ISLAM AND EUROPE

OTHER HISTORICAL CONTACTS

There were specific English royal contacts with Muslims, or individuals with first-hand knowledge of Islam.

These included Henry I's (r.1100–1135) employment of the physician Petrus Alfonsi, an Arabic-speaking convert to Christianity from Judaism who became Henry I's physician.

Petrus introduced Arabic astronomy, a Christian apologia which gave details about Islam, and a morality textbook which refers to the Qur'an, and borrows from Arabic literary sources.

Other contacts included the expulsion of a visiting 'Saracen' by Henry III in 1238, who was believed to be seeking military support against the Mughals, and crusades by Richard of Cornwall (1240) and Prince (later King) Edward I (1270).

Domestic concerns, civil wars, and consolidation of the English crown were generally of greater importance than the fighting of 'heretics' in distant lands.

Twelfth and thirteenth century developments increased knowledge about Islam. There were also a more significant corpus of propaganda about Muhammad and his 'heresies'. As part of the European view of Islam, the central argument was:

"Christianity is a religion of love, Islam is opposed to Christianity, therefore Islam is the religion of cruelty, therefore Muhammad was cruel and claimed divine justification for it, as suitable circumstances arose."

Although this polemic was centred around the Holy land, the entire Islamic World suffered - and it inspired later attacks and opinions on Islam. There is no doubt that the Crusades, and the conquest of Spain, determined the image for Islam.

There were also other, more subtle contacts: in the transmission of philosophy influenced by Islamic values, the Qur'an, or knowledge of Islam itself might be at best secondary, a subtext, or not obvious at all.

The importance of the knowledge to scholarship in Britain during this period frequently lay in its essence, rather than its origins, which might only be alluded to or be ignored altogether.

The centres of learning changed between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, with the development of a more secular education format, itself influenced by the transmission of the learning 'pulses' from the Islamic world to Europe.

The lure of knowledge led the inquisitive far afield. This led to a measure of direct and indirect contact with Muslims, and naturally increased awareness of Islam.

R.W. Southern states that he only found one reference to 'Muhammad' outside of Spain and south Italy prior to 1100: the opening up of the Mediterranean to extensive Latin traffic was to change this.

A good English example of such a traveller was Abelard of Bath (1079-1142), a collaborator with Petrus, who travelled in Sicily and the Holy Land during the twelfth century: he translated works from both Greek and Arabic, showing respect for Muslim scholars, philosophers, science and writings - but in terms of information on Islam, of limited value.

The vehement desire to baptise 'heretics' and 'pagans' has contributed to discord between Muslims and Christians throughout the centuries.

Peter, Abbot of Cluny, sought knowledge of Islam in order to engage in polemic dialogue: an 1142 visit to Toledo in Spain (conquered from Muslims in 1088) led to a decision that Islamic studies were essential to Christian missions..

Peter felt Muslim acceptance of Christ's nativity provided a basis for conversion. He sought the translation of a Christian Arabic book disputing Islamic doctrine into Latin.

In Spain, he discovered Herman of Dalmatia and Robert of Ketton (in England) studying Arabic, astronomy, and mathematics. Peter paid for their collaboration with a Mozarab and a Muslim:

Robert contributed a Qur'an translation and a compendium of Islamic tradition. This 'Toledan Collection' was edited, copied and distributed by Peter, who wrote to his Muslim readers:

"I attack you not, as some of us (Christians) often do, by arms, but by words; to by force, but by reason; not in hatred, but in love ..."

Peter's exempla to Muslims was English King Ethelbert (516-616) "who lived almost contemporaneously to your Muhammad," and accepted a Christian mission.

Robert's work was the first unabridged Qur'an translation, although he changed chapters and rearranged verses.

It is a fundamental contact between Europe and Islam, although Muslims may dismiss a translation, because Arabic was the medium for pure, un-tampered Revelation of God to Muhammad.

The Toledan Collection is seen as the start of serious study of Islam in Western Europe.

Christian Europeans assumed (in general terms) that

- Muhammad was not an authentic Prophet;
- that Muhammad denied the Crucifixion, Incarnation and Trinity;
- and that Muhammad built a worldly kingdom upon violence.
- Islam was perceived as a heresy from Christianity, not as paganism.

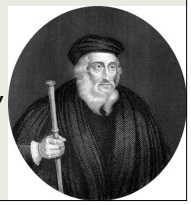
Determining British approaches to Muslim sources of knowledge, from the twelfth to fifteenth century, requires extensive study of scholars in religious houses and universities, in order to evaluate any 'Islamic' influence.

Within the Western Church, a fear of Islam was engendered to encourage fervour in its own believers.

In England, the advance of Islam might be applied as an indicator of papal sin, for example by John Wycliff:

"The Koran of Mahomet and the Decretals of the Pope have attracted attention from the incomparable pre-eminence of the Bible. This is a sign of the approach of Antichrist, and the only remedy for modern superstition is to believe solidly in the faith of scripture, and to believe no one else on any topic except to the extent to which he based himself on scripture."

. "Whyclif's Latin Words," W 1905.382, The Wyclif Society, 1883-1922: from De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, ed. R. Buddensief



The unfavourable comparison between Muhammad and the Pope, and the implied analogy between the Qur'an and 'modern superstition', was not written to harm a sensitive domestic Muslim audience: it was aimed at papal supporters.

Islam provided a convenient, flexible weapon: the Qur'an and Muhammad did not have to be explained, nor could they be defended.

The fifteenth century saw 'transitional events' inspiring further formative contacts between Britain and Islam: in particular, 1453 was significant - for the Ottoman (Osmanli) Turks conquest of Byzantine Constantinople, and the printing of the first book using moveable metal type, by Johann Gutenberg (1394-1468).

The Ottoman factor is significant in analysing relationships between Islam and the West, although the conquest of Constantinople went largely unnoticed at the time in Western Europe.

Trade is important, because when all else had broken down in terms of relations, there was still enthusiasm and necessity for specific products.

Where there was trade, there was also knowledge: of the peoples, because knowledge of their demands and supplies was sound business sense; of the regional geography, in terms of trade routes and ports; of the leaders, military forces and armies; and of Islam.

Some knowledge of religion, culture, customs and protocol was conducive to survival and success.

Trade was a formative conduit of knowledge about Islam, and influenced opinions about Muslims.

Northern European and Near East trade links can be traced back to at least the twelfth century:

after the First Crusade, the Levant influence of Italian merchant cities increased.

Population and town growth in Western Europe increased demands for luxury articles which often underwent a long journey, via overland caravans, before reaching ports.

From at least 1278, Italian galleys brought oriental merchandise to London.

English-Ottoman mercantile communications commenced in 1575: in 1580, Elizabeth I and Murad III signed a formal capitulation, allowing Levant Company activities in Istanbul. William Harborne was appointed ambassador in 1578. Profits were considerable, as was Harborne's reputation:

" ... mercurial-breasted Mr. Harborne ... who ... hath noised the name of our island and of Yarmouth so tritonly that not an infant of the cur-tailed skin clipping pagans but talk as frequently [of that] as that of their prophet's tomb at Mecca[sic]."

