

RECONSIDERING  
GÉRÔME

Edited by Scott Allan and Mary Morton



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**GÉRÔME**

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SCOTT ALLAN and MARY MORTON

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

# Contents

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8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 191.
10. Étienne-Jean Delécluze, "Exposition de 1857," *Journal des débats*, July 2, 1857, n.p.
11. In the catalogue to the Exposition universelle the work is entitled *Récreation du camp (Souvenirs de Moldavie)* and dated 1854. See *Exposition universelle de 1855: Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, gravure, lithographie, et architecture des artistes vivants étrangers et français, exposés au Palais des beaux-arts, avenue Montaigne, le 1<sup>er</sup> mai 1855*, exh. cat. (Paris, 1855), no. 3164 bis.
12. Albert Boime, "The Second Empire's Official Realism," in *The European Realist Tradition*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (Bloomington, 1982), pp. 85–86.
13. Ibid., p. 86.
14. Paul Mantz, "Salon de 1857," *Revue française* 10 (1857), p. 54.
15. Théophile Gautier, "Salon de 1857. IV. MM: Gérôme, Mottez," *L'Artiste*, July 5, 1857, p. 245.
16. Alphone de Calonne, "Exposition des beaux-arts de 1857," *Revue contemporaine* 32 (1857), pp. 609–10.
17. Jules Castagnary, *Philosophie du Salon de 1857* (Paris, 1858), p. 85.
18. A.-J. Du Pays, "Salon de 1857," *L'Illustration, journal universel* 30, no. 755 (August 15, 1857), p. 1089.
19. "Jules Verne, "Salon de 1857," *Revue des beaux-arts* 8 (1857), p. 273.
20. Victor Fournel, "Mélanges: Salon de 1857," *Le Correspondant* 5 (August 1857), p. 744.
21. Émile de La Bédollière, "Exposition de 1857," *Le Siècle*, August 23, 1857, n.p.
22. Flaubert considered the physical differences between what he calls "various races of negroes," including one with "a skull narrowed so sharply above the temples that it was almost pyramidal." See his travel notes dated May 18, 1851, in Gustave Flaubert, *Flaubert in Egypt: A Sensibility on Tour*, ed. and trans. Francis Steegmuller (New York, 1972), pp. 187–88.
23. Maxime Du Camp, *Le Salon de 1857: Peinture, sculpture* (Paris, 1857), p. 64.
24. Ibid., p. 61.
25. Théophile Gautier, "Gérôme: Tableaux, études, et croquis de voyage," *L'Artiste*, December 28, 1856, p. 34.
26. Ibid.
27. Gautier (note 15), p. 246.
28. Charles Perrier, *L'Art français au Salon de 1857* (Paris, 1857), p. 92.
29. "Alexandre Tardieu, "Beaux-Arts: Exposition de 1857," *Le Constitutionnel*, June 30, 1857, n.p.
30. Théophile Gautier, "Exposition de 1859. VIII," *Le Moniteur universel: Journal officiel de l'empire français*, June 11, 1859, p. 669.
31. Gautier (note 15), p. 246. On Valerio, see Théophile Gautier, "Aquarelles ethnographiques," *Les Beaux-arts en Europe*, 1855, 2 vols. (Paris, 1855), 2: pp. 287–315.
32. Mantz (note 14), p. 55.

## Gérôme in Istanbul

MARY ROBERTS

Jean-Léon Gérôme's *The Snake Charmer* (plate 3) has attained a level of notoriety matched by few Orientalist paintings. Since its inclusion on the front cover of Edward Said's landmark book *Orientalism*, the painting has been imbued with a synoptic function to become a visual shorthand for the Orientalism debate.<sup>1</sup> Through its superb rendering of Iznik tile panels from the Topkapı Palace, the mise-en-scène of this painting invokes the cultural heritage of Istanbul, the city that was the center of the modernizing Ottoman state in the nineteenth century. Yet, as Linda Nochlin has so perspicaciously argued, this painting dissimulates any such contemporary cultural connotations in favor of a theatrical rendering of the Orient as a picturesque, eroticized diversion for the delectation of the European viewer.<sup>2</sup>

Since Nochlin's important essay, scholars of Islamic art history have uncovered a mélange of sources and references in this painting and in so doing its surface of seamless realism gives way to a more complex and intriguing aggregation. There is a beguiling accuracy and beauty about the rendition of fabrics, armor, and decorative tilework across this painting, and in their documentary merit some of Gérôme's sources are impeccable. Indeed, one of the photographs of the Topkapı Palace harem precinct, which Gérôme is highly likely to have used in creating the majestic tiled panels in this painting, was by the Abdullah Frères, photographers to the Ottoman court. This was one of few, very rare early photographs of one of the most secluded interior spaces of the Topkapı Palace. Yet this painting sustains both a very precisely observed and a deeply ambiguous inscription of place. The tiles were from two different parts of the palace (the Altın Yol and the Baghdad Pavilion) and have been substantially modified for the painter's purposes.<sup>3</sup> This composite setting is peopled by a motley group that would never have congregated in either of these most proscribed spaces of the palace. One can only imagine how willfully incoherent this composite painting might have appeared to elite nineteenth-century Ottoman viewers familiar with these most interdicted precincts of the Ottoman palace.



While the iconography and ideology of Gérôme's painting have been scrupulously researched and debated, scant attention has been paid to the painter's travels to the Ottoman capital in the decade in which it was produced. In this essay I investigate Gérôme's journey to Istanbul in 1875. This was not his first visit to the Ottoman capital but a journey undertaken when his professional seniority ensured that his pedagogic networks were able to facilitate his access to some of the city's foremost historic and religious sites. Once we shift the lens to examine Gérôme through accounts published in Istanbul's nineteenth-century newspapers and bring into the debate other sources from the Turkish archives, we see that in this period Gérôme was also implicated in the Ottoman palace's acquisition of contemporary European art. Gérôme had a dual role in this process as both a facilitator of the acquisitions and as one of the painters under commission to the palace. Focusing on the circuits of production and reception of Gérôme's paintings destined for Istanbul's elite Ottoman audience enables new ways of understanding his art. For these reasons nineteenth-century Istanbul is a productive place from which to reassess Gérôme's Orientalism.

