

Edwin Lord Weeks: An American Artist in North Africa and South Asia

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**Abstract**

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Artist, adventurer, travel writer and cultural commentator Edwin Lord Weeks (1849–1903) was one of America's most celebrated expatriate artists. From the 1870s through the 1890s the Boston native and Paris resident traveled throughout Spain, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Persia and India, venturing well beyond "the Orient" familiar to many of his professional colleagues. His scenes of Egypt and Morocco established early successes in France and America. Travels to India beginning in 1882 inspired a new vision of that region centered on its monumental architecture, colorful street life and vibrant culture. His fresh, bold images of India distinguished Weeks from rival American and European Orientalist painters, established his mature reputation, and brought sustained international acclaim.

The dissertation situates Weeks' life and work in a broad socio-political context. For the first time, Weeks' reputation as an intrepid "artist-adventurer" is examined relative to critical and

popular reception, the construction of artistic identity, the interdependence of text and image, and the evolving definition of the modern American artist.

Original research confirms, clarifies and augments Weeks' biography. New analysis places Weeks at the center of artistic life in 1870s Boston, sheds light on his confusing Moroccan excursions of the 1870s and early 1880s, and brackets his Indian itineraries of the 1880s and 1890s.

Weeks' enduring associations with the *École des Beaux-Arts*, Léon Bonnat and Jean-Léon Gérôme are considered in depth. Despite these academic affiliations, Weeks' consistent emphasis on the effects of sunlight, glare, immediacy and viewer participation indicates that he was thoroughly immersed in contemporary aesthetic concerns.

Weeks' major paintings of India, exhibited at the Paris Salon and internationally, emerge as conceptually innovative and transformative when viewed against the long French and British traditions of visualizing India. Moreover, they may be read as richly layered commentary on contemporary topics such as architectural preservation and the geopolitics of Central/South Asia. The cross-cultural circumstances of their production, their integration of French and British visual and textual sources, and the pervasive backdrop of colonialism reveal Edwin Lord Weeks' career as a complex transnational project grounded in an American identity and perspective.

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Of course, any omissions or errors in the dissertation are my sole responsibility.

## **Dedication**

To Jenny, for her tolerance, patience and encouragement. To my sons, for trying to be still and then racing uncontrollably around the house, for trying to be quiet and then bursting into fits of giggles, for thousands of interruptions to tie a shoe, kick a ball, make a snack, bandage a finger, find a sock, read a book. You make it all worthwhile.

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## Introduction

Gilded Age American artist, adventurer, travel writer and cultural commentator Edwin Lord Weeks (1849-1903) was America's foremost painter of the Orient, that shifting designation that in the Victorian era encompassed all distant points east, southeast and south of Western Europe. Weeks was a Boston native, the adventuresome son of a prosperous grocer, intimate with leading artists in the circle of William Morris Hunt. He launched his reputation as a painter of "the East" while still in his twenties when he set off on the first of several extended tours of southern Spain, North Africa and the Levant. Like so many prominent American artists of the post-Civil War generation, he moved to Paris for professional training where he studied in the studio of Léon Bonnat and probably received guidance from Jean-Léon Gérôme. His scenes of Morocco, an object of France's colonialist interests, brought him to the attention of French arts writers, secured an exclusive contract with the canny and influential Parisian dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, and solidified his international stature.<sup>1</sup> However, it was his paintings of India that brought him sustained transatlantic acclaim. Travels there beginning in 1882 inspired the artist to embrace a bolder vision of "the East" centered on India's monumental architecture, colorful street life and vibrant culture. These paintings staked out new artistic territory, established Edwin Lord Weeks as a mature artist, and continue to define his oeuvre even today.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Paul Durand-Ruel was an early and influential promoter of the Barbizon School, the Impressionists, as well as a steadfast representative of the Orientalists and the more fashionable academic painters. Weeks' paintings, hung with works by Claude Monet, Albert Sisley and others, featured in a number of Durand-Ruel's exhibitions in Paris and New York.

2. Gerard Ackerman, the scholar most closely associated with study of the American Orientalists, stated



Weeks' paintings are in the collections of the Musée d'Orsay, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Walters Art Museum among other major institutions. Yet, for the better part of a century they have been of little interest to scholars or collectors, dismissed as either too academic in style or too imperialist in subject. However, the reevaluation of Victorian painting beginning in recent decades combined with a concurrent rethinking of the trenchant arguments of literary and cultural critic Edward Said have raised the visibility of this long-discounted category. Regarding Orientalist artists, the current thrust of scholarship is to shift the discussion from a master narrative of the West's domination of the East, articulated by Edward Said, to issues of cultural exchange and simultaneous, layered meanings. Cogent arguments arising from this new direction rest on in-depth investigations of intended and unintended political collusions, but also on artists and their lives, the means, methods and outcomes of production, commercial transactions and public display, publications and their dissemination, contemporary issues and debates.

Four general objectives inform this dissertation on the life and work of Edwin Lord Weeks. Because he left no diaries and only a few scattered letters, his early life and influences have remained obscure, leading to ambiguities and inaccuracies in dating some of his paintings and in identifying some subjects. Taking on one of the most traditional tasks of the art historian,

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that "during his lifetime Edwin Lord Weeks was the most famous American Orientalist," Ackerman, *American Orientalists* (Paris: ACR Édition Internationale, 1994), 234. Weeks' rival for this title was Frederick Arthur Bridgman (1847–1928), the subject of Ilene Susan Fort's 1990 dissertation in which she claims Bridgman was "the most important American Orientalist." Fort, "Frederick Arthur Bridgman and the American fascination with the exotic Near East," (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1990), 1. Regardless, the two men were fellow expatriates in Paris, colleagues and friends. Bridgman served as pallbearer at Weeks' funeral.

that of artistic biography, this essay reviews and confirms what has been written by previous scholars, clarifies confused events and augments the chronology with original research.

That focus on the individual prompted a new inquiry into Edwin Lord Weeks as a distinctive artistic personality, the "artist-adventurer," an identity that was constructed and leveraged in the pages of the popular press. Ultimately, this led to an examination of how Weeks fit into the evolving definition of the modern artist, how he manipulated that definition to suit his own purposes, and how—despite his expatriate status and academic affiliations—he defined himself, and was viewed by others, as both modern and American.

Two related but more expansive issues shaped the inquiry. The first questions whether being "American" and "modern" distinguishes Weeks in the realm of nineteenth-century Orientalist painting. That is, in a category defined primarily by French and British artists with academic affiliations, are Weeks' choices regarding subject, theme and style chiefly derivative? Or do they support a point of view that is identifiably American, or that stands outside of a nationalist framework, or that introduces a different set of social, political, aesthetic or technical concerns? Fundamentally these questions probe the network of tensions between influence and independence. Review and comparison of Weeks' paintings with prior British and French sources, coupled with a close reading of a variety of contemporary critical and popular texts, reveals the artist's career as a transnational project grounded in an American identity. Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings, like his writings, reflect complex and composite interests. As the following chapters reveal, they are inspired by but independent of European traditions, politically aware but not politically charged, undoubtedly engaged with current aesthetic dialogues but distanced from the coalescence of Modernism.

A final, overarching objective was to consider Edwin Lord Weeks and his paintings of North Africa and India within the context of his own time, without organizing or filtering the examination of his work chiefly in terms of East-West polarities. For decades the most common art historical practice has been to view nineteenth-century paintings of "the Orient" primarily as broad imperialist statements rife with racism, sexism and cultural violation and control, in the full measure first articulated by Edward Said in his seminal text, *Orientalism* (1978), and further expounded by Linda Nochlin, Rana Kabbani and others.<sup>3</sup> The compelling analyses of these scholars was adopted by a legion of followers and has invigorated valuable feminist, Marxist and post-colonial critiques of art and its power relations. As this cumulative effort restructured the field, in effect it ejected Victorian painters of "the Orient" *en masse* from traditional art historical studies, carved them out from contemporary aesthetic, modernist and social concerns, and consigned them to footnotes in the sweeping narrative of the West's domination of the East.

Much (but not all) of the latest historical scholarship questions the premise that Orientalism in the visual arts is necessarily and invariably bound to power, and/or recognizes that at present there are more promising lines of inquiry. In a presentation for a 2010 symposium on Orientalist photography held by the Getty Research Institute, Christopher Pinney, who has written extensively on photography and India, declared that the study of Orientalist relations to power is now "exhausted." He proposed that it be succeeded by investigations of "transculturation," "purification" and "autonomy," that is, with investigations of cultural

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3. Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *Art in America* (May 1983): 118–31, 187–91; Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myth's of Orient: Devise and Rule* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1986).

exchange, of images that purposefully eliminate signs of modern life and technology, and of the indigenous traditions that adapted and endured despite colonialist interventions. During a panel discussion on "Re-Thinking Orientalism" (at another Getty Center event) Mary Roberts, who has written compellingly and frequently on art and empire, called for a "reframing" of the field. Roberts argued for research that "did not lose sight of political questions" but that emphasized investigations of cultural encounter and exchange and contemporary histories of production, reception and consumption.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the symposium, architectural historian Esra Akcan posited that the most promising direction of art historical scholarship lay in the investigation of the "simultaneity of multiple meanings" of Orientalist images.

This dissertation takes up the direction articulated by Pinney, Roberts, Akcan and others. It recognizes that the study of Orientalism in visual culture is headed for a multi-perspectival discourse with scholarship grounded in the idea that images have diverse and layered meanings that are in conversation with their subjects, with their producers and consumers, with the world around them and with each other. While remaining theoretically and ideologically engaged, it reflects a turn away from the polemical vein of postcolonial critical inquiry and a turn towards a methodological framework that arises from close visual and textual readings of primary sources. This is not to deny that the complicated geopolitics of Orientalist painting merit deep scrutiny

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4. Author's personal notes of talk by Christopher Pinney, "What's Photography Got to Do with It?" (paper presented at Session I, Theory, Politics and the Orientalist Photograph, "Zoom Out: The Making and Unmaking of the 'Orient' through Photography," Getty Research Institute, May 2010); author's personal notes of talk by Mary Roberts, "Re-Thinking Orientalism" (The Getty Center, August 2010). Roberts, Linda Nochlin and Lalla Essaydi participated in this panel discussion in connection with the 2010 exhibition "The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme" held at the J. Paul Getty Museum.

and further research. It is rather to delineate a more modest objective for this dissertation, to study Edwin Lord Weeks and his paintings in context and to recover some of what they tried to convey to American and European audiences about a world very different from their own.

This inquiry builds on, dissents from and adds to the work of a number of scholars who have written specifically about Edwin Lord Weeks. Since his death in 1903 the sum of that work is comparatively little; only occasionally has Weeks figured into the peripheries of scholarly inquiry. In 1976, the University of New Hampshire mounted a modest exhibition of paintings by Weeks which was accompanied by a short booklet introducing the artist.<sup>5</sup> At times frustrated by the lack of material, the author noted “Our research turned up not one word written about him or his work since the 1920s.” The dissertation corrects some inaccuracies in this publication that arose from the dearth of materials available in 1976 and the limited research resources available to the university.

In 1983 Lynne Thornton’s *The Orientalists, Painter-Travellers, 1828-1908* covered Weeks in one paragraph. More insightful was H. Barbara Weinberg's 1983 book, *The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme*, in which she asserts that Weeks was strongly influenced by Gérôme. The discussion was very brief but influential, later taken up by Annette Blaugrund and other art historians. Chapter Three explores Weinberg's analysis in depth.

A couple of years later D. Dodge Thompson, now chief of exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art, penned a feature article on Weeks for the August 1985 issue of the *Magazine*

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5. Kathleen Duff Ganley, *The Art of Edwin Lord Weeks (1849-1903)* (Durham, NH: University Art Galleries, University of New Hampshire, 1976).

*Antiques*, a general interest publication.<sup>6</sup> Years went by before Weeks resurfaced. In 1994 he was included (in seven pages of text) as one of the seventy artists' biographies in Gerard M. Ackerman's *American Orientalists*. In a wide-ranging essay of 2000, " 'The garments of instruction from the wardrobe of pleasure': American Orientalist Painting in the 1870s and 1880s," Brian T. Allen asserted that Weeks' paintings were about cultural strength, agency, vitality and purpose, challenging assumptions about Orientalist artists and themes.<sup>7</sup>

Steadily Weeks' individualism has emerged. Catharine Y. Becket's 2001 master's thesis, "Anticipating Edward Said: The Prescient and Sympathetic Nature of Edwin Lord Weeks' Orientalism" notes that, compared to French Orientalists, Weeks aimed for "more perceptive and objective interpretations and, in turn, representations of the Orient." Analyzing Weeks primarily through the Orientalist narrative developed in the late twentieth century, she observes that the artist "does not fit so neatly into Said's Orientalist model" and claims that he presented a distinctly American point of view.<sup>8</sup> This dissertation's conclusions parallel those of Becket as they venture into a much more wide-ranging discussion of influences on Weeks.

In 2002 independent art historian Dr. Ulrich W. Hiesinger authored a gallery exhibition catalog, *Edwin Lord Weeks: Visions of India*.<sup>9</sup> This is a well-researched essay that provides the

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6. D. Dodge Thompson, "Edwin Lord Weeks, American painter of India," *Magazine Antiques* 128, no. 2 (1985): 246–58.

7. Brian T. Allen, " 'The garments of instruction from the wardrobe of pleasure': American Orientalist Painting in the 1870s and 1880s," in Holly Edwards, *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures, Orientalism in America, 1870–1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 59–75, at 67–70.

8. Catharine Y. Becket, "Anticipating Edward Said: The Prescient and Sympathetic Nature of Edwin Lord Weeks' Orientalism," (master's thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2001), 2, 6.

9. Ulrich W. Hiesinger, *Edwin Lord Weeks: Visions of India* (New York: Vance Jordan Fine Art, Inc.,

highlights of Weeks' biography and situates Weeks in the broad context of Orientalist art. It is an excellent overview of the artist, a useful chronological resource and a helpful guide to much of the directly relevant archival material. A couple of years later Oliver B. Pollack, a professor of history at the University of Nebraska, argued in a twenty-three page article that Weeks was fundamentally an apologist for British imperialism.<sup>10</sup> Pollack's opinion may be substantiated by the sources that he cites; however, it may be repudiated using those same sources.

Well after this dissertation was underway Adesola Alabi published online in 2011 "Edwin Lord Weeks: An Artist's Encounter With British India And The Ideologies of the Raj: 1882-1896," a master's thesis for Christie's Education London. The thesis concludes that although Weeks expressed "an artistic rather than ideological gaze," his work must be seen as a part of the imperial project, a topic that is revisited in the conclusion of this dissertation.<sup>11</sup>

While these authors have resurrected Weeks from scholarly obscurity and provided valuable information on the artist, to date there has been no comprehensive investigation of Edwin Lord Weeks' career and paintings. Gaps and errors in the artist's biography have seldom been researched. Weeks' early career, his life in Boston and association with prominent Boston artistic circles have been overlooked as important early influences. Conflicting reports of his

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2002). The catalog consists of forty-one pages of text and illustrations followed by thirty-nine color plates. Another nod to Weeks in 2002 was a one-page entry for the catalog *After the Hunt: The Art Collection of William B. Ruger* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002).

10. Oliver B. Pollack, "Edwin Lord Weeks: An American Artist-Writer and Indian Art," in the Festschrift *Charisma and Commitment in South Asian History: Essays Presented to Stanley Wolpert*, ed. Roger D. Long (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004), 207–30.

11. Adesola Alabi, "Edwin Lord Weeks: An Artist's Encounter With British India And The Ideologies of the Raj: 1882-1896," (master's thesis, Christie's Education London/University of Glasgow, 2011), 44.

training in Paris in the ateliers of Léon Bonnat and Jean-Léon Gérôme remained unreconciled. Published accounts starting from an early "pocket biography" of 1880 left his years in North Africa, particularly Morocco, a confusing tangle of dates. Moreover, writers have rarely mentioned Weeks' paintings of Morocco, crucial accomplishments in the crafting of his international reputation. While in the course of writing on Weeks some have acknowledged the long tradition of the British visualization of India, none have situated Weeks within the context of that tradition. Weeks' interest in contemporary and historical writers on India and its culture, such as architectural historian James Fergusson, travel writer Louis Rousselet and others, has been considered only superficially. The artist's monumental paintings of India, though certainly the best known and most popular of his works, have not been analyzed in terms of formal structure, layered meanings, or contemporary references. Weeks' distinctive identity as an artist-explorer often has been mentioned but never considered in terms of the broader professional, social and economic forces operating on late-Victorian artists.

The following chapters tackle all of these issues. Chapter One, "Constructing the Artist Adventurer," introduces Weeks as he wanted to be known and no doubt remembered. It presents a new, deeper and expanded understanding of the artist, positioned in the nineteenth-century popular press as an ideal of American masculinity and modernity. Weeks' public image, grounded in the Victorian explorer mystique and established in newspapers and widely-read periodicals like *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and *Scribner's Magazine*, imparted convincing authority to his scenes of North Africa and India. Methodologically based on the work of Sarah Burns and Julie F. Codell, this chapter introduces to Weeks scholarship the complex, entangled issues of artistic identity, celebrity, myth and the market, the interdependencies of text and



image, and the creation of cultural capital.

Chapter Two, "Boston Beginnings," pieces together scattered letters, newspaper articles and unconventional sources such as ward maps, city directories, municipal photography collections and census records to weave a coherent narrative of Edwin Lord Weeks' family history and life in Boston. New research places Edwin Lord Weeks at the center of the thriving artistic life of 1870s Boston and well-connected to the influential circle of William Morris Hunt. Ambiguous, conflicting and missing data are unraveled to create a plausible account of Weeks' early travels to Florida, Surinam, Syria, Egypt and Morocco. Key sources include Boston newspaper reviews of the work spurred by these earliest travels that launched Weeks' reputation as an intrepid adventurer in search of the authentic.

During the mid-1870s Weeks looked to Europe to advance his training and professional stature. Chapter Three, "Professional Training in Paris," considers the lure of the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, the ambiguities surrounding Weeks' acceptance to the studio of Jean-Léon Gérôme and his enduring association with Léon Bonnat. The discussion takes up H. Barbara Weinberg's assertion of Gérôme's prevailing influence on Weeks, probes her comparisons more deeply, and expands the analysis to include other sources, influences and motivations. The final section considers comments by nineteenth-century critics Robert Sherard and R.A.M. Stevenson, who observed in Weeks' paintings a powerful individualism in conception and execution, and positioned him with James McNeill Whistler and John Singer Sargent as among the most advanced American artists.

Chapter Four, "Edwin Lord Weeks in North Africa," considers the artist's journeys to and interpretations of the region that popularized his romantic artist-adventurer persona, impressed

French and American critics with his daring and distinguished him from many of his Orientalist colleagues. The first third of the chapter describes in brief the complex European and American interests in the region, a necessary context for considering the charged political environment that backgrounded the conception, production and reception of the work. Next, new information further documents the artist's travels and sheds some light on his confused Moroccan chronology. Excerpts from French accounts demonstrate the contemporary reception of Weeks' paintings as achievements gained by a rare combination of an individual vision, raw courage and dogged perseverance. The concluding discussion considers how Weeks both colluded with and questioned France's colonial entanglements.

After Weeks first went to India in 1882, he pivoted away from Morocco and turned almost exclusively to Indian and Persian subjects. The next two chapters widen the view to examine the French and British traditions of visualizing India. The purposes of these chapters are twofold: first, to situate Weeks in the context of this long European tradition and second, to serve as a prelude to the concluding discussion of the artist's major paintings of India. The work of Edwin Lord Weeks is best understood as a distillation of the French and British traditions of depicting India, though filtered by the experiences of an independently-minded, sophisticated American immersed in a competitive, transatlantic artistic milieu. His paintings are stylistic composites, produced at the intersection of multiple cultures and histories. Chapter Five, "Weeks and the French Visualization of India," and Chapter Six, "Empire of the Imagination: the British Visual Legacy," set forth the French and British artistic vision that informed and inspired Edwin Lord Weeks' panoramic scenes of Indian life.

Against the backdrop of the British and French traditions the conception and presentation of Edwin Lord Weeks' major paintings of India in the 1880s and 1890s emerge as innovative, transformative, category-shattering. Chapter Seven, "An American Vision: India at the Paris Salon," discusses how Weeks' Indian-themed contributions to the Académie des Beaux-Arts staked out new artistic territory, cemented his international reputation and continue to define his oeuvre. New sources and approaches that previously have not been applied to Weeks' paintings are employed to dissect and contextualize the works in light of viewer experience, paintings by other artists, aesthetic concerns such as the "glare effect" and references to then-current issues such as architectural preservation and the geopolitics of Central Asia. The final pages touch on Weeks' declining reputation at the end of the century as American critics and patrons increasingly demanded art and artists with pronounced, undiluted ties to their native land.

The arguments and analyses presented in these chapters rely as much as possible on primary sources. Admittedly these are rather scarce. Pursuit of them, and related research in archives and museum vaults, took me to the British Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, Tate Britain, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Thomas J. Watson Library, Brooklyn Museum, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Walters Art Museum, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, University of New Hampshire, Portland Museum of Art (Maine), Annmary Brown Memorial and Brown University Library, the Getty Research Institute and J. Paul Getty Museum, Sterling Memorial Library of Yale University, Yale Center for British Art, and the Art Gallery of Hamilton in Ontario, Canada.<sup>12</sup> Although I did not travel to Paris the staff

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12. To develop additional background for the dissertation the author attended the 2008 exhibition "The

of the Musée d'Orsay were helpfully responsive. Durand-Ruel & Cie, the Paris-based gallery that had an exclusive contract with Edwin Lord Weeks, provided to me a copy of the artist's file from its archives.

This research has only confirmed that, to the extent nineteenth-century Orientalism in the visual arts has garnered the attention of scholars, that attention has been focused primarily on the work of French and British artists. Although the most recent exhibitions and re-appraisals of Orientalist painting have been multi-national scholarly collaborations, they have continued to be defined, and arguably constricted, by this narrow focus. It is time to expand the inquiry to artists with other personal perspectives, national—and, in the case of Weeks, transnational—interests.

Weeks' depictions of the panorama of life in the "Orient," especially of Morocco and India, demonstrate that he approached these cultures with a point of view and purpose that differed from those of his European contemporaries even as it drew from European sources. Complicated then as now by the pervasive backdrop of colonialism, they are works of art and historical documents subject to a multiplicity of meanings. Their interpretations are layered and sometimes contradictory. They may be seen as simultaneously innovative and stubbornly conventional. But always the cross-cultural circumstances of their production and reception reflect the collective curiosities, failings and unresolved tensions that characterized Edwin Lord Weeks and his times, and that resonate in our own.

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Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting, 1830–1925" at the Yale Center for British Art, and toured the same exhibition at the Tate Britain as well as attended the Tate's June 2008 symposium, "Orientalism Revisited: Art and the Politics of Representation."

## Chapter One

### Constructing the Artist Adventurer

Edwin Lord Weeks, son of a prosperous Boston grocer, was lauded as the preeminent American painter of the "Orient" by more than one late-nineteenth-century art critic (Figure 1-1). Famous on both sides of the Atlantic, charming and urbane but with a knack for landing in perilous situations, he was also the Gilded Age embodiment of a nascent American archetype, the adventure hero. Weeks constructed this unlikely but memorable public personality—an improbable Indiana Jones, wielding a brush—from his earliest years as a professional artist.

It is no exaggeration to state that Edwin Lord Weeks shaped the visual understanding of the "East" for hundreds of thousands of his contemporaries. Over the course of his three-decade career Weeks traveled for months at a time through what is now Spain, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and India. His scenes of North Africa and India became familiar to audiences across the United States and Europe, from the exhibitions of small galleries fronting Boston Common to those of the Royal Academy, the Paris Salons, the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition and the Munich Succession. Showman Imry Kiralfy devoted a gallery to seventy-five of Weeks' paintings and sketches of India in his 1895 Empire and India Exhibition that opened in London's sprawling Earl's Court, drawing a half-million people.<sup>1</sup> Weeks' illustrations of crowded cafés, colorful weddings, princely processions, cliff-top

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1. The exhibition offered a commemorative booklet of Weeks' paintings, *Life and Scenes in India from original oil paintings by E. L. Weeks* (London: T. F. Robey and Co., n.d.). Among those displayed were

palaces, lumbering elephants, barbers, soldiers and street vendors of "the East" enlivened the pages of periodicals such as *Scribner's Magazine*, *Harper's Monthly*, *La Vie Moderne*, *Figaro Illustré*, and books like *Constantinople* (1895) by the popular and prolific Francis Marion Crawford and Weeks' own travelogue, *From the Black Sea through Persia and India* (1895/6). So well known were his scenes of India that he was selected to illustrate the initial serial publication of Rudyard Kipling's landmark novel, *Kim*, that first appeared in *McClure's* and *Cassell's* magazines beginning in 1901 (Figure 1-2).

In all of his work, Weeks strived to achieve a highly convincing portrayal of places most Americans and Europeans had only heard or read about, but that he had experienced first-hand. His efforts extended beyond the typical Eastern exotica that invariably found its way into so many mundane Orientalist paintings of the period—the dancing women, the obligatory hookahs, the snake charmers, the crumbling façades of once-glorious monuments. Occasionally Weeks did employ these common signifiers, with predictable results (Figure 1-3). But he also aimed higher. He sought to present the astounding richness, vitality and dignity of North African and Indian culture against a backdrop of magnificent architecture, penetratingly observed and precisely rendered. Enveloping all of these efforts was his obsession with capturing brilliant sunlight glaring off of whitewashed walls, reflecting from stretches of sand, creating a pulse of heated atmosphere completely foreign to most European and American audiences (Figure 1-4).

