggestive of this new commercial environment: as handmade and manufactured goods flooded the marketplace, with varying degrees of quality, and as the value of antiques was increasingly recognized, the demand for connoisseurship grew exponentially.)

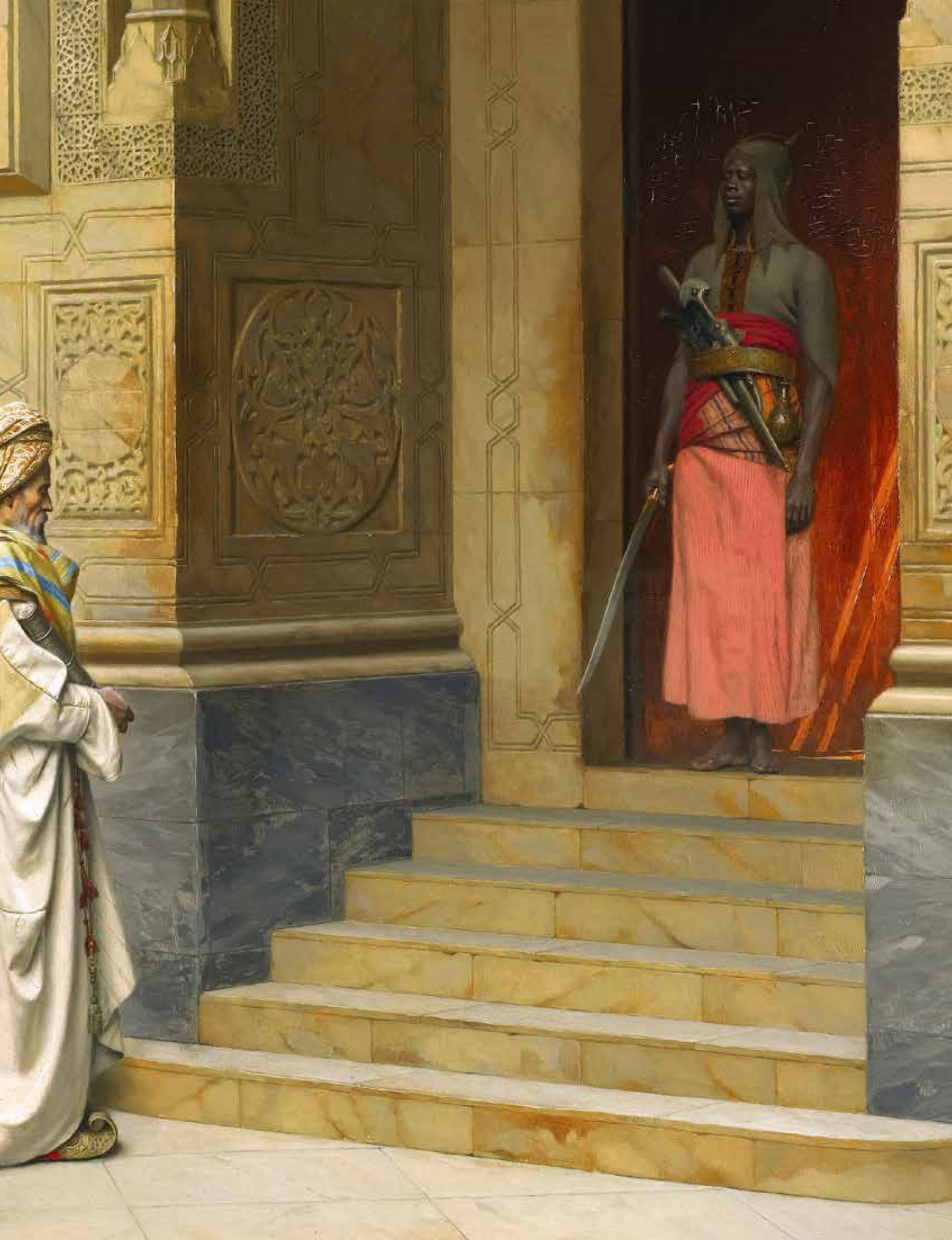


Leading the group of figures is a bearded elder; he wears an elaborately wrapped patterned turban and curly-toed *babouches*, or slippers, and carries a scroll in a protective case. (The subtle reference here to reading and writing is in keeping with many of Deutsch's paintings from the 1890s: during this period, he embarked on a new theme in his art, highlighting the Arab literati.) The man is accompanied by a soldier with a Qajar (nineteenth-century Iranian) chain mail helmet capped by peacock feathers. Tucked into his tooled leather cummerbund is a Persian Qajar ivory-hilted *jambiya* and he holds an Ottoman *shamshir* sword with a curved blade in his hand. Concluding this impressively accessorized group is a servant carrying the offerings of the paintings's title, including a second Qajar helmet overlaid with gold. In typical enigmatic fashion, and so as to avoid the distraction of a narrative, Deutsch provides no indication of who might be receiving these finely wrought goods, or what the occasion for their delivery might be. (That it is a foreign emissary presenting luxury goods to an Egyptian pasha or high official, whose rooms are located behind the sentinel's post, is, nonetheless, a compelling guess.)

The guarded entrance of the palace featured in *The Offering* incorporates many architectural elements from the portal of the 14th century madrasah complex of the Mosque of Sultan Hassan in Cairo, recorded in Deutsch's characteristically hyper-realistic style. In addition to sketches he made on site - the date of this painting indicates that it was executed after two impactful trips to Egypt had already been made - it is likely that Deutsch used photographs purchased at the well-known Cairo studio of G. Lékégian in order to perfect his architectural renderings. Such care and attention to detail did not, however, necessarily result in a coherent whole: the setting here, and in countless others of Deutsch's Orientalist works, is a deliberate collage of disparate buildings, unified only by the artist's creativity and imagination.

The provenance of this work suggests Deutsch's popularity even outside of Europe: sold soon after its completion, it was in Edinburgh before being purchased for a private collection. A slightly larger and undated version of this painting, exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1897, is also held in a private collection (see Lynne Thornton, *Les Orientalistes, peintres voyageurs*, Paris, 2001, page 241).





# THE PALACE GUARD

Signed, 'L. Deutsch' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

31¼ x 23¾ in. (79.5 x 60.3 cm.)