Gérôme's arrival in the capital of the Ottoman Empire on May 15, 1875, was much vaunted among Istanbul's cosmopolitan expatriate community, and, judging from local newspaper reports, this community was well aware of his reputation both in France and across the Atlantic. Indeed his imminent arrival was announced in three successive articles in the *Levant Herald*, one of Istanbul's local English- and French-language newspapers. The first, a short entry, appeared fourteen days in advance of his arrival.<sup>4</sup> The second, published six days later, was a longer piece announcing that Gérôme had "been commissioned by the Sultan to execute some paintings for the palaces of Dolmabahçehé [Dolmabahçe] and Tcheragan [Çırağan]" and recounting his recent successes in London with the exhibition of *The Sabre Dance* (1875).<sup>5</sup> Yet another article, published four days after that, on May 11, disclosed that Gérôme's host and guide on his excursions around Istanbul was to be his friend the painter Stanislaw Chlebowski. This article further bolstered Gérôme's celebrity status with an extended account of his achievements in both the "old and new worlds."<sup>6</sup>

Once he had arrived in the capital,<sup>7</sup> a succession of articles reported Gérôme's unfolding itinerary to their local readership, praising his industriousness in producing about fifteen studies of mosques in Istanbul, including the New Mosque (Mosque of the Valide Sultan) and Rustem Paşa Mosque, and several mosques in Scutari (Üsküdar) on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, all of which were to appear in subsequent paintings.<sup>8</sup> Later reports specify the painter's two-week visit to Bursa, commencing on June 2, to see the major Ottoman monuments, mosques, and tombs in the former Ottoman capital, again in the

company of Chlebowski and the young French artist Antoine Buttura who had accompanied Gérôme from Paris.<sup>9</sup> From these sites, it is recounted, the painter "has brought back with him a rich harvest of studies," including sketches of the magnificent tiles in the Green Mosque.<sup>10</sup> So too they announced his intention to visit another former capital of the Ottoman Empire, Adrianople (Edirne), famous for Sinan's Selimiye Mosque. Gérôme's sense of heritage also encompassed tracing the footsteps of well-known Orientalists and former residents of Istanbul. As the *Levant Herald* noted, Gérôme visited Baghtchekeui (Bahçeköy) "to paint the picturesque neighbourhood of Belgrade and the great bends so charmingly described in the letters of our English Seigné, Lady Mary Wortley Montague."<sup>11</sup>

From these articles in the local press we are able to establish a fairly precise sense of Gérôme's itinerary in 1875 of his visits to the sites that gave him material for his Orientalist paintings in the decades ahead. More significantly, however, they provide an insight into the professional networks into which Gérôme was received in Istanbul—incorporating both the European expatriate community and the Ottoman palace. In Istanbul, as elsewhere, Gérôme's international network of former students provided a crucial entrée to the city's cultural elites. In the Ottoman capital it was his friend and former student, the Polish artist Chlebowski, a European expatriate and painter under commission to the Ottoman sultan, who was a crucial conduit.<sup>12</sup>

We have no sources confirming whether or not Gérôme visited the sultan's residence, the Dolmabahçe Palace, during this 1875 trip, but documents in the palace archives reveal that some months later he was instrumental in negotiating the sale of paintings to the sultan through his father-in-law's firm, Goupil et cie.<sup>13</sup> In this enterprise his interlocutor was another former student, Ahmed Ali Bey, one of the foremost Ottoman artists of his generation, who came to be known as Şeker Ahmed Paşa. In the mid-1860s Sultan Abdülaziz sponsored Ahmed Ali's studies in Paris, where he worked in the studios of Gérôme and Gustave Boulanger. Returning to Turkey sometime between 1871 and 1872, he quickly rose in rank and position in the palace bureaucracy.<sup>14</sup>

There are numerous documents in the Dolmabahçe Palace Archive related to the purchase of these paintings between October 1875 and mid-1876. These holdings include invoices from the company addressed to "Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan," transportation receipts for the delivery of crates of paintings addressed to Ahmed Bey from the Constantinople Agency of the Compagnie de Messageries Maritimes, records of money orders paid through the Crédit Lyonnais to Goupil, and telegrams sent from Paris to Istanbul by Gérôme and Goupil to Ahmed Aly (Ali) Bey, who was addressed as an aide-de-camp to the imperial palace. The telegrams are particularly intriguing. Even though they



are only one side of the correspondence, they give a sense of the liveliness of the protracted negotiations that took place between the Ottoman palace and the Parisian art dealers.<sup>15</sup> They indicate that there was a complicated process involving various intermediaries to secure the purchases and surmount the geographic challenges of aesthetic decision-making at a distance.

That these records are only partial remnants of the negotiations makes the issue as to whose taste this collection reflects a rather complicated matter. Certainly Goupil et cie played an important role in recommending works by Gérôme and others that were available for purchase. The telegrams also convey that Ahmed Ali was a crucial mediator. Did he confer with his former mentor, Gérôme, to initiate this commission a few months earlier when both were in Istanbul? Even if he did not, the palace bureaucrat must have known the work of many of the painters that were being mooted for purchase because of his years as a student in the Parisian art world in the 1860s. It is tempting to conclude that he would have been partial to the landscape paintings that were acquired given his preoccupation with this genre in his own art. Before his deposition in May 1876, Sultan Abdülaziz was in all likelihood also active in these decisions. He was an enthusiastic painter, and in 1867 during a trip to Europe the sultan visited a number of major museums as well as the Paris Exposition universelle.<sup>16</sup>

A comparison of these documents in the Istanbul archives and the company's stock books, held at the Getty Research Institute, has enabled me to identify twenty-nine paintings by twenty-eight different European artists that entered the palace collection through this means.<sup>17</sup> From the stock books, which record both the cost price to Goupil and the sale price to the sultan, it is also evident that in some instances (although not consistently) the firm charged the palace considerably more than their other customers in Europe and America, with a markup that was often around one hundred percent. The record of the company's acquisition and sale dates in these ledgers indicates that some works were drawn from stock that had been in the company's holdings for up to three years (which was a considerable length of time for a company that had a high turnover). Yet by no means was the firm only shifting their old stock. In fact, a number of the paintings purchased in 1875 (such as Charles Chaplin's *Roses de mai* and Giuseppe de Nittis's *Place de la Concorde*) had been exhibited in the Salon that year. The palace was purchasing popular contemporary art.