Harbourne's success resulted in Levant Company consuls being appointed in Egypt, Syria, Tripoli (Libya), and Tunis.

Levant Company history charts an uneasy English-Ottoman relationship, which survived through incentives of riches rather than mutual respect.

A variety of talents emerged, notably Benjamin Bishop: this consul swindled English creditors, sold alcohol to Turks, and vanished from the records after conversion to Islam.

Perhaps more influential increasing unfavourable impressions of Muslims were Maghrebi 'corsairs' or pirate activities.

Whilst their ports - including Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli - were under Ottoman suzerainty, the Turks had limited scope to intervene - even when Treaties were broken. Between 1609-16, 466 English vessels were captured and their crews enslaved.

The Algiers Consul was forced to attempt negotiations for their freedom. Accounts were published from English survivors: others 'turned Turk', converting to Islam, and committing acts of piracy.

The activities of pirates generated a fearsome, violent image of a specific (perhaps in a nominal sense) 'Muslim group'.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries show development of a specifically English (rather than European) view of Islam and Muslims.

Careers of Istanbul Ambassadors are examples of successful efforts in learning Muslim languages. Opinions expressed about Islam would be increasingly recorded in English rather than Latin.

Merchants obtained Arabic and Persian manuscripts, presented to university libraries.

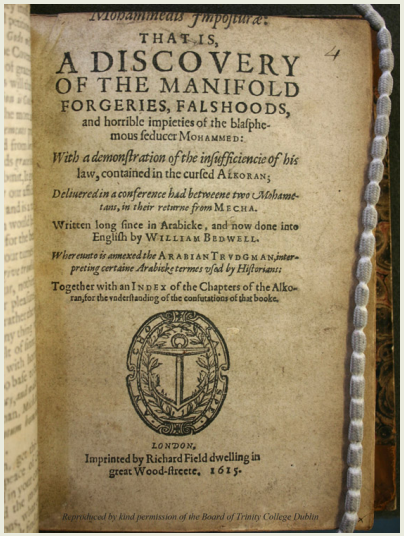
Graduates sought Company positions to study the Levant *in situ*, using this experience to found academic careers.

Theologians worked as chaplains, pursuing classical and biblical interests: Edward Pococke (1604-91) was chaplain in Aleppo and Istanbul, before taking the first Oxford University Arabic chair in 1636.

Practical experience in Istanbul was not the only influence on Pococke: his teacher William Bedwell (1563-1632) can be attributed with a proportion of English knowledge about Arabic and opinions about Islam.

Bedwell also taught the first Cambridge Professor of Arabic (appointed 1632), Abraham Wheelock.

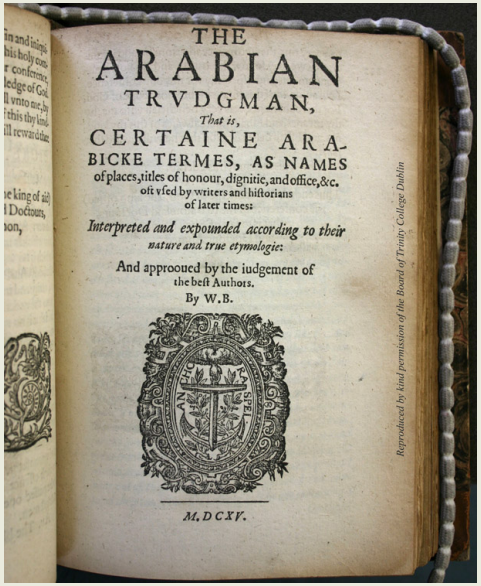
Bedwell's achievements included an extensive Arabic-Latin lexicon, a Qur'an guide, a navigation text, and the translation of a Christian Arabic polemical work.


Mohammedis Imposturæ:
THAT IS,
A DISCOVERY
OF THE MANIFOLD
FORGERIES, FALSHOODS,
and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer MOHAMMED:
With a demonstration of the insufficiencie of his law, contained in the cursed ALKORAN;
Deliuered in a conference had betweene two Mohametans, in their returne from MECHA.
Written long since in Arabicke, and now done into English by WILLIAM BEDWELL.
Whereunto is annexed the ARABIAN TREVDGMAN, *interpreting certaine Arabicke termes vsed by Historians:*
Together with an INDEX of the Chapters of the Alkoran, for the vnderstanding of the confutations of that booke.
LONDON,
Imprinted by Richard Field dwelling in great Wood-streete. 1615.
Reproduced by kind permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin

Bedwell was limited in primary Arabic sources, never visiting a Muslim land. He relied on Leiden University Library, the few documents that reached England, and contacts with merchants.

Bedwell's' approach is shown in his 1615 translation of the anti-Islam polemical text: Mohammedis Imposturae: That is, A discovery of the Manifold Foregeries, Falshoods, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer, Mohammed: With a demonstration of the insufficiencies of his law, contained in the cursed Alkoran ..."

These are the views of an age: they belong to an 'armchair scholar', whose motivation was not an understanding of Islam, but whose works influenced generations.



THE
ARABIAN
TRVDGMAN,
That is,
CERTAINE ARA-
BICKE TERMES, AS NAMES
of places, titles of honour, dignitie, and office, &c.
oft vſed by writers and hiſtorians
of later times:
Interpreted and expounded according to their
nature and true etymologie:
And approoued by the iudgement of
the beſt Authors.
By W.B.

M. D CXV.

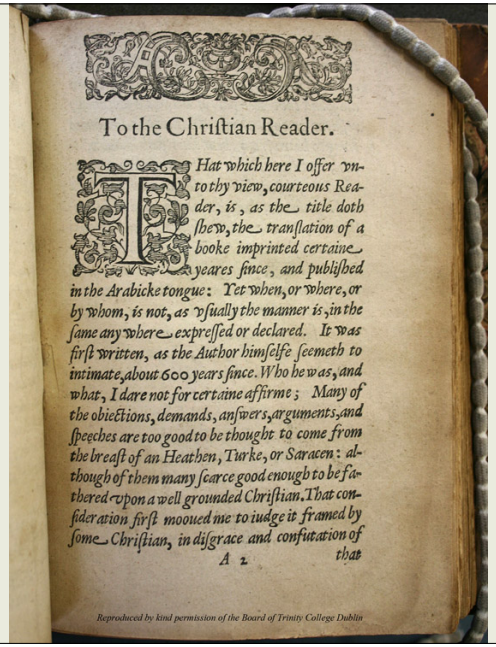
Reproduced by kind permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin

Includes dialogues on aspects of Islam in his writings, which includes a dictionary.

"This early seventeenth-century text was translated by William Bedwell (1563-1632), and printed by Richard Field in 1615, based on an Arabic text printed in Rome during the 1570s (the original author is unknown)."