Painted ca. 1900–02

## Provenance:

Cooling Galleries, London

Private Collection, England

Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, 25 November 1983, lot 67

Borghesi & Co., New York

Private Collection, Switzerland

Anonymous sale, Christie's, New York, 19 April 2006, lot 17

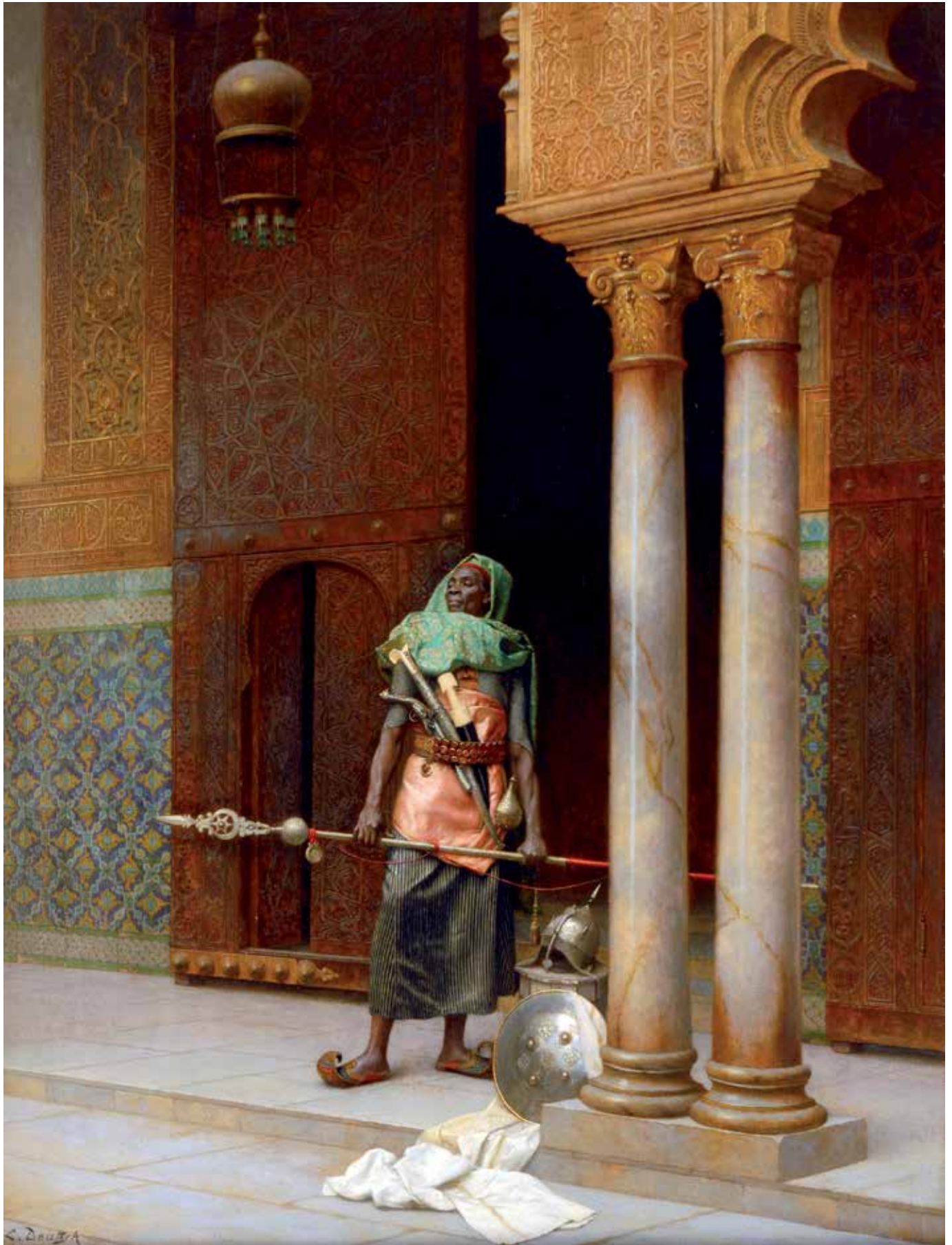
## Literature:

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

In *The Palace Guard*, Ludwig Deutsch is at the height of his powers. The figure of the guard exudes pride and grandeur and his pose is unyielding and commanding. We can observe a number of Deutsch's favourite props in this painting that we also find in *The Nubian Guard*: the shield on the floor, the weapons around the guard's belt, as well as the exquisitely embroidered silk fabrics wrapped around the man's head.

Deutsch's use of architecture is similar to a stage set, as it is utilised to set off the human figure. In his compositions depicting palace guards, Deutsch frequently used columns, gateways, exquisitely worked masonry and marbles to accentuate the might and glory of his sitters. In the present work, an even more complex and impressive arrangement is depicted, most of which is mainly inspired by the Alhambra in Spain. The tall columns, the archway, as well as the carved wooden doors, are all reminiscent of fourteenth-century Nasrid architecture, while Iznik tiles have been added on both sides. Here, Deutsch displays the breadth of his artistic virtuosity and without reservation shows his academic excellence and mastery. The high-gloss finish, the microscopic detail and the exemplary attention to photographic exactitude, without burdening his art with academic virtuosity, enables Deutsch to express his subject's individual character.

An existing study for *The Palace Guard* illustrates the astonishingly exact and detailed planning involved. Deutsch produced many sketches and colour studies before moving forward with a composition, and it is apparent that at each stage of planning and execution he aimed for perfection, which he achieved.