The palace acquisitions indicate an approach to collecting that favored academic paintings and landscapes by affiliates of the Barbizon school. These acquisitions invite comparison with the collecting practices of the famous Ottoman statesman, Halil Bey (Halil Şerif Paşa), who had amassed his substantial collection of contemporary and old master European paintings in the previous

decade. The Ottoman palace focused solely on contemporary painting, and their selection did not include any of the more *outré* French avant-garde paintings (hardly surprising given the Gérôme-Goupil conduit), but this difference should not be overemphasized. Michèle Haddad's scholarship on the full scope of Halil Bey's acquisitions is a crucial corrective to the tendency to characterize his collection on the basis of a few notorious paintings, especially those by Gustave Courbet.<sup>18</sup> In fact, a number of the same contemporary artists—including Boulanger, Charles Daubigny, Eugène Fromentin, Gérôme, and Constant Troyon—are represented in the two collections.

Halil Bey's collection, Francis Haskell asserted, "could not in essence be distinguished from that of any other rich man living in Paris at the time," and therein lies its potential as a corrective to European Orientalist stereotypes about the Easterner.<sup>19</sup> A similar conclusion might be ventured about the collection accrued in the Ottoman palace in 1875–76. Both Sultan Abdülaziz and Sultan Abdülhamid II understood the strategic value of demonstrating their cultural affiliations with Europe through the display of these collections in the official reception rooms of the palace. Sultan Abdülhamid seems to have been particularly attuned to the way the palace art collection could be utilized as part of contemporary statecraft and international diplomacy. One of his court painters, the Italian Fausto Zonaro, records in his memoirs that the sultan entrusted him with the task of selecting and displaying appropriate paintings from the palace collection for the rooms that German emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II and Kaiserin Augusta Viktoria would see during their state visit in 1898. Zonaro's choices were governed by aesthetic preferences. Among his inclusions were many of the paintings purchased through Goupil (including Gérôme's work). Zonaro was later dismayed to find that his selection was edited by the sultan himself, whose alternative judgments were premised on diplomatic criteria. Abdülhamid vetoed the work by the painter Ivan Aivazovsky on the grounds that his German visitors might be offended to see so many Russian paintings.<sup>20</sup>

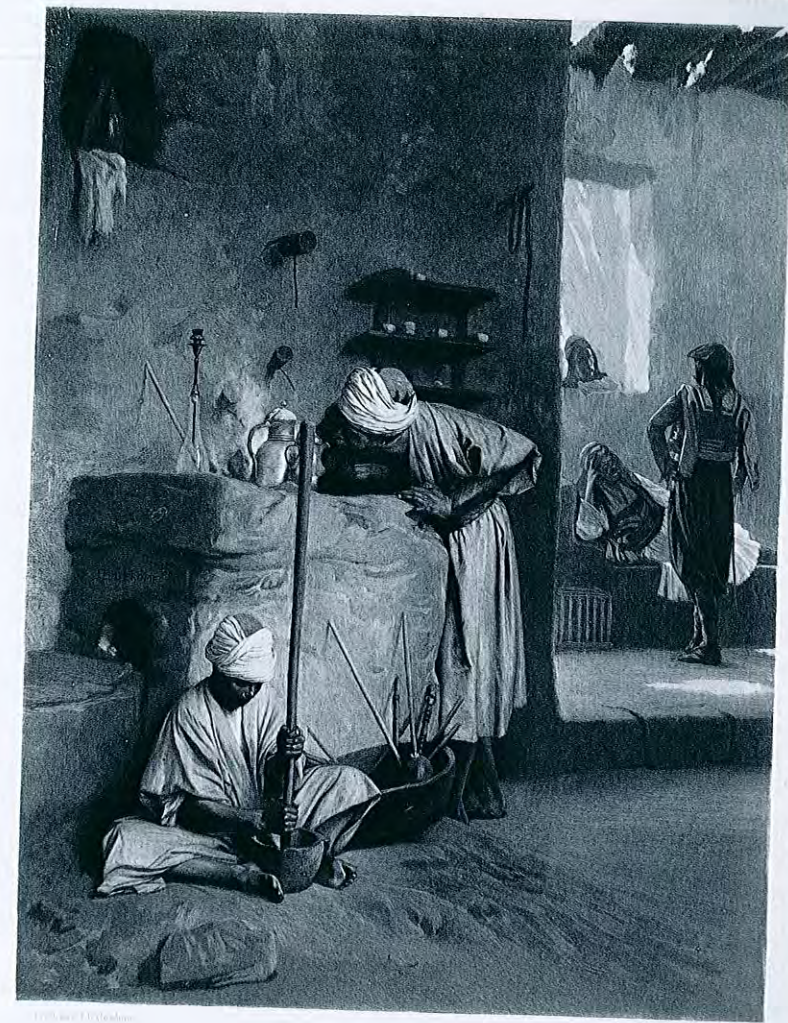
It would be misleading to make judgments about the Ottoman palace collecting priorities in the 1870s on the basis of the Gérôme-Goupil acquisitions alone. Rather they should be assessed, as Semra Germaner and Zeynep İnankur argue, alongside the range of artworks that Sultan Abdülaziz commissioned from visiting European painters, Istanbul's expatriates, and contemporary Ottoman artists. This collection continued to be augmented by Sultan Abdülhamid.<sup>21</sup> To cite just one example, Gérôme's former student Chlebowski was commissioned to paint battle scenes commemorating historic Ottoman victories. Sultan Abdülaziz was actively involved in this commission and supplied sketches to the painter to indicate compositional arrangements for the paintings.<sup>22</sup> This example suggests



that some palace acquisitions were motivated by priorities that differed from, and in some cases were at odds with, contemporary European sensibilities.