"Even within the Trudgman he cannot stop himself from castigating the Islamic religion on occasion; for the entry on 'Alesalem' as 'the law of saluation, or the law of God', Bedwell interjects 'If he had said, the law of damnation, and of the diuell, he had said well'."

Source: ***Derek Dunne, Mohammedis Imposturae: that is, a discovery of the manifold forgeries, falsehood, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer Mohammed*** *http://www.ucd.ie/readingeast/essay4.html*



To the Chriſtian Reader.

THat which here I offer vnto thy view, courteous Reader, is, as the title doth ſhew, the tranſlation of a booke imprinted certaine yeares ſince, and publiſhed in the Arabicke tongue: Yet when, or where, or by whom, is not, as vſually the manner is, in the ſame any where expreſſed or declared. It was firſt written, as the Author himſelfe ſeemeth to intimate, about 600 years ſince. Who he was, and what, I dare not for certaine affirme; Many of the obiections, demands, anſwers, arguments, and ſpeeches are too good to be thought to come from the breaſt of an Heathen, Turke, or Saracen: although of them many ſcarce good enough to be fathered vpon a well grounded Chriſtian. That conſideration firſt mooued me to iudge it framed by ſome Chriſtian, in diſgrace and confutation of

A 2 that

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Knowledge provided by Bedwell may have been synthesised with other texts and sources: for example, learned works about Muslim regions, and information provided by merchants and travellers, which achieved wide circulation.

Pivotal was the publication in 1600 of an English translation of The History and Description of Africa by Leo Africanas. 'Leo' was al-Hassan ibn Mohammed al-Wezas al-Fasi (b. C.1496), who became Johannes Medices upon his conversion to Catholicism. He was a well-educated scholar, who wrote his text first in Arabic, and then Italian (1526).

Leo emphasises personal Catholicism, for example by describing early Muslims as bewitched, whilst Christian terms have been applied for Muslim institutions. Leo provides valuable information about Islamic practices.

Through the application of eyewitness accounts, it opens up the region with a comprehension that might be denied to the passing traveller.

Leo had access to a wide variety of social, ethnic and religious groups. Leo marks the point that Africa enters universal history.

Numerous travellers' tales followed, included collected letters and other accounts for publication:

•Richard Hakluyt (priest, editor, translator)
•Samuel Purchas (cleric, editor)

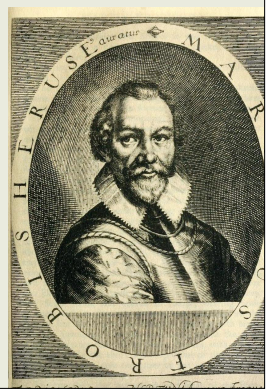
Numerous travellers' tales followed, included collected letters and other accounts for publication:

•Richard Hakluyt 1553-1616: The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation (1589)

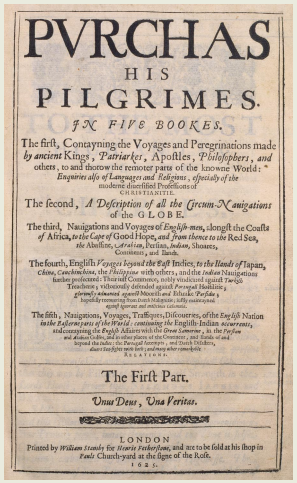



THE PRINCIPALL NAVIGATIONS, VOIAGES AND DISCOVERIES OF THE English nation, made by Sea or ouer Land,

Imprinted at London by GEORGE BISHOP and RALPH NEWBERIE, Deputies to CHRISTOPHER BARKER, Printer to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie.



Samuel Purchas (1575-1626)


PVRCHAS HIS PILGRIMES.

IN FIVE BOOKES.

The first, Containing the Voyages and Peregrinations made by ancient Kings, Patriarkes, Apostles, Philosophers, and others, to and throw the remoter parts of the knowne World:

The second, A Description of all the Greeke Nauigations of the GLOBE.

The third, Nauigations and Voyages of English-men, alongst the Coasts of Africa, to the Cape of Good Hope, and from thence to the Red Sea, the Abissine, Arabian, Persian, Indian, Shoares, Continent, and Iles.

The fourth, English Voyages beyond the East Indies, to the Iles of Iapan, China, Cauchinchina, the Philippine with others, and the Indian Nauigations further prosecuted: Throughout, nobly vindicated against Forraine Treachery, valiantly defended against Perpetuall Hostilitie, glorious atchieued against Monarkes and Rebells: Purchas, hopefully recouering from Death-sickenesse, richly enamoured against ignorant and enuious calumnie.

The fifth, Nauigations, Voyages, Traffiques, Discoueries, of the English Nation to the Easterne parts of the World: containing the English-Indian occurrents, with accompanying the Dutch Affaires with the Great Turke, in the Persian and Arabian Gulfes, and in other places of Asia, Africa, and the Iles thereof, and beyond, and about the Cape of Bona Esperanza, and throughout the Atlantick Ocean, and Straights of Magellan, and the South Sea, and Iles thereof: with many other remarkable Relations.

The First Part.

Vnus Deus, Una Veritas.

LONDON

Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard at the signe of the Rose. 1625.





Geffrey Ducket *described Shi'a practices* [He believed Muhammad was worshipped alongside God and 'Mortus Ali'. Ducket applies Christian terminology: 'priests', 'churches', and 'Lent' - and certain Persian terms which are not explained.

Robert Withers' account on the Turks, written in 1620. Withers commences with a detailed account of Sunni Islam.

The description of Heaven and Hell reflects the Qur'an.

Other aspects of Wither's account suggests contact with Sufism, and he describes "the Teckehs of the Meulevees (which are an order of Derveeshees, that turne round with musike in their Divine Service) ..." Withers provides his explanation of Arabic terms: "

Robert Withers (Ottaviano Bon), A Description of the Grand Signor's Seraglio or *Turkish* Emperour's Court (London, 1650)

”All the Prophets are held in great honour among them. They call Moses, Musahib Alloh, that is, a talker with God; and Christ, Meseeh, Rooh-ulloh, and Hazrette Isaw, that is Messias, the Spirit of God, and venerable Jesus: and Mahomet, Resul Alloh, that is, the Messenger of God.”

Withers reflects his historical period with a subtle and damning comparison of Catholics and Muslims:

“ ... whereas the Papists say the Ave Maria, so they say only Subhawn Alloh, that is, God is pure and true, and sometimes Alloh Ekber, that is, God is great.”

Withers also observed Muslims at prayer:

“[the] Eemawm, which is the Parish Priest, beginnes to pray, and all they which are present imitate him in gesture: for, of themselves a great part of them would not else know how to performe that businesse. For their Prayers consist chiefly in rising up, falling down, kissing the ground, and sometimes sitting still, one while touching their eyes, sometimes their faces, then their beards, then their heads ...”

The seventeenth century sees clarification of Islamic terms, and some accuracy, encounters with Muslims were taking place in a variety of settings, and differences were being noticed. Muslims could be vilified or admired. Islam was a point of comparison with perceived reduced standards of religious belief in England.