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several of the artist's major works, listed in the booklet as: *The Last Voyage*; *The Emperor Shah Jehan Leaving the Great Mosque at Delhi*; *The Funeral Procession of a Fakir*; *The Moti Masjid, or Pearl Mosque, of Agra at the Time of Prayer*; and *An Open-Air Restaurant at Lahore*. These paintings are discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Compelling as many of his paintings are, by themselves Weeks' vibrant images of the Eastern panorama formed only a part of his reputation as an artist. Critics and the public invested Weeks' images with an authenticity that stemmed from their perception of the artist's character and their knowledge of the experiences that formed it. The performative aspects of Edwin Weeks' life set him apart from many of his contemporaries and helped to distinguish his work in the broader Orientalist field.

Without question, Weeks' exploits made stimulating reading. From his earliest notices in Boston newspapers, his accomplishments in the aesthetic arena were inextricably linked to his reputation in print as an ambitious young American artist who was hell-bent to venture well beyond the comfortable expatriate enclaves of Cairo, Tangier and Bombay. For Edwin Weeks text, vision and reputation were always interdependent, mutually amplifying and career sustaining, as suggested in two passages below, the first written about Weeks and the second by him:

. . . When they were finally able to crawl out, reduced almost to skeletons from the terrible sickness which they had endured, the whole party was nearly drowned crossing the river from Sallee to Rabat at night during a freshet. After another interval of waiting, attended by several other hair-breadth adventures, the travellers finally succeeded in escaping in a dirty English brig, which took them to Tangier; but they came very near being swamped and losing their lives when landing there in a storm.

But Mr. Weeks was well rewarded for the perils which he had undergone. He had seen antiquities of Carthaginian and Roman origin which no foreigner had ever beheld before. He had gazed with enthusiasm and astonishment upon specimens of Saracenic architecture equalling the far-famed halls of the Alhambra, and hitherto as little known out of Morocco as if they were in the moon, and he had brought away with him studies gained at the risk of his life, of which the results have since appeared in noble paintings displayed in the leading exhibitions of London and Paris.

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These preliminary lines of explanation are only to show why this journey was undertaken at such an unfortunate moment, and that there was some underlying method in its apparent madness. When the route was first mapped out, it was our intention to follow the line of the Trans-Caspian Railway to Samarcand, and thence to Herat, and through Afghanistan to India. But the political situation and the civil war in Afghanistan rendering such a trip hazardous, we decided to take the trans-Persian direction, and to enter Persia near Meshed . . . With permission from the War Department to visit Central Asia came an urgent telegram from the American legation at St. Petersburg, advising us not to go on account of the cholera, which, after devastating Meshed, had left Persia and invaded the Russian provinces . . . This time we elected to follow the old caravan route from Trebizond, on the Black Sea, to Tabreez, through the mountains of Kurdistan, that country of indefinite boundaries.

In short, there was no other route left open to us; we must either turn back or, setting our faces forward, head straight for the Persian frontier, five hundred miles away, and we decided to go on.<sup>2</sup>

The first of these excerpts is from a chapter of S.G.W. Benjamin's *Our American Artists*, which recounted Edwin Lord Weeks' harrowing adventures during the devastating 1878 famine in Morocco. The second is from the foreboding preface of Weeks' 1896 *From the Black Sea through Persia and India*, a travelogue of the arduous 1892 journey on horseback that claimed the life of his companion, the English arts writer Theodore Child, and nearly took Weeks' own. As these two passages relate the lived experience behind Weeks' paintings, they also reveal the essence of the subject's public character. It is the artist's biography cloaked as adventure story, the artist packaged as the heroic product of a pragmatic, spirited, irrepressible post-Civil War America.

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2. S[amuel] G[reene] W[heeler] Benjamin, *Our American Artists* (Boston: D. Lothrop and Co., 1881), 30–31; Edwin Lord Weeks, *From the Black Sea through Persia and India* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1896), preface. In this essay all references to Weeks' *From the Black Sea* are to the 1896 publication. (Though a review dated November 1895 indicates that there may have been a late 1895 printing.)



This dimension of Edwin Lord Weeks' career, the leveraging of myth with an eye to the market, has been largely overlooked for the past hundred years. Indeed, for most of the twentieth century not one word appeared in print about Edwin Lord Weeks or his paintings. Fifty years after his death in 1903 at age fifty-four, his reputation was in tatters; Gilded Age Orientalists held little interest for Atomic Age art historians and collectors. Having no apparent reason to hold onto it, in 1956 the Metropolitan Museum of Art deaccessioned one of Weeks' largest (76 x 114 inches), most inventive and acclaimed paintings of India, *The Last Voyage—Souvenir of the Ganges*, singled out as "audacious" and "some of the most striking work of the year" at the 1885 Paris Salon (Figure 3-14).

Edwin Weeks' widow, Fannie, withheld *The Last Voyage* from the 1905 estate auction to bestow upon the museum and the nation a gift befitting the memory of her famous husband. When Fannie made this magnanimous gesture, Edwin Weeks was renowned on both sides of the Atlantic, described by early documentary filmmaker Burton Holmes as "not only a painter, he is a traveler, an explorer, and an enthusiastic Alpinist," and the *London Times* as "the student of art and of manners, viewing the characteristics of Indian and Anglo-Indian life with Western sympathies, but from the independent point of view of an American observer."<sup>3</sup> An unquenchable taste for adventure and a confident, independent "Americanness" were the dual perceptions that came to define Edwin Lord Weeks.

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3. Burton Holmes, *Burton Holmes Travelogues*, vol. 2 (New York: McClure Co., 1901, 1908), 64; "Two Books of Travel," *Times* (London), 29 November 1895, 14 col. A.

Fannie's husband's reputation was built on more than his merit as an accomplished artist, trained in the most prestigious ateliers, applauded by critics and welcomed in heady social company. From every public angle, Weeks presented the fin-de-siècle masculine ideal: intrepid adventurer, devoted husband, enthusiastic sportsman, thoughtful cross-cultural observer, stimulating writer, traveler to exotic lands. By popular account the swarthy, wiry, five-foot-eight Weeks was virile, intellectually curious, scrappy and courageous—the kind of Gibsonesque male "of sympathetic nature and indomitable pluck" who could navigate, with the same Yankee sensibility, a diplomat's Parisian soiree or a North African sandstorm.<sup>4</sup> He was the Gilded Age New Man, the very embodiment of American modernity.

Weeks' public image, crafted in magazines like *Scribner's* and *Harper's Monthly*, provided context for his work and gave viewers a reason to believe in the veracity of the scenes he depicted. In Edwin Weeks the professional and the personal were intertwined, echoed and embellished in the press, though not in the typical fashion. Weeks inhabited public space at the farthest remove from Postlethwaite, Maudle and other late nineteenth century caricatures of effete, buffoonish artists who appeared in cartoons that mocked their exaggerated sensitivities and the Victorian art world's social pretensions. According to the French illustrated weekly *La Vie Moderne*, Edwin Lord Weeks was a member of that exclusive club, "les peintres explorateurs," more Henry Morton Stanley than James McNeil Whistler. This categorization imparted a special value to the scenes of the "East" that Weeks brought before European and

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4. F. D. Millet, *Works of the Late Edwin Lord Weeks, Important finished pictures, sketches, studies and drawings* (New York: American Art Galleries, 1905), "sympathetic nature and indomitable pluck," preface.

American audiences, a value that rested as much on the artist's reputation for physical courage and stamina as on exotic content and engaging style.

Modern art historians have tended to disregard these aspects of Weeks' career, relying instead on his Orientalist subject matter, early style and Paris training to lump him together with the French Academic painters. However, Weeks never bore that association in his own time or in his own mind. From the very outset, Weeks was determined to redraw the boundaries of the artists' profession in a way that suited his adventuresome nature. As subsequent chapters will discuss, he undoubtedly was inspired by French and Spanish masters Jean-Léon Gérôme and Léon Bonnat, but he was not hobbled by them. Weeks crafted his own brand of Orientalism, starting with a highly individualized definition of himself.

#### Artists and Masculinity in the Later Nineteenth Century

Beset by pervasive social and political changes that swept the country in the immediate years after the Civil War, Americans—especially men—of Edwin Weeks' generation faced a particularly unsettling time. The war had devastated untold numbers of homes, families and livelihoods. The collective social and political strength of white males was threatened by the Reconstruction Amendments that abolished slavery, extended the privileges and protections of citizenship and granted voting rights to former slaves. The Fifteenth Amendment, which prohibits the federal or state governments from denying a citizen the right to vote based on race, color or previous condition of servitude, reignited the women's suffrage movement and led to increasingly vehement demands for the vote, education, equal pay, property rights and full legal recognition. Weeks was in his early twenties when the Panic of 1873, precipitated by an

international drop in the price of silver and Germany's abandonment of the silver standard, aggravated by a railroad investment bubble and rising interest rates, caused a run on banks and a severe depression that lasted until 1879. Although Edwin Weeks' father's prosperous Boston grocery insulated the young artist from the downturn's more dire effects, across the country over a hundred railroads failed; striking workers faced federal troops; businesses collapsed by the thousands; unemployment shot up.<sup>5</sup> Overall, it was a period with political, economic and class tensions acutely reminiscent of our own time, fraught with parallel issues concerning the social constructs of gender.

The shifting foundations and definitions of masculinity in post-war America confounded the role and identity of artists. In the later nineteenth century, leaving behind the drafty garrets and doffing the velvet jackets, artists began to present themselves as modern men of affairs, competent in business dealings, socially adept, disciplined, unsentimental and financially successful. Contrary to the artists of today, who are often positioned as "outsiders" intent on stretching or rending the social fabric, the artists of Edwin Weeks' time were intent on bootstrapping themselves up the socio-economic ladder. Sales were bolstered by proper dress, a well-appointed studio in a prestigious location and a formidable education. Professional achievement was measured in terms of income and juried awards as well as acceptance to exclusive private clubs and highly sought invitations in the post. In *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America*, art historian Sarah Burns noted:

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5. Martin A. Berger, *Man Made: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Gilded Age Manhood* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 10.

Attempting to gain secure status and promote their cause, artists maturing after the Civil War had to reinvent the image of the artist as one of practicality and civic responsibility to match the new roles they hoped to play in modern America. Artists and critics insisted on the businesslike qualities of modern American art, characterized by "a generally high order of technical ability and artistic sanity, a general temperance and discretion."<sup>6</sup>

Though many, perhaps most, American artists gravitated to a more business-like presentation of the self, post-war artistic identities remained fluid and artistic appearance somewhat variable. William Merritt Chase, the exact age of Edwin Weeks, affected a broad sartorial range, from floppy tie, loose-fitting belted smock and pom-pom topped tam-o'-shanter in 1888; to suave man-about-town in evening dress, top hat and black cloak in 1891; to the flourishing mustache, cream waistcoat and tie that lent him the air of the successful, if a tad flamboyant, banker in 1902 (Figures 1-5, 1-6).<sup>7</sup> A certain intriguing panache (a luxuriant mustache or casually held cigarette) was permitted, even expected, but any association with effeminacy, degeneracy, or Aestheticism was not.<sup>8</sup> In the later years of the century any flaunting of the borders of gender, closely associated with the Aesthetic Movement and circle of Oscar Wilde, was viewed as particularly corrosive.

In part as a reaction against Aestheticism, for their public selves, American artists typically sought to project a tidy professionalism and assured, comfortable manliness. This is

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6. Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1996), 35.

7. *William Merritt Chase*, 1888 bronze relief by Augustus St. Gaudens and Walter T. Smedley's *William Merritt Chase* in Charles De Kay, "Mr. Chase and Central Park," *Harper's Weekly* 35 (2 May 1891), mentioned in Burns, 20, 22; *William M. Chase, N.A.* by John Singer Sargent (1902).

8. Burns, 35.

evident in the familiar photographs of the distinctively neat, natty and mustachioed Winslow Homer, the casual pose captured by James Carroll Beckwith's *Portrait of William Walton* (1886), J. Alden Weir's intense and skeptical *Self-Portrait* (1886), and the cabinet card photograph of a carefully groomed (therefore disciplined and respectable) Edwin Lord Weeks (Figures 1-7, 1-8, 1-9). This photograph is the earliest known picture of Weeks, taken when he was in his twenties and already a well-established artist.<sup>9</sup> Sarah Burns calls this assemblage of dress, accessories and slightly aloof demeanor the "corporate appearance," designed to communicate professional competence, social conformity and superior status.

However, even as conformity in dress generally held the many staves of artistic personality in rough alignment, discouraging any flirtation with an outward Aestheticism, it led to a dull predictability. The "corporate appearance" dampened experimentation and competing patterns of expression. A balance was required, one that struck a bargain between individual expression and some form of social or cultural responsibility.<sup>10</sup> It was imperative for the ambitious American artist to forge an array of traits—creativity, manliness, robust health and rigorous discipline—into a coherent identity and to cultivate it in the public realm. In pursuit of this professional narrative artists vaulted into the media where the performative aspects of their lives competed with, and commented on, the works themselves.

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9. A digital image of the cabinet card photograph of Weeks was obtained from Freeman's Auctioneers, Philadelphia, who had dated it to 1900. However, W. Balch, the photographer, was active in Boston from 1873 to 1878, per the Massachusetts Historical Society, which indicates an earlier date for the photograph. It is nearly identical to the portrait reproduced in S.G.W. Benjamins' *Our American Artists* (1881), 29.

10. Burns, 38, 109.

## The Media-Generated Artistic Personality

After the Civil War newspaper and magazine circulations exploded, primarily because technological innovations drove down production costs. In the early 1860s newspaper stock was twenty-five cents a pound in the United States. By 1897 it was two cents a pound and falling. The firm of S. D. Warren of Boston built the largest paper mill in the world in the 1870s to supply paper to periodicals like *Youth's Companion* and *Atlantic Monthly*. A major customer, the *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, was one of the first periodicals in the U.S. to employ the halftone process for illustrations, an 1885 innovation that relied on the acres of smooth surface paper provided by Warren. For these surging periodicals advertising revenues climbed steadily as the burgeoning network of railroads integrated far-flung communities into one giant magazine market. As readership expanded geographically and demographically, content of popular magazines shifted away from poetry, literature, criticism and formal essays towards reporting of current events, light fiction and articles about travel and adventure.<sup>11</sup>

Magazines devoted to art retained relatively small and specialized audiences, but the mass-marketed "general interest" journals of the late nineteenth century—*Harper's*, *Munsey's*, *McClure's*, *Collier's*—had combined circulations in the millions.<sup>12</sup> Popular magazines and all large metropolitan newspapers had regular features and often daily columns on the fine arts that covered the latest exhibitions in America and abroad. In the 1860s the *New York Tribune's* art

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11. David Reed, *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States 1880-1960* (London: The British Library, 1997), 27, 28, 50–51.

12. Matthew Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order: Popular Magazines in America 1893–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 11.

critic Clarence Cook and, decades later, the *Boston Evening Transcript's* William Howe Downes carved out new space as respected, insightful guides for the general public and essential reading for the cognoscenti.

With the vigorously expanding book and magazine industry eager to satisfy aspiring middle class readers, a mutually beneficial relationship developed between publishers and artists eager to tap broader audiences. As the publishing industry stoked reputations, determined canons and constructed personalities, so artists learned to manipulate media appearances to their own advantage.<sup>13</sup> Artists were quick to seize opportunities for publicity and to make them where none had existed. They flattered critics with personal notes, sent well-disposed reviewers small “thank you” canvases and welcomed reporters and photographers into their lavish studios, all with the aim of snagging a well-placed mention or better yet, a feature article. By frequently appearing in high-circulation newspapers, journals and heavily marketed books—either as subjects, authors or illustrators—artists dramatically increased awareness of their work and burnished their public images as authoritative figures.

Canny publicity became a hallmark of a new kind of artist celebrity, his or her character an amalgam of multiple sources—the artist, the work, critics, pocket biographers, dealers and social columnists. Accomplishments and characteristics featured in popular accounts and critical reviews transferred to interpretations of the meaning and value of the work and declarations on the worthiness of the artist. Artist and work product became one nearly indistinguishable commodity, fused in popular print. This was of no small import for artists' careers, for an 1892

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13. Burns, 2.



survey concluded that American periodicals exercised “an almost incalculable influence upon the moral and intellectual development of individuals, upon home life, and upon public opinion. [Their] great increase and improvement may be regarded as one of the most important signs of the times.”<sup>14</sup>

In the later Victorian era the artist/product fusion became a commodity implicitly invested with purposes beyond those associated with the individual artist: to position artists as appropriate role models for young adults, to educate the middle and civilize the working classes, to inspire patriotic and poetic feeling, to express beauty and refined sentiment, to foster stable social relations over disruptions. Therefore, an artist with the right kind of identity—the artist who could meet these various demands with admirable flair—had considerable leverage to accrue cultural capital and to exchange it with popular publications, with reciprocal credibility benefits. The successful modern American artist was part individual talent, skill and determination, part media invention. Edwin Lord Weeks worked assiduously on all parts.

### Have Pith Helmet, Will Travel

It was a tall order to craft a believable, coherent public image that was at once manly, creative, wholesome, daring, disciplined, intriguing, respectably domestic, sufficiently European and still unquestionably American. Faced with the pervasive and defining "corporate appearance," how was an aspiring American artist to construct a unique, complex identity that

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14. Burns, 11, quoting Emma Helen Blair, *Andover Review* 18 (August 1892): 154, as cited in Mott, *History of American Magazines, 1885-1905*, 14.

could define the man, elevate the work, and ratchet a career from the modest galleries on Boston Common to the grand halls of Earl's Court? For Edwin Lord Weeks, a pith helmet was the answer.

Edwin Weeks engineered a self-image, textual and visual, grounded in the Victorian explorer mystique, a natural complement to his North African and Indian preoccupations. Weeks the Intrepid was not a wholesale invention. He did indeed travel extensively in North Africa, British India and the Levant, occasionally in rough, dangerous circumstances far beyond the tracks familiar to most of his fellow Orientalist painters. If the perils he faced were not quite of the Allan Quartermain kind, he really did come close to death more than once, and it all made good copy.

As an instantly recognizable symbol to associate the Anglo-American with scenes of exotic adventure, not much can compete with a pith helmet, save maybe a whip (Weeks had one of those, too). The pith helmet, or *sola topi* (topee), *de rigueur* for Victorians traipsing through hot climates, was the signature traveling accessory of the American or European in the East. Due to its outsized symbolic value and the firm conviction that failure to wear a topi would inevitably result in sunstroke for the fair-skinned, it was critically important to possess the correct pith helmet, with full brim, high crown, ventilation and in current fashion. Particularly in India only the *right* topi proclaimed social correctness and British identity, as a former missionary recalled some decades after Weeks traveled in that country: "The topi was a fetish; it was a tribal symbol. If you did not wear a topi you were not merely silly, you were a cad. You were a traitor . . . You

had gone native.”<sup>15</sup>

Beyond its practical, mundane uses (to shield supposedly vulnerable European constitutions from deleterious climates), the pith helmet and other special tropical clothing affirmed Western identity, distinguished colonizers from colonized, and instilled a sense of intellectual superiority over local inhabitants. However, even as it enveloped the wearer in a literal and figurative shield against disease and degeneration, at the same time it signaled a departure from the safe, secure, civilized world. It was associated with the brave, heroic and the masculine, from Burberry's advertisements ("The only safe wear for tropical climes") to John Murray's 1895 guide, *How to Live in Tropical Africa* (Figure 1-10). Tropical clothing marked a border, but also recognized that a border had been crossed. It suggested adventure and danger, far from the safe and civilized streets of London, Paris, or Boston.<sup>16</sup>

For Edwin Lord Weeks the pith helmet was a recurrent visual association. S.G.W. Benjamin's 1881 essay on Weeks led with a half-page drawing of the artist seated on a camp stool in Norfolk jacket and buttoned gaiters, *en plein air*, sketching a squatting figure and camel, pith helmet firmly in place (Figure 1-11). The helmet, full beard and curling mustache dominate the portrait sketch that appeared in *Harper's Weekly* of January 13, 1883, accompanying a write-up on the artist and an engraving of his painting *A Public Fountain in the City of Morocco* (Figure 1-12). In an 1893 illustration from the first in a nine-part series by Weeks for *Harper's*

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15. Francis A. de Caro and Rosan A. Jordan, "The Wrong Topi: Personal Narratives, Ritual, and the Sun Helmet as a Symbol," *Western Folklore* 43, no. 4 (Oct. 1984): 233–48 at 237.

16. Ryan Johnson, "European Cloth and 'Tropical' Skin: Clothing Material and British Ideas of Health and Hygiene in Tropical Climates," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Fall 2009): 530–60.

*Magazine* that chronicled his ride over Persia's mountainous caravan routes and on to India, the distinctive headgear likewise signaled to readers the author's *bona fides* (*Entering the Taya Pass, Early Morning*, Figure 1-13). The third article in the series, "From Ispahan to Kurrachee," begins with a quarter-page portrait of Weeks likely updated from the 1883 file photo, pith helmet pulled low over his forehead, the air of authority unmistakable (Figure 1-14).

In these images Weeks' facial hair shared near equal prominence with his pith helmet. Although by the 1890s long whiskers began to fall to other markers of masculinity, with many younger "sporting men" opting for a display of muscles and a clean shaven look, they were still undeniable symbols of elemental masculinity, vitality, hardiness and authority. Particularly for those engaged in strenuous endeavors in deleterious climes, it was believed that a vigorous beard and mustache protected against infections borne by unhealthful air. For the British Camel Corps soldier or European big game hunter, the beard was a symbol of primitive manhood, of beating the odds, of brutal existence seized from unforgiving nature or defended from unsparing foe (Figure 1-15).<sup>17</sup>

To further this not-too-subtle identification, occasionally Weeks suited up with a full complement of adventure regalia to promote his artist/explorer identity, seen in this studio photograph dating to probably the early 1890s (Figure 1-16).<sup>18</sup> The casual grasp of the *sola topi*

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17. Christopher Oldstone-Moore, "The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain," *Victorian Studies* 48, no. 1 (Autumn 2005): 7–34.

18. This undated photograph was likely given to publishing scion Robert Barrie when he was working in Paris in 1893 and had come to know Weeks. Robert Barrie, *My Log* (Philadelphia: Franklin Press, 1917), 53.

in the left hand, whip in the right; the cartridge box with revolver holstered at the hip; the wrinkled riding breeches tucked in worn leather boots; the nonchalant stance and direct gaze; the scattered ornamental rugs and pillows define Weeks as an updated Henry Morton Stanley (Figure 1-17). Born in Wales, the journalist Stanley was a naturalized American citizen whose indefatigable, 700-mile trek through dense forest in pursuit of Dr. Livingstone was inked across every major American and British newspaper. As a twenty-one-year old in 1871, like many Americans Weeks no doubt eagerly awaited dispatches detailing Stanley's progress and marveled at his perseverance, likely ignorant of or disregarding Stanley's reputation for extreme brutality.

With his sobriquet *Bula Matari*, "Breaker of Rocks," Stanley's fierce engagement with the world was much admired in America and Britain during the burgeoning colonial era. Writers praised his "perseverance," "dauntless spirit of enterprise," and fortitude in carrying out "duties so manfully performed."<sup>19</sup> One female journalist observed that Stanley was able to succeed where others had failed because of "his firmness and decision of character, [to] the exercise of these manly virtues." Moreover, Stanley did it all in the name of America as his 1872 account, *How I Found Livingstone*, makes clear. The book's full-page depiction of the critical "Dr. Livingstone, I presume" moment features Stanley tipping his pith helmet to the doctor, just as the explorer steps beneath a fluttering American flag, held aloft by one of his bearers.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Edward Berenson, "Charisma and the Making of Imperial Heroes in Britain and France, 1880–1914," in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 33 quoting *Edinburgh Review*, October 1890, 372 and *Queen, the Lady's Newspaper*, 8 February 1890.

20. Henry M[orton] Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone; Travels, Adventures and Discoveries in Central Africa* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low and Searle, 1872), 413.

Weeks tapped into this emerging trope in American mythology.<sup>21</sup> Its late-twentieth century apogee is perhaps the familiar Indiana Jones character first introduced in the 1981 film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Figure 1-18). In the series, fearless archaeologist Dr. Jones exchanges university tweeds and horn-rimmed glasses for a battered hat and bullwhip, slashes through jungles, survives seething pits of vipers, outwits sinister Nazis and other nemeses of America, all to rescue some precious artifact and the requisite hapless female from horrible fates in untamed Africa, Asia and South America. Dr. Jones' "adventure quest" is an inescapably colonialist concoction in which personal ambitions and the rivalries of Western nations are played out against the backdrop of an exoticized, backwards "Orient," with the American nineteenth-century mantra of Manifest Destiny in full throttle as a guiding principle.<sup>22</sup>

Weeks' Gilded Age identity readily fits in with this kind of American adventure protagonist, real or fictional. He routinely left the comforts of his large, well-lit studio and the crowded cafés, boulevards and galleries of Paris in order to bring back, purportedly at the peril of his own life, authentic views of a world little known to the West. In a stroke, the artist-as-

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21. Tim Prchal, "The Bad Boys and the New Man: The Role of Tom Sawyer and Similar Characters in the Reconstruction of Masculinity," *American Literary Realism* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 187–205. Mary Blanchard points out that the counterpoint to the aesthete, patterned after Oscar Wilde, was the more visible and persistent American ideal, the soldier/citizen. This characterization was overlaid on other cultural heroes emerging post-Civil War: the assertive entrepreneur, the frontier warrior, the Populist rebel and even union agitator. Blanchard asserts that Aestheticism in America "could not have been a popular movement without the Civil War," as it offered an alternative construction of manhood to the war-weary. Mary Blanchard, "The Soldier and the Aesthete: Homosexuality and Popular Culture in Gilded Age America," *Journal of American Studies* 30, no. 1 (April 1996): 25–46.