Gérôme's own work was acquired as part of this collection. As early as April 8, 1875, it was reported in the *Levant Herald* that the French academician had received a painting commission from Sultan Abdülaziz.<sup>23</sup> Telegrams in the Dolmabahçe Palace Archive indicate that by November 1875 two of the three commissioned paintings had entered the palace collection, with the third still under negotiation via Goupil and the painter himself. The three works by Gérôme that were purchased for the sultan are *Lion dans sa grotte*, *Café égyptien*, and *Bachi-Bouzouk dansant*. Two are listed as lost in Gerald M. Ackerman's revised catalogue raisonné, but, in fact, all three remain in Turkish national collections.<sup>24</sup> As Ackerman notes, two paintings, *Lion dans sa grotte* and *Bachi-Bouzouk dansant*, were exhibited at the Exposition universelle that was held in Paris between May and November 1878. Documents in the Prime Ministers' Archives in Turkey indicate that the French embassy in Istanbul negotiated on Gérôme's behalf with the Ottoman foreign affairs ministry in April 1878 for the loan of these two paintings and that permission was granted by Sultan Abdülhamid for them to travel back to Paris for the duration of this event.<sup>25</sup> Given the extensive effort required to repatriate these paintings for the purposes of this exhibition, one wonders why Gérôme opted for such a complicated loan. It is tempting to speculate that the painter sought to bolster his Orientalist credentials through recognition that his paintings belonged to the sultan. The loan source, however, was not acknowledged in the official catalogue and it was not until the publication of Fanny Hering's monograph in 1892 that the provenance of one of them, *Lion dans sa grotte*, was publicly disclosed.<sup>26</sup> So too one speculates as to the reasons why the Ottoman palace was willing to lend the works. Perhaps Sultan Abdülhamid recognized the benefit of this high-profile recognition of Ottoman participation in the European practices of collecting and lending works of art. This is certainly consistent with the Ottoman state's regular contributions to the international exhibitions held in Europe and America throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

Two of the three paintings purchased for the Ottoman palace collection also had another life through their circulation as prints. In 1881 *An Egyptian Café* and *Bashi-Bazouks Dancing* were published as photogravures in Edward Strahan (Earl Shinn's) volume on the painter (figs. 21 and 22).<sup>28</sup> This presents us with a fascinating puzzle and prompts questions as to the divergent contemporaneous significance of Gérôme's Orientalism for both the Ottoman palace elite and for European and American audiences. My attention here is focused on the geographically disparate reception histories of one of these two: *Bashi-Bazouks Dancing*.



AN EGYPTIAN CAFE

FIGURE 21  
Jean-Léon Gérôme, *An Egyptian Café*. From *Gérôme: A Collection of the Works of J.L. Gérôme in One Hundred Photogravures*, ed. Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn] (1881), vol. 2: n.p. Los Angeles, Research Library, Getty Research Institute (81-B265)





BASHI - BAZOUKS DANCING

New York, Cassell, L. Hall

FIGURE 22

Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Bashi-Bazouks Dancing*. From *Gérôme: A Collection of the Works of J. L. Gérôme in One Hundred Photogravures*, ed. Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn] (1881), vol. 3: n.p. Los Angeles, Research Library, Getty Research Institute (81-B265)

When it was exhibited at the Paris Exposition in 1878, Dubosc de Pesquidoux admired Gérôme's vivid rendering of the picturesque costume of the Bashi-Bazouks, whom he judged to be "less soldiers than bandits."<sup>29</sup> The painting received a more politically charged interpretation when reproduced as a photogravure in Strahan's book. The accompanying text identified Gérôme's figures as "brothers" of the irregular troops that fought alongside the Ottoman army in the 1877–78 Russo-Ottoman War and who had been so controversial in the British accounts of this conflict. Strahan writes:

[These Bashi-Bazouks are] gathered from the remotest quarters of the Empire in Europe and Asia. . . . Often with scarcely a pretence of military discipline among them, they imported into a war, professedly carried on under the regulations of the Geneva Convention, such atrocities as before long led the Russians to retaliate in kind. From the letters of the enterprising gentlemen who represented the English press in both armies, may be gathered the fullest details of the manners and customs of these picturesque pillagers, whom Gérôme here represents in a singularly innocent moment. . . . In the East, men may change, but manners do not, and these dancers and chicken-killers of Gérôme's are the legitimate brothers of the soldiers of the Sultan, so vividly described by those letters from the field.<sup>30</sup>

Strahan endorses the view of this war reported in the British press: a strident critique of the Ottoman Empire because such lawlessness at the hands of the irregular troops was, by implication, sanctioned by the morally corrupt leadership of the Ottoman sultan. Strahan's text assimilated the reported capricious behavior of the Bashi-Bazouks to the larger Ottoman political structures within which the exercise of arbitrary violence was reputedly given license. Such views of the ruthlessness of the Bashi-Bazouks had already been entrenched in the popular imagination. American and British reports about events leading up to the war stirred popular outrage in Britain and ensured that Disraeli's pro-Ottoman policy could no longer be sustained. As Şükrü Hanioglu has argued, this was a decisive turning point in British foreign relations, signaling "the end of active British support for the Ottoman Empire."<sup>31</sup>

Strahan's characterization of the Bashi-Bazouks as symptomatic of the unchanging nature of "manners" in the East oversimplifies a far more complex and checkered history of the Ottoman state's relationship with the irregular soldiers, who served alongside regular forces during many of the key nineteenth-century battles for the empire's survival.<sup>32</sup> In the context of Strahan's volume, Gérôme's painting performs a certain kind of ideological work, becoming a



vehicle for historicizing these recent events in a way that justifies the shifts in British foreign policy and makes such an unsavory subject palatable to a Western audience by presenting these “bandits” as exotic and picturesque. In Gérôme’s painting the threatening implications of their formidable weaponry is muted and the most visible firearm is brandished by the dancer as a benign, picturesque accoutrement to his dance. Although the details of this historic moment are very particular, in essence this is a familiar interpretation of Gérôme’s Orientalism, one that accords with Linda Nochlin’s and Olivier Richon’s insights about the myth of Oriental despotism.<sup>33</sup> Why would the Ottoman sultan have been engaged by such a painting? What alternative connotations might this representation have elicited for the elite Ottoman palace audience in the 1870s?