Daniel Defoe describes students studying Arabic as a dead language, unemployable even as translators, whom Defoe compares with merchants, speaking several Arabic dialects, yet not being regarded as scholars by university men.

It was a combination of practical experience, serious scholarship, and a synthesis of previous knowledge that would result in Islam becoming widely known - if not completely understood - as Britain became a colonial power.



British contact with the Islamic world became more commonplace in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, leading to a greater diversity of information about Muslims and Islamic societies. Greater power in the Islamic world(s) did not lead to more respect for Islam or Muslims: to justify a position of superiority, Islam might be downgraded as 'primitive' and 'heretical'.

The period sees the Europeanisation of aspects of Islamic cultures, some becoming simple novelties, whilst others became more enduring: an example of a successful cultural transplant was coffee-drinking, and the establishment of coffee houses. Such 'new' social customs in Britain would also influence their region of origin.

For example, the seventeenth century success of the coffee trade led: to a British presence in an exclusive production area in Arabia (Mokha, Yemen); a transfer of the industry to other areas where coffee could be produced (in the eighteenth century) and transported more economically (causing financial hardship in Yemen).

Tangible cultural acquisitions from Muslim cultural sources included coffee houses (1650 onwards, run by Armenians);

Turkish baths, staffed by Muslims and Eastern Christians (1679 onwards); wearing of Eastern silks and fashions in the Royal Court, observed by Pepys in 1666 and also by Evelyn; and a growing interest in antiquities found in the 'Islamic world' (although culturally belonging to other eras and contexts).



Lady Mary Worsley Montague (1689-1762) provide insight into English contacts with Ottoman Muslims, and a perception of Islam.

As the wife of the Ambassador to Istanbul (appointed in 1717), Montagu had an insight into the Ottoman Court denied to many outsiders; as a woman, she could visit the *harem.* Her posthumously published and edited correspondence - in numerous editions - inspired many subsequent impressions of Islam.

Montagu is interested in how Islam has been described by other writers and travellers, and with what degree of accuracy. Montagu was conscious of gaps within her knowledge, perhaps derived from sources cited earlier:

"'Tis certain we have but very imperfect relations of the manners and Religion of these people, this part of the World being seldom visited but by merchants who mind little but of their own Affairs, or Travellers who make too short a stay to be able to report any thing exactly of their own knowledge."



Montagu was encouraged to read the Qur'an (an English translation only became available in 1734, produced by George Sale). She said of the Qur'an:

"'tis the purest morality deliver'd in the very best language."

Montagu also believed that Christian evangelism would be successful in the Ottoman Empire.

Montagu believed Muslim women had more liberty: in wearing the *hijab*, Montagu believed that illicit affairs were easier, and that with women's anonymity " ... no Man dare either touch or follow a Woman in the Street."

Montagu has a low opinion of Western European views about Muslim women:

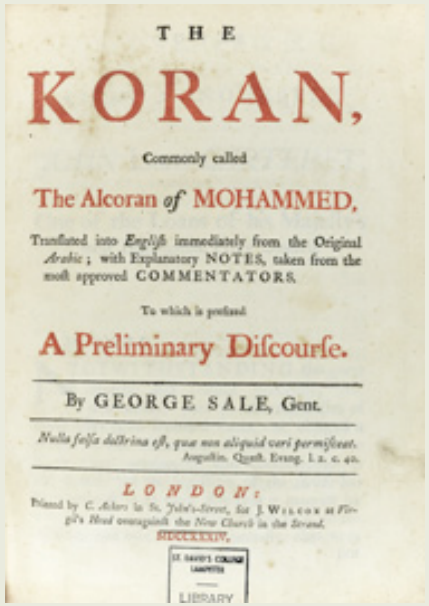
" ... I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme Stupidity of all writers that have given accounts of them ..."

The letters and works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. ed. by Lord Wharncliffe (London, 1837, 2nd ed.)

There is a significant increase in published material about Islam during the eighteenth century, reflecting an increase in scholarship, travel, and general interest.

A more detailed representative study of 'mainstream publications' would incorporate a selection of eighteenth century texts, including:

Joseph Pitts, A Faithful Account of the Religion & Manners of the Mahometans - including an early description of the *hajj*; and George Sale's translation of the Qur'an (1734) - based around Italian priest Ludovico Marracci's Latin translation.



THE

KORAN,

Commonly called

The Alcoran of MOHAMMED,

Tranſlated into *Engliſh* immediately from the Original *Arabic*; with Explanatory NOTES, taken from the moſt approved COMMENTATORS.

To which is prefixed

A Preliminary Diſcourſe.

By GEORGE SALE, Gent.

Nulla ſeſſa doctrina eſt, quæ non aliquid veri permiſceat.
Auguſtin. Quæſt. Evang. l. 2. c. 40.

LONDON:

Printed by C. Ackers in St. John's-Street, for J. Wilcox at Virgil's Head oppoſite the New Church in the Strand.

MDCCXXXIV.

ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE LAMPETER

LIBRARY

UWTSD library

The interest and knowledge in the East was reflected in many areas of society during the eighteenth century.

King George I (r.1714-24) took his interest in the East to the extent of importing two Muslims servants, Mustapha and Mahomet, who discretely practised Islam whilst serving the Royal Court. Developments in Britain were increasing linked with European and World issues, indicating a transition from foreign policies linked primary with Europe and the Mediterranean, to further afield.

A familiarity with Islam and Muslims became more relevant, as awareness increased that Muslim communities were present globally.

The 19th century sees more extensive accounts of Muslims emerging in literature, art and academic study.

Some of the accounts endeavour to provide accuracy and authenticity (rather than simply being sensationalistic)

Examples include:

Lithographs/Paintings of David Roberts

E.W. Lane's work on the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, together with an extensive Arabic-English lexicon.

Further reading on this:

Search for works by

E.W. Said
Norman Daniel
R.W. Southern

David Roberts, among the earliest of British artist travellers, professed himself to be fulfilling an ambition "from earliest boyhood, to visit the remote East". But he was well aware of the commercial and social rewards that scenes of ancient Egypt and the Holy Land would bring him from a public hungry both for novelty and for apparently true records of biblical places, and he knew that he was bringing back "one of the richest folios that ever left the East". Occasionally, he encountered difficulties in transferring to paper the size and magnificence of tombs and temples: at Karnak he was "overwhelmed… with astonishment" and was "fearful painting will scarcely convey any notion of what I mean", but his training as a stage-scene painter had equipped him well for such large-scale challenges. He returned with 272 coloured drawings and three full sketchbooks.