# THE PHILOSOPHER

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1905' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

21¾ x 14¾ in. (55 x 37.5 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1905

## Provenance:

Anonymous sale, Christie's, Scotland, 26 November 1997, lot 516

In this late work by Deutsch, the guard image has been transformed. Rather than a threatening figure challenging us to pass, Deutsch here offers a pensive Arab man, leaning against a wall. In his right hand he dangles a *misbaha*, or string of blue prayer beads; there are no weapons here. In Islam, the string is typically made up of 99 beads, one for each of the 99 names of Allah, though 33 are sometimes also seen; Deutsch shows us a cord of approximately 66 beads, more common to the worry beads of Greece, Turkey and Armenia. The man's voluminous robes and scarf, wrapped loosely around his shoulders and draped over his head, add mass to an otherwise slight body. So too, they suggest that hot summer days have given way to colder temperatures, and that cotton has necessarily been exchanged for wool.

Below the step on which this contemplative figure stands, incense burns. A sinuous curve of smoke wafts into the air, perfuming it with the smell of *'ood* (agarwood), *gáwee* (benzoin resin) or *kishr ambar* (cascarilla bark). Perhaps the smouldering embers, like the reassuring manipulation of the prayer beads, are meant to ease a troubled mind. Or perhaps the incense merely reflects a moment of personal indulgence, and a welcome source of warmth.

Further to the right, there is a square of embroidered fabric from the Iranian city of Rasht, laid atop a wooden box. Its surface provides a resting place for one of Deutsch's favourite motifs - a basin and matching ewer. The inclusion of this oft-repeated pair does little to damage the sincerity of Deutsch's work. Somehow, and despite our knowledge of its many counterparts within this artist's oeuvre, we maintain an interest in this painting, and in the thoughtful man.

Deutsch's attention to detail - attributable, in part, to his extensive use of photographs - does not stumble in this work. The stone panel on the right, inlaid with marble and mother-of-pearl, was typical of early Mamluk architecture, and is in keeping with the scene. Just above this ornamental feature, the Austrian painter has tried his hand at recording a maze of square *kufic* script, also commonly employed. This form of writing can be considered the essence of Islamic style, in its stylised abstraction and strict geometries. Though notoriously difficult to decipher, even by native speakers of the language, Deutsch inscribes the name 'Muhammad' in perfect *kufic* style. The precision of such details, as well as the subtle narratives that they support, make *The Philosopher* one of Deutsch's most compelling and relatable Orientalist works.



## READING THE LETTER

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1899' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

26½ x 22½ in. (67.4 x 57.2 cm)

Painted in Paris in 1899

### Provenance:

Newman Ltd, London

Mathaf Gallery, London 1996

*Reading the Letter* is a studio production in which Deutsch has arranged often used objects from his Oriental collection of artifacts and photographs (the *kufans* worn by the protagonists, the *mashrabiya* bench, the Turkmen carpet, the inlaid stand) to create a colourful composition. However, there are ambiguities as to setting and content.

The steps on the left and the patches of dust-dampening water suggest an inner courtyard, although the elaborately hooded doorway set among the flaking limestone blocks is more indicative of a street façade. In either context, the wooden door with its ivory/bone inlay is out of place as an exterior entrance. By placing the richly decorated door behind the listener, however, Deutsch may have intended to characterize him as a man of property and substance.

The painting is titled *Reading the Letter*, but another interpretation is more likely. The reader wears the headdress (red *fez*, blue tassel) of a Shaykh from the al-Azhar Mosque/University, thus indicating a man of religious learning. He reads from what appear to be several closely printed pages taken from the red leather book on his lap, perhaps a religious text printed at the press in Bulaq. The man draped in the black cape listens pensively to the inspiring words.

In this scene, Deutsch portrays both his interest in Islam as religion (see *The Lamplighter*, page 30) and his awareness of the modernizing literary trends of the nineteenth century (see *A Gathering Around the Morning News, Cairo*, page 26).