22. See generally, James Chapman and Nicholas J. Cull, "Calling Dr. Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)," in Chapman and Cull, *Projecting Empire: Imperialism and Popular Cinema* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 169–85.

adventurer public image achieved four things, all with especial appeal to Weeks' financially successful male patrons. It most definitely set Weeks apart from his refined rivals in Europe and America, consciously posed in dark suits, starched collars, and pince-nez. For Weeks' European audience, it recalled the exploits of their own soldier heroes, men like General Gordon, Sir Garnet Wolseley, Lieutenant Antoine Mizon (Figure 1-19) and the French-Italian Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, its undeniable imperialist overtones hinting at European colonialist sympathies. In America, it worked to promote Weeks as a rough and ready individualist, self-reliant and worldly, just when the United States was beginning to press more forcefully in foreign affairs. Above all, it stamped Weeks' representations of the East with a badge of authenticity—truth guaranteed by the authority of the pith helmet.

Like Sherlock Holmes' well-known traveling cap, the pith helmet did not have to be continually atop Weeks' head to accomplish its symbolic purpose. It was an intermittent visual cue amplified by early and consistent textual characterizations of the artist. For example, S.G.W. Benjamin's 1881 essay led with "If Mr. Weeks had not chosen to be an artist by profession he would have been an admirable explorer. Enthusiastic in temperament, he craves adventure with a zest equal to that with which he paints a picture . . ." <sup>23</sup> The October 1, 1881 issue of *Le Gaulois* described Weeks venturing into the Moroccan interior "souvent au péril de sa vie." Taking a cue from Benjamin, *La Vie Moderne's* November 19, 1881 double-page spread on Weeks was entitled "Les Peintres Explorateurs: Edwin Lord Weeks." An 1890 auction catalogue claimed that, of all the painters of remote regions of the Orient, "the most noteworthy of these

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23. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 27.

exceptional adventurers is Mr. Weeks."<sup>24</sup>

This characterization of the artist persisted throughout his career, augmented by Weeks' own writings. His most famous trip, plotted with British art critic Theodore Child over drinks at the boisterous Café Americain in Paris, provided the grist for a series penned by Weeks in 1893–94 for *Harper's Magazine* that was published subsequently as *From the Black Sea through Persia and India*. In the autumn of 1892, from Trebizond on the coast of the Black Sea, the pair began the trek on horseback over the ancient caravan routes leading from Turkey to Persia. Threading narrow defiles, scrambling over wild passes and around steep, crumbling mountain paths, Weeks and Child lived an adventure straight out of *Boys' Own Life* magazine. The first few *Harper's Magazine* articles that recounted the journey were replete with allusions to mortal peril: campsites that were "a fitting background for robbery and assassination;" thieves betrayed in the night by "the ripping sound of the knife;" an engrossing conversation with the chief executioner of Ispahan. Always understated, Weeks nonetheless portrays himself as wary and tough ("My first impulse is to draw my revolver; and Carapet, in his wrath, slips off the cover of my rifle and reaches it out for me"); kind but unflinching ("the poor brute [wolf] has a broken leg, and is dragged reluctantly along by a rope tied about his muzzle; knowing that he is doomed to die by slow torturers, I ask permission to finish him with a rifle ball"); resilient ("we ride through a stratum of air like the breath of a furnace. Yet the pocket thermometer held on the saddle seldom shows more than 105° Fahr."); and dutiful ("my friend died as we were carrying

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24. American Art Association, *Catalogue of the Private Collection of Modern Paintings belonging to Mr. Walter Bowne* (New York: American Art Association, 1890), 30.



him by easy stages to Julfa").

This last reference was to the death of Theodore Child. For two months the pair had kept all manner of threats at bay only to ride straight into a raging cholera epidemic. Their desperate efforts to avoid quarantined areas were of little use. With grim resolve, Weeks and Child each survived bouts of cholera and managed to press on. But not long after, Child succumbed to typhoid and died before Weeks could get medical help, forty miles away. After bringing his friend's body back to Julfa, Weeks eventually made it to the Persian coast, took a steamer to Kurrachee, and traveled from there throughout India. It was a journey that Child had instigated, convincing Weeks to come along as illustrator for a series on "Living India" contracted for publication by *Harper's Magazine*. It was only after Child's death that *Harper's* engaged Weeks to write and illustrate the planned series.<sup>25</sup>

The reinforcing circularity of artist image, confirming text, and exotic subject projected a tightly woven construction of artistic identity and authenticity, crafted in the media and translated to the market. However, in Weeks' case it was grounded in fact. A letter from Theodore Child to his *Harper's* editor (who had pleaded with him not to go to Persia on account of the dangers) conveys something of the harsh reality and compelling novelty of Weeks' experience:

It is a hard life we are leading, exposed to all the elements, burning sun in the day, cold at night, fearful wind, blinding dust, thieves too, and kicks from horses. The other day Weeks got a fierce kick on the thigh, but he managed to get over it. At Zendjan where we camped at the gates of the town thieves came in the night . . . but all this bad luck and hard work is compensated by the beauty and novelty of

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25. Henry Mills Alden to Edwin Lord Weeks, 3 February 1893 and Harper and Brothers [unknown editor] to George A. Lucas, 2 March 1893, reprinted in James Henry Harper, *The House of Harper: A Century of Publishing in Franklin Square* (New York, London: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1912), 594–96.

the country and the people. Nothing has yet been published about Persia that gives any idea of it. Weeks is enthusiastic. He paints at sunrise; he paints at sunset; and even when he goes to bed he continues—painting his nose with vaseline . . . We are gathering heaps of material, and the little ride from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf will, I hope, be found interesting by Mr. Alden and the public. There are not many people who have done it; and, rough as it is, it is worth doing. There is literally no end of material for illustration, and all different from anything either of us has ever seen in any country or any book.<sup>26</sup>

### Alternate Identities

Edwin Lord Weeks cultivated a public image of manly fitness, physical courage, strength and stamina in other arenas, as well. He was an avid cyclist who covered the fifty miles or so between Paris and Vernonnet with apparent ease.<sup>27</sup> Weeks was known to spar with that "ardent votary of the tennis-court," American artist Frederick Arthur Bridgman, on the lawn across from Bridgman's studio.<sup>28</sup>

Besides mastery of the more prosaic sports, during these years Weeks also gained a wide reputation as an accomplished alpinist. As with his more recognizable "explorer" image, he burnished his mountaineering reputation in the pages of the popular press. His sketches were featured in the *Scribner's* article "A Thousand Miles Through the Alps"<sup>29</sup> by Sir William Martin

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26. Theodore Child to James Henry Harper, 2 October 1892, Teheran, reprinted in James Henry Harper, *The House of Harper: A Century of Publishing in Franklin Square* (New York, London: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1912), 592–93.

27. "What Prominent People are Doing in France," *New York Times*, 16 November 1902, 4.

28. Ishmael, "American Artists on the Seine," *Illustrated American* 6, no. 34 (11 October 1890): 97–101, at 100.

29. W. Martin Conway, "A Thousand Miles through the Alps," *Scribner's Magazine* 20 (July–Dec. 1896): 28–43.

Conway, "a graphic account of a tour that is unique in the history of mountain-climbing . . . illustrated by Edwin Lord Weeks, who is himself a famous mountain-climber."<sup>30</sup> Weeks would have had much in common with the learned Conway, prolific writer and leader of exploring and mountaineering expeditions who became Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Cambridge in 1901. Weeks also wrote and illustrated his own articles on mountaineering, including "Varallo and the Val Sesia" in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* May 1898 issue; "The New Switzerland" for *Harper's* June number of 1897; and "Some Episodes of Mountaineering, by a Casual Amateur" in the May 1894 issue of *Scribner's Magazine*.<sup>31</sup>

Many of Weeks mountaineering-themed sketches depict a closed masculine world of bracing athleticism, daring and camaraderie: roped together on a sheer face of rock; clinging triumphantly to a summit, supported by the merest toehold; enjoying a well-deserved pipe (Figures 1-20, 1-21, 1-22). Despite the perils made plain by Weeks' illustrations, his text downplays the danger just often enough to leave the reader marveling at the author's skill and steely resolve, as hinted in this excerpt from "Some Episodes of Mountaineering":

Among the minor peaks (minor, not in regard to size or interest, but in difficulty only) the Rimpfischorn and the Gran Paradiso, are ranked as difficult. Both of these peaks exceed the Jungfrau in height [13,642 feet; a main summit of the western Swiss Alps], and although care and attention are necessary at certain points, there is not the slightest difficulty about either of them. A noted Alpinist records that he has ascended the Gran Paradiso alone and without guides. There

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30. "Notes and Announcements," *Publishers' Circular*, no. 1565 (27 June 1896): 695.

31. Edwin Lord Weeks, "Varallo and the Val Sesia," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 96, no. 576 (May 1898): 905–20; "Some Episodes of Mountaineering, by a Casual Amateur," *Scribner's Magazine* 15, no. 5 (May 1894): 531–53. "Some Episodes" was reprinted in Edward L. Wilson, Edwin Lord Weeks, et al, *Mountain Climbing* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897).

is one point, however, where most men would feel safer with a rope and at least one guide. A practised expert whom I met on the way down affirmed that it was hardly worth doing, while another, equally experienced, had made the ascent twice.<sup>32</sup>

Though "most men" might want a rope and a guide, Weeks apparently eschewed such assistance; for him "there is not the slightest difficulty" in scaling these 14,000 or so foot peaks. Weeks' reading on the toughness meter creeps ever higher as he discusses whether the peaks and passes may be considered sufficiently arduous to be worth the trouble and expense of climbing them. Although he points out from time to time that "unless one is extremely quick and clever" the incautious climber is likely to get himself in a desperate situation, the overall tone is one of marked self-confidence.

His article "The New Switzerland" is more sober. One lengthy passage gives an account of a climber discovered "lying at the foot of the grand couloir; the other, still fast to the rope, which had caught on the rocks, hung in the opening of the crevasse;" their bodies brought down the mountain "corded to poles and wrapped up like mummies in rough canvas."<sup>33</sup> Despite this ominous beginning, Weeks and his party gamely ascend in the very footsteps of those who had just lost their lives. When they reach the site of the dead climbers' demise, Weeks muses:

one might imagine that a desperate struggle for foothold had taken place . . . for two men, however skilful, might easily lose their traces in descending, particularly in bad weather; and even now a slight deviation of a foot or two on either side might have ensured a rather sudden descent to the glacier.<sup>34</sup>

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32. Weeks, "Some Episodes Of Mountaineering," 532.

33. Weeks, "The New Switzerland," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 95, no. 565 (June 1897): 3–18, at 10.

34. Weeks, "The New Switzerland," 13.

But these meditations are brief. Brushing aside the momentary reminder of mortality, undaunted Weeks continued up the mountain.

These passages fully evoke not only Weeks' own daring, but also the new attitude towards mountaineering, which in the Victorian era had evolved from an invigorating pastime that connected one with nature and the sublime (the mood, for example, of Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, 1818) to a rigorous sport that pitted man against rock. Character development and physical competence, the goals of the late-nineteenth century cult of physical culture, were the lessons to be gained from danger and hardship. William Martin Conway, author and president of the Alpine Club, described them as follows:

Such struggles with nature produce a moral invigoration of enduring value. They wash the mind free of sentimental cobwebs and foolish imagining. They bring a man in contact with cold stony reality and call forth all that is best in nature. They act as moral tonics.<sup>35</sup>

Mountaineering as moral tonic would have appealed to Weeks and his wealthy patrons. Its manly connotations were powerful antidotes to any perceived weakness inherent in the artistic personality as well as to dissipations associated with the artist's profession or with life in Paris, where Weeks had long resided.

Mountaineering's efficacies extended to the intellectual realm. Quantification of distances and heights, precise mapping and geological inquiry all set mountaineering in a new, logical, decidedly modern, and mostly male context. Serious alpinists dismissed the mere

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35. Alan McNee, "'Cold Stony Reality': Subjectivity and Experience in Victorian Mountaineering," *Dandelion* 2, no. 2 (2011), n.p., citing William Martin Conway, *The Alps from End to End* (London: Archibald Constable, 1895), 174.

physical accomplishments of amateurs seeking bragging rights:

Alpine climbing is no mere gymnastic exercise like rowing, but a large and comprehensive sport, wherein the whole nature of man can find stimulus and play. It is not an exercise for the muscles and the nerves only, but for the reason and imagination as well.<sup>36</sup>

Mountaineering, properly met in body and mind, was a sport that honed and invigorated a man's physical, intellectual and moral vitalities. Women of course participated, their displays of outstanding physical capability often accompanied by "intrepidity of demeanor in the presence of danger calculated to alarm the strongest of men."<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, it was the hearty male that reaped the publicity benefits.

For charismatic appeal a demonstrated ability to negotiate hostile deserts and scale lofty precipices was all well and good, but the successful, fully rounded Gilded Age artist needed an even broader repertoire of character. Of course, a painter's reputation was most closely bound to the work itself, which had to garner a generous share of critical accolades, awards and prominent placements at prestigious exhibitions. But it was also necessary to project a personal image of professional success, urbane refinement and—in the late nineteenth century—prowess in the domestic sphere. To this end Weeks, like many of his colleagues, used his lavish, prop-filled studio to advertise his work as well as to mold his public persona.

Julie F. Codell notes that in the Victorian era artists' "Homes and studios became rich

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36. McNee quoting William Martin Conway, 'Centrists and Excentrists', *Alpine Journal* 15, no. 112 (May 1891), 397–403, at 401.

37. "In Ladies' Company," *Literary World*, n.s. 45 (Jan.–June 1892): 608.

symbols of artistic moral and national character, reaching the status of fetishized spaces."<sup>38</sup> Well-appointed studios were markers of social and financial success, aimed squarely at impressing clients and critics. When photographed for feature articles in popular magazines, artists' studios operated in more covert ways to position the artist in society. A lavish studio attached to the home anchored the artist in the domestic realm, banishing the moral ambiguities associated with live models and suspect bohemianism. Walls crowded with books, plaster casts piled atop shelves, travel memorabilia, rugs and fine furniture validated the artist's life experiences and proclaimed his place in history. A studio overflowing with tools, materials and paintings in various stages of completion verified the value of the artist's labor and asserted his professionalism. The combined effect was to demystify the artistic process and normalize it within a safe, domestic context. Visitors, either in person or through the pages of a magazine, were invited to scrutinize (and thereby regulate) the site of cultural production, to determine whether the artist's workplace and home met professional standards and the equally important values of domesticity, propriety and comfort.<sup>39</sup>

Edwin Lord Weeks unquestionably met those criteria via the published photographs of his home studio, "glowing with the tints of Ind and Araby."<sup>40</sup> In A. Hustin's *Paris Salon de 1892* a dapper Weeks seated on an ornate but no-nonsense straight-backed chair puts the finishing

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38. Julie F. Codell, "Constructing the Victorian Artist: National Identity, the Political Economy of Art and Biographical Mania in the Periodical Press," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 283–316, at 293.

39. Julie F. Codell, *The Victorian Artist: Artists' Lifewritings in Britain, ca. 1870–1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 46–48, 57–58, 61.

40. Ishmael, 100.

touches on *The Hour of Prayer at the Moti Mushid (The Pearl Mosque), Agra*, his 1889 Salon submission (Figure 1-23). Beneath his feet, the tiger hide hints at exotic travel and victorious confrontations with big game, a compelling dimension to the poised figure whose clothes and posture are equally crisp.<sup>41</sup> Here Weeks exemplifies the modern Euro-American professional at work, a sharp contrast to the languid figures depicted in his painting.

A more relaxed version of Weeks in his "handsome studio in Paris" was featured in the April 1893 issue of *The Art Interchange* (Figure 1-24). Even lounging crossed-legged on a divan, the artist appears fully in command of the professional and domestic spheres. His studio is quite orderly, but not too symmetrical and tidy, which might detract from its masculine aura by signaling the reign of the conscientious wife rather than the duties of the housekeeper.<sup>42</sup> Dozens

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41. "Although artists complained to critics and editors of their exertion in the studio, images of them 'at work' were thoroughly socialized and genteel; sweat and strain were airbrushed away. Artists were not besmattered with paint but appeared dressed for social occasions in their studios, so that the body of the artist at work was really the body in social life, not the body at work." Codell, *The Victorian Artist*, 62.

42. Of Frank Dicksee's studio, C. Lewis Hind wrote that, in addition to having such manly accoutrements as exercise equipment, Dicksee's studio boasted "A workroom of good size, with examples of old tapestry on the walls, a cast of a fragment of the Parthenon frieze at the further end, Oriental lamps hanging from the ceiling, dark wood cabinets, an organ . . . and here, there, and everywhere those curios an artist picks up in his wanderings. The studio is somewhat less orderly and methodical than the studios of the German painters we have been noticing. There is about it a suggestion of bachelor comfort—letters open on the table, a little dust where it should not be, an absence of fresh-cut flowers, and that general *tout ensemble* betokening the reign of the housekeeper." C. Lewis Hind, "Painters' Studios," *Art Journal*, n.s. 52 (1890): 11–16, 40–45, 135–39 (first of a three-part series on German and English ateliers). On a similar theme art critic Clarence Cook wrote: "It must not be forgotten that the charm of an artist's studio such as those of Mr. Chase, Mr. Shirlaw, or Mr. Tiffany, is due to the owner's horror of conventionality, and his feeling for unity and harmony, and so long as these are obtained, and his eye fed and kept in tune, he does not care for the intrinsic value of his belongings, nor is it necessary that apple-pie-order should reign supreme." "Casts and Tapestry in Room Decoration," *Monthly Illustrator* 4, no. 14 (June 1895): 323–28, at 327–28.



of paintings, evidence of professional achievement, are hung on and propped against every wall. On the easel, facing the tiger hide spread across the floor, is his 1888 Salon entry, *A Rajah of Jodhpore*. A Persian lamp hangs from the ceiling; the carved latticework of *mashrabiya* dominate the upper gallery. A wall display of carefully arranged weaponry, typical of Victorian museums and upper class homes, frames the artist as it associates him with both his patrons and the soldier/scholar ideal.<sup>43</sup> The *Art Interchange* author, "an eminent art critic resident in New York," observed that when "This painter of Indian and other Oriental climes" returns to his European studio:

he is enabled to put all these impressions and studies together and produce elaborate compositions that apparently have been painted directly from nature and art in the blazing sunshine of Jetnan or Delhi. . . In all these countries he has found themes which have appealed to his temperament, and which he has translated for the benefit of the curious untraveled with great cleverness and technical ability, and in a mood that apparently hesitates between the frankly and brutally realistic and the judiciously poetical.<sup>44</sup>

The author unified the artist's character and work product, finding in each a forceful appreciation of visual truth tempered by admirable restraint, ennobled with a dash of romanticism. The studio photograph reinforced all of that for the contemporary viewer; the "trophies of his travels" were simultaneous proofs for the reader and aids to the artist that enabled him to "conjure up again, on the banks of the Seine, the life of the Ganges and the Jordan." A skeptical reader might have

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43. On the soldier-adventurer, and on masculinity in the domestic sphere, see Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), 58–65. On Victorian trophy displays, see Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1994, 1997).

44. "Edwin Lord Weeks," *Art Interchange* 30 (April 1893): 94–96, at 94.

questioned Weeks' technical ability (and the author does: "the painter draws well, but not impeccably;" "his compositions, though natural, are not strikingly original"), but not the authenticity or sincerity of the artist or the work.

This particular photograph was apparently widely circulated, for it was reproduced in the October 19, 1895 issue of the London weekly *Black and White* (atop a half-page image of Weeks' *The Last Voyage*) and again in the April 1904 issue of *The Booklovers Magazine*. The latter picture-article "Famous Parisian Artists in Their Studios," published a few months after Edwin Weeks' death in November 1903, included photographs of the studios of William Adolphe Bouguereau, Jean Joseph Benjamin-Constant, Louis-Ernest Barrias, Emmanuel Frémiet and Jean-Léon Gérôme. This was heady company for Weeks, who had died not long before the celebrated Gérôme, reported in several sources to have been an early teacher and consistent influence on Weeks (a topic of Chapter Three). However, the *Booklovers* caption noted that Weeks "pushed farther afield than Gérôme, adding the pagodas and bazaars of Benares to the deserts of Morocco."<sup>45</sup> Coupled with the text, Weeks' relaxed, self-assured pose communicates to the reader that even compared with the undisputed master of the Orientalist genre Edwin Lord Weeks could well hold his own in the studio and the field.

The Gilded Age artist's studio was the ultimate prop in the narrative construction of the self. It declared individualism, professional status, superior taste, financial and material success, urbanity and worldly sophistication.<sup>46</sup> It was one of the most powerful tools available to artists

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45. "Famous Parisian Artists in Their Studios," *Booklovers Magazine* 3, no. 4 (April 1904): 327–33.

46. Burns, 50.

as they strived to shape and manipulate their images in a world rife with the sometimes colluding, sometimes competing points of view of critics, writers, dealers, patrons, the public, the media and the artists themselves.<sup>47</sup>

For Edwin Lord Weeks and his contemporaries the studio was a tangible, complex statement about the identity of the artist and, as Sarah Burns observed, about "what an artist was to be in a changing and rapidly modernizing world, and what it meant to be modern and American."<sup>48</sup> Packaged for the press, Weeks in his studio was every inch the intrepid adventurer, the sophisticate, the successful professional, the leading interpreter of Eastern culture, whose transnational interests broadened Americans' and Europeans' views of the world.

After touring Weeks' Paris studio, no one summed up for the public the artist's multifaceted, romantic identity better than travel writer, lecturer, and early filmmaker Burton Holmes:

Suffice it now to take a hasty peep into the studio of an artist whose work appeals to the traveler with peculiar force, for Edwin Lord Weeks is not only a painter, he is a traveler, an explorer, and an enthusiastic Alpinist. He has revealed to us in all the glory of its color and its sunshine the Indian and Persian East. Into Morocco he has traveled, the deserts and the far-off islands of the world he has brought near to us, the sublime terrors of the higher Alps he has expressed in quick, vigorous strokes while finding a precarious foothold on icy pinnacles. He may call one little room his studio, but his true studio is the wide world; its height is marked by mountain-tops, its breadth by Orient and Occident.<sup>49</sup>

Weeks' artist-adventurer identity, a largely media-generated construction, was in the most direct sense a sustained advertisement for his paintings and his career. It was also more than that. It

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47. Burns, 2.

48. Burns, 2.

49. Holmes, 64–65.

broadened the definition of what an American artist could be and do. As the artist-adventurer threw open the doors of his "true studio"—the wide world—he expanded what Americans could imagine about themselves and their place in it.

## Chapter Two

### Boston Beginnings

Because the personal correspondence relating to Edwin Lord Weeks is especially thin, any biography of the artist must rely on miscellaneous newspaper articles, a few scattered letters and various government records. Few primary or secondary sources convey much information about his formative years or early career. Nonetheless, a full understanding of the artist's deep roots in the life and culture of New England is one of the armatures that supports multiple layers of subsequent analysis.

#### A Yankee Through and Through

Edwin Lord Weeks was of rock-solid New England stock. On his father's side, Weeks' lineage reached all the way back to the colony at Jamestown, Virginia. His forbearer, Leonard Weeks, landed with Captain John Smith in Jamestown then forged on to New Hampshire in 1639. Two centuries later, the rolling farmland of New Hampshire was still home to the Weeks clan when Edwin's father, Stephen Haines Pickering Weeks, was born there in 1816.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Rossiter Johnson, ed., *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans*, vol. 10 (Boston: The Biographical Society, 1904). Ganley notes Weeks was descended from Leonard Weeks, who emigrated from Somersetshire, England to settle in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1656; Ganley, 7 citing Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* 19 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 601. This is confirmed by a review of the Weeks genealogy detailed by Jacob Chapman in *Leonard Weeks of Greenland, N.H. and Descendants, 1639–1888* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell's Sons, Publishers, 1889), 3–6, 11, 27–28. Chapman claims Stephen Weeks was born on January 22, 1816; the U.S. Census for 1870 confirms that year but the U.S. Census for 1860 indicates his birth was in 1813. Previous authors have suggested that Stephen Weeks' middle name was Holmes, and that he was a sea captain

Not one to stray far from family, in September 1846 Stephen married Mary Lord in Somersworth, New Hampshire, about twenty miles north of where Leonard Weeks first settled two centuries earlier.<sup>2</sup> Mary was a true Daughter of the American Revolution if ever there was one. Her grandfather was Lieutenant Nathan Lord, a courageous officer of only seventeen in the 1775 siege of Boston. In the spring of 1775, fighting his way north, Nathan Lord was wounded in the Battle of the Cedars a few weary miles west of Montreal, only to be “saved from a death by torture at the hands of the Indians by an English officer, Edwin Parks Stanhope, for whom Lt. Lord, at a later period, named his eldest son.” That son, Edwin Parkes Stanhope Lord, was Mary's father and Edwin Lord Weeks' grandfather.<sup>3</sup>

Early in their marriage Stephen and Mary Weeks ventured a few miles south to Boston, where they resided at the time of the birth of first child, Edwin Lord Weeks.<sup>4</sup> As a toddler,

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turned merchant. I could find no evidence of either of these assertions, although it was a common enough name for that time and geographic area that confusion is understandable.

2. Stephen Weeks married Mary Lord on 24 September 1846. New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics, Concord, NH, “New Hampshire Statewide Marriage Records 1637–1947,” Stephen Weeks, 24 September 1846.