Extraordinary scenes of beautifully arranged horrible wilderness
British Orientalist Painting
By Briony Llewellyn
1 May 2008











David Roberts, Gate of Metwaley



David Roberts, Mosque of Sultan Hassan

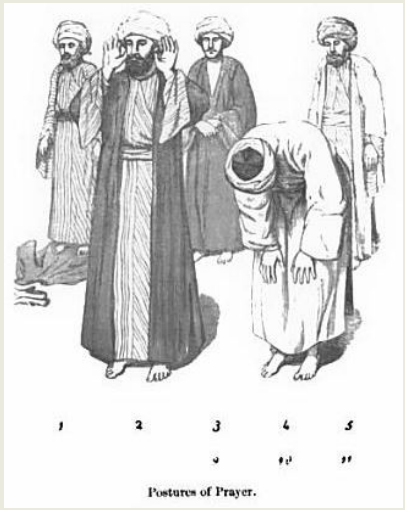


Robert Scott Lauder
David Roberts, 1796–1864. Artist
(In Arab dress) 1840
Oil on canvas

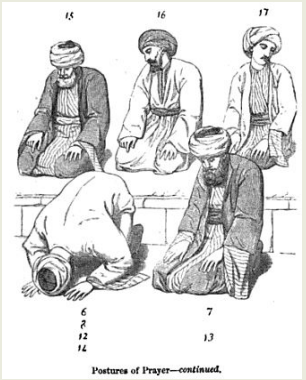


'The Jewish Wedding' (After
Delacroix) by Auguste Renoir, French.
Oil, 1875.





Postures of Prayer.



Postures of Prayer—*continued.*



Women and Children of the Lower Classes.

CHAPTER XIX

PUBLIC DANCERS

EGYPT has long been celebrated for its public dancing-girls; the most famous of whom are of a distinct tribe, called "Ghawázee."[1] A female of this tribe is called "Gházeeyeh;" and a man, "Gházee;" but the plural Ghawázee is generally understood as applying to the females. The misapplication of the appellation "Al'mehs" to the common dancing-girls of this country has already been noticed. The Ghawázee perform, unveiled, in the public streets, even to amuse the rabble. Their dancing has little of elegance; its chief peculiarity being a very rapid vibrating motion of the hips, from side to side. They commence with a degree of decorum; but soon, by more animated looks, by a more rapid collision of their castanets of brass, and by increased energy in every motion, they exhibit a spectacle exactly agreeing with the descriptions which Martial[2] and Juvenal[3] have given of the performances of the female dancers of Gadès. The dress in which they generally thus exhibit in public is similar to that which is worn by women of the middle classes in Egypt in private; that is, in the hareem;

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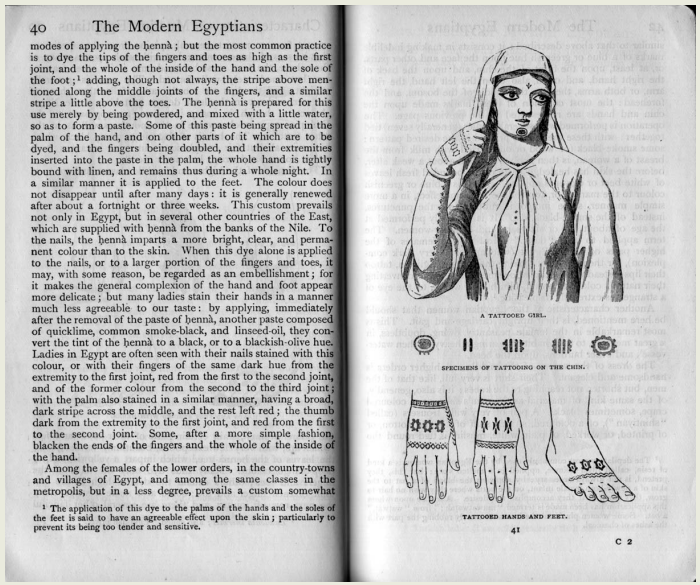
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DANCING-GIRLS (GHAWÁZEE, OR GHÁZEEYEHS).

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40 The Modern Egyptians

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A TATTOOED GIRL.

SPECIMENS OF TATTOOING ON THE CHIN.

TATTOOED HANDS AND FEET.

41

C 2



Ladies attired for Riding or Walking.

Jean Leon Gerome, The Snake Charmer



Genre painting, the depiction of everyday life, was fundamental to nineteenth-century British art. Through such images British society was able to analyse itself, especially to reflect upon the little dramas of domestic life. But in the Middle East, so British artists complained, they felt excluded from local family life and so were compelled either to imagine life in the harem, or to focus instead upon the male-dominated public spaces of the cities they visited. John Frederick Lewis, who lived in Cairo throughout the 1840s, emphasises the relaxed pleasures of male company, just as his harem scenes appear to show female social spaces freed from many of the tensions between men and women shown in traditional British paintings of domestic scenes.

The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting: room guide, Genre and Gender

Harems

Some of the most popular Orientalist genre scenes—and the ones most influential in shaping Western aesthetics—depict harems. Probably denied entrance to authentic seraglios, male artists relied largely on hearsay and imagination, populating opulently decorated interiors with **luxuriant odalisques**, or **female slaves or concubines** (many with Western features), reclining in the nude or in Oriental dress. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) never traveled to the East, but used the harem setting to conjure an erotic ideal in his voluptuous odalisques. Beyond their implicit eroticism, harem scenes evoked a sense of cultivated beauty and pampered isolation to which many Westerners aspired. The taste for Orientalism further manifested itself in Eastern architectural motifs, furniture, decorative arts, and textiles, which were increasingly sought after by a European elite. Proponents of the Aesthetic movement in Great Britain (1860s–80s), who collectively advocated an aesthetic of beauty for its own sake and valued form over content in art, took particular inspiration from Oriental interiors. This taste is exemplified in the Arab Hall (1877–79) in the London home of artist Frederic Leighton (1830–1896): glittering with mosaic tiles collected from Leighton's journeys to the East, it served as a gathering place for like-minded aesthetes.

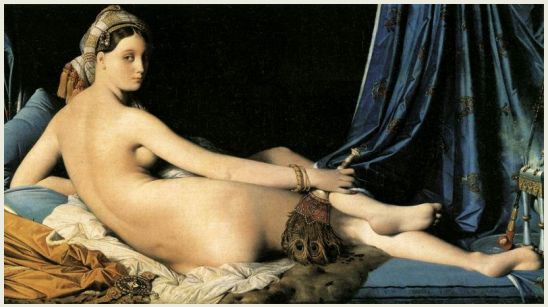
Jennifer Meagher
Department of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The harem was the defining symbol of the Orient for Western Europeans, and is today the definitive category of Orientalist imagery for us. What the West thought it knew about 'the East' was that, there, women were kept as chattels, imprisoned in segregated spaces, the slaves or sex-toys of their masters. From this image derived one of the key meanings of 'Oriental' in European languages: unfettered masculine power. Later treatments of the harem theme by artists across Europe adopted a less violent but still eroticised tone, imagining the harem as a place of refined female sensuality. In this section, the British vision of the harem is explored, a vision which could on occasion lean precariously towards the cruel or the kitsch, but which could also offer fascinating insights into Victorian thinking about the 'Orient' and about domestic life at home.