## THE SMOKER

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1903' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

23 x 16 in. (58.4 x 41.9 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1903

### Provenance:

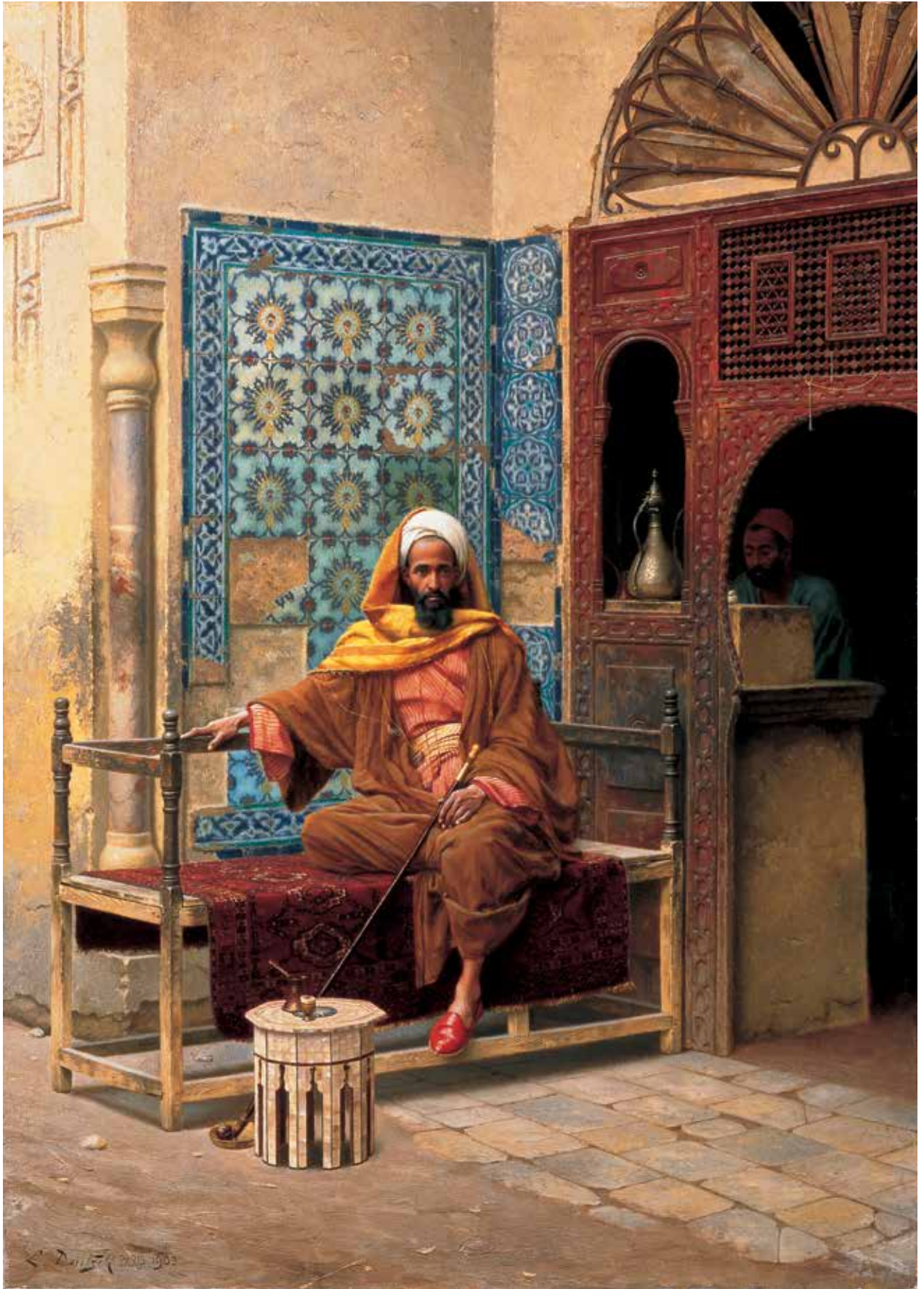
Private Collection, Jordan

Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, 17 June 1999, lot 98

Painted in Paris in 1903, *The Smoker* is deeply inspired by the opulent Orientalist decoration of Deutsch's studio, in the Pigalle area in the 10<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. When he finally settled in the French capital in the late 1870s, he recreated in his atelier sumptuous Islamic interiors, filling his rooms with *mashrabiyas*, painted ceramic tiles, textiles, carpets and precious objects brought back from his numerous trips to the Middle East.