In the first place, the figures in this painting were identified by a different name, Zeybeks. This is the title by which the painting was referred to in nineteenth-century Ottoman sources and by which it is still known in the Turkish archives. This designation was neither as generic nor in the 1870s did it carry such negative connotations as “Bashi-Bazouks.” An Ottoman viewer would immediately have recognized this painting as a representation of the distinctive costume and dance of the Zeybeks, from the mountain region of western Anatolia. The Zeybeks had been part of the irregular Ottoman forces and indeed they had a troubled history with the Ottoman regime, but by the 1870s they were in favor with Sultan Abdülaziz even though the Zeybeks’ relationship with the state would continue to wax and wane as the century progressed.<sup>34</sup> The Zeybeks’ fierce resistance to any measure to abolish their distinctive dress in 1838 gave them a particular notoriety.<sup>35</sup> These dress reforms were part of the Tanzimat modernization of the Ottoman state. Prior to the reforms (first initiated in the late 1820s) the myriad sartorial distinctions in dress across the empire signaled diverse regional and sectarian allegiances, and the push to homogenize clothing was part of the modernization and increased centralization of the Ottoman state.<sup>36</sup> By the 1870s the official attitude seems to have softened toward the Zeybeks, a change that coincided with shifts in late-Tanzimat state ideology toward “Ottomanism,” an ideology that emphasized unity within diversity across the multiethnic, multireligious empire. This shift is evident in the *Elbise-i ‘Osmaniyye* (*Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie*), published as part of the Ottoman government’s contribution to the World’s Fair held in Vienna in 1873. Two Zeibek (Zeybek) costumes were included in the section on Aidin (Aydın) (fig. 23). The accompanying ethnographic account noted this fraught recent history of the Zeybeks’ relationship to the state but recouped this fiercely proud and sartorially idiosyncratic group as exemplars of successful centralized reform by recounting that the state’s representative in the vilayet had recently persuaded



FIGURE 23

*Aidin* (figures 1 and 2: Zeibek [Zeybek]), section 3, plate 4. From Osman Hamdy Bey and Marie de Launay, *Elbise-i ‘Osmaniyye* (*Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie*) (1873). Los Angeles, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Box 139, Pierre de Gigord collection of photographs of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey (96.R.14)



the Zeybeks to collaborate with the local police. Instead of profiting from banditry, they reaped financial rewards by providing services as travelers' escorts.<sup>37</sup>

Gérôme's Zeybeks are not situated within an ethnographic classificatory rubric in such a determined way as the Zeybeks in the *Elbise*. As Ahmet Ersoy has argued, the *Elbise* was a project that systematically encompassed each of the Ottoman vilayets (starting with Istanbul, "the heart of the Ottoman Empire")<sup>38</sup> to propose a geographic summary of the empire through costume. A crucial part of what allowed the Ottoman state to define its modernization as distinct from the West was premised on positioning "native culture" as the modernizing state's timeless patrimony. A sartorial definition of this patrimony, Ersoy argues, is evident in the *Elbise's* framing distinction between the continuity and integrity of local, traditional "costume" and the transience and superficiality of modern (European) "garments."<sup>39</sup> Ussama Makdisi pushes this one step further arguing that the *Elbise* articulates Ottoman Orientalism, "a vision of Ottoman modernity," defined by the Ottoman elite "that was hierarchical and imperial."<sup>40</sup>

In this context the Zeybeks' costume is representative of one element of regional "native culture" within the frame of a book that positions each within a classificatory mode by staging costumed pairs and trios against the same generic background. This and the frontal poses of each model in the *Elbise* contrasts with the anecdotal mise-en-scène of Gérôme's painting and its figures who are entertained by their fireside companion, whose finely wrought costume is so splendidly animated by the movement of his dance. Their tethered horse in the background turns to look, perhaps stirred by the music and dancing of his masters. His presence is a reminder that once the victuals have been consumed and the entertainment finished, the Zeybeks will move on. Here is rendered an itinerant existence that was the antithesis of Ottoman palace life governed by formality and protocol. Despite the differences between the *Elbise* project and the painting, the language of Gérôme's academic realism lends an ethnographic sensibility; and their particular dance was recognized as one of their distinctive practices.<sup>41</sup> It is tempting to think of the range of representations of Ottoman culture within the sultans' art collection as performing something of a visual précis of the empire's diversity for its elite audience, a reminder of cultural patrimony (that which distinguished the Ottoman Empire from Europe), within the contextualizing frame of the modern Ottoman palace. As we track the circulation of Gérôme's painting from Paris to Istanbul to Paris and then back again and incorporate within the account the life of its reprographic double produced in America, the variant names that it accrued as a result of these transitions are indicative of the interpretive distinctions for its divergent audiences.

Reassessing Gérôme's Orientalism through sources that attune us to nineteenth-century Istanbul as a context for the reception of his art, we find ourselves at a considerable geographic and interpretive distance from where this essay commenced and from Nochlin's analysis in which she argues that "the white man, the Westerner, is of course always implicitly present in Orientalist paintings like *Snake Charmer*; his is necessarily the controlling gaze, the gaze which brings the Oriental world into being, the gaze for which it is ultimately intended."<sup>42</sup> My intention here is not, however, to summarily dismiss Nochlin's Saidian analysis of Gérôme's art but rather to suggest that what is required is further cross-cultural interpretive work. An approach that embraces a more contested and geographically encompassing production and reception will augment and nuance our understanding of the cultural politics of Gérôme's Orientalism. So too the impact of Gérôme's pedagogical relations on his Orientalist art and his entrepreneurial activities in the capital of the Ottoman Empire needs to be further investigated to uncover the ways these activities intersected with the shifting parameters of both Ottoman and Orientalist cultural agendas in the nineteenth century.

#### Notes

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1. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

2. Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient" (1983), in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York, 1989), pp. 33–59.