3. William Hale provided the Lord family history in his application dated 14 April 1911 for membership in the Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, *Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889–1970*, vol. 115 (Louisville, KY), SAR membership number 22894. Hale's mother was a sister of Edwin Lord Weeks' mother; Hale's sister Frances married her cousin, Edwin Lord Weeks, in 1877.

4. Weeks declared he was born in Boston on his marriage certificate. Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts, *Massachusetts, Town Vital Collections, 1620–1988*, Marriages Registered in the City of Boston for the Year 1877, Record No. 1733, 12 September 1877. The 1850 U. S. Census places the family near Boston Common. *United States Census, 1850*, Boston Ward 10, Suffolk, Massachusetts, Roll M432\_337, Record group 29, page 339A, Image 336, Dwelling 277, Family 493, Stephen Weeks/Record Group 29. The 1860 U.S. Census lists residence in Quincy, although spelling and age discrepancies indicate caution when considering this record. *United States Federal Census, 1860*, Quincy, Norfolk, Massachusetts, Roll M653\_514, page 21, Image 27, Dwelling 122, Family 149, Stephen Weeks.

Edwin lived very near Boston Common's fifty acres of open park. His only sibling, Sarah ("Minnie") was born on February 3, 1856.<sup>5</sup> In 1860 the family resided in Quincy, Massachusetts (now a southern suburb of Boston), though the city directory in the 1864 Boston Almanac records them living once again near Boston Common.

Sometime after 1864 and before 1870, when Edwin Weeks was a teenager, the family moved to Newtonville, one of several villages that made up the small town of Newton, Massachusetts.<sup>6</sup> Situated only a few miles west of Boston and served by a local express train into the city, Newton was one of the nation's first commuter suburbs.<sup>7</sup> The Weeks family settled into a large home on half an acre at the corner of Washington Place and Walnut Street, a main artery very near the depot for the daily round-trip to Boston.<sup>8</sup> With ten rooms, one bath, fruit

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5. "Mrs. W.A.H. Goodwin Dead," *Boston Daily Globe*, 11 January 1916, 5.

6. The Weeks were residing in Newton by 1870. *United States Census, 1870*, Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Roll M593\_630, page 157B, Image 321, Dwelling 1067, Family 1131, Stephen Weeks. The population of Newton in 1850 was 5,258 according to the U.S. Census for that year.

7. Newton was an early suburb of Boston, defined during Weeks' time as "all the surrounding cities and towns within the territory whose limits are the terminal points for the local or suburban trains run by the various steam railroads centering in the metropolis . . . The residents of this territory are closely connected with the city by business and social interests, and may be termed, for the most part, day residents of Boston." George Edward Ellis, ed., *Bacon's Dictionary of Boston* (Boston, New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), 389.

8. Earlier essays on Weeks have placed his home and his father's grocery in Newtonville. Weeks lived in Newtonville as a teenager; his father's store was always in central Boston. A local Newton directory for 1871 lists under "General Directory of Citizens" the following: "Weeks Stephen, grocer (*Boston*), house Walnut, near Newtonville avenue." There is no listing for Weeks under the "Business Directory" section for the Newton directory. *Directory of the Town of Newton* (Newton, MA: Samuel Chism, 1871), 192. An 1874 ward map for Newtonville clearly shows the name "S. Weeks" written on the lot located at the corner of Walnut Street and Washington Place (Washington Place is now called Austin Street). "Part of Newtonville," *Atlas of Newton 1874* (New York: J.B. Beers and Company), 56–57. An 1873 Boston directory commercial listing for Stephen Weeks' grocery notes the store at 236 Tremont and a "house at Newtonville," *The Boston Directory* 69 (Boston: Sampson, Davenport and Company, 1873), 772. After Stephen Weeks died in 1878, the family home was apparently sold to Dr. Mary Florence Taft and her

trees in the yard and a two-minute walk to the station, it was the ideal suburban location.<sup>9</sup>

Little is known of how Weeks may have spent his childhood years. He was probably educated in the local public schools.<sup>10</sup> That he developed early on a keen and imaginative interest in drawing is evident from childhood sketches of horses and coats of arms preserved in the files of the Archives of American Art; but how he fared in school, whether he was a serious or an indifferent student, is not known. Weeks attended Union College in Schenectady, New York, as a member of the class of 1870, but did not graduate.<sup>11</sup> Apparently, the allure of plowing through a pile of books was pretty thin, and certainly no match for the pull of an artist's career.

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husband, a dentist. The Tafts had consulting rooms in their home. Massachusetts, Town Vital Collections, 1620–1988, “Deaths Registered in the City of Newton for the Year Ending December 31, 1878,” 1, no. 20, Stephen Weeks.

9. Copy of an unidentified newspaper clipping (n.p., n.d.), *The Art of Edwin Lord Weeks*, File 1, Box 7, Art Gallery Exhibition Files, 1941–2004, UA 9/3/1, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, NH. Among other materials, the exhibition records contain copies of 27 non-consecutive pages of a collection of newspaper clippings that appear to be a portion of the missing “Weeks Family Scrapbook” (also cited as the “Weeks-Goodwin Scrapbook”). The scrapbook was available to the 1976 exhibition organizers, and is mentioned by Oliver Pollack (who apparently had access to it) in his 2004 article, but has since disappeared. My several attempts to locate the scrapbook were not successful. In this dissertation, citations to the Weeks Family Scrapbook refer to the copied pages in the files noted above.

10. “As a young boy Weeks was educated in the Boston and Newton public schools.” Ganley, 7, without further reference.

11. This is based on a reference concerning the Theta Chapter of the Psi Upsilon Fraternity, Union College, Schenectady, New York: “278. Edwin Lord Weeks. † At Union College, 1866–68. Studied and practiced Art, since 1868. Artist: 128 Ave de Wagram, Paris, France.” *The Tenth General Catalog of the Psi Upsilon Fraternity*, ed. Henry Clark Johnson (Bethlehem, PA: Comenius Press, 1888), 52. Confusingly, Weeks is also listed as a University of Michigan non-graduate in the Department of Literature, Science and the Arts: “Edwin Lord Weeks, 66–67. Artist. Paris, France.” *University of Michigan General Catalogue of Officers and Students, 1837–1890* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1891), 371. These sources await reconciliation.



Although E. L. Weeks was not of the most patrician class of Bostonians, clearly his family enjoyed means substantial enough to enable the only son to go to college and later to sustain his artistic career. His father, Stephen Weeks, was the proprietor of a prosperous specialty grocery. Edwin Weeks' charcoal portrait of his father (Figure 2-1), reminiscent of Thomas Eakins' sombre "head and shoulders" portraits, records the determined man of commerce in the resolute set of the jaw, betrayed by a subtle softness in his eyes. In the mid-nineteenth century, in contrast to a general store or a local market, a grocery handled imported dry goods or specialty items that were not domestically manufactured or commonly available. The Weeks' family business, Stephen Weeks & Co., was located only about a block from Boston Common. Its favorable commercial address, 236 Tremont Street corner Eliot, is very much connected to the history of Edwin Lord Weeks, the artist.<sup>12</sup>

### Early Influences

After the Civil War, as Boston lost ground to New York as a driving force in national commerce, the leading families of the city shifted some of their commercial energies to cultural pursuits. Influenced by the writings of Carlyle, Coleridge and Ruskin, elite Bostonians developed an ideology that placed business at the service of philanthropy and culture.<sup>13</sup> These tightly networked families belonged to the same clubs, were linked by socially strategic

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12. Previous essays on Weeks have located Stephen Weeks' store in Newtonville.

13. Mona Domosh, "Shaping the Commercial City: Retail Districts in Nineteenth-Century New York and Boston," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80, no. 2 (Jun., 1990): 268–84, at 271.

marriages, and generally shared a common set of values, a solidarity that lent particular power to their focus on cultural endeavors. Their attitudes permeated Boston society; their views informed the social and economic aspirations of the middle class.

In post-war Boston, there was no greater marker of financial and social success than for a tradesman to have the means to free his children from mundane business affairs. Regardless of whether Stephen Weeks may have wished his son to take over the family business or pursue a more conventional occupation, his attitudes were flexible enough and his pockets were deep enough to support a fledging artist.<sup>14</sup> Ironically, it was probably the grocery that not only helped to launch Weeks' artistic career, but also facilitated his introduction to it. An imaginary stroll from the doorstep of Stephen Weeks & Co., down nineteenth-century Tremont Street and along the east side of Boston Common will suggest how this may have been the case.

The starting point is the grocery itself, Stephen Weeks & Co. (234–238 Tremont at the corner of Eliot, now called Stuart Street). A photograph that dates to just after the end of the Civil War clearly shows the storefront's bold signage “Stephen Weeks” and the tram line that ran past the door (Figures 2-2, 2-24).<sup>15</sup> The grocery was on the street level of Eliot Hall, a building

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14. Ganley notes Weeks' determination to pursue an artistic career: “This decision disappointed his father, but Stephan [sic] and Mary supported Edwin in his endeavors. His parents’ position and wealth allowed Edwin to choose this career and maintain the lifestyle to which he was accustomed.” Ganley, 7. I found no information indicating how Weeks' parents felt about his decision to become an artist.

15. *Eliot Hall at 234–238 Tremont Street, ca. 1865*, Item VW0001/- #001253, The Bostonian Society. The Tremont Gymnasium sign is mounted just above the signage for Stephen Weeks & Co. Stephen Weeks started in the grocery business on School Street, where he remained for some years. Next he operated the firm as Smith & Weeks on Tremont Street near Eliot Street. It subsequently moved to the corner of Tremont and Eliot opposite the location depicted in the photograph, then about 1860 moved to the YMCA Building shown. The grocery still operated on this corner when Stephen Weeks died in 1878. A one-paragraph history of the grocery was included in a brief obituary of Stephen Weeks. *Weeks Family Scrapbook*, unidentified newspaper clipping [may be dated to 29 January, 1878]. A photograph of

whose architecture conveyed a good measure of unshakable sensibility if its address brushed against a slightly bohemian quarter. Co-located with the grocery in the Eliot Building were the Young Men's Christian Association and the Tremont Gymnasium.

It takes little imagination to feature a popular corner grocery as a hub of neighborhood gossip. Located in the arts and theaters district, Weeks & Co. customers were well up on the doings of Boston's most prominent composers, artists and musicians, as well as the latest exhibitions and entertainments, from the Boston Theatre, "the leading Temple of Thespis in the City of Notions, and one of the handsomest theatres in the world," to less reputable amusements.<sup>16</sup>

One reliable source for provocative conversation was three or so blocks north, at 145 Tremont, facing Boston Common. From about 1864 to 1870 this address was home to the exclusive gallery De Vries, Ibarra and Company (Figure 2-4). De Vries was adept at reeling in prospective clients with sensational works such as Albert Bierstadt's *Mt. Vesuvius in Eruption* (1868). Striking that irresistible combination of the horrifying and the religiously instructive, *Mt. Vesuvius* was an undeniable crowd-pleaser. The *Ladies' Repository* called it "a magnificent spectacle" of "Fire, smoke, molten lava, and the lurid, desolate waste below, all standing out against a blue-black sky." The reviewer breathlessly continued: "The mighty spirit of the volcano seems fiendish, and the pale, high moon a saint of heaven struggling vainly against the

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Stephen Weeks' grocery in the Edwin Lord Weeks Papers at the Archives of American Art is likely a record of an earlier location of the business.

16. *The Stranger's New Guide through Boston and Vicinity* (Boston: A. Williams and Co., 1869), 36.

powers of hell."<sup>17</sup> Any nineteen-year-old rambling around the neighborhood of his father's store surely would have been keen to behold the powers of hell.

Just a few steps farther down Tremont Street, at number 127, the gallery of Messrs. Child & Jenks (Figure 2-4) offered more restrained fare. Confronted on one wall by Peter Rothermel's (1817–95) *Paul before Agrippa* and on the other by Friedrich Biachoff's *Golden Wedding*, an 1864 reviewer for *The Round Table* described the former as "bad, decidedly, in its delineation" with a "stuffy background" and "bilious flesh," but the latter as "the production of a great and intellectual mind." Yet it was the gallery's unnamed work by Eastman Johnson, "A drowsy negro woman, sitting by a half-open door, with a sleeping child upon her knee," that drew the unbridled praise "No greater evidence of absolute genius can be found in the whole range of art than this sleeping child."<sup>18</sup>

These galleries were located at the heart of fine arts production in Boston, in a neighborhood that had been popular with artists at least since the 1850s.<sup>19</sup> Doors away from Child & Jenks, at 110 Tremont corner Bromfield, stood the imposing Studio Building (Figures 2-3, 2-4). This transplanted Second Empire stack of brick, four stories high, was the headquarters for many of Boston's leading artists. The imposing French exterior elevated the status of the domestic products sold in the ground-level shops—the Leavitt and Parker Sewing

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17. "Literary and Artistic," *Ladies' Repository* 42, no. 1 (July 1869): 78.

18. "Boston Art Notes," *Round Table, a weekly record of the notable, the useful and the tasteful* 1, no. 25 (4 June 1864): 392–93. By 1871 this address would be occupied by Eliot, Blakeslee & Noyes, representatives of Edwin Lord Weeks in Boston.

19. Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790–1860* (New York: George Braziller, 1966), 267.

Machine Company, the California Wine Agency, the Howard Clock Company.<sup>20</sup> Above-stairs, enveloping a "perfect hive of artists," a more stimulating atmosphere reigned.<sup>21</sup>

Sculptor and physician William Rimmer's (1816–79) anatomy lectures in Room 55 of the Studio Building were popular with John LaFarge, Daniel Chester French and Frank Benson. As steeped in the lessons of the dissecting rooms of Massachusetts Medical College as in the early modern anatomical plates of Albinus and Vesalius, Rimmer covered the blackboard with brawny figures that sported wings, reclined against ornate urns and brandished daggers. In his spare moments Rimmer frequented the private Tremont Gymnasium in search of models for his astoundingly accurate figural representations. As mentioned, the gymnasium was in the same building as Stephen Weeks' grocery (Figure 2-2).<sup>22</sup>

One of Rimmer's fellow tenants in the Studio Building was William Morris Hunt (1824–79), in the 1860s and 1870s Boston's preeminent portrait and landscape painter. Prior to his withdrawal from club activities in 1874 (the year Edwin Weeks began his formal training in Paris), Hunt's studio and gallery "were the great attractions to visitors who came to the 'receptions' given by the artists in the building." Hunt's compatriots on the Boston art scene were

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20. *The Stranger's New Guide through Boston and Vicinity*, 11.

21. "This structure is occupied on the streetfloor by six large stores, while above is a perfect hive of artists. This building, indeed, is the head-quarters of the artists of Boston, though many of them are located elsewhere. There are delightful artists' receptions here, to which the general public is invited. Besides the devotees of art, there are many private teachers of music and the languages in the Studio Building, and not a few of the rooms are occupied as bachelors' apartments." *Boston Illustrated* (Boston: James P. Osgood and Co., 1872), 72.

22. Lincoln Kirstein, "William Rimmer: His Life and Art," *Massachusetts Review* 2, no. 4 (1961): 685–716, at 688–89.

also tenants of the Studio Building: Elihu Vedder (1836–1923), J. Foxcroft Cole (1837–92), and Thomas Robinson (1835–88).<sup>23</sup> In *Living New England Artists* Frank Torrey Robinson recalled the Boston arts scene of the 1860s:

There is no doubt that [Frank Hill] Smith, [Albion Harris] Bicknell, [Thomas] Robinson, [J. Foxcroft] Cole, [William Morris] Hunt, [Marcus] Waterman, and, later on, [Frederic Porter] Vinton, and one or two others, had pretty much the swing of art in Boston for several years, and it is well for the arts of to-day that they did. They were constantly together, working like brothers in the cause, and their interests seemed to be closely united.<sup>24</sup>

Edwin Weeks was a particular intimate of at least one member of this artistic coterie, J. [Joseph] Foxcroft Cole (1837–92). In the summer of 1874 Weeks accompanied Cole and his family to France to spend the summer sketching in Normandy. Cole was undoubtedly the surest guide that Weeks had to the Parisian ateliers and the Salon system, for the older artist had exhibited at the Salon in the later 1860s and early 1870s as well as at the Royal Academy and various American exhibitions. Years before, Cole had apprenticed with Winslow Homer at J. G. Bufford's lithography shop in Boston. In 1860 he traveled to France for three years of formal instruction under Émile Lambinet, a practice that he continued in 1865 in the studio of Charles Jacque, where he came to know the Barbizon painters Troyon, Corot, Daubigny and Diaz.<sup>25</sup>

Edwin Weeks was also acquainted with another tenant of the Studio Building, Edward

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23. Frederic P. Vinton, "William Morris Hunt. I. Personal Reminiscences," *American Art Review* 1, no. 2 (December 1879): 49–54, at 51–52.

24. "J. Foxcroft Cole, S.A.A.," in Frank Torrey Robinson, *Living New England Artists* (Boston: Samuel E. Cassino, 1888; reprinted New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 45–51.

25. "Joseph Foxcroft Cole," Smithsonian American Art Museum, citing Peter Bermingham, *American Art in the Barbizon Mood* (Washington, DC: National Collection of Fine Arts and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975), n.p..

Mitchell Bannister. Near J. Foxcroft Cole's Studio Building quarters (Room 51) were those of Edward Mitchell Bannister (Room 85),<sup>26</sup> a Canadian-American of African descent (1828–1901) who had relocated to Boston in 1848. Boston had been a center of abolitionist activity from the beginning of the nineteenth century, led by men and women like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Maria Child, Wendell Phillips, Stephen and Abby Foster, Maria Weston Chapman and William Lloyd Garrison. Post-war, Boston had earned a reputation as one of the northeast's most hospitable cities for African Americans, which is not to say that even in that city they were not the targets of active and persistent discrimination. Finally gaining access to professional instruction in the studio of William Rimmer, Bannister persevered for two decades to become one of the leading artists of Boston, "a painter of genius."<sup>27</sup> He was strongly influenced by William Morris Hunt, an energetic promoter of the Barbizon School who revered Jean-François Millet. Many of Bannister's works evoke the pastoral scenes and rustic motifs popularized by Millet, Jean-Baptiste Corot (introduced to Boston by J. F. Cole), and Charles François Daubigny.<sup>28</sup> In her study of Henry Ossawa Tanner, art historian Marcia M. Mathews noted that Bannister shared a studio with Edwin Lord Weeks.<sup>29</sup> Weeks could not have been older than about twenty-one at that

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26. *The Boston Almanac for the year 1864*, no. 29 (Boston: George Coolidge, n.d.), 154.

27. Moritz Carrière, *Iconographic Encyclopedia of the Arts and Sciences*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Iconographic Publishing Co., 1887), 284.

28. Noted in an excerpt from the exhibition catalog, *Free Within Ourselves: African American Artists in the Collection of the National Museum of American Art*, as quoted by Bannister Gallery, Rhode Island College, "Edward Mitchell Bannister," [http://www.ric.edu/bannister/about\\_emb.php](http://www.ric.edu/bannister/about_emb.php), accessed 30 April 2012.

29. Bannister "had gone to Boston as a young man where, for a time, he shared a studio with the artist Edwin Lord Weeks." Marcia M. Mathews, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 18–19. Mathews corresponded extensively with members of the Tanner family

time, for Bannister moved to Providence, Rhode Island in 1870.

As a very young man, perhaps even as a teenager, Edwin Weeks the grocer's son was clearly well-connected to the leading artists of Boston, from whom he undoubtedly sought advice and professional guidance. Coupled with his considerable ambition, that was force enough to launch his career.

### Early Travels

Identifying mentors early on would have been a canny move for Weeks, for unlike the myths that surround so many artists there is no indication of unusual promise emanating from the watercolors that he produced as a teenager (*Shoreline* and *Hanging Duck*, both 1867). Though these watercolors lack sophistication, they demonstrate Weeks' lifelong interest in animal studies and the mastery of realistic detail.<sup>30</sup> Weeks' fledgling talents were sufficiently admired by his friend, fellow Newtonian C. J. (Charles Johnson) Maynard (1845–1929), to land him the assignment of illustrator for Maynard's *The Naturalist's Guide in Collecting and Preserving Objects of Natural History, with a complete catalogue of the birds of Eastern Massachusetts* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1870). This book is by no means lavishly illustrated, but its one detailed rendering is quite creditable. Maynard was rather an “odd duck” himself, a loner and self-taught naturalist, ornithologist, taxidermist and prolific author who became a recognized

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and interviewed William Alden Brown, collector and pupil of Bannister, to develop her book. Tanner was a welcome guest in Weeks' Paris home.

30. Ganley, 13.



expert on snails and the vocal organs of birds.

Weeks' association with Maynard explains his first brush with the exotic, a trip to Florida in 1869 "when he was scarcely twenty." *Our American Artists*, penned by Weeks' friend, fellow artist and writer S.G.W. Benjamin, offers the only record of this excursion:

Cruising about the palm-tufted Keys in the small fleet schooners of the wreckers, he found lots of fun and at the same time revelled in painting the yellow sands of that semi-tropical peninsula lined with palms, and haunted by blue cranes and pelicans.<sup>31</sup>

At the time there was intense interest in the Florida Everglades. The December 18, 1869 issue of the popular *Appleton's Journal* published a full-page engraving of *A Florida Scene* to illustrate an article on the Everglades. The Victorian imagination generated a truly mythic vision of an overwhelmingly lush Florida, home to vines like "huge serpents" that seemed to "have sprung with one leap fifty feet into the air;" to "the grandest live-oaks of the world . . . extending over a surface of ground equal to the area of a 'city square;' " and to "a geniality of climate that can only be understood by realization." The *Appleton's* article concluded with a challenge aimed squarely at a young Yankee artist:

The frosts which make the Northern forests in the fall mottle with gay colors never garnish these Southern landscapes; all is one intense but ever-varying green. It is this feature which makes it quite impossible to reproduce these tropical exhibitions on canvas, and renders all exaggerated displays of red, yellow, blue, and scarlet, as peculiar to tropical regions, the falsest things of all the demonstrations of meretricious art.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 27.

32. "The Florida Everglades," *Appleton's Journal: a magazine of general literature* 2, no. 38 (Dec. 18, 1869): 556–58, at 558.

Benjamin's brief mention of the trip offers no insights into why Weeks went there, though it is most plausible that he accompanied either C. F. Maynard and/or Boston artist George F. Higgins. Higgins was yet another denizen of the Studio Building (Room 59), who painted a number of South Florida scenes, including *The Florida Keys* (1870).<sup>33</sup> Weeks' friend Maynard spent three seasons stalking the flora and fauna of the Everglades. On an earlier 1867 trip, one of Maynard's comrades had a close call with a ten-foot crocodile, understandably snappish after being shot through with a rifle. He did not mention Weeks as among the party on that occasion.<sup>34</sup> However, the Boston artist Helen S. Farley made a trip with Maynard to Florida in 1870, the same year that Weeks traveled there, according to S.G.W. Benjamin. Farley illustrated Maynard's two monographs, *Catalogue of the Mammals of Florida, with notes on their habits, distribution, etc.* and *The Birds of Florida* (both 1872).<sup>35</sup> It is unlikely that Farley traveled solely in the company of Maynard; more probably there were others in the party, and one of the others may have been Edwin Weeks.<sup>36</sup> Among the paintings known from Weeks' Florida trip are:

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33. Maybelle Mann, *Art in Florida, 1564–1945* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1999), 53–67.

34. Nathaniel Holmes Bishop, *Four Months in a Sneak-Box: A Boat Voyage of 2600 Miles Down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1879; reprinted Applewood Books Bedford, MA, n.d.), 310.

35. "European and American Literary Intelligence," *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record* 81 (29 June 1872): 183.

36. Helen Stevens (Greenwood) Farley (1849–1900) was first married to Henry Farley. When Henry died, she married Henry R. Blaney, signing her later work Helen Farley Blaney. She maintained a studio in Boston and was a manager of the Union Institute of Arts in Boston where her second husband was an instructor in illustration. The above, and the 1870 date for travel to Florida in the company of Maynard, were noted in "Death of Mr. Henry B. Blaney in Japan," posted 21 December 2008 on the *Blaney—Family History & Geneology Message Board*, Ancestry.com, boards.ancestry.com/thread.aspx?mv=flat&m=258&p...blaney, accessed 17 April 2012. Gary R. Libby claims Weeks returned to Florida in 1872, apparently based on his painting dated to that year; see Gary R. Libby, *Reflections:*

*Florida Everglades with Great Blue Heron* (signed and dated E. L. Weeks, 1871); *Florida Everglades, 1871* (dated "Dec. 26, 1871", Figure 2-5); *Flowering Agave, Florida* (dated and inscribed "Jan. 20, '71, Miami"); and *In the Everglades of Florida, 1872*.<sup>37</sup>

According to S.G.W. Benjamin, the year after his trip to the Florida Keys Weeks sailed for Surinam, that densely forested country situated on the northeast coast of South America, even today remarkable for its biodiversity. Benjamin wrote that "among the somewhat unhealthy but magnificent forests of South America" Weeks found "abundant material to whet his appetite for brilliant effects."<sup>38</sup> There is no other record to verify this trip or indicate how or why Weeks made it, although surely the adventure was reason enough. Undeterred by Surinam's nineteenth-century reputation for exceptional unhealthiness, Weeks most plausibly journeyed there in the company of a colleague of naturalist C. J. Maynard.

Upon his return to Boston, Weeks turned his attention to the woodland scenes and domestic subjects found around his home in Newtonville and that of his grandparents in Rollinsford, New Hampshire. From his "New England" period there are drawings and oil sketches of Wallis Sands, Rye, New Hampshire; Appledore Island of the Isles of Shoals off the New Hampshire coast; and *Landscape with Blue Heron* (1871). Also from 1871 is a small oil and a number of sketches of sixteen-year-old Frances Rollins Hale, known all of her life as "Fannie," who was to

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*Paintings of Florida 1865-1965* (Daytona Beach, FL: Museum of Arts and Sciences, 2009), 42–43.