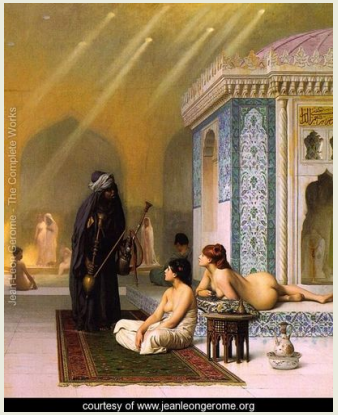
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The design of domestic architecture in the Middle East was one of the most consistent motifs in British Orientalist painting. The modest façades, projecting balconies and above all the delicate mashrabiyyas (lattice-work screens) of private buildings attracted the attention of most of the artists in this exhibition. There was also a fascination with life in these houses, particularly the harem (the female quarters). For those artists who intended to paint any kind of Middle-Eastern domestic subject, therefore, a study of domestic architecture was an essential preliminary.

The Lure of the East British Orientalist Painting: room guide, Harem and Home



Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres, The Great Odalisc



Harem Pool

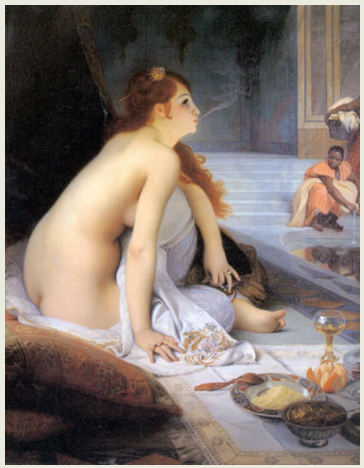
Jean-Léon Gérôme



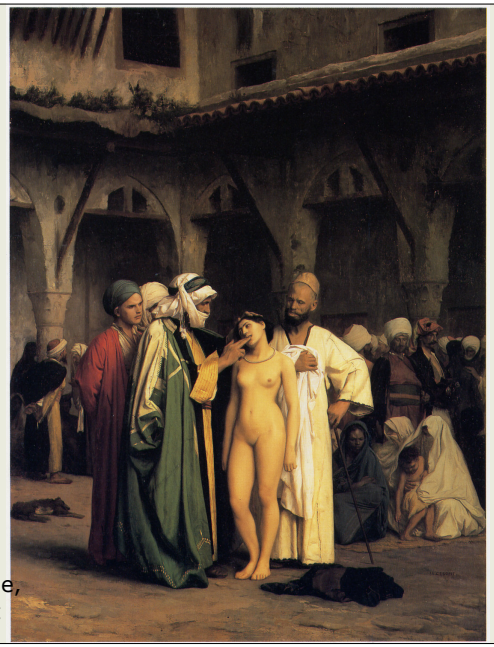
Frederick Goodall, A New Light in the Harem



Edwin Long, Love’s Labours Lost



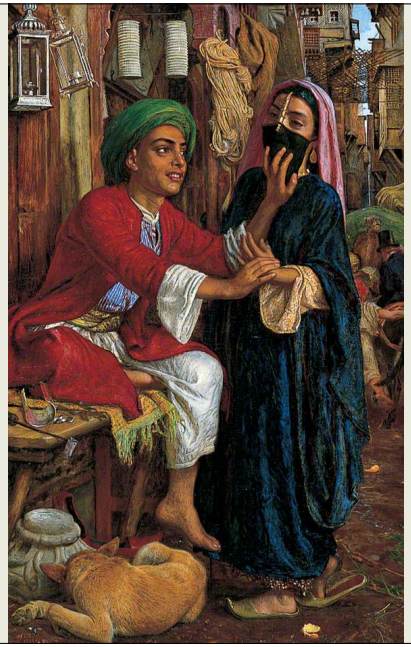
Jeran-Jules Antone Lecomte de Nouy, The White Slave



Jean Leon Gerome,
The Slave Market



Gerome
The Bath

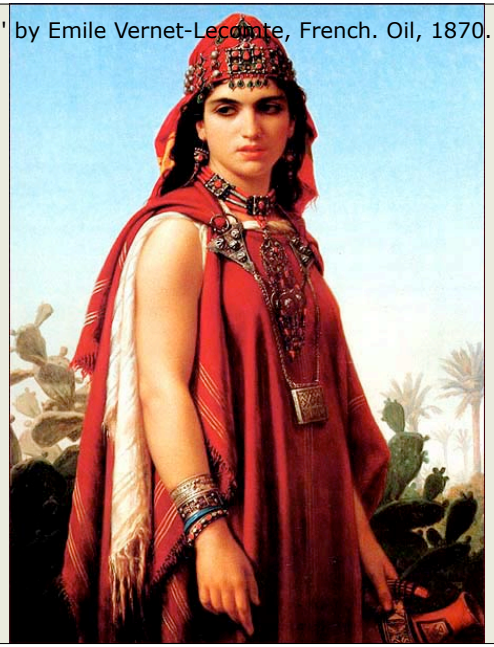


William Holman Hunt,
The Lantern Maker's
Courtship (Cairo
Street Scene)



Slave of Love and Light of my Eyes' by
Etienne Dinet, French. Oil, 1904.

'Berber Woman' by Emile Vernet-Lecomte, French. Oil, 1870.





'Angelica' by Charles Gleyre, Swiss. Watercolor, 1834.



'Arab Girl' by Louis-Joseph Anthonissen, Belgian. Oil.



'Salome' by Henri Regnault, French. Oil, 1870.



'Egyptian girl with a butterfly' by Leopold Carl Muller, Viennese. Oil, 1885.



Frank Dicksee
Leila 1892



'Jewish Woman, Smyrna' by Charles Gleyre, Swiss. Watercolor, 1834.



'Adile Hanim' by Amadeo Preziosi, Italian. Watercolor, 1854.



'An Almeh' by Jean-Leon Gerome, French. Oil, 1882.

David Roberts, among the earliest of British artist travellers, professed himself to be fulfilling an ambition "from earliest boyhood, to visit the remote East". But he was well aware of the commercial and social rewards that scenes of ancient Egypt and the Holy Land would bring him from a public hungry both for novelty and for apparently true records of biblical places, and he knew that he was bringing back "one of the richest folios that ever left the East". Occasionally, he encountered difficulties in transferring to paper the size and magnificence of tombs and temples: at Karnak he was "overwhelmed… with astonishment" and was "fearful painting will scarcely convey any notion of what I mean", but his training as a stage-scene painter had equipped him well for such large-scale challenges. He returned with 272 coloured drawings and three full sketchbooks.