3. In note 7 of her essay "The Imaginary Orient" Linda Nochlin reported a conversation with Edward Said in which he said that "most of the so-called writing on the back wall of the *Snake Charmer* is in fact unreadable," to refute Richard Ettinghausen's statement that the various inscriptions in Arabic "can be easily read" (Richard Ettinghausen, "Jean-Léon Gérôme as a Painter of Near Eastern Life," in Gerald M. Ackerman, *Jean-Léon Gérôme [1824–1904]*, exh. cat. [Dayton, 1972], p. 18). Walter Denny weighed in to the discussion by identifying the lower panels as being, in Gérôme's time, from the Altın Yol (1574) and the upper panel from the Baghdad Kiosk (1637) (Walter B. Denny, "Quotations in and out of Context: Ottoman Turkish Art and European Orientalist Painting," *Muqamas* 10 [1993], p. 221). Adding a further complication to the identification, Barry Flood (in correspondence with Sarah Lees, curator at the Clark Art Institute) has identified the long inscription at the top as an amalgamation of two sources—one of which is a verse from the Qur'an (2: 256)—and he proposes the following about the differing interpretations: "Ettinghausen claimed . . . that the inscriptions were legible, Edward Said denied this. The truth lies somewhere in between and is more interesting—the inscriptions have been deformed/transformed through copying, and Gérôme's combination of disparate sources also complicates any sense of 'simple' reading" (email correspondence between Finbarr Barry Flood and Sarah Lees, Clark Art Institute file notes on *The Snake Charmer*).



4. "M. Gérôme, the distinguished French historical painter, has, we understand, received a special invitation from the Sultan to paint a series of pictures for the Palace, and is expected to arrive here towards the middle of the present month" (*Levant Herald*, May 1, 1875, p. 330). A shorter notice in French appears on page 331 of the same paper.
5. *Levant Herald*, May 7, 1875, p. 346.
6. "Le Peintre Gérôme," *Levant Herald*, May 11, 1875, p. 359. A slightly extended version of the same article was published the following day under the same title, *Levant Herald*, May 12, 1875, pp. 158–59.
7. His arrival on the Messageries Maritimes vessel *La Bourdonnais* was announced in a short entry in *La Turquie*, May 15, 1875, p. 1.
8. Again the newspaper is highly conscious of art-world events in the French capital, noting that "despite the crises that have occurred, Paris has once again become, with remarkable speed, the great centre of the arts," where the "English and particularly the Americans come and pay amazing prices for canvases by Gérôme, Baudry, and Meissonier" ("Le Peintre Gérôme," *Levant Herald*, May 28, 1875, p. 403).
9. *Levant Herald* (June 2, 1875, p. 189) reports his departure for Bursa, as well as his return to Istanbul (June 17, 1875, p. 458). This same trip to Bursa is again reported (June 23, 1875, p. 219).
10. *Levant Herald*, June 17, 1875, p. 458. A version of the same report is published in French on page 459.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Opinions differ as to which artist hosted Gérôme's 1875 visit. The Goncourt *Journal* recounts a dinner-party conversation with the artist on the eve of his trip that year. In this source it is indicated that Gérôme will be hosted by an (unnamed) court painter who had painted the sultan's portrait (Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, *Journal mémoires de la vie littéraire*, 6 vols. [Paris, 1935–36], 5: pp. 154–55). Vasif Kortun disputed Gerald M. Ackerman and Semra Germaner's assumption that it was "Abdullah Siriez" (a misnomer for the Abdullah Frères) and contended instead that it was Pierre Désiré Guillemet (Vasif K. Kortun, "Gérôme ve İstanbul'daki Dostları," *Tarih ve Toplum* [August 1988], pp. 40–41). Both Guillemet and Chlebowski were court painters to Sultan Abdülaziz, and portraits were commissioned from both of them, so either could fit the description. Given the extensive reports in the *Levant Herald* of Chlebowski's role in hosting Gérôme's visit and the fact that he was also a former student, in my view it seems more likely that he is the unnamed painter referred to in the *Journal*.
13. I am grateful to Cemal Öztaş, M. Erdal Eren, and Gülsen Sevinç Kaya for facilitating my access to study and photograph these documents and the paintings in the Dolmabahçe Palace Archive and Museum in 2004.
14. *Şeker Ahmed Paşa, 1841–1907*, ed. Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu and İlona Baytar (Istanbul, 2008). The third important contact for the painter was the Abdullah Frères, the Ottoman-Armenian photographers. This firm was an important source of photographs for Gérôme's paintings. A letter to the artist dated November 14, 1878, demonstrates that they remained in contact well after Gérôme's visit (Gérôme correspondence, Masson Collection, Paris). (My thanks to Gerald M. Ackerman for generously providing a transcription of this letter.) I discovered further evidence of their ongoing contact in a newspaper article published in the previous year. This report indicates that Gérôme had sent a painting of a bullfight to the Abdullah Frères studio in Istanbul. The same report notes that the delivery also contained a landscape by Buttura and some Gérôme and Fortuny photogravures published by Goupil (*Levant Herald*, November 9, 1877, pp. 846–47). The Gérôme painting is *Taureau et picador* and is inscribed, "Souvenir à MMrs Abdullah." This painting is number 178 in the French edition of Gerald M. Ackerman, *Jean-Léon Gérôme: Monographie révisée, catalogue raisonné mis à jour* (Courbevoie, 2000), p. 268.
15. This correspondence even includes some works that Goupil sought to acquire at auction