37. Barridoff Galleries, *Fine Auction, American and European Art, Wednesday October 24, 2012* (South Portland, ME: Barridoff Galleries, 2012), 20–22 and Libby, 42.

38. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 27.

marry Weeks six years later.<sup>39</sup>

### Abroad in the 1870s

Owing to ambiguous, conflicting and missing data, the decade of the 1870s is a very confusing one in the Weeks chronology. The principal source for these years has been the five-page essay (with big pictures) on “Edwin Lord Weeks” in *Our American Artists* (1881), a book for young people written by Weeks' close friend, S.G.W. Benjamin (1837–1914).<sup>40</sup> In the few modern accounts of Weeks' life, authors from the 1970s to the present have augmented Benjamin's brief essay with contemporaneous Boston newspaper articles and a few personal letters, among them those found in the Alexander Stevenson Twombly papers at Yale University and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. However, inconsistencies remain. The following chronology draws on all of the relevant source materials, synthesizes and verifies the research of previous Weeks scholars, in some cases confirming and in some altering their chronologies.

A small, hasty pencil sketch of a snowy woodland scene dated "Feb 72" suggests that Weeks spent that winter in Newtonville. Surely by this point Weeks was burning to break free of New England and follow the paths laid before by J. Foxcroft Cole and the circle of William Morris Hunt. Given his acquaintances and evident ambition, it would have been unthinkable for

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39. Ganley, 14. Ganley dates the marriage to 1871, but it was actually in 1877.

40. As a young man Benjamin was also an aspiring Boston artist. He became better known for his art criticism and later as the first United States Minister to Persia (1883–86). "S.G.W. Benjamin Dead," *New York Times*, 20 July 1914, n.p.

Weeks not to be spurred towards training in the Parisian ateliers. After all, William Morris Hunt had studied with history painter Thomas Couture in Paris until he came under the spell of the radical Jean-François Millet, who converted Hunt into a Boston-based proselytizer for the Barbizon school. Hunt's Boston compatriot, Elihu Vedder, was a student of the neoclassicist François-Edouard Picot until his father cut young Vedder off, perhaps because of his deep attachment to artist and Italian revolutionary Giovanni Costa. With Hunt's urging, from 1860 Weeks' close associate and mentor J. Foxcroft Cole studied off and on for years in France, in winters at the École des Beaux-Arts, in summers with landscapist Émile-Charles Lambinet in Normandy, and in 1865 with Charles Jacques in Paris. Obviously, if Weeks intended to join the ranks of his Boston mentors, Parisian training was inescapable.

A season in Europe and a stint in the East is exactly what the ambitious twenty-two-year-old Weeks lined up. In mid-April 1872 Weeks and two friends, the young illustrator A[delbert] P. Close and Edgar A[llan] P[oe] Newcomb, sailed from New York for Liverpool aboard the steamship *Trinacria*.<sup>41</sup>

Prior to their departure, Weeks and Close paid a visit to S.G.W. Benjamin's studio to try convince him to join their Eastern “pilgrimage.” Writing some years later from a more mature perspective, Benjamin still felt the tug of the spirited adventure that he missed. Bowing to the

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41. On his April 8, 1872 passport application, for which Edgar A.P. Newcomb signed as witness, Weeks is described in suitably Victorian terms as five-feet eight and one-half inches, with a low forehead, dark brown eyes and hair, an oval face, aquiline nose and dark complexion. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795–1925*, Collection Number: ARC Identifier 566612 / MLR Number A1 508, NARA Series: M1372, Roll #: 180, Mar 1872–08 Apr 1872, Image no. 1232. On April 14th Weeks, Newcomb and Close sailed for Liverpool on the steamship *Trinacria*. “Passengers Sailed,” *New York Times (1857–1922)*, 14 April 1872, 10.

pressure of unnamed "other plans," Benjamin lamented that "he was reluctantly obliged to go in another direction."<sup>42</sup> It was a missed opportunity, but not a last chance. Artist, author and (eventually) diplomat, Benjamin's experience of the East lay in the future; in 1883 he was appointed the first American Minister to Persia.

In his brief essay in *Our American Artists*, Benjamin recalled that on this initial trip to Europe Weeks stopped in Paris "to gain some much needed instruction in his art" before continuing on "for a long journey to the far East."<sup>43</sup> Aside from a very few dated sketches like *Loch Lomond* (1872), not much is known of Weeks' travels, experiences and first impressions of Europe. However, in 1872 he could have gained only the most cursory introduction to the Parisian ateliers, for two months after they left New York Weeks and A. P. Close were already in Beirut.

The first account of Edwin Weeks in the Levant is a somber one: on June 21st along with members of the American Consulate the two young artists attended the Beirut funeral of a leading Presbyterian missionary.<sup>44</sup> Services for Mr. Galbraith, who had been felled by malaria compounded by subsequent illnesses, were held at Beirut's Oriental Hotel. The funeral was to

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42. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 28.

43. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 28.

44. "Syria Mission," *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter* 10, no. 11 (November 1872): 340–41. The article cites the account of the death and funeral of Galbraith, described in a July 31st letter from Dr. James Martin, posted from Latakiah, as reported in the October issue of the *Covenanter*, Ireland. Martin wrote: "Soon after four o'clock on Friday, a considerable number of persons, missionaries and others, were assembled in the hotel. . . a cawass of the American Consulate advanced, and spread the American flag upon the coffin. The following attended the funeral: . . . Mr. Close and his friend, artists from Boston, travellers in Syria. . ."

portend an unforeseen end to the friends' companionable adventure.

In the Edwin Lord Weeks files at the Archives of American Art are a handful of typewritten pages, presumably contemporaneous transcripts of Weeks' handwritten notes, that describe, in run-on sentences and indifferent grammar, his 1872 experiences in Beirut and Cairo. He wrote that he and Close enjoyed a hospitable welcome in Beirut. They dined with Dr. Daniel Bliss, president of the Syrian Protestant College (now the American University of Beirut), and his wife in their home overlooking the Mediterranean. Weeks sarcastically called the marbled halls with twenty-foot ceilings yet "another specimen of the houses in which missionaries learn to 'suffer and be strong.'"<sup>45</sup>

Edwin Weeks was never content to confine himself to the genteel expatriate quarters favored by so many other Western artists who traveled to the "East." Leaving reliable comforts behind, he and Close trekked thirty or forty miles inland and north of Beirut to the cliffs of Akorah (Akoura). Weeks vividly described sketching *en plein air*:

We left Akorah at seven. The usual crowd of beggars and loungers came around the camp to see us off. One fellow with a withered hand settled himself on the ground in front of me while sketching the village, and held out the maimed member sturdily clamoring for buchshish meanwhile. When we left the camp several children remained on the ground hunting for relics of the Howadju. After climbing a high stony ridge from which we could see the Mediterranean beyond Tripoli, we came suddenly on a little grassy hollow in which lay patches of green turf and springs of water. Here were the black tents of some Bedaween shepherds who were lying about on the grass with their flocks of goats and

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45. Edwin Lord Weeks, "We have received hospitable welcome . . .," [Beirut and Akorah to Tripoli account], Edwin Lord Weeks papers, [ca. 1885–1976], Box 1, Folder 1, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, (hereafter cited as Weeks, "Beirut Notes"). "Suffer and be strong" was a reference to George William Curtis, *Nile Notes of a "Howadji:" or, the American in Egypt* (London: Henry Vizetelly, 1855), 48; this book was probably among Weeks' reading materials for his trip.

sheep. . . In the afternoon we came out upon the brink of the narrow and deep valley . . . From this point we could not see the bottom, but over the outer and between the vertical walls of rock now in the afternoon shadow, was a triangular space of sea above the white speck which was Tripoli.<sup>46</sup>

The pair continued northward through mountainous terrain to Hasroun, where they camped for three days. Weeks was getting his first taste of the challenges that enveloped the Western artist traveling in the Eastern Mediterranean:

No sooner were the mules unloaded and Abdullah cooking utensils out than we were surrounded by a curious throng of villagers who squatted about the tent and during our stay at Hasroun, some three days, our camp was a resort for the boys of the village who played leapfrog raising clouds of dust; but as soon as the Howadjin commenced to sketch, write or do anything unusual the tent was surrounded by a dense throng . . . The children as well as the grown people were quite eager to be sketched, but then there was some difficulty in getting sketches of the women. Those who had any pretensions to beauty became suddenly bashful and hid their faces while the ugly ones were not at all backward in displaying their charms.<sup>47</sup>

The two artists toured with "the sheik of the village" and took coffee, sherbet and cigarettes at his home. They struggled to overcome a language barrier only partly bridged by the helpful Abdullah. Somehow through Abdullah they managed to get on well enough, regaling the sheik with stories of North American and Seminole Indians—a topic prompted by their attempts to place these extraordinary encounters in a familiar context.<sup>48</sup> Each day they began anew, to sketch, to write, to engage the villagers, to assess unfamiliar social settings and to apprehend

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46. Weeks, "Beirut Notes," 1–2.

47. Weeks, "Beirut Notes," 2.

48. Close's illustrations had recently been published for Helen C. Weeks' *White and Red: A Narrative of Life among the Northwest Indians* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1869). It is uncertain whether Helen Weeks was related to Edwin Lord Weeks.



their place in them. The people they met, sketched and tried to talk to were as curious about as Weeks and Close as the two young artists were about them:

They were squatting round the fire the last thing at night and when the tent door was opened at sunrise, there they were squatting in front waiting patiently to see what the Howadjins were going to do next.<sup>49</sup>

On one of their late-July excursions around Lebanon, shortly after their return to Beirut or perhaps even on the way to Damascus, A. P. Close was overcome with fever. He lingered for two months before dying in Beirut on September 16th, 1872. There is no known record of Weeks' response to his friend's fatal illness, although a Boston newspaper reported that Close had "the best medical advice and ministrations of careful and loving hands to the last."<sup>50</sup> Writing four years later, S.G.W. Benjamin echoed a common lament for the premature death of A. P. Close, who "gave promise of standing among the foremost of American landscape painters . . . Certainly no artist we have produced has evinced more abundant signs of genius at so early an age."<sup>51</sup>

Undaunted, the young Weeks journeyed on. The leaves of his notebook and a few dated watercolors indicate that he sketched his way east to Damascus and south to the ancient city of

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49. Weeks, "Beirut Notes," 3.

50. In a discussion of the genealogy of the Close family, a distant relative of A. P. Close quoted extensively from unidentified Boston newspaper articles on the death of the artist in Beirut. Ronald E. Close III, "Close Family History," 25 June 1996, [http://groups.google.com/group/alt.genealogy/browse\\_thread/thread/6f1f3647f9ab868b/313b990c55a0e0a7%3Flnk=st%26q=angus%2Bcontractor%2Blandscape%26rnum=30%26hl=en](http://groups.google.com/group/alt.genealogy/browse_thread/thread/6f1f3647f9ab868b/313b990c55a0e0a7%3Flnk=st%26q=angus%2Bcontractor%2Blandscape%26rnum=30%26hl=en), accessed 16 May 2012.

51. S.G.W. Benjamin, *Art in America: a critical and historical sketch* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1880), 104–5.

Tyre, Lebanon. By October 8th he was in Jerusalem.<sup>52</sup> A quickly executed watercolor from the third week in October 1872 locates him in the port city of Jaffa (now Tel Aviv), captivated by the desert dwellers and their broadly striped tents framed by rich foliage and swaying palms (Figure 2-6). In addition to providing insights into Weeks' earliest impressions of Greater Syria, these sketchbooks reveal something of his technique of angular blocking, hatched shading, and concentrated detail. His interest in precision (for example, the interlocking patterns of tile colors) is already evident, as are his early struggles with the human form.<sup>53</sup>

By November, Weeks was steeped in the vigorous rounds of the Anglo-American tourist in Cairo. Journaling as if he could not pen the impressions quickly enough, his stream of staccato prose notes the colors and detail that punctuated the sweeping views from the Citadel:

Elnohattam, the mountain rising behind it like Arthur's seat at Edinborough [sic]; situated parallel of rock; cadmium yellow color. Vast volume of current of the yellow Nile resembling to the [blank] and other tropical rivers; distant hazy shores fringed with palm groves, crowds of lateen sails. Avenues of massive foliage at Boulah and Old Cairo. Rich and quaint forms of the minarets and other architecture, bizarre outline and colors; embroidered [sic] domes, Animated bazaar seen through Babel Nasn. Smooth roads, not paved with uncomfortable stones as in Damascus Rome or Jerusalem . . . People sleeping along side the streets on benches.<sup>54</sup>

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52. The following works offer evidence of Weeks' itinerary for this trip: *Cedars of Lebanon*, dated 1872; *Jerusalem*, watercolor, dated October, 1872; *Jerusalem Trees*, pencil on paper, dated October 8th; *Inynena Mosque, Damascus*, watercolor, dated 1872; *St. Thomas Gate, Damascus*, watercolor, n.d.; *Tyre*, watercolor, n.d. Ganley, 21.

53. A set of six of Weeks' early sketchbooks containing 20–45 pages each was sold at auction by Bonham's, 13 May 2010, *Orientalist Pictures and Works of Art*, Auction 18180, Lot 63. Several of the images are posted online.

54. Edwin Lord Weeks, "Cairo Notes," Edwin Lord Weeks papers, [ca. 1885–1976], Box 1, Folder 1, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

His impressions of Cairo are jumbled, kaleidoscopic. Shaved donkeys, purple minarets, crimson turbans, the endless cries for "buckshish" jostle his senses and occasionally strain Weeks' patience. Alternately fascinated and overwhelmed, his comments on the "pyramid business" reveal his mounting frustration with the Cairo tourist routine:

Arabs seize us and we are hustled up. Talk about buckshish all the way up. Brazillian gentleman (fat one) quite used up. Top of pyramid covered with names. They take us up over the biggest steps; see that it is quite possible to go up an easier way. humbug. Come down again. Buckshish. My deaf friend puts his hand in his pocket from time to time draws forth buckshish. Arabs want more. Bores at bottom want us to buy coins, images, trinkets. Go inside. Slide through inclined passage dust clothing. Arabs drag us part way. Chant all the way: about buckshish. Flourish torches; look wild. Don't experience any emotion. Get into the chamber horrible echoes. More names . . . Sit down on a stone; draw breath and contemplate sphinx. Small boy with jar of water squats on one side begs piteously for buchshish, carried the water up to the top and down inside for me to drink didn't drink any. Won't pay him. Idiotic old grizzly old beggar on the side, buckshish. Gets between me and sphinx, poke him out of the way with a stick. Brazillian come to contemplate sphinx. Completely blown, is borne aloft on the shoulders of a dozen Arabs, all clamor for buchshish, ridiculous sight. Arabs produce more coins. Having contemplated sphinx retire, bodyguard twenty Arabs. . . . Get into carriages. Sheik alongside want more buchshish but at him with whip. Small boy runs along other side with jar of water, no buchshish. Goodbye, give him cut with the whip.<sup>55</sup>

The haughty nature of this lengthy quotation does not flatter Weeks. Not even his sojourn in Morocco during the height of the 1878 famine—the subject of a later chapter—prompted this kind of response. Instead of the inquisitive young man who, a couple of months earlier, chatted amiably with the villagers in the mountainous region north of Beirut, who took sherbet and cigarettes with the sheik, Weeks' quickly jotted "Cairo notes" reveal an exasperated and arrogant character not reflected elsewhere in his writing. Of course, in 1872 the full pyramids tour

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55. Weeks, "Cairo Notes."

required eleven miles of donkey riding in the full desert sun, which would erode anyone's patience. Nonetheless, tourists were routinely warned to expect the pressing throngs and constant begging. Advising practical and armchair travelers on scaling the pyramids, Harper's *American Traveller's Guide* shrugged off the incessant demands for *backsheesh* with a light tone:

You having to pay the sheik one dollar for their services, will you refuse as directed? No! nine chances out of ten, you give them something, as you know *a little slip*, and where would you be?<sup>56</sup>

The two-and-one-half pages of Weeks' "Cairo Notes" supplies ample evidence of the condescending attitude that was all too prevalent among Victorian tourists traveling in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. However, to extrapolate from this brief *aide-mémoire* to Weeks' mature attitudes and intentions regarding the Islamic world is an unsteady proposition. The essay's broken sentences differ markedly from the more coherent and relaxed "Beirut Notes." The draft differs in style and tone from all of his subsequent published writings. His stunted note, "Don't experience any emotion," hints at the cumulative stress of months of travel, the newcomer to an alien culture, and the death of his companion A. P. Close, buried only weeks before in Beirut.

Weeks remained in North Africa through December. His painting of 1872 entitled *Tangier; Morocco* suggests that he visited that city after he departed Cairo, though at present this initial visit cannot be corroborated by textual evidence.<sup>57</sup> If he indeed traveled to Morocco in 1872, it

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56. William Pembroke Fetridge, *The American Traveller's Guide: Harper's Hand-book for Travellers in Europe and the East* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), 498.

57. *Tangier; Morocco*, dated to 1872, appears in William H. Gerdt's, "Americans in Faraway Places, in the Roderic H. D. Henderson collection," *Magazine Antiques* 91, no. 5 (May 1967): 647–49 at 647; it is also cited by Thompson, 248. The sketchbook(s) of 1872 might verify an 1872 trip to Tangier, although this

was for only a few weeks at most, for just after the New Year 1873 he disembarked in New York from the steamship *Parthia*, arriving from Liverpool.<sup>58</sup>

### Back in Boston

That winter, while most Bostonians were preoccupied with rebuilding after the great fire of November 9, 1872 that leveled sixty-five acres of downtown Boston, Weeks diligently prepared for the March opening exhibition of the Boston Art Club, where he kept a studio.

The recently revived Art Club was a sophisticated enclave for upper-class gentlemen artists and fine arts enthusiasts (male, of course). The club leased a bow-front brick townhouse at 64 Boylston, formerly a private residence (about a block from Stephen Weeks' grocery; see map, Figure 2-4). This urbane gentlemen's retreat boasted a spacious sky-lighted exhibition gallery, dining and reading rooms, a handsome library, and its own paintings collection. For its two annual juried exhibitions, monthly social gatherings and occasional concerts women were welcomed as guests, but not as members.

The Art Club, "among the most interesting resorts in Boston," was *the* venue for visual arts professionals and patrons, as touted in the *Art Journal*:

Here, three or four times a year, exhibitions of artistic products take place, including the works of both native and foreign artists, which are attended with much interest by the *élite* of the city. The Art-Club has really done a great deal to promote and refine the aesthetic tastes of Bostonians. It has provided an

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author has reviewed neither the painting nor all of the sketchbook images.

58. Weeks arrived back in New York on January 4th. "Passengers Arrived," *New York Times*, 5 January 1873, 8.

opportunity not only to observe and compare the results of the work produced in Boston studios from year to year, but to see the finer specimens of foreign art acquired from time to time by private collections. It is the only place where the art-purchases of wealthy Bostonians abroad may be seen by the general public; and where it is possible to make wide selections from the productions of native artists.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to a comfortable studio with enviable amenities, the Art Club and its membership (five to six hundred in 1875) provided Weeks with a prestigious professional address, a venue to show his works regularly, and a ready network of the most successful Boston artists and the most prominent local collectors of European and American works. The club's mid-March exhibition consisted primarily of paintings by foreign artists, although several Bostonians participated. One reviewer found Weeks' Egyptian watercolors "quiet and subdued and naturally effective," but they failed to garner the praise accorded Frank Hill Smith's Venetian scenes or the piscatorial art of W. M. Brackett.<sup>60</sup> If anything, this tepid response steeled Weeks' determination to succeed. The following month he consigned a number of paintings to Leonard & Co. to be auctioned on April 25th, along with those of more established Boston artists.<sup>61</sup> Throughout the summer and

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59. "The Boston Art Club," *Art Journal*, n.s. 1 (1875): 95.

60. Under the heading of watercolors, "E. L. Weeks' Egyptian sketches are quiet and subdued and naturally effective." "Art and Artists. The Boston Art Club Exhibition," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 25 March 1873: 2. The thorough *Atlantic Monthly* notice of the exhibition did not mention Weeks. "Art," *Atlantic Monthly* 3, no. 185 (March 1873): 371–72.

61. The advertisement reads: "By Leonard & Co., Auctioneers and Appraisers, [48 and 50 Bromfield street.], Boston Artists' Sale. Oil Paintings. On Friday, April 25, at 2 o'clock P.M., In the Library Salesroom, No. 50 Bromfield street, a collection of about One Hundred Paintings, from the studios of the following Boston artists: J. Foxcroft Cole, F. H. Shapleigh, Frank Howland, B. Champney, S. P. Hodgdon, G. W. Seavey, J.E.C. Petersen, D. A. Clough, Miss Stetson, Frank H. Smith, J. R. Key, Henry Bacon, G. N. Cass, George Niles, W. Webber, E. L. Weeks, J. E. Miles, Miss Horton, Thos. Robinson, W. A. Gay, Thomas Hill, S. W. Griggs, J. J. Enneking, Champ, F. Snow, Miss E. Champney, and others. The pictures will be on exhibition four days previous." *Boston Daily Globe*, 19 April 1873, 3.

fall he continued to market through Elliot, Blakeslee and Noyes, who energetically promoted his work. With a reputable gallery solidly behind him and a relentless focus on improving his skills, Weeks' notices steadily improved.

In concert with his emerging public profile, Weeks began to weave the Orient into his artistic reputation. S.G.W. Benjamin pegged the "turning point" to Weeks' first exposure to the East, "for it discovered to him the field in which his genius could find its most natural expression." Although only in his early twenties, Weeks had recognized that, for him, the East was indeed a career.<sup>62</sup>

The young artist decked his Boston Art Club studio with the souvenirs of his travels to evoke a fitting atmosphere for his paintings of Cairo, Lebanon, Tangiers and Damascus, a panorama of the Southern Mediterranean. His small oil-on-board sketch, *Moroccan Market Scene* (1873, Figure 2-7), typifies this early work and the Orientalist genre paintings then popular.<sup>63</sup> Looking past the weak draftsmanship, the themes that were to engage the artist for his entire career were already present: interest in the prosaic life of the East, compositions with multiple figures and animals dominated by architecture, the dramatic effects of sunlight, authenticating detail, rich color.

Also from 1873 is the much livelier finished watercolor, *The Moorish Bazaar* (Figure 2-8).

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62. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 28. "The East is a career," Benjamin Disraeli in *Tancred* (1847), quoted by Edward Said as an epigraph to his seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978).

63. Signed by E. L. Weeks and dated 1873, as listed by the online auction database Artfact. "Lot 53: Edwin Lord Weeks (1849-1903)," Sotheby's, *American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture*, Sale 7273, March 11, 1999 (New York: Sotheby's, 1999).

This image, contrasting the weather worn masonry with the bright sunlight and busy market, is of the Bab Zuwiela (Zuwayla), the last remaining southern gate of the medieval fortress walls of Fatimed Cairo.<sup>64</sup> With its history of decapitations, hangings and healing powers (one had only to drive a nail in one of the huge doors to alleviate a toothache), the massive gate had been a tourist attraction long before it was commemorated in David Roberts' *Egypt and Nubia* (London 1846–49). In Weeks' version, the figures may be rather stiff, but the morning sun's glare fills the scene, the deft composition easily manages competing lines and geometric shapes, and the use of intense red is well-controlled. Importantly, this early work clearly demonstrates Weeks' dedication to representational accuracy. A recent photograph of the gate verifies how carefully Weeks recorded exactly what he observed (Figure 2-9). Comparing the photograph and the watercolor reveals that the proportions are precise, the numbers of the bricks are closely calculated, the alternating banding corresponds neatly. Even the view through the gateway to the crooked streets of Old Cairo includes, unmistakably, the elegantly arched fenestration of the building to the right.<sup>65</sup>

A review of Weeks' painting of a Damascus sunset from the *Boston Daily Globe* of June 17, 1873 suggests how quickly the twenty-three year old artist acquired an audience for his interpretations of the East. In typical Victorian fashion the author conjures an image of the

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64. This new identification confirms Dr. Ellen Morris' suggestion that the scene "is possibly a view in Cairo." Ellen Morris, "Lot 85 Notes, *The Moorish Bazaar*, Edwin Lord Weeks," in Sotheby's, *American Paintings, Drawing and Sculpture*, March 14, 2001, Sale 7615 (New York: Sotheby's, 2001).

65. Weeks' painting of this subject is remarkably close to one by English artist William Logsdail, *The Gate of the Khalif* (1887), reproduced in Kristian Davies, *The Orientalists: Western Artists in Arabia, the Sahara, Persia and India* (New York: Laynfaroh, 2005), 182–83.



painting with a detailed description of the Eastern scene, a tiresome slog for the modern reader. But it also communicates the subject's worthiness, relevance, emotional and aesthetic appeal, and the artist's devotion to authenticity. These criteria, lumped under the umbrella of "genuine and unpretending," were the measures of Weeks' early works:

This picture is full of the sentiment and poetry of early evening in the Orient. A warm and golden atmosphere, suffused with tints of pale crimson, surrounds the landscape and reveals the outlines of every object within its limits. The camels composing the caravan are minutely drawn, as are also the figures of the Syrian drivers, whose picturesque costumes add much to the life and beauty of the scene. Taken in detail or as a whole, this is a picture of rare interest and beauty, and so unlike anything lately seen in this city that to its other attractions is superadded the charm of novelty. There are also several other pictures in the studio of Mr. Weeks, illustrating the life and scenery of the Eastern world, which cannot fail to inspire more than an ordinary degree of interest in the minds of every student of sacred history and every lover of genuine and unpretending art.<sup>66</sup>

The arts reviewer for the *Boston Evening Transcript* was likewise taken with the authenticity of Weeks' images. The excerpt below, from an article of September 1873, bears not a hint of the modern skepticism that accompanies the production of images. Weeks' travels to the "East", his participation in that culture, were the guarantors of his vision. It did not hurt that he apparently could tell a good story:

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66. The review begins: "E. L. Weeks, whose studio in the building of the Art Club, with its views in Egypt, Syria and Palestine, and the picturesque national costume which hang upon its walls, remind the visitor of an apartment in the Orient, has nearly finished a large and elaborate picture of a sunset as seen from the city of Damascus. Among the prominent objects in the picture is the Convent of the Dervishes, with its lofty minarets, and a caravan returning from Beyrout with heavily laden camels, while under the shade of a small grove on the right of the picture is a café, at which a group of travellers have halted for rest and refreshment. Through the foreground flows a stream formed by the union of the sacred rivers of Abana and Pharpar, which were thought by the captain of the King of Syria to be more efficacious in the way of healing than all the waters of Israel." "The Fine Arts. Sunset at Damascus," *Boston Daily Globe*, 17 June 1873, 1.