Extraordinary scenes of beautifully arranged horrible wilderness
British Orientalist Painting
By Briony Llewellyn
1 May 2008











David Roberts, Gate of Metwaley



David Roberts, Mosque of Sultan Hassan



Robert Scott Lauder
David Roberts, 1796–1864. Artist
(In Arab dress) 1840
Oil on canvas

John Frederick Lewis's experience of the East was almost sedentary. He spent nearly ten years living in a Mamluk-style house in Cairo, with an occasional trip to the Sinai desert and only one known voyage on the Nile. If he wrote a journal or extensive letters home, they have not survived, and we have to rely on the comments of the few English visitors who met him for glimpses of his apparently cross-cultural existence. Dadd reported to Roberts that Phillips had seen his sketches, and that Lewis was intending to return soon and "reap the harvest of his labours". In fact, he remained another eight years, becoming an elusive and enigmatic figure, whose supposed lifestyle as a pipe-smoking "languid Lotus-eater", wearing an "embroidered jacket and gaiters, and a pair of trousers which would make a set of dresses for an English family" and as the overlord of a "long, queer, many-windowed, many-galleried house", was given almost legendary status by his friend William Makepeace Thackeray, who wrote about his visit to Lewis in his Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo (1846).

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John Frederick Lewis
Life in the Harem

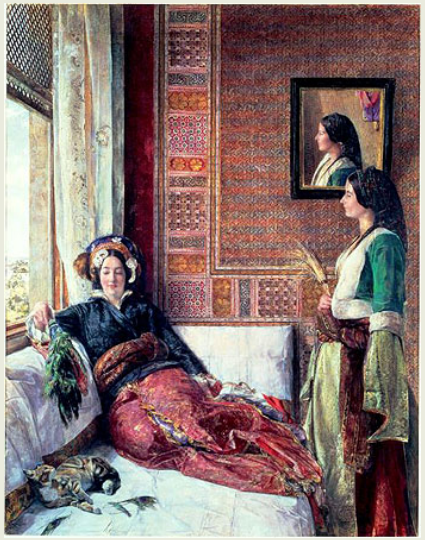


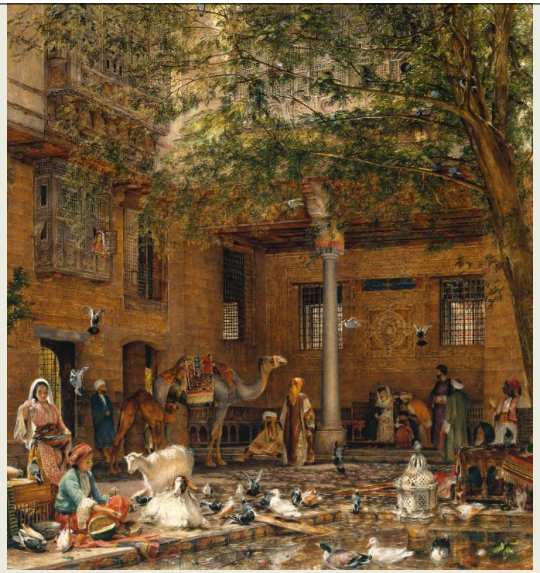
John Frederick Lewis
In The Mosque



John Frederick Lewis,
El Khan Khalili, 1860







John Frederick LewisStudy for 'The
Courtyard of the Coptic Patriarch's



John Frederick Lewis
The Bazaar of the Ghûriyah from the Steps of the Mosque of El-Ghûri, Cairo 1841-51
Pencil, watercolour and

In July of 1798 Napoleon marched into Egypt with an army. He defeated the Turks at the battle of the Pyramids, stayed for a year and then was driven out by the British. In the small amount of time that he was there he managed to do what he did best: he changed everything.

Following him came first a trickle and then a torrent of westerners into the Near and Middle East. The writers who wrote about their experiences and the artists who painted what they saw became known as the Orientalists. They traveled through Turkey, Iraq, Persia, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Arabia and North Africa. With time this became an art movement and today we call it Orientalist art.

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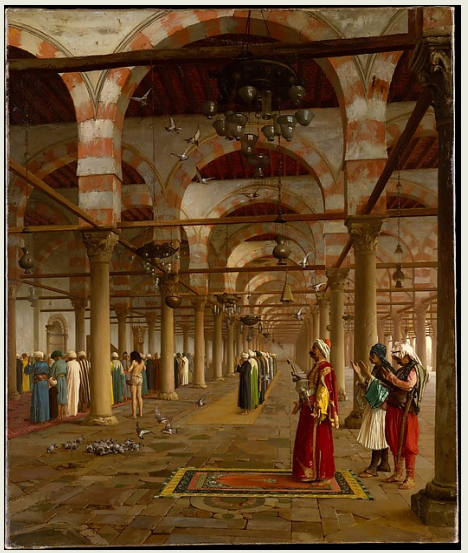
For the topographical painters, Jerusalem presented problems. A decade and a half earlier Roberts declared that he "never had more uphill work than in sketching the various objects of interest about Jerusalem. The city within the walls may be called a desert, two thirds of it being a mass of ruins and corn fields; the remaining third with its Bazaars and ruined mosques being of such a paltry and contemptible character that no artist could render them interesting". His Jerusalem subjects, though numerous, are mostly from outside the walls, as were Lear's, nearly twenty years later. Like many western visitors, Lear was appalled not only by the decay into which the sacred city had been allowed to fall, but also by the internecine strife between the representatives of the various Christian sects supposed to be guardians of the Holy places. "O my nose! o my eyes! O my feet!" he wrote, "how you all suffered in that vile place! – For let me tell you, physically Jerusalem is the foulest and odiousest place on earth. A bitter doleful soul=ague comes over you in its streets – & your memories of its interior are but horrid dreams of squalor & filth – clamour & uneasiness, – hatred & malice & all uncharitableness. – But the outside is full of melancholy glory –: exquisite beauty & a world of past history of all ages: – every point forcing you to think on a vastly dim receding past – or a time of Roman War & splendour… or a smash of Moslem & Crusader years…"

Extraordinary scenes of beautifully arranged horrible wilderness
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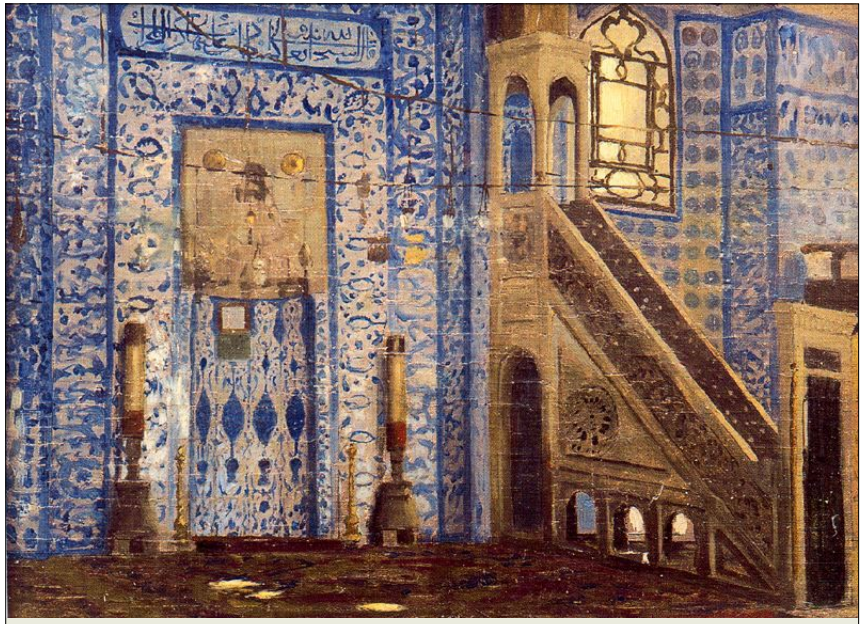