- on behalf of the sultan but failed to obtain at a suitable price, such as the *Florentine Poet* (1861), most likely the painting of the poet Dante by Alexandre Cabanel.
16. Sema Öner, "The Role of the Ottoman Palace in the Development of Turkish Painting following the Reforms of 1839," in *National Palaces*, no. 4 (Istanbul, 1992), pp. 58–77; and Gülsen Sevinç Kaya, "Dolmabahçe Sarayı İçin Goupil Galerisi'nden Alınan Resimler / The Paintings Purchased from Goupil's Art Gallery for the Dolmabahçe Palace," in *Osmanlı Sarayı'nda Oryantalistler / Orientalists at the Ottoman Palace* (Istanbul, 2006), pp. 71–91.
17. *Goupil & Cie / Boussod, Valadon & Cie Stock Books* [electronic resource], 1846–1919 (Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles). A more extended comparative analysis of these two sources will be part of my forthcoming book, *Artistic Exchanges in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul*.
18. Michèle Haddad, *Khalil-Bey: Un Homme, une collection* (Paris, 2000).
19. As Haskell demonstrates, Halil's reception in the popular press in Paris often reiterated superficial stereotypes of the "Turk" as a spendthrift and philanderer (Francis Haskell, "A Turk and His Pictures in Nineteenth-Century Paris," in *Past and Present in Art and Taste: Selected Essays* [New Haven, 1987], pp. 175–85). For an account of the role of Halil as an Ottoman statesman and advocate for political reform, see Roderic H. Davison, "Halil Şerif Paşa: The Influence of Paris and the West on an Ottoman Diplomat," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 6 (1986), pp. 47–65; Davison, "Halil Şerif Paşa, Ottoman Diplomat and Statesman," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 2 (1981), pp. 203–21.
20. Fausto Zonaro, "Venti anni del regno di Abdulhamid: memorie e opere di Fausto Zonaro," typed manuscript, pp. 249–54 (Collection of Erol Makzume, Istanbul). My thanks to Erol Makzume for providing access to Zonaro's memoirs. For commentaries on the collection by other foreign visitors to the palace, see Semra Germaner and Zeynep İnançkur, "The Ottoman Imperial Art Collection," *Constantinople and the Orientalists*, trans. Joyce Matthews (Istanbul, 2002), p. 118. Sultan Abdülhamid's deployment of photography and public ceremony as instruments of statecraft and international diplomacy has been extensively analyzed; see, for example, Selim Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London, 1998), p. 16.
21. Germaner and İnançkur (note 20), pp. 117–19.
22. A large folio of Sultan Abdülaziz's drawings presented to Chlebowski (one of which is a drawing by the painter that has corrections on it by the sultan) is collated in a commemorative album held in the National Museum of Cracow (inv. no. III–r.a.10.296–10.366). See *War and Peace: Ottoman-Polish Relations in the Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries*, exh. cat., ed. Selmin Kangal, trans. Bartłomiej Świątlik (Istanbul, 1999), p. 432.
23. "We also learn that MM. Gérôme and Boulanger, the celebrated French painters, have received commissions from the Sultan for several of their works" (*Levant Herald*, April 8, 1875, p. 266).
24. *Café égyptien* is held in the Dolmabahçe Palace collection. *Lion dans sa grotte* and *Bachi-Bouzouk dansant* are held in the Cumhurbaşkanlığı Atatürk Müze Köşk Koleksiyonu.
25. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Foreign Affairs Decrees, no. 16850. The document in Ottoman is reprinted in Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı'ya açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, 2 vols. (1971; Istanbul, 1995), 2: pp. 629–30, and is reprinted and transliterated into Turkish by Sema Öner, *Tanzimat Sonrası Osmanlı Saray Çevresinde Resim Etkinliği (1839–1923)* (PhD diss., Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 1991), pp. 361–63.
26. Fanny Field Hering, *The Life and Works of Jean Léon Gérôme* (New York, 1892), p. 225. Hering notes that the alternative title for this painting is *The Lion with the Phosphorescent Eyes*. In the 1878 official catalogue of the Exposition universelle the painting is just listed as *Un lion*. I am indebted to Holly Clayson for her suggestion about Gérôme's possible motivation for the inclusion of these specific paintings.



27. See Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley, 1992).

28. *Gérôme: A Collection of the Works of J. L. Gérôme in One Hundred Photographures*, ed. Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], 4 vols. (New York, 1881). *An Egyptian Café* is in vol. 2 and *Bashi-Bazouks Dancing* is in vol. 3, both accompanied by extended descriptive text. In Strahan's book the title of the latter work is in the plural in the illustration's caption, i.e., *Bashi-Bazouks Dancing*, but is expressed in the singular form in the heading for the work's text entry, i.e., *Bashi-Bazouk Dancing*.

29. Jean Clément Léonce Dubosc de Pesquidoux, *L'Art dans les deux mondes: Peinture et sculpture*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1881), 1: p. 136.

30. "Bashi-Bazouks Dancing," in Strahan (note 28), vol. 3: n.p.

31. For further explication of these historical events and the political implications in Britain and the Ottoman Empire, see M Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, 2008), p. 131.

32. The term *Başbozuk* was used to describe the irregular troops that served alongside regular Ottoman forces during times of war. The majority were of Kurdish, Albanian, and Circassian origins (*Encyclopaedia of Islam* [Leiden, 1960], 1: p. 1077). During the Crimean War there was an unsuccessful attempt to subject them to military discipline. The Bashi-Bozouks were so controversial during the Russo-Ottoman War that they were subsequently no longer employed by the Ottoman state (*Türk ansiklopedisi* [Istanbul, 1967], 5: p. 383).

33. See Nochlin (note 2), pp. 52–53; and Olivier Richon, "Representation, the Despot, and the Harem: Some Questions around an Academic Orientalist Painting by Lecomte-du-Nouy (1885)," in *Europe and Its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature*, ed. Francis Barker et al., 2 vols. (Colchester, 1985), 1: pp. 1–13.

34. For an analysis of the shifting perceptions of the Ottoman state toward the Zeybeks, as reflected in documents in the Ottoman archives, see Atilla Çetin, "Osmanlı Arşiv belgelerinde Zeybekler hakkında Bilgiler," in *Zeybek kültürü sempozyumu*, ed. Nâmik Açıkgöz and Mehmet Naci Önal (Muğla, 2004), pp. 69–70; Haydar A. Avcı, *Zeybeklik ve zeybekler: Bir başkaldırı geleneğinin toplumsal ve kültürel boyutları* (Hückelhoven, 2001); Onur Akdoğan, *Bir başkaldırı öyküsü: Zeybekler: Tarihi, ezgileri, dansları*, 3 vols. (İzmir, 2004).