In *The Smoker*, Deutsch's refined taste for Ottoman miscellanea stands out, whilst his observant eye indulges in the rarest Orientalist objects surrounding the elegant smoker. The sitter is lounging on the most precious Turkoman carpet, a dark red Saryk Juval, in which we can admire the beautifully finished *alim* (the base panel, continuing around the sides), and the traditional design of four rows of Juval Gls (from gl, Turkish 'rose' and Persian 'flower', the gl is the primary ornament on the main carpet). Behind him is a wall filled with Damascus tiles of the rarest type. Similarly, the carved *mashrabiya*, the mother-of-pearl inlaid tabouret and the precious *chibuk* - the man's sophisticated pipe - illustrate the artist's passionate observation of the most minute details of Oriental street scenes.

*The Smoker* is a major example of Deutsch's ability to capture the atmosphere of sweet, languid *far niente*, iconographically associated with Orientalist interiors and more intimate scenes. The artist's brushstroke is unsurpassed in these typical small-scale oils, dedicated to the attentive description of one figure in magnificently detailed surroundings. At the core of Deutsch's aesthetic concern is the lucid, controlled mastery of chromatic contrasts - perfectly embodied by the focus on one figure, manifesting the refinements of the East.



## THE STREET MERCHANT

Signed, inscribed and dated 'L. Deutsch Paris 1888' (lower left)

Oil on Panel

16½ x 13 in. (42 x 33 cm.)

Painted in Paris in 1888

### **Provenance:**

Williams & Son, London

Richard Green, London

Mathaf Gallery, London, 1995

In *The Street Merchant*, Ludwig Deutsch presents the viewer with two equally rich and detailed picture planes. The background of the painting is a fine example of Mamluk period stone masonry in Old Cairo, while the foreground of the painting meticulously depicts an elderly street merchant mixing ingredients in a bowl, with raw materials such as potatoes and eggs in piles by his side.

Similarly both the architectural background and the street seller show signs of wear and tear, a testament to their age. In Islamic cultures, age and experience afford one a distinctive and esteemed respect. The white beard, wrinkled and creased eyes, and the fragile frame of an ageing man, complemented by the sum of his extensive knowledge of his craft, would secure him the respected and revered status of village elder. It is no coincidence that Ludwig Deutsch, perhaps the finest implementer of painterly exactitude, should choose to depict the effects of time and hence underline the beauty and importance of wisdom and skill.

This work establishes a contrast with Deutsch's typically idealised portraits, such as seen for instance in his representations of majestic palace guards. In addition to depicting *The Street Merchant* in the same meticulous fashion as his other masterpieces, he creates here a timeless representation of his subject matter just as he did in *A Gathering Around the Morning News, Cairo*.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

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Contributed the Ludwig Deutsch Biography.

Kristian Davies is an author whose previous books include *The Orientalists: Western Artists in Arabia, the Sahara, Persia & India*, and *Artists of Cape Ann: A 150 Year Tradition*. He has written for publications such as *American Art Review*, *Art & Antiques* and *Fine Art Connoisseur*. Mr Davies has travelled extensively in the Middle East and has lived in Egypt. He currently divides his time between New York and California.

## Emily M. Weeks

Contributed the essays for the paintings: *The Antique Dealers*, *Egyptian Priest Entering a Temple*, *The Favorite*, *The Mandolin Player*, *Morning Prayers*, *The Nubian Guard*, *The Offering* and *The Philosopher*.

Emily M. Weeks received her Ph.D. from the Department of the History of Art at Yale University in December 2004. 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. Dr. Weeks has lectured widely in these fields, both in the United States and internationally. Dr. Weeks has also organized and contributed to a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions, including *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting, 1830-1925* (2008-2009; organized by Tate Britain). 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.