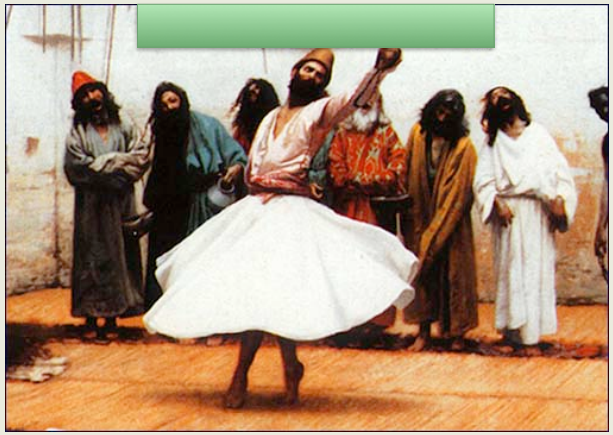


Interior of a Mosque – Gerome 1870



Prayer in the Mosque
Artist: Jean-Léon Gérôme (French, Vésoul 1824–1904 Paris) -





Detail from 'The Whirling Dervishes' by Jean-Leon Gerome, French. Oil, 1899.



Ludwig Deutsch, The Nubian Guard



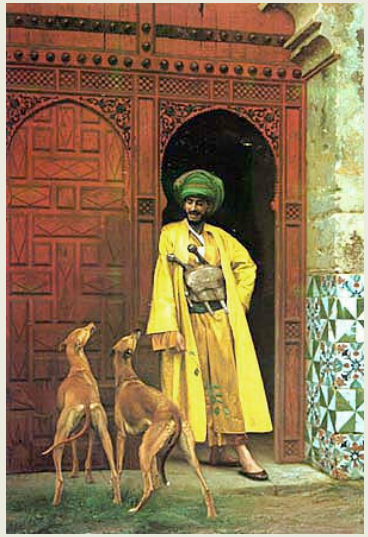
Gerome, Café House in Cairo



'Girls dancing and Singing' by Etienne Dinet, French. Oil, 1902.



'The Jewish Wedding' (After Delacroix) by Auguste Renoir, French. Oil, 1875.



'Complicity' by Jean-Leon Gerome, French. Oil, 1875.



'The Pelt Merchant' by Jean-Leon Gerome, French. Oil, 1869.



'Bashi-Bazouk Chieftain' by Jean-Leon Gerome, French. Oil, 1881.



'Awaiting an Audience with the Pasha' by Arthur Melville, Scottish. Watercolor, 1882.



Arthur Melville
An Arab Interior 1881

National Gallery of Scotland



'Pilgrims going to Mecca' by Leon Belly, French. Oil, 1861.



'The Journey of the Magi' by James Tissot, French. Watercolor, 1894.

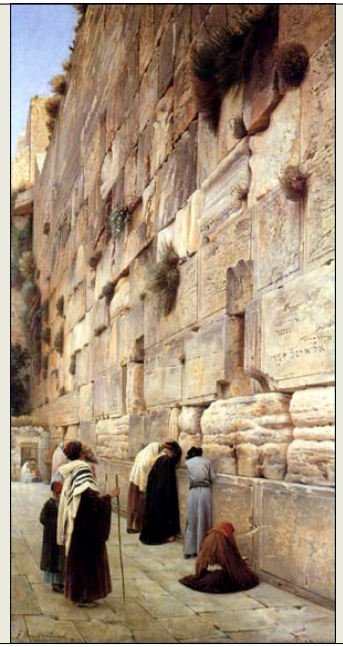


Goodall, Early Morning in the Wilderness of Shur

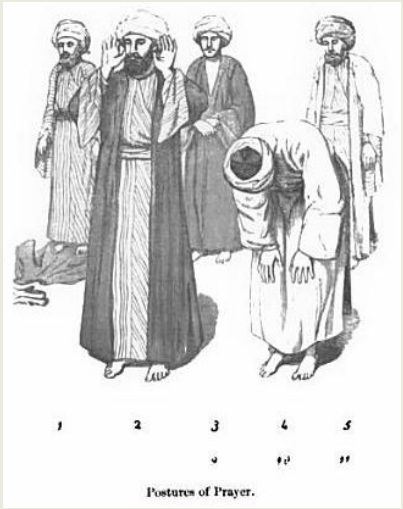


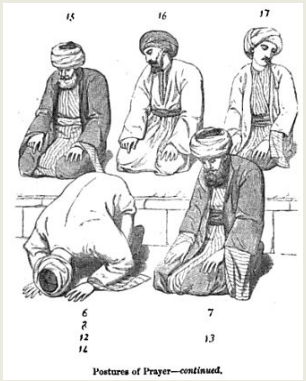
'The Pyramids Road, Gizah' by Edward Lear, British. Oil, 1873.

'Lament of the Faithful at the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem' by Gustav Bauernfeind, German. Oil, 1890.









Postures of Prayer—*continued.*


Women and Children of the Lower Classes.





Henry William Pickersgill, Portrait of James Silk Buckingham and His W
1816

CHAPTER XIX

PUBLIC DANCERS

EGYPT has long been celebrated for its public dancing-girls; the most famous of whom are of a distinct tribe, called "Ghawázee."[1] A female of this tribe is called "Gházeeyeh;" and a man, "Gházee;" but the plural Ghawázee is generally understood as applying to the females. The misapplication of the appellation "Álmehs" to the common dancing-girls of this country has already been noticed. The Ghawázee perform, unveiled, in the public streets, even to amuse the rabble. Their dancing has little of elegance; its chief peculiarity being a very rapid vibrating motion of the hips, from side to side. They commence with a degree of decorum; but soon, by more animated looks, by a more rapid collision of their castanets of brass, and by increased energy in every motion, they exhibit a spectacle exactly agreeing with the descriptions which Martial[2] and Juvenal[3] have given of the performances of the female dancers of Gades. The dress in which they generally thus exhibit in public is similar to that which is worn by women of the middle classes in Egypt in private; that is, in the hareem;

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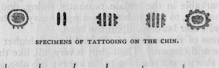
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A TATTOOED GIRL.



SPECIMENS OF TATTOOING ON THE CHIN.



TATTOOED HANDS AND FEET.



Ladies attired for Riding or Walking.

Sir David Wilkie
Mrs Elizabeth Young in Eastern Costume 1841
Watercolour and gouache on paper