35. For an account of the suppression of the Zeybek uprising in 1838 that resulted from attempts to forbid their dress and other, later equally ineffective attempts at Zeybek dress reform in 1894 and 1905, see G. Leiser, "Zeybek," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 2002), 9: pp. 493–94.

36. Donald Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720–1829," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (August 1997), pp. 403–25.

37. Osman Hamdy Bey and Marie de Launay, *Elbise-i 'Osmaniyye / Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873 ouvrage publié sous le patronage de la commission impériale Ottomane pour l'exposition universelle de Vienne* (Istanbul, 1873), p. 141.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 7; Ahmet Ersoy, "A Sartorial Tribute to Late *Tanzimat* Ottomanism: The *Elbise-i Osmaniyye* Album," in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textiles to Identity*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul, 2004), pp. 253–70.

39. Hamdy Bey and de Launay (note 37), p. 5; Ersoy (note 38), p. 261.

40. Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002), p. 786. For an analysis of Osman Hamdi Bey's paintings in terms of Ottoman Orientalism, see Edhem Eldem, "Osman Hamdi Bey ve Oryantalizm," *Dipnot* (Kış-Bahar [Winter-Spring] 2004), pp. 39–67.

41. Leiser (note 35), 9: p. 494.

42. Nochlin (note 2), p. 37.

# An Artistic Enmity

## Gérôme and Moreau

PETER COOKE

The archives of the Musée Gustave Moreau in Paris contain three brief, undated letters from Jean-Léon Gérôme to Gustave Moreau. Two of them address Moreau with a playfully exaggerated display of love and respect as "my beloved and venerated colleague," indicating that they were written after Moreau's election in November 1888 to the Institut de France, where Gérôme had been a member since 1865. One of these two relates to an essay prize, the Prix Bordin, for which Gérôme and Moreau served on the jury in 1891.<sup>1</sup> The other refers with irony and disgust to the banquet that was to be held on January 16, 1895, to celebrate the seventieth birthday of Puvis de Chavannes, a painter whose idealistic, flat, anti-naturalistic style Gérôme detested.<sup>2</sup> The third letter, in which Gérôme addresses Moreau in frank and affectionate terms as "Very dear friend," appears to be a reply to a letter of condolence.<sup>3</sup> Yet, beneath the cordial surface of their relationship as colleagues, how did the two painters relate to each other's art? Friendships, associations, and influences have been much studied in art history, but enmities can also be revealing. Aversion may exert aesthetic influence of another kind, for artists may define themselves in opposition to an alien art. Whereas Gérôme, who enjoyed a much more precocious official career than Moreau, probably took little notice of the latter's controversial and relatively marginal art, he epitomized the type of art that Moreau abhorred.<sup>4</sup>

Both artists had to contend with the prolonged crisis of history painting (traditionally the most prestigious of the genres) that came to a head during the mid-nineteenth century. After a vast but less than entirely successful official commission—*The Age of Augustus* (fig. 19) exhibited at the Exposition universelle of 1855—Gérôme abandoned attempts at achieving the grand manner, for which his training in the studio of Paul Delaroche, one of the foremost proponents of *genre historique* (anecdotal history painting), had ill prepared him. After exhibiting, in the 1850s and 1860s, a few experimental and highly controversial realist history





PLATE 2  
Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The End of the Session*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 48.3 x 40.6 cm (19 x 15 $\frac{7}{8}$  in.).  
Frankel Family Trust

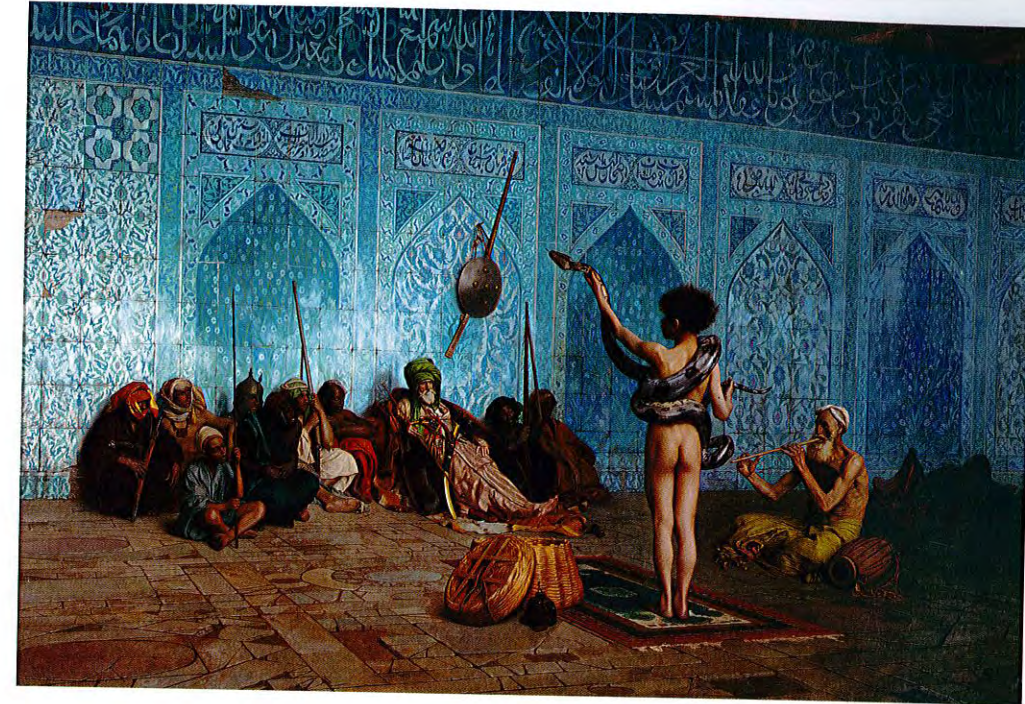


PLATE 3  
Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Snake Charmer*, ca. 1870. Oil on canvas, 83.8 x 122.1 cm (33 x 48 in.).  
Williamstown, Massachusetts, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute (1955.51)