## Caroline Williams

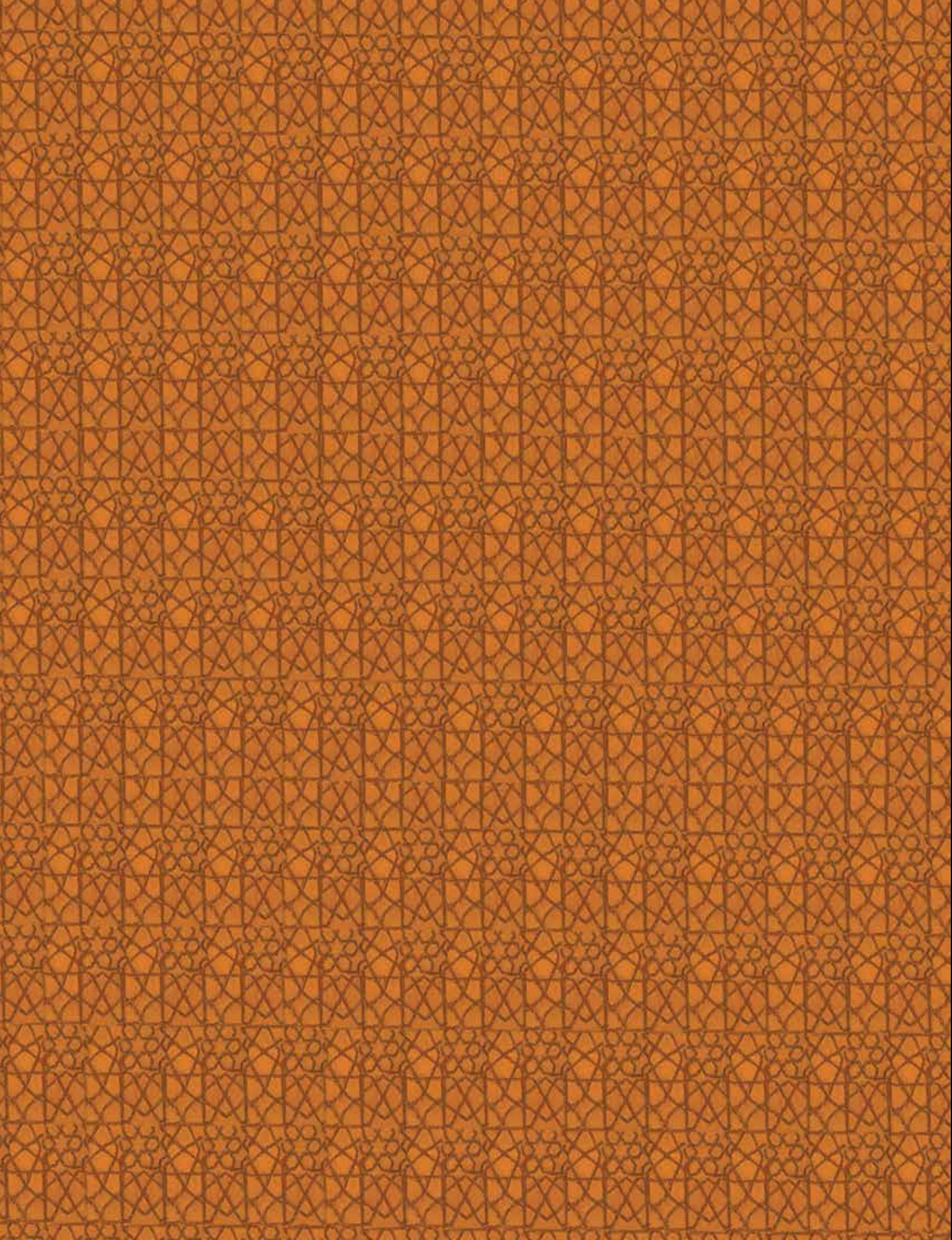
Contributed the essays for the paintings: *At the Door of the Mosque*, *The Inspection*, *The Lamplighter*, *Learned Advice* and *Reading the Letter*.

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.

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**M**r. 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 multidisciplined investment holding company with businesses in infrastructure, automotive, engineering, technology and real estate, over the past three years focusing on technology startups and VC investments.

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 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](http://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, *Learned Advice*. (detail)



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