E. L. Weeks is at work on a Mohammedan dervish at prayer, which is one of his best studies of Eastern character. The artist met the subject at a bazaar, and succeeded, after much persuasion, in inducing him to visit his room, where he spent the afternoon busily sketching him. Towards night the dervish began to grow impatient, and as the sun approached the horizon he suddenly kicked his shoes off, and, raising hands aloft, went through his devotions, giving Mr. Weeks an opportunity not often vouchsafed to an artist, which he was not slow to avail himself of.<sup>67</sup>

Weeks maintained a rigorous exhibition schedule through the summer of 1874, when he planned to venture abroad again for a holiday in Normandy and formal study in Paris. Prior to his departure, the young artist had labored for months to supply Blakeslee and Noyes with a generous inventory of Orientalist scenes that they marketed assiduously throughout the summer and autumn.<sup>68</sup> The gallery's steady advertising in *The Boston Globe* and *The Boston Evening Transcript*, along with favorable newspaper reviews, were definitely spurring sales:

The second exhibition of the Art Club, for the present year, opened on Wednesday evening. The collection comprises a large number of good pictures by American and foreign artists. Among the former . . . A 'View on the Nile, near Cairo,' by E. L. Weeks, is a fine specimen of his feeling for glowing color and atmospheric effects. 'A Pilgrim Caravan' just leaving Damascus afford him an opportunity for

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67. The review concludes: "Among Mr. Weeks's works of the summer are an East Indian watercarrier, and a couple of desert scenes, all strong in color. They will be among the works of art at the fall opening of Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes." "Art Items," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 23 September 1873, 8, col. 1.

68. "Special Artists' Sale. / Now on exhibition of the Gallery of Elliott, Blakeslee & Noyes, 127 Tremont Street, and to be sold by auction on Friday, May 15, at 2 P. M., / A very attractive collection of paintings, mostly by the following well-known Boston artists: Francis Snowe, Wesley Webber, W. F. Lansil, J. J. Enneking and E. L. Weeks. Also a few pictures by T. Hill, Virgil Williams, Ed. Hill, Miss A. C. Newell, F. D. Williams, T. Robinson, Moses Wight and others." "Special Artists' Sale," *Boston Daily Globe*, 13 May 1874, 5, *Boston Daily Globe* (1872–1922), ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <<http://www.proquest.com>>, accessed 5 April 2012; "A collection of Paintings by E. L. Weeks and S.G.W. Benjamin, Comprising a great variety of subjects and including some of the best productions of these well-known artists. Now on exhibition at the Gallery of Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes, 127 Tremont street. To be sold by AUCTION on THURSDAY, November 19 . . ." "Artists Sale," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 16 November 1874, 7.

the exhibition of his skill in the drawing of figures of men and animals. This picture is a beautiful and graphic illustration of life in the Orient.<sup>69</sup>

Weeks' subjects, "novel and treated in a masterly manner," were drawing crowds of admirers at Blakeslee and Noyes and at the Boston Art Club.<sup>70</sup> Two days later, on May 7, 1874 the *Evening Transcript* carried an even more effusive review of the Art Club's exhibition:

E. L. Weeks has never done better work than in the two Eastern landscapes he has here. The one of 'A Pilgrim Caravan' is good in the drawing of the figures, and the composition introduces in fine effect a Nubian, nearly nude, as a central figure, that is decidedly striking. By some unaccountable taste (or lack of it) in hanging, the subject is hung beside a Ziem that is too hot and theatrical for the most refined taste, and that robs it of much that is really meritorious. On the other side of the room away from this intense blaze, it would do him much more credit. The other canvas by this artist is a view of the river Nile, near Cairo, and its breadth of treatment and luminous color are exceedingly marked, while its qualities of atmosphere are decidedly the best he has ever given us.<sup>71</sup>

The unqualified praise for *View on the Nile near Cairo* (Figure 2-10) was not tossed off in every artist's direction; not even the esteemed William Morris Hunt was spared the occasional critical lance. In the same review, for example, the *Evening Transcript* had dismal words for French painter Hugues Merle's *Oh that this too, too solid flesh would melt*: "It is not only

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69. "Art Items. Boston Art Club," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 4 May 1874, 1, col. 5. In the same review, the critic was not so complimentary to the eminent William Morris Hunt: "'A Scene in Florida,' by Hunt, occupies a conspicuous position. It is bad in color, and evidently a hasty sketch, which would attract but little attention but for the prestige of the painter's name."

70. Supplementary forces were operating in Weeks' favor; there were sound economic reasons to laud the exhibitions of such a reliable advertiser. "The pictures now on exhibition and to be sold by auction at the gallery of Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes, are attracting a crowd of admirers . . . Mr. Weeks's subjects are novel and treated in a masterly manner." "Art Items," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 13 May 1874, 1, col. 5. More on the Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes exhibition appeared the next day: "E. L. Weeks has several excellent Eastern subjects, and a view in Florida, all of which are good, and his Florida sketch is full of pleasing color and conscientious work." "The Fine Arts," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 14 May 1874, 4, col. 5.

71. "The Art Club Exhibition," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 7 May 1874, 6, col. 2.

unconventional, but characterless to the verge of imbecility. The other subject, by this artist, hanging opposite, is as faulty as this is weak."

Merle's evident shortcomings were not called out just because he was French, for fellow countryman Léon Bonnat's *Figures*, "an Italian girl holding a bouncing babe in her arms, evidently just from the bath," stole the show:

The gem of the collection, and probably the finest of its class ever brought to this country—we have certainly never seen its equal is the one catalogued simply 'Figures,' and numbered 62, from the easel of Leon Bonnat. It represents a little girl standing and holding in her arms a nude babe. The modeling of the figures is good, their pose artistic, the flesh color perfect, the lights and shades managed all with facility and knowledge, and above all, the human feeling and strong sympathy of the artist with his subject, are manifest in a striking manner. Whether the picture is studied as a work of art, or as a subject around which the heart's sympathies may play, it is perfect.<sup>72</sup>

Bonnat's *Figures* must have mightily impressed Weeks. Only a few months after the exhibition the June 1, 1874 edition of the *Boston Evening Transcript* announced Weeks' imminent departure for France. He was to enroll in the Paris studio of Léon Bonnat, who would claim the young artist's allegiance for the balance of his career.<sup>73</sup>

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72. "The Art Club Exhibition," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 7 May 1874. Bonnat's painting is likely the same that was exhibited in Boston that autumn, described in "The Fine Arts Exhibition at the Mechanic Fair," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 21 Sept. 1874, 6 col. 4.

73. "Several of our resident artists will spend the summer across the water, among them Rouse and Weeks, J. Appleton and others," "Art Items," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 1 June 1874, 1 col. 2. Weeks exhibited actively throughout 1873. "E. L. Weeks also has here a number of his Oriental studies in color, his dervish and water-carrier, and two desert scenes in especial being of marked merit," "Art Matters," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 30 October 1873, 1 col. 2. Blakeslee and Noyes Gallery sent three of Weeks' paintings to the Exposition at Cincinnati. "Literary and Artistic," *Ladies' Repository: Religious and Literary Magazine for the Home Circle* 50, no. 4 (Oct. 1873): 317.

## Chapter Three

### Professional Training in Paris

For Edwin Lord Weeks, the years between 1872 and 1882 were characterized by steady improvement of skills, an advancing reputation as an intrepid traveler and painter of North Africa and a single-minded ambition to rival the leading French Orientalist artists. During the 1870s, as Weeks looked to European models to advance his training and professional reputation, he was in step with innumerable post-Civil War American artists. Only sixteen at the close of the Civil War, Weeks mulled over the pursuit of an artist's career as the nation treaded onward in a tumult of emotional anxiety and stricken confidence. His decision to pursue professional training in Paris in the mid-1870s in the ateliers of Jean-Léon Gérôme and Léon Bonnat coincided with America's dramatic, post-Civil War turning towards continental Europe in search of a new intellectual, philosophical and social identity. Apparently Weeks was a quick study. When railroad magnate John Taylor Johnston called on Bonnat to name the most promising young American painter in Paris, Bonnat reportedly answered without hesitation "Weeks."<sup>1</sup>

#### Destination Paris

For hundreds of post-Civil War American artists, only in Paris was the training sufficiently rigorous, the competition sufficiently worthy, and the awards sufficiently glorious.<sup>2</sup>

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1. It was an endorsement Johnston apparently took to heart: "Since then, Mr. Johnston has purchased several of Weeks's best pieces, and set the example for the New York world of picture-buyers of 'going long on' Weeks." Greta, "Boston Correspondence," *Art Amateur* 3, no. 5 (Oct. 1880): 94.

2. H. Barbara Weinberg, *The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum

The École des Beaux-Arts offered an intense, demanding professional curriculum. The annual Paris Salons launched careers, honed international reputations and stoked a substantial arts press on both sides of the Atlantic. Every major metropolitan newspaper in the U.S. dissected the slights and echoed the triumphs of American artists at the Salons. As art historian Michael Quick observed: "Jean François Millet and Mariano Fortuny were names known and discussed in Midwestern towns, where it was possible to follow the main successes of the Paris Salon (and the fortunes of Americans exhibiting in it)."<sup>3</sup>

In Europe and America, no painter's reputation flourished more than that of Jean-Léon Gérôme, the widely acknowledged master of the French Orientalists. In the early 1870s Gérôme was known for an astonishing range of visual exotica, all realized in precise, minute detail, achieved with thin layers of paint that revealed nary a brushstroke. Gérôme smoothed away the reality of the canvas so that viewers could seamlessly immerse themselves in proto-cinematic scenes of ancient Rome (*Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant*, 1859; *Pollice Verso*, 1872); highly detailed, often sexualized and denigrating imaginings of the East (*Dance of the Almeh*, 1863, Figure 3-1; *The Slave Market*, 1866; *Pelt Merchant of Cairo*, 1869; *Moorish Bath*, 1870); encounters between East and West (*The Reception of the Siamese Ambassadors at Fontainebleau*, 1864; *Oedipus*, 1867–8); Orientalist genre (*Bashi-Bazouk Singing*, 1868; *Cairene Armorer*, 1869); figural and pseudo-ethnographic studies (*Black Bashi-Bazouk*, 1869; *Arnaut of Syria*,

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of Western Art, 1984), 1.

3. Kathleen Adler, Erica E. Hirshler, H. Barbara Weinberg, *Americans in Paris 1860–1900* (London: National Gallery Company Ltd., 2006), 27, quoting the exhibition catalog by Michael Quick, *American Expatriate Painters of the Late Nineteenth Century* (Ohio: Dayton Art Institute, 1976), 16.

1870–71); or scenes of religious piety (*Prayer on the Housetops (Cairo)*, 1865).

American galleries clamored for Gérôme's canvases; he was positioned at the foreground of the leading centenary exhibitions in New York. His works were particularly sought after by wealthy Americans. A year before Weeks left for Paris in 1874, New York dry goods merchant Alexander Turney Stewart added Gérôme's *Pollice Verso* (Figure 3-2) to his collection, at a price of 80,000 francs, setting a new record for the artist.<sup>4</sup> Over the course of his career, Gérôme sold to American patrons 144 paintings, nearly a quarter of his production.<sup>5</sup>

Despite his prodigious output and enormous transatlantic success, most scholarly articles of recent decades cite Gérôme's work as a noxious blend of the trite, the exploitative and the stultifying academic. However, the latest scholarship is re-evaluating Gérôme and his importance in the nineteenth century. A 2010 essay by art historian Mary G. Morton locates Gérôme at the very center of the post-war shift in American tastes in favor of contemporary French painting. Morton points out that, contrary to most twenty- and twenty-first century perspectives, in Weeks' time Americans found Gérôme's paintings complex, edifying and completely modern:

From the late 1850s to the end of the century, Gérôme represented high art in America, and through his paintings and public persona, he served as both a positive and a negative model for Americans seeking to define a new culture. He was idealized for his professionalism, his cosmopolitan Frenchness, his intellectualism, erudition, and refined technical training. But he was also

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4. DeCourcy E. McIntosh, "Goupil and the American Triumph of Jean-Léon Gérôme," in *Musée Goupil, Gérôme and Goupil: Art and Enterprise*, trans. Isabel Ollivier (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2000), 38. Goupil sold the painting to Stewart's English associate George Fox, likely an agent for Stewart.

5. McIntosh, 34, 38.

disdained as overly commercial, and suspected of a characteristically French moral degeneracy that some Americans sought to escape in the reconstruction of their national identity.<sup>6</sup>

Apparently Gérôme's extensive Orientalist repertoire and extraordinary reputation impressed Edwin Weeks more than concerns about his questionable commercial motives or the moral pitfalls that might confront his followers or a young art student in Paris. As an enthusiast of exotic travel eager to embark on the most obvious path to artistic success, in the fall of 1874 Weeks applied for admittance to the atelier of Jean-Léon Gérôme, who headed one of the three painting studios of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

This was an astute social and professional step for any ambitious American artist, but particularly for one fast gaining ground as a painter of the East. The masters of the French ateliers often served as mentors to promising students, promoting their works and facilitating introductions. Few artists could match Gérôme's extensive travel experiences in the Islamic world and fewer still could boast of such an extensive professional network or commercial success.

In 1863 Gérôme married Marie, daughter of Adophe Goupil, the founder of the dynasty of Parisian art dealers and publishers Goupil & Cie. The alliance proved lucrative. By 1867 the market for Gérôme's paintings had skyrocketed, facilitated by Goupil's canny marketing of inexpensive but highly profitable reproductions.<sup>7</sup> Because Goupil had founded a New York

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6. Mary G. Morton, "Gérôme in the Gilded Age," in Laurence des Cars, Dominique de Font-Réaulx, Édouard Papet, ed., *The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904)* (Milan: Skira Editore; Los Angeles: Getty Museum; Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2010), 183–210, 183.

7. See chart entitled *Purchases and sales of Gérôme's paintings by Goupil Gallery*, Hélène Lafont-Couturier, "Mr Gérôme works for Goupil," Musée Goupil, *Gérôme and Goupil: Art and Enterprise*, trans. Isabel Ollivier (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2000), 20 fig. 5.



office as early as 1846, Gérôme was especially well-positioned to take advantage of the burgeoning American market driven by the immense fortunes made during the Civil War and its aftermath.<sup>8</sup>

For Edwin Weeks and other young American artists hoping to attract American buyers, Parisian training at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in a well-known atelier under a master such as Gérôme, combined with Salon recognition and established dealer connections, translated into market credibility. In addition to its professional advantages Paris promised more bohemian freedoms—flowing champagne, crowded cafes, vibrant boulevards and arcades, sophisticated flâneurs. A staunch New Englander like Edwin Weeks must have viewed Paris as the center of the cultural universe.

The lives of Parisian art students orbited around the *École des Beaux-Arts*. At this time a typical course of instruction would have included classes in perspective drawing, history and archaeology, aesthetics and art history, and, most importantly, anatomy. Life study, the bedrock of French academic training, was seldom available in the United States (the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts being a notable exception). Writing in 1881, the Illinois-born sculptor Lorado Taft described the typical *École* anatomy lecture as "an exhilarating spectacle" that employed a stimulating rotation of mannequins, live models, cadavers, various pre-dissected anatomical parts, skeletons, and *écorchés* (sculptures that revealed the muscles, *sans* skin). Tuition was free and enrollment open, by competition, to any promising male applicant regardless of nationality.<sup>9</sup>

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8. Morton, 184.

9. Added in the mid-1870s were courses on General History, Ornamental Design, and Decorative Art.

Admission to the École depended on successful performance in the demanding *concours des places*. In this semi-annual competition, up to two hundred or more aspiring painters competed for seventy openings. The first segment began with tests in anatomy and either ornamental design or world history. A student's scores in the preliminary tests determined his vantage point for the most taxing, and critical, part of the examination. This was the drawing from the antique or from life, for two six-hour sessions, with students *en loges*—perched on stools in front of easels, set in small three-sided stalls that discouraged communication. To compound the difficulty for some Americans, instructions, questions and required responses were of course given in French. Tests scores determined more than admission. For the demanding and crowded École life class, successful matriculants were assigned positions proximate to the model based on the *concours des places* rankings.<sup>10</sup>

Very likely Weeks learned of the intricacies of the École and its admissions process through his colleagues in Boston, and particularly from artist J. Foxcroft Cole, twelve years Weeks' senior. After apprenticing for several years (along with fellow draftsman Winslow

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In the early 1880s instruction was offered in arts, sciences, *sciences morales et belles-lettres*, as well as a supplementary lecture series. H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and Their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 15.

10. For example, a question on perspective (July 1880) read: "Put into perspective on construction scale a rectangular fountain surrounded by a wall, for which you have been given the plan and elevation. Laying in of the shadows is not required; the direction in which light falls is left to the choice of the competitors. You can leave on the answer sheet those construction lines which help to clarify the delineation method that you used." A typical history question from the 1879 exam read: "*Ancient history*: 1) A summary map of Egypt with an indication of the principal monuments of antiquity. 2) Give some indication of the state of ancient Gaul and its conquest by the Romans. *Modern history*: 1) What are the dynasties that have followed one another in France from the fall of the Roman Empire to the fourteenth century? Indicate for each dynasty the most celebrated king or kings. 2) Describe briefly the first crusade; indicate the results." Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris*, 16–17.

Homer) in the Boston lithographic studio of J. H. Bufford, Cole had ventured to Paris in 1860 to study under Émile Lambinet (a pupil of Corot) and later under Charles-Emile Jacque, a member of the Barbizon School. Cole was a serious student who made numerous contributions to the Salon, beginning in 1866, as well as to the Royal Academy. Over many years and in various ways Cole became an influential force for advancement of the French visual arts, from teaching Gustave Doré how to speak English to bringing the first Corot to America.<sup>11</sup>

Likely spurred on by J. Foxcroft Cole, Edwin Weeks was determined to gain his place in the epicenter of the art world, but first to enjoy a leisurely summer in Normandy. On June 28, 1874 Weeks sailed for Brest on the steamship *Pereire* in the company of Cole, Cole's family and the Boston artist Albert Thompson (b. 1853).<sup>12</sup> Weeks was no doubt looking forward to a restorative holiday after toiling for months to raise money for the trip through sales of his paintings through Elliott, Blakeslee and Noyes of Boston.<sup>13</sup> Cole had a particular affection for

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11. Robinson, 45–48.

12. "Passengers Sailed," *New York Times* (1857–1922), 28 June 1874: 5. On Thompson, see "Thompson, Albert," Clara Erskine Clement and Laurence Hutton, *Artists of the Nineteenth Century and Their Works*, 5th ed., vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1889), 293. Thompson was a capable portraitist and an author (*Elementary Perspective*, 1878). He had a particular affinity for pastorals and cattle, with works such as *Cows grazing in a landscape*, *The Hay Wain* (1877), *Cattle on a Hillside*, *Landscape and Cattle*, and *Cows in the Pasture*. He had made at least one earlier trip to Europe: "In 1872, in company with Rev. William S. Barnes . . . Thompson travelled four or five months in Great Britain and Continental Europe, visiting, as he journeyed the famous galleries of art. Three years later he made a second trip abroad, with the artists J. Foxcroft Cole and E. L. Weeks. After sketching for a time in Normandy, he went to Paris and, during the winter of the same year, to Italy." Leander Thompson, *Memorial of James Thompson* (Boston: L. Barta and Co., 1887), 217–18.

13. Boston gallery Blakeslee & Noyes continued to represent Weeks after his departure for France: "E. L. Weeks has an Oriental street scene, a study of a fruit stand, that is good in color, and gives a graphic picture of a street fruit stand." "The Fine Arts Exhibition at the Mechanic Fair," 6 col 4. See also the following notices: an exhibition at the Boston Arts Club of "landscapes by Cole, Weeks and others," at Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes "from the easels of two of our best artists, to be sold by auction Nov. 19 at 11 A.M. / E. L. Weeks, who is now in Paris, studying with Gerome, sends many of his best pictures, mostly studies in the East, painted with great brilliancy of color, and fine effects of sunlight." "Art Items," *Boston*

Normandy, where a decade earlier he had befriended French painters Jules Héreau and Auguste Bonheur at Cernay-la-Ville, near Paris. Sharing an admiration for the contemplative pastorals of the Barbizon School, in 1870 Cole joined Héreau and Boston native William Mark Fisher (1841–1923) for a season of sketching on the Normandy coast.<sup>14</sup> To this area Cole returned in the summer of 1874 with a party of Bostonians in tow.

The long, lazy days stretching before him, Edwin Weeks wrote of this summer idyll to a friend in Boston:

We are here in this isolated house near the sea. Cole and family, Thompson and I. Around us is the typical French landscape made familiar by Daubigny, De Cock, Hereau, etc., slender poplars and willows, thatched roofs, corn fields and sea. But

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*Evening Transcript*, 12 Nov. 1874, 1 col. 6; “Many of the readers of THE GLOBE have undoubtedly visited the fine collection of paintings in the gallery of Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes, advertised to be sold at auction on Thursday next. But two of our Boston artists are represented, Mr. E. L. Weeks and Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin, both gentlemen who have attained high rank in their profession by purely legitimate means. Mr. Weeks, as is well known, has made a specialty of Eastern subjects, and most of his works in the present collection are scenes in Egypt and the Holy Land. One of the best, numbered “34” in the catalogue, “The River Nile,” held a prominent place on the walls at the last Art Club Exhibition and attracted particular attention. Better, even, in some respects, is No. 67, “A Nile Sunset,” the last picture, we believe, from the brush of Mr. Weeks before his departure from the country. No. 40, “Pilgrim Caravan at Damascus,” is full of good qualities, as also are Nos. 23 and 11, “A Bedouin Herdsman” and “The Pyramids of Ghizeh.” Besides the paintings in oil, Mr. Weeks has two exceedingly meritorious water colors in the sale, No. 24, “The Gate of Thomas, Damascus,” and No. 56, “Tower of Hippieus, Jerusalem.” “The Fine Arts. The Sale at Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes’s,” *Boston Daily Globe*, 16 Nov. 1874, 5; “The gallery of Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes is hung with a collection of paintings by E. L. Weeks and S. G. W. Benjamin, to be sold by auction on Thursday. Those by Mr. Weeks are devoted to the specialty of Eastern landscape and accessories, and some of the works show a marked advance over anything heretofore shown by this artist,” “The Fine Arts,” *Boston Evening Transcript* 17 Nov. 1874, 5 col. 2; “The present exhibition at the rooms of the Boston Art Club strikes us as decidedly inferior to the closing one of last season . . . E. L. Weeks has a picture of a caravan halting in the desert, which presents a great advance from his pictures of last year,” “The Art Club Exhibition,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, 29 Dec. 1874, 3 col. 4.

14. Robinson, *Living New England Artists*, 45–47. Fisher subsequently moved to England where his impressionist style was well received. George Moore called him “An admirable painter, the best, the only landscape painter of our time.” George Moore, *Modern Painting* (London: Walter Scott Publishing Co., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, revised edition 1906), 251.

it is quite beautiful and the color is soft and gray. Our subjects are all within a few minutes walk of the house. We work and live mostly in the open air, and vary this truly pastoral and Homeric existence by a daily swim in the sea. It is harvest time; the people with wooden shoes are abroad in the hay fields, and there are poppies in the yellow grain. In fair weather we work ten hours a day on and off, and sleep ten at a stretch. Cole expects Hereau and Fisher next month.<sup>15</sup>

The subject of the somewhat awkwardly composed, heavily shadowed *Normandy Farmyard near Honfleur* (1874, Figure 3-3), a small canvas attributed to Weeks, demonstrates the influence of J. Foxcroft Cole and his circle.

By September 1874 Weeks was settled in Paris, but the process by which he applied to the *École des Beaux-Arts* remains unclear. None of Weeks' papers mention the *concours des places* or study in the French ateliers. If Weeks stood for the autumn series of admittance exams, he would have undertaken them in the company of Chicagoan J. Carroll Beckwith (1852–1917). Fearing the worst for his chances of admittance—a fear not misplaced—Beckwith wrote in his diary on October 13th:

I do not think as yet that I am going to be accepted and if I were not I should feel like eating several of the committee. On Monday the 28th September we began with perspective and I think I did well. Anatomy came the same Wednesday it was very unfair but I did as the others [,] took my charts and made a nice copy of the Thorax side view. Monday following we drew from the ornament. Three days of two hours each concluded this and then we were allotted from these drawings our position for the life, I had 34 points and came the 13th from the head in my series which was far from bad but the test has begun this week in the life and how I am coming out remains to be seen, half or more now trying will have to stand being left out as they only admit 80 perhaps my drawing may be considered to belong to the unlucky pile.<sup>16</sup>

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15. "Mr. E. L. Weeks writes to an artist of this city from Normandy, where he is devoting the summer to painting in the company of J. Foxcroft Cole . . .," "Personal," *Daily Evening Transcript*, 22 August 1874, 4 col. 2.

16. Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris*, 18; quoting the J. Carroll Beckwith diary, October 13, 1874, National Academy of Design, New York; in Kathleen Burnside, "James Carroll Beckwith (1852–1917): His

Beckwith did not perform as well as he had hoped. That autumn only two Americans, J. Alden Weir and John Singer Sargent, passed the "the great and terrible examination," as it was described by Sargent.<sup>17</sup>

Rather than submit to the arduous *concours des places*, Weeks probably applied directly to Gérôme, the *chef d'atelier*. Gérôme was known for circumventing the competitive process; he frequently admitted foreign students to his atelier under the designation *élèves libres*, a category that excluded them from competing for the Prix de Rome.<sup>18</sup> This would not have been a special hardship for Weeks as the Prix de Rome scholarship was not open to Americans. A letter from Gérôme preserved in the archives of the École des Beaux-Arts authorized Weeks to enter his atelier on September 22, 1874.<sup>19</sup> Before he could begin, Weeks would have had to present this letter to the minister of fine arts for approval as well as obtain a letter of introduction from the American diplomatic legation.

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French Training and His American Career" (manuscript, City University of New York Graduate School, 1984), 13.

17. H. Barbara Weinberg, "Sargent and Carolus-Duran," in Marc Simpson, *Uncanny Spectacle: The Public Career of the Young John Singer Sargent* (New Haven: Yale University Press; Williamstown, MA, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; 1997), 23; the quotation is from a letter from Sargent to Charles Heath Wilson. Sargent attended classes in Bonnat's atelier in the evenings. Weir enrolled in the studio of Jean-Léon Gérôme, about which he writes extensively; see Dorothy Weir Young, *The Life and Letters of J. Alden Weir* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

18. H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris*, 17. Gérôme first admitted Americans to his atelier in 1866 only at the request of the American Legation. They were Frederick Arthur Bridgman, Conrad Diehl (born Germany), Thomas Eakins, sculptor Howard Roberts and Earl Shinn. Fort, 27, citing Legation des États-Unis to the French Minister, October 12, 1866, in Eakins Papers, Archives, Philadelphia Museum of Art (microfilm, Archives American Art, roll P10, fr. 563).

19. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 51, citing Archives Nationales, Paris, Archives de l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, *Dossiers individuels des élèves. Série antérieure au 31 décembre 1893* (AJ52:273, Weeks). See also Weinberg, "Nineteenth-Century American Painters at the École des Beaux-Arts," *American Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Autumn 1981): 66–84, at 81.

However, Edwin Lord Weeks' name is not recorded on the atelier register nor does it appear in the matriculant's registers. To further the confusion, the Salon catalogues of 1898 and 1899 as well as that of the Exposition Universelle of 1900 state that Weeks was a student of the École des Beaux-Arts but a pupil of Léon Bonnat.<sup>20</sup> All nineteenth-century Paris Salon catalogue entries for Weeks (1878, 1880–82, 1884–92, 1894–99) indicate that he was an "élève de Bonnat" with no mention of Gérôme.<sup>21</sup> An article on Weeks in the November 1881 issue of *La Vie Moderne* states that "il entra, en 1875, à l'École des Beaux-Arts et à l'atelier Bonnat où il termina ses études," with no reference to Gérôme.<sup>22</sup> Although the *Boston Evening Transcript* reported on November 12, 1874 that Weeks was "now in Paris, studying with Gerome [sic]," and on December 23rd that "Weeks is studying in Gerome's [sic] studio," it seems that he never formally enrolled.<sup>23</sup> However, these early newspaper accounts do explain why in published sources there has been over a century of confusion about Weeks' Paris training, repeated over the years beginning in the 1870s and including early authorities such as Richard Muther in his 1896

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20. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 51; *The Lure of Paris*, 17.

21. Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth Century Paris Salons* (Washington, DC: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 403.

22. B. Mariott, "Les Peintres Explorateurs: Edwin Lord Weeks," *La Vie Moderne* 3 (19 Nov. 1881): 749–50. This article draws partially on S.G.W. Benjamin's essay on Weeks.

23. Of an exhibition marking the first social meeting of Boston Art Club on Saturday: "landscapes by Cole, Weeks and others" were sent. In the same article: "At Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes's there is now on exhibition a collection of choice pictures from the easels of two of our best artists, to be sold by auction Nov. 19 at 11 A.M. [par] E. L. Weeks, who is now in Paris, studying with Gerome, sends many of his best pictures, mostly studies in the East, painted with great brilliancy of color, and fine effects of sunlight," "Art Items," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 12 Nov. 1874, 1 col. 6. From a December article: "Cole has settled in an apartment in Paris with his family. Enneking is also settled there, industriously studying French art. Weeks is studying in Gerome's studio," "Art Items," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 23 Dec. 1874, 4 col. 5.

*History of Modern Painting*, in which he states that Weeks was a pupil of Gérôme.<sup>24</sup>

This is not to assert that early in his career (and perhaps even later) Weeks did not benefit from some informal association with Gérôme, although that possibility is not corroborated by any known textual evidence other than the letter from Gérôme mentioned above. As H. Barbara Weinberg suggests, the young American's extensive travels in Syria and Egypt, accomplished at such an early age, would have impressed Gérôme. Weinberg has concluded that, regardless of whether Weeks was formally enrolled in the atelier, "there is every likelihood that he enjoyed private criticism from Gérôme, and developed his mature style very much under Gérôme's influence."

#### The Ateliers of Gérôme and Bonnat

Regardless of the news articles and many Salon catalogue entries that record Weeks' enduring affiliation with Bonnat, according to Weinberg it was Gérôme who ultimately claimed Weeks' artistic allegiance. Indeed, Weinberg states that Weeks' post-1884 Salon entries indicate a gradual rejection of Bonnat's painterly style and "reveal instead Weeks's consistent devotion to a meticulous linear technique very similar to that of Gérôme."<sup>25</sup> In support of this view, Weinberg analyses three paintings by Edwin Lord Weeks relative to Gérôme's style and subject choices:

*The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India* (c. 1886); *The*

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24. Richard Muther, *The History of Modern Painting*, Vol. 4 (London: Henry and Co., 1896; rev. ed. London: J. M. Dent and Co., New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1907), 295–96. Muther noted Weeks, Frederick A. Bridgman and Harry Humphrey Moore as pupils of Gérôme.

25. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 51.



*Last Journey, Souvenir of the Ganges, Benares* (Salon, 1885); and *Street Scene in India*, (ca. 1884–88).

Before further considering these three paintings and Weinberg's assessment that they reveal Gérôme's prevailing influence, it is well to consider carefully Weeks' association with the teacher whom he consistently acknowledged, Léon Joseph Florentin Bonnat (1833–1922). Originally from Bayonne, in the mid-1870s Bonnat headed an independent Paris atelier. He assumed this position in 1866; under his guidance the Atelier Bonnat was the only independent atelier in Paris to rival those of the *École des Beaux-Arts*. Bonnat was trained in the Academic tradition, had attended the *École des Beaux-Arts*, and was awarded the *Prix de Rome*. In the 1880s he became a professor of the *École des Beaux-Arts* and later its Director. Despite his intimate connections with the French art establishment, Bonnat was highly skeptical of *École* training and remained independent in his approach to teaching and in his evaluation of style and method. Bonnat was known for a new integrative approach to painting that synthesized the Academic tradition with a more direct, objective study of nature. Art historian Alisa Luxenberg has noted that Bonnat saw himself as a reformer who challenged *École* ideals by emphasizing manual technique over abstract concepts, and was determined to offer his students more instruction and practice in painting than provided by the *École*.

The "study of nature" was the working premise of the Atelier Bonnat. Though Bonnat was known for his openness to subject and style, pursuit of idealization or highly wrought, decorative approaches were not tolerated. The atelier's singular focus on "nature" implied the pursuit of a comprehensive study of anatomy, perspective, modeling, the scientific study of the human form, all demonstrated in the context of a forthright, logical representation of space. The

paramount concern was the emphasis on modeling form in strong light; subjects, methods and materials were secondary (Figure 3-4).<sup>26</sup>

Barclay Day's 1882 article on "L'Atelier Bonnat" in the *Magazine of Art* provides first-hand insights into the inner workings of the studio, which he described as founded on "the wholesome purpose of studying nature as closely as possible, avoiding on the one hand the vagueness of the impressionists, and on the other the conventionalism of the academical style of work, upon which the followers of Bonnat look with undisguised contempt."<sup>27</sup> The admission process for Edwin Weeks would have been quite straightforward: after calling upon M. Bonnat and gaining permission to attend, the prospective student would simply pay the entrance fee (25 francs) and subscription fee (360 francs, payable monthly), and be prepared to set to work at seven in the morning in the summer, eight in the winter. Fresh models were posed every Monday, with students deciding by majority vote as to whether the pose was satisfactory. The atelier occupied a lofty room of about thirty feet square, with a large window before which the nude model posed on a table near the stove. In the corners and against the walls lay a jumble of broken easels, racks for canvases, a skeleton dangling from a stand (said to be a student who did not pay his subscription), a few abused and broken plaster casts, and some rudimentary supplies for washing up. For the students' edification, on the walls hung a portion of Bonnat's impressive collection of Old Master drawings as well as some paintings by Bonnat's contemporaries. The

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26. Alisa Luxenberg, "Léon Bonnat (1833–1922)," (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1990), 216, 219, 222–23.

27. As there were no Impressionists identifiable as such when the atelier was founded, Day must be considering this in the longer retrospective sense. Barclay Day, "L'Atelier Bonnat," *Magazine of Art* 5 (1882): 138–40 at 138.

students perched on stools and easels graduated in height, all arranged in semi-circles around the model table. Those closest to the model worked on studies of the head; those in the rear, seated atop the tallest stools, took advantage of a broader view; those in the very back row stood before their easels to work on larger canvases. Day described the typical student encounter with Bonnat, a man of "Modesty, energy, and straightforward frankness":

We were left entirely to our own devices during the first day of the week; on the second the "patron" came round to see how we had blocked-in our studies, and again on the last to see what we had made of them. His plan was to leave each pupil absolutely free to follow his own inclinations in all matters pertaining to choice of subject, method of work, and materials; and whether we did a study of a head, a half-length, or an entire figure, whether we worked in charcoal, in red or black chalk, or in colour, was all the same to him, so long as he thought we were doing our best. His attention was always directed to the study as a whole, and he was a cheery and encouraging critic—always praising when he conscientiously could, but always telling us very decidedly what was bad in our work . . . each pupil got on an average four or five minutes at each visit. When one's turn came, one would suddenly hear over one's shoulder, in rapid and rather staccato utterance, some such phrase as this: "That's not bad; but . . . you must look at the figure more as a whole;" and then he would point out the faults of proportion which prevented the ensemble, the "swabble," from being good. He was very particular that the gesture of the figure should be true, and that the type and character of face and form should be emphasised, even if ugly in nature.<sup>28</sup>

Students appreciated the Atelier Bonnat for its rare combination of artistic freedom, disciplined bonhomie (unlike the wild atmosphere that reigned in a few other ateliers),

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28. Day, 139. William Eugene Harward recalled of the Atelier-Bonnat: "there are about fifty members of the class I should judge, although the number who daily attend is about thirty. I paint, or at least draw, at the school every day; we have the best models to be found. The working hours are from 7 1/2 a.m. until noon, and the price paid to the model is four francs for the five hours work. Bonnat comes round Wednesday morning and examines what we have done, and as he is now acknowledged to be one of the first of living artists, having taken all the prizes possible to take at the 'salon,' we listen to all he says with great attention. Saturday he comes again; he receives no compensation for this, beyond the honor, which in France is considered very high, of instructing this class, which is the most select in Paris." Francis Edward Clark, *Life of William Eugene Harward* (Portland: Hoyt, Fogg and Donham, 1879), 90.

individualized attention, and knowledgeable and earnest direction from the patron. Unlike the intimidating Gérôme, Bonnat never took over the brush or pencil to correct a student's work, but encouraged his pupils to help one another to solve technical difficulties through experimentation and, if necessary, failure.<sup>29</sup> However, students' fierce loyalties to Bonnat rested on more than the companionable atmosphere of his studio, his sincere manner, professional achievements and reputation as "the first portrait painter, and one of the great artists of the day" (Figure 3-5).<sup>30</sup> Bonnat was viewed as thoughtfully defiant, advanced, independent, intellectual (Figure 3-6).<sup>31</sup>

This opinion of Bonnat was forcefully expressed by American artist Edwin Blashfield as he weighed the decision of whether to join the atelier of Bonnat or that of Gérôme. Already accepted by Gérôme, Blashfield was to enter the studio of "the world-famous painter" in three months' time. For the interim, Gérôme advised Blashfield to enroll in the Atelier Bonnat, saying "You must not lose your time. Go to Bonnat until then; his is an open school (*atelier indépendant*), and there is no better man in Europe to teach you." However, like Edwin Weeks, even though Blashfield had been accepted as a student by Gérôme, he chose to remain at the Atelier Bonnat:

When three months had passed, and I might have entered the Beaux-Arts, I liked the Atelier Bonnat too well to leave it; I had stumbled unwittingly upon a new order of things, a new order which pleased me very much. These young men represented the opposition, not only in political demonstrations, to which

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29. Day, 140.

30. "M. Bonnat," *Architect* 23 (7 February 1880): 93–94, at 93.

31. "Actuellement, c'est lui qui est en réalité le plus puissant et le plus solide de nos peintres." Émile Zola, *Salons, recueillis, annotés et présentés*, vol. 63 of Société de publications romanes et françaises, ed. Frederick W. J. Hemmings, Robert J. Niess (E. Droz, 1959), 208.

the whole *atelier* went religiously "*pour ennuyer le gouvernement*," but, what was much more important, in art.<sup>32</sup>

Blashfield, inspired by the "forceful truth," "vigor" and "honesty" of Bonnat's work, perceived that Bonnat had turned away from the artificiality of "official painting" in favor of an appeal directly to nature, to close observation of the human form, to the dramatic works of Velasquez, Rembrandt and seventeenth-century Spanish Tenebrist Jusepe de Ribera. He admired the manner in which Bonnat interpreted earlier masters' interests in strong light and shadow, variable brushwork and illusionistic modeling to suggest form and space. Moreover, he was impressed by Bonnat's insistence that these elements be applied precisely towards the deliberate pursuit of the artist's vision rather than employed to replicate an approved formula.

To this end, Blashfield recalled of Bonnat that "Construction, values, and texture have always been his watchwords:"

M. Bonnat painted vigorously, with a full brush, and the pupils imputed a magical property to the thick laying on of paint, not seeing that the stroke must be laid upon exactly the right spot, that the value and color must be exactly right, else this robust way of painting would only emphasize blunders. I remember very well that for at least eighteen months after my arrival thin painting meant to me the last expression of weakness . . . "<sup>33</sup>

Yet, much to Blashfield's surprise, Bonnat was critical of the indiscriminate layering of paint. He recalled Bonnat's admonition to a student, "Why do you use so much paint? you only hamper yourself. I do not do so for the sake of painting thickly, but only because I get my effect better in that way." Blashfield continued:

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32. E[dwin] H. Blashfield, "Léon Bonnat," in John Charles Van Dyke, ed., *Modern French Masters, a series of biographical and critical reviews* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), 48–49.

33. Blashfield, 49, 51.

Every great artist has some dominant characteristic in expression, some dominant characteristic in technic. Of M. Bonnat it may be affirmed that at the central core of his artistic nature is the desire for forceful truth, that the central quality of his technic is vigor, that is to say, the choice of the strongest lights and the darkest shadows, for the most powerful expression of that same truth.<sup>34</sup>

Blashfield's memories of the Atelier Bonnat suggest how Edwin Weeks may have perceived the work of Bonnat and how he may have translated the patron's example and guidance into his own visual language. Evidently Bonnat encouraged his students' individuality of expression and technique. He preached close study of the manner in which great artists handled paint in order to achieve illusion, drama, space, three-dimensionality, emotion; but nothing suggests that Bonnat found any merit in stylistic imitation for its own sake.

In addition, Blashfield's choice to pursue his training at the Atelier Bonnat prompts the question of whether Weeks underwent a similar decision process. That is, after receiving an acceptance letter from Gérôme in September 1874, then enrolling in the Atelier Bonnat (perhaps with Gérôme's encouragement), did Weeks elect to continue his professional training under an instructor whose work he felt was more innovative, intellectually and emotionally honest? This would not have been a discounting of the extraordinary achievements of Gérôme, nor an implied statement that there was little to learn from or admire in Gérôme's oeuvre. Rather, it was a decision to be open to the new, to be independent, to be modern.<sup>35</sup>

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34. Blashfield, 50.

35. "Many leading artists, like Bonnat, Laurens, Munkacsy, and Carolus Duran, take pupils at about the same moderate rate. This meets the wants of men who cannot get into the Beaux-Arts, or who do not care to try, because they think it too academical, or object to its many holidays, or fancy a particular master outside." "The American Student at the Beaux-Arts," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, n.s. 23, no. 1 (Nov. 1881–Apr. 1882): 272–85 at 266.

This must have been an exceptionally difficult choice to make. Given Weeks' passion for adventurous travel and his early experiences in Egypt and North Africa, twenty-five-year-old Edwin Weeks would naturally have seen a potential mentor and kindred spirit in the world-famous, fiftyish Gérôme. By the time Weeks arrived in Paris, Gérôme had traveled extensively through the Balkans, Turkey and North Africa. Gérôme's visualizations of the East were powerfully imaginative and virtuosic in execution. Ultimately Gérôme's studio paintings of a sensualized, exoticized East, characterized by uncanny attention to detail, devotion to minute archaeological and ethnographic description, and nearly photographic finish, informed most of his artistic production.<sup>36</sup>

But other factors may have deterred Edwin Weeks from formal study with Gérôme and fostered his interest in Bonnat. At the second exhibition of the Boston Art Club, the submissions of Weeks and his colleagues were decidedly trumped by Léon Bonnat's *Figures*, "the gem of the collection."<sup>37</sup> Gérôme did not always merit such unalloyed praise. Gerard Ackerman, author of *The Life and Work of Jean-Léon Gérôme*, summarizes the chief contemporaneous complaints as:

. . . miscalculated Realism, coldness, the studied quality of his work, his preference for finish over an interesting facture, his fondness for genre and anecdotes, and his limits as an ethnographic painter.<sup>38</sup>

John Ruskin, in an 1867 letter to French art critic and writer Ernest Chesneau that lamented the pitiable state of the world in general and of fine art in particular, named Gérôme "an indecent

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36. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 20.

37. "The Art Club Exhibition," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 7 May 1874.

38. Ackerman, 84.

modeller in clay instead of a painter."<sup>39</sup> A year later Chesneau, an early supporter of Manet and Whistler, likened Gérôme's paintings to genre masquerading as historical studies:

He certainly accords an important part [of his thought] to the composition, but he is far from taking the subjects to their most moving aspect. It seems that M. Gérôme is afraid of emotion, and systematically evades it. And emotion takes its vengeance in remaining for its part rather far from the painter, who is, to sum it up, very respectable in intentions and very clever in execution.<sup>40</sup>

None of Edwin Weeks' writings hint at his opinion of Gérôme, his work or his instructional methods, but the recollections of one of Weeks' contemporaries, American artist Will H. Low (1853–1932) perhaps edges closer to it than the views of Ruskin or Chesneau. Low's brief memoir of Gérôme appeared in *Modern French Masters*, the same 1896 volume that published Blashfield's reminiscences of the Atelier Bonnat. The nineteen-year-old American enrolled in Gérôme's atelier in 1873, the year before Weeks arrived in Paris and long after Gérôme's international reputation was well established. From the vantage of over two decades later Low observed that:

the essential characteristic of Gérôme's work is absolute completeness in every detail, a completeness only attained by the patient brush-stroke adding each day its quota of accurately expressed form . . . a style which rigorously prohibits work that stops before the final touch is given . . .<sup>41</sup>

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39. John Ruskin to Ernest Chesneau, 13 February 1867 in John Ruskin, *Letters from John Ruskin to Ernest Chesneau*, ed. Thomas A. Wise (London: n.p., 1894), 5–6.

40. Ackerman, 84 and note 249 citing Ernest Chesneau, *Peinture, sculpture, Les nations rivales dans l'art* (Paris: 1868), 220.

41. Will H. Low, "Jean-Léon Gérôme," in John Charles Van Dyke, ed., *Modern French Masters, a series of biographical and critical reviews* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), 31–43 at 32.



Completeness, in the Victorian art critical sense of meticulous attention to detail and finish, is unquestionably a hallmark of Gérôme's work. Stasis is another. Though often somewhat flexible in his assessment of his students' work, in his own practice (as opposed to the beliefs held by Bonnat) Gérôme was indifferent to the innovations of Corot, Millet and certainly of Manet, whom he called "the apostle of a decadent manner, of a piecemeal art." Not surprisingly, he found the work of Gustave Caillebotte "rubbish."<sup>42</sup>

Low's recollections demonstrate that he, and perhaps Weeks, believed that the internationally famous Gérôme was an artist rooted in time and place, bound to the artistic ideals that conformed to those of an earlier generation. In a word, he was not modern:

Gérôme's right to be considered modern is therefore almost purely intellectual. His point of view—the manner in which he regards the scene which he is to portray and the actors who are to fill it—is essentially of his time. It is more—it is Gallic, almost locally Parisian.<sup>43</sup>

Will Low found in his last sight of Gérôme, impeccably dressed in a coat of military cut as he walked away from a funeral, a metaphor for the great artist's career:

It is thus that I last saw him, it is thus that I like to think of him—as of a soldier who early in the campaign received his marching orders, and who, faithful to his duty, has followed unflinchingly in the path which they indicate, looking neither to the right nor the left.

The nineteen-year-old Will Low's admiration for Gérôme, mingled with a certain disenchantment, amplifies the understanding of Edwin Blashfield's decision to turn down

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42. Laurens des Cars, Dominique de Font-Réaulx and Édouard Papet, "Picturing Gérôme," in Laurens des Cars, Dominique de Font-Réaulx, Édouard Papet, ed., *The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904)* (Milan: Skira Editore; Los Angeles: Getty Museum; Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2010), 17–20 at 20 (quotations not cited).

43. Low, 36.

enrollment in the atelier of Gérôme in favor of studying with Bonnat. Regardless, Blashfield's preference for the Atelier Bonnat did not hinder him from taking full advantage of Gérôme's generosity and willingness to "give time and attention to young men" and to critique his work "as often as I wished." H. Barbara Weinberg remarks that this association led to a predictable affinity in the works of Blashfield and Gérôme, evident in paintings such as Blashfield's *The Emperor Commodus [dressed as Hercules] Leaving the Arena at the Head of the Gladiators* (Salon, 1878, Figure 3-7), which echoes Gérôme's meticulously researched Roman reconstructions. This association did not escape the notice of contemporary critics, who frequently invoked the name of Gérôme in reviews of Blashfield's earlier paintings.<sup>44</sup> Weinberg maintains that the Beaux-arts principles of Gérôme underlie even Blashfield's later paintings and murals, the basis for his mature reputation.

Clearly Blashfield's elaborate allegories and historically based compositions owed a significant intellectual and stylistic debt to Gérôme, one that was readily apparent to contemporary viewers and one that was acknowledged by Blashfield himself. It is therefore reasonable for Weinberg to propose that there was a similar informal mentoring arrangement with another of Bonnat's American pupils, Edwin Weeks, that likewise resulted in a lasting thematic and stylistic influence in his work.

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44. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 56, quoting Edwin Blashfield in "Open Letters: American Artists on Gérôme," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 37 (Feb. 1889): 635. For example, Blashfield's work was likened to that of Gérôme by the *Art Journal* in "Notes," *Art Journal* 5 (1879): 31–32 and by the *New York Times* in "New Pictures at the Schaus Gallery," 29 Nov. 1878, n.p.

## Considering Weeks and Gérôme

Few art historians have given Edwin Weeks much more than a passing reference in the past hundred years. Therefore a well-argued analysis of his work by an eminent art historian such as H. Barbara Weinberg is not only exceptional but also highly influential.<sup>45</sup> For this reason the comments of Weinberg, currently Alice Pratt Brown Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture, Metropolitan Museum of Art, must be considered in depth.

As mentioned earlier, Weinberg finds Gérôme's influence ascendant over the more painterly style of Bonnat in Weeks' *The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India* (c. 1886), *The Last Journey (Voyage), Souvenir of the Ganges, Benares* (Salon, 1885), and *Street Scene in India* (ca. 1884–88). These paintings will be discussed in detail below, with particular regard for Weinberg's assertion that throughout his career Weeks remained a follower of Gérôme.

Weinberg compares Week's *Street Scene in the East* (now titled *Street Scene in India*, ca. 1884–88, oil on canvas, 28 7/8 x 23 3/4 inches, Figure 3-8) with Gérôme's *Saddle Bazaar* (at the Haggin Museum, *The Saddle Bazaar, Cairo*, 1883, oil on canvas, 32 x 25 5/8 inches, Figure 3-9), noting in particular that the images share an obliquely viewed, highly detailed "architectural corner" featuring carefully observed animals and "Near Eastern types."<sup>46</sup> These paintings are undeniably similar in certain respects: the size of the canvas, the red awning or rugs denoting the

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45. Although Weinberg discusses Weeks in only a few pages in her 1984 book *The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme*, her arguments have been relied on by other influential scholars, among them Annette Blaugrund in *Paris 1889: American Artists at the Universal Exposition* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 42–43, 223–24.

46. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 51–53.

shopfront, the side view of the white horse, the sharply detailed saddlery and costume of the rider, the red hues that lead the eye around the canvas, and the overall conception grounded in orientalized Victorian genre.

Certainly Gérôme's reputation for the portrayal of a spectrum of North African "types" was well known to Weeks. In fact, in a letter written by Weeks from Rabat during the height of the 1878 Moroccan famine, it seems that Weeks was eager to surpass it: "There are magnificent types grand looking old men squalid Arab girls with faces like African Madonnas and such lustrous eyes . . . such as Gerome [sic] has never rendered because in ordinary times nothing could induce these people to pose or enter the house of a Christian."<sup>47</sup> *Street Scene in India* may be read as an attempt to "out-Gérôme" Gérôme, not only by including South Asian "types," but also by jamming so much detail and substructure into the composition—the balcony fretwork, the lackadaisical stitching on the awning—that the viewer longs to follow those strong architectural diagonals right off of the canvas in search of relief.

While the painting may be read as a variation on Gérôme's leading brand of French Orientalism, to read it solely that way omits an important, and constant, dimension in Weeks' work. Weeks consistently strived to convey a personal interpretation of India based on the astounding sensory experience of being in that country—the heat, the colors, the intense light, the architecture, the pageantry, the sensual in the everyday. Gérôme quiets the architecture in order to highlight the richly accessorized figures of the Bashi-Bazouk and his gleaming steed; Weeks characteristically makes the architecture the subject, drawing attention to it with surface

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47. Weeks to Alexander Twombly, 8 December 1878, Rabat, 4, Alexander S. Twombly Papers, Box 1, Folder 001 0002, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

texture, minute detail and subtle color harmonies. Following Bonnat, he punctuates it with thickened paint, caring little for the glazed plane that characterizes Gérôme's work. Weeks meandered through the streets in search of this "seductive woodwork." He studied it; he wrote about it; he tried to capture its worn patina and roughened surface in his paintings.<sup>48</sup> The architecture, with its finely wrought balconies, dominates Weeks' composition; the shopkeeper in shadows, the customers who inspect his wares, the half hidden "young ladies of the nautch-dancing sisterhood" are almost incidental.<sup>49</sup>

From a compositional standpoint, the two artists use architecture in distinctly different ways. Here Gérôme employs it to enclose space. The broad, low step that leads the eye into the picture ends abruptly in the middle ground, cut off by a massive pillar that halves the canvas and by a wall that runs parallel to the picture plane. In contrast, the entire architectural façade in Weeks' painting is set at an oblique angle; strong receding diagonals manage to defeat the weightiness of the balconies to suggest continuity and openness. The cropped figure to the extreme right adds to the sense of space beyond the frame. Admittedly, both *Saddle Bazaar* and *Street Scene in India* project a sense of frozen stagginess, but Gérôme's is that of an elaborate,

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48. This may be seen in works such as *Craftsmen Selling Cases by a Teak-Wood Building, Ahmedabad* (c. 1885), *Soldier of the Rajah Coming to the Sword Sharpener of Ahmedabad* (c. 1886), and *Teak-wood Doorway, Ahmedabad* (n.d.). In Lahore and Ahmedabad, Weeks searched for the most appealing examples of decorative architecture, delighting in the deeply-carved balconies and finely wrought supports, the home or shopfront whose "whole facade is often covered with a wealth of carving, painted with tints which are rather gaudy when new, but which are exquisitely beautiful when half effaced and weather-worn." Weeks, *From the Black Sea through Persia and India*, 330–31.

49. Given that the upper-left quarter of *Street Scene in India* closely resembles "Carved Balconies," reproduced in Weeks' 1894 *Harper's* article "Lahore and the Punjaub," it is likely that *Street Scene* depicts a shopfront in Lahore. "Over these shops and lower stories there are often balconies of carved wood . . . and they are usually occupied by young ladies of the nautch-dancing sisterhood . . .," Weeks, "Lahore and the Punjaub," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 89, no. 533 (Oct. 1894): 651–73, 662.

carefully crafted theater set while Weeks' is that of a still from a film shot on location.

It is this stage set quality that most directly associates certain works by Edwin Weeks with those of Jean-Léon Gérôme. Among his paintings of Cairo, this characteristic is particularly evident in Weeks' *A Game of Chess in [a] Cairo Street* (1879, Figure 3-10). The subject and composition are defined by a diagonally receding, highly elaborated architectural façade, the elements Weeks employed to similar effect in *Street Scene in India*. Again Weeks focused more on the architecture than the figures. Compared to similar scenes by Gérôme, Weeks employed a marginally looser technique, more textural variation, a brighter palette, and notably less imagination. Otherwise, structural parallels to depictions of similar subjects by Gérôme such as *A Street Scene in Cairo* (1870–71), *Chess Players* (1859) and *Almehs playing Chess in a Café* (1870) are readily apparent.

Yet there are important differences. For example, the central figures in Gérôme's *Chess Players* (at the Wallace Collection, entitled *The Draught Players*, Figure 3-11) are impressively armed, linking even this congenial pastime to endemic social violence. The standing onlooker's teacup poised in his right hand imparts a refined note but hardly detracts from the intimidating weapons just a few inches below his fingers. Absorbed in the next move, each player rests an arm against a formidable blade, as if ready to take the symbolic war on the game board to a real field of battle. None of the figures conveys a particular mental acuity. One sits back from the board and raises his hand to his mouth, a gesture of uncertainty or recognition of vulnerability; his opponent languidly smokes from a long chibouk as he contemplates the next move. The blue-robed figure standing in the doorway in Weeks' *A Game of Chess* (Figure 3-10) suggests the same passivity and indolence, although without the undertones of violence that frequently appear

in the works of Gérôme. Also, Weeks' players lean over the board, undistracted by other pursuits. They are more engaged with the game, and by implication, with the world around them.

It is tempting to see the influence of Gérôme in other paintings by Edwin Weeks from this period. His ambitious *Interior of a Mosque at Cordova* (ca. 1880; 56 in. x 72 9/16 in., Figure 3-12) finds a ready comparison in Gérôme's *Public Prayer in the Mosque of Amr* (1871; 35 x 29.5 in., Figure 3-13), that Gerard Ackerman calls "The first and greatest of Gérôme's mosque interiors."<sup>50</sup> *Interior of a Mosque at Cordova* does indeed give the impression that Weeks is consciously trying to demonstrate his technical accomplishments and his mastery of the Orientalist genre dominated by Gérôme. As in *Public Prayer in the Mosque of Amr*, Weeks' worshippers are sturdy and muscular or wiry and taut. The central figures in both paintings are richly outfitted with impressive weaponry and framed against a series of banded arches that recede into the background. Perhaps most reminiscent of Gérôme is the crisp precision of *Interior of a Mosque at Cordova* combined with meticulous attention to imitation of surfaces and materials. Weeks' draftsmanship and perspectival skills are on full display in the darkly illuminated, voluminous space. If the painting is overstuffed with hanging lamps, trims and tassels, each adds to the cumulative authenticating effect. On close inspection the columns do indeed appear to be marble; the shield in the foreground gleams softly like old hammered metal; the floor looks aged to a warm polish; the expanse of carpet seems rough with worn knots. Practically every inch is worked into a fever pitch of near-claustrophobic detail, which was a key

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50. Ackerman, 228 and notes Figure 200.

selling point even as late as Weeks' estate auction in 1905:

Preaching the holy war against the Christians, the old Moor holds aloft the green flag of Mohammed, while he curses the "dogs of Christians" with true religious fervor, and calls on Mohammed to drive them out of Spain. The devout audience, kneeling facing the shrine, composed of all classes of Moors, rich and poor, as well as soldiers in armor, is probably an ideal and almost photographic view of the Mosque of Cordova as it was at the beginning of the downfall of Moorish power in Spain. The entrance to the shrine is most artistic, composed of many-colored glass mosaics, with texts from the Koran set in. Down the long vista of arches the crowd of worshippers gives one some idea of the enormous size of the mosque, that stands to-day an imposing monument of the grandeur and power of the Moors several hundred years ago.<sup>51</sup>

Although the description rings a bit of salesroom hyperbole, the writer's insistence on "almost photographic" fidelity does not. The gold-leafed tiles of the mihrab, a tenth-century expansion, mimic the actual architecture in color, pattern and proportion, as do those of the trifol arches. Weeks closely approximated the gold Kufic characters, inscriptions that proclaim God's omniscience and the believers' duty of total submission. The figures may be drawn from the imagination, but the setting accurately reflects what Weeks saw.

Though Weeks' attention to minute detail thoroughly follows the standards set by Gérôme, the surface of his canvas does not. Generous dabs of paint on the hanging lamp, the cloak of the central figure and various ornaments disturb the planes of the canvas, catching the eye and drawing attention to the tactile surface. The strong contrast of light and dark, a practice advocated by Bonnat, splits Weeks' canvas neatly in half as it adds drama to the scene; Gérôme

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51. "No. 269 Mosque at Cordova, Spain," Millet, *Works of the Late Edwin Lord Weeks: Important Finished Pictures, Sketches, Studies and Drawings*, n.p. The obvious comparison to Gérôme's *Public Prayer in the Mosque of Amr* does not mean that Weeks may not have been aware of or influenced by other artists. Spain was a favored destination of many artists; images of Spain's most well-known sights were commonly reproduced in a variety of formats (for example, David Robert's *Picturesque Sketches in Spain Taken During the Years 1832 & 1833* (London: Hodgson and Graves, 1837).



uses darker tones primarily in the four corners to frame the interior. Gérôme's long-haired, nearly nude holy man in the background refers to an exoticized East likely to evoke little understanding or respect from Parisian viewers. Weeks' corresponding figure, aged and holding a battered flag, may have been perceived by viewers as an object of scorn or even pity, yet it would not have violated the Western sense of propriety in the same way. Similarly, Gérôme's central figure, a dignitary whose dress includes a sabre strapped across his waist, communicates a more threatening message to the European viewer than the kneeling soldier in Weeks' painting, the very image of pious manhood, who has laid down his arms.

It is possible that *Interior of a Mosque at Cordova* acknowledges Gérôme's Cairo paintings in other, more oblique, ways. Weeks may have used the figure of the kneeling soldier to reference the Cairene worshippers in *Public Prayer in the Mosque of Amr*. The soldier's helmet and especially his physiognomy bear a conspicuous resemblance to "Mameluke in Full Armour," an illustration by Wilhelm Gentz that appears in Egyptologist and novelist Georg Eber's *Egypt: Descriptive, Historical and Picturesque* (1884).<sup>52</sup> To stretch this speculative connection further—perhaps past the breaking point—the architectural history of the two subject mosques are closely linked. The Great Mosque of Cordoba is considered the culmination of the hypostyle system illustrated in the earlier Amr Mosque of Cairo. The Cordoba mosque operates symbolically as a cultural and religious relic of a lost Islamic land; and, due to its geopolitical position, as a monument to the forging of a nation from two religiously and ideologically

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52. If this were the case, unless there were an earlier edition it would argue for placing a later date on the painting than that of 1880.

opposed worlds.<sup>53</sup> Considering Weeks' motivations and intentions, perhaps he considered these meanings as he sought to perfect the tradition of Gérôme and to merge the teachings of Gérôme and Bonnat in his own, contemporary vision of the Orient.

Nowhere is Weeks' personal vision of the "East" more evident than in his 1885 Salon submission, *Le dernier voyage;—souvenir du Gange* (*The Last Voyage;—souvenir of the Ganges*, approximately 76 x 114 inches, Figure 3-14). This work is described in the Salon catalog as:

Deux Fakirs hindous se rendaient en pèlerinage à la ville sainte de Benares; l'un d'eux etant sur le point de mourir, son camarades s'empresse de lui faire traverser le fleuve saint pour qu'il puisse rendre le dernier soupir sur la rive sacrée.<sup>54</sup>

Here again Weinberg found indelible echoes of Gérôme, noting that this enormous painting "reiterates both the morbid content and the careful arrangement" of Gérôme's *The Prisoner* (*Le Prisonnier*, 1863, Figure 3-15) and that of *The Burial of a Mummy* (*Les Funérailles d'une momie*, c. 1877, Figure 3-16) by Gérôme's American student, Frederick Arthur Bridgman.<sup>55</sup>

Citing Weinberg, art historian Annette Blaugrund also asserted that Weeks modeled the composition of *The Last Voyage* on these previous works by Gérôme and Bridgman.<sup>56</sup> As *The*

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53. Nuha N.N. Khoury, "The Meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the Tenth Century," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 80–98; Richard F. Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah*, vol. I (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts; 2nd ed., 1857), 93; Théophile Gautier, *Wanderings in Spain* (London: Ingram, Cooke, and Co., 1853), 253–54.

54. Fink, 403. Weeks was awarded an Honorable Mention on the strength of this work.

55. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 53–54: "As Weeks described the episode in the Salon catalogue: 'Two Hindu Fakirs are making their pilgrimage to the holy city of Benares. As one of them is on the verge of death, his comrade rushes him across the hallowed river so that he can draw his last breath on the sacred shore' [my translation]."

56. Blaugrund, 223. The painting was exhibited at the 1888 International Art Exhibition in Munich, the

*Last Voyage* is one of Weeks' most important paintings, it is worth examining Weinberg's comments in depth.

The grim-faced captive in Gérôme's *The Prisoner*, bound in hand stocks and rope, mockingly serenaded as he lies immobile athwart the bottom of a dinghy, was a highlight of the 1863 Salon. Gérôme concocted this image from his own experiences of a delightful 1855 excursion up the Nile in the company of twenty-one-year old Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, a trip sponsored by the French government with the vague goal of recording Egyptian antiquities. Gérôme's subsequent recollections were aided by photographs made on the trip by Bartholdi and possibly others taken of Palestine by Felix Bonfils. The painting's distorted vision of the Orient as perverse entertainment, authenticated by convincing detail, persuaded both "connoisseurs and fools" to subscribe to Gérôme's fantasy.<sup>57</sup>

*The Prisoner* was highly influential, especially among some of Jean Léon Gérôme's American students who sought to emulate the convincing artificiality of Gérôme's vision of the East. With its soft light and historic setting, *The Burial of a Mummy* by Gérôme's American pupil, Frederick Arthur Bridgman, so captured the authenticating spirit of *The Prisoner* and Gérôme's *Excursion of the Harem* (1869, 3-17) that *Le Figaro* art critic Albert Wolff stated: "Les

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1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the 1894 Exposition in Antwerp and the Universal Exposition, Paris 1889 (gold medal). In 1905 it was donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Weeks' widow.

57. Dominique de Font-Réaulx, "Gérôme and Photography: Accurate Depictions of an Imagined World," in Laurence des Cars, Dominique de Font-Réaulx and Édouard Papet, ed., *The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904)* (Milan: Skira Editore; Los Angeles: Getty Museum; Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2010), 213–57, at 230. Page 230, note 4 quotes Jean Léon Gérôme, *Notes autobiographiques* [1874], ed. G. Ackerman (Vesoul: S.A.L.S.A., 1981), 11.

Funérailles d'une momie, by M. Bridgman, is able to be signed by the master."<sup>58</sup> Bridgman's style and Orientalist subject matter were so closely identified with Gérôme that German art critic and historian Richard Muther stated flatly: "Frederick A. Bridgman is Gérôme translated into American."<sup>59</sup> Former Gérôme student Earl Shinn wrote in *The Art Amateur* that with *The Burial of a Mummy* Bridgman had surpassed his teacher:

In the "Burial of a Mummy" our compatriot completely distances Gérôme by placing behind his carefully calculated scheme of figures a landscape of almost divine purity and beauty, completely impossible to the older artist [Gérôme].<sup>60</sup>

Gérôme had a similar stimulating effect on one of his earliest American students, Thomas Eakins, who had studied in Gérôme's atelier with Shinn beginning in 1866. After returning to Philadelphia in 1870, Eakins may have worked from a photograph of *The Prisoner* to construct the pose for *John Biglin in a Single Scull* (ca. 1873, 3-18). Letters demonstrate that Eakins sought Gérôme's advice on the rower's positioning and body mechanics. Twice Eakins sent to Gérôme watercolors of the composition for his critique and approval.<sup>61</sup> For Eakins and

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58. Fort, 143, quoting Albert Wolff, "Le Salon de 1877," *Figaro*, 4 May 1877, 1 col. 3. Fort rightly adds that this painting was strongly influenced by the work of Laurence Alma Tadema.

59. Muther, 295. Bridgman's devotion to Gérôme was widely recognized: "Mr. Bridgman belongs to a group which has sat at the feet of Gérôme and worshipped in the mosques of the Orient." Ishmael, "American Artists on the Seine," 100. The same article remarked of Weeks: "But it was Bonnat taught him how to see and translate the brilliant scenes he conveys to his canvas," at 100.

60. Fort, 145, quoting Earl Shinn [pseudonym Edward Strahan], "Frederick A. Bridgman," *Art Amateur* 4, no. 4 (March 1881): 71. Bridgman and Gérôme were frequently compared, for example in "American Painters Winslow Homer and F. A. Bridgman," *Art Journal*, n.s. (1878): 227–29 and Edward Strahan, "Frederick A. Bridgman," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 63 (Oct. 1881): 694–705. M. G. Van Rensselaer observed of Bridgman's paintings: "one or two might have passed anywhere for Gérôme's," "Frederic Arthur Bridgman," *American Art and American Art Collections*, ed. Walter Montgomery, vol. 1 (Boston: E. W. Walker and Co., 1889), 179–91, at 184.

61. Font-Réaulx, 230. Gerard Ackerman states that in 1873 Eakins sent to Gérôme a watercolor of a rower in a scull and in response received a highly detailed critique, which prompted Eakins to revise and resend to Gérôme for approval. Ackerman, 169. Weinberg relies on Ackerman's analysis and further

Bridgman, Gérôme was the one man who knew how to get the details right; without question they sought his guidance and in many respects followed his example. However, there are no known letters or textual references that professionally tie Edwin Weeks to Gérôme in like fashion.<sup>62</sup>

Regarding Bridgman and Weeks, contemporary accounts indicate the men were good friends. They lived in the same artsy Parisian neighborhood; Weeks was a regular tennis partner; Bridgman served as a pall bearer at Weeks' funeral. It is probable that they critiqued each other's efforts, and in this sense Weeks may have benefited vicariously from Gérôme's more direct and consistent instruction to Bridgman. A number of Weeks' paintings overlap those of Bridgman in subject, style and mood, particularly those from the 1880s and earlier such as *Girl in a Moorish Courtyard* (1880).

But to evaluate Weinberg's assertion that Gérôme's influence dominated Weeks' style, partly based on her observation that *The Last Voyage—Souvenir of the Ganges* "reiterates both the morbid content and the careful arrangement of Gérôme's *The Prisoner* and Bridgman's *The Burial of a Mummy*," requires not only a comparative visual and thematic analysis but also consideration of other possible sources as additions or alternatives to Gérôme and his student

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notes that "An even more persuasive case could be made for a relationship between one of Eakin's more ambitious sculling pictures, *The Biglin Brothers Turning the Stake* (1873; fig. 2), for example, and *The Prisoner* or *Excursion of the Harem* (1869; fig. 28), which Gérôme painted and showed in the Salon during the last year of Eakin's study in Paris." Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 41.

62. One rare association of Weeks and Gérôme appears in "Famous Paintings Owned on the West Coast, XIV," *Overland Monthly*, n.s. 23, no. 134 (Feb. 1894): 174–75. The writer notes that Weeks' *Street in Cairo* "shows him an apt pupil of his master, Gérôme." The writer does not seem to have specialist knowledge.

Bridgman.<sup>63</sup> For example, Weeks' interest in rowboats and oarsmen may be traced to his early years in Boston based on two sketches in the Archives of American Art, probably executed when Weeks was a teenager. The small boat safely hauled ashore in Figure 3-19 demonstrates that Weeks was intimately familiar with the type of rough but sturdy Indian craft depicted in *The Last Voyage*. Another sketch from the same file (Figure 3-20) likely depicts a scene from Weeks' boyhood, a hotly contested sculling race on the Charles River. Rowing was an immensely popular sport in Boston; by the 1860s there was an intense rivalry between the Harvard and Oxford university rowing clubs. The figures in the sketch are stiff and somewhat awkward, but placement, posture and musculature are carefully observed. The kneeling figure who steadies the shell and especially the rower in the single scull on the right relate directly to the figures in *The Last Voyage*. Undoubtedly Weeks had long possessed a fundamental understanding of the body mechanics involved in rowing.

Beyond careful attention to detail and the visual commonalities of a near-field view of a small boat being rowed across a river, the most obvious link among works of such ostensibly different themes—manly prowess in Eakins' *John Biglin in a Single Skull*, historical melodrama in Bridgman's *The Burial of a Mummy on the Nile* and the sensual and the cruel in Gérôme's *The Prisoner*—is an uncanny sense of physical immediacy. In none of these paintings is the viewer left to stand on the muddy bank, craning to get a glimpse of the action. He floats on the river along with the prisoner and his guards or the mummy and his attendants, rowing for all he's worth or laughing at the prisoner's mock serenade or listening to the shrieks and wails of the

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63. Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 51.

pharaoh's mourners. Because proximity to the action has converted the viewer from an observer to a participant, the episode, the characters and the storyline become all the more absorbing.

Among Gérôme's French predecessors, perhaps no artist had mastered this kind of visual immersion more than Théodore Géricault with the enthralling, repulsive *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818–19).

Some twenty-two years after *The Prisoner* made its debut and about seven years after *The Burial of a Mummy* was completed, Weeks painted *The Last Voyage*. In the mid-1880s the ability to create for the Victorian viewer that combined sense of immediacy, direct presence and mortal peril was still much admired. Even in America, it was the fundamental attraction that underlay immensely popular works such as Winslow Homer's *The Life Line* (1884) and *The Fog Warning* (1885). To achieve it Weeks spent hour after hour, in stifling heat, in the cabin of a small boat on the Ganges.

Viewers' interest in participatory immediacy was spurred by technical advances in photography, which throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century continued to disrupt the individual and collective visual systems. By the 1880s, amateur and professional photographers in India had flooded the market with inexpensive photographic prints that made their way into mass-produced souvenir albums and stereoscopic collections. In addition, photographic firms that specialized in India, such as Baker & Burke and Bourne & Shepherd, published catalogues and advertised in newspapers the hundreds of images that could be ordered by mail (available often in large format, 15x12 and 10x12 inches).<sup>64</sup> Weeks was an avid photographer, who traveled

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64. Omar Khan, *From Kashmir to Kabul, The Photographs of John Burke and William Baker 1860–1900* (Munich, Berlin, London: Prestel Verlag; Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 2002); Vidya Dehejia, *India*

with photographic equipment and who mentions more than once his preoccupation with the tedious tasks of developing images (although none of his photographs is known). For these reasons, photography must be considered among the most likely sources for the realization of Weeks' Indian scenes.

As a potential source or aid for the production of *The Last Voyage*, Weeks would have had his own photographs, possibly supplemented by any number of images readily available from commercial photographers such as the photographic print of Manikarnika Ghat shown in Figure 3-21.<sup>65</sup> *The Last Voyage* and this contemporary photograph share almost precisely the same vantage point.<sup>66</sup> Minor architectural discrepancies may be explained by reference to a photograph of the same site taken in the 1860s by commercial photographer Samuel Bourne (Figure 3-22). Compare, for example, the *chhatri* or domed pavilion arising from the steps in the

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*Through the Lens: Photography 1840–1911* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 2006).

65. The British Library describes this image, which so precisely captures the sense of Weeks' painting: "Photograph of Manikarnika Ghat on the River Ganges, Varanasi from the 'Earl of Jersey Collection' was taken by an unknown photographer in the 1880s. This is the main cremation ghat of Varanasi, presided over by the Doms, a caste who historically and till now hold exclusive rights over the cremation ghats. In the middle of the Ghat is the Manikarnika kund (tank) which was said to have been dug by Vishnu with his discus and filled with his perspiration from the exertion of creating the world. There are footprints of Vishnu set in a circular marble slab on the ghats. According to legend, Shiva's mani (crest jewel) and his consort Parvati's Karnika (earring) fell into the kund while bathing thus came the name of the ghat. This site is known as a tirtha or 'crossing place' where devotees can gain access to the divine and where gods and goddesses can come down to earth. Those who die at Varanasi are considered extremely fortunate and blessed for they attain release from samsara, the unceasing cycle of death and rebirth, and are assured of moksha or enlightenment." "Manikarnika Ghat, Benares," British Library Online Gallery, <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/m/019pho0000807s2u00004000.html>, accessed 12 May 2012.

66. From a methodological standpoint, the use of photographs to assist with architectural details and settings aligns Weeks with Gérôme, who frequently employed photographs to enhance or supplement his recollections and on-the-spot sketches.



upper left of the painting with its corresponding element in the two photographs. In the 1880s (when Weeks first went to India) it was enclosed, but in *The Last Voyage* Weeks restored it to its fully open state, as it is shown in the Samuel Bourne photograph of 1865. This strongly suggests that Weeks consulted photographs or drawings from an earlier era.

The painting, however, accomplishes what photographs of the period could never do. It shimmers with color and vibrancy of atmosphere. The architecture, hence the broader culture of India, is as much the subject as the figures. This is what struck the reviewer for *The Art*

*Amateur*:

On the opposite bank, filling up the whole canvas, we see the terraces and loggias and brilliant pagodas of the temple of Benares. The scene represented is immense and full of incident, but the picture does not on that account exceed reasonable proportions. It is a remarkable presentation of the Oriental world with its dazzling luminousness and brilliant color.<sup>67</sup>

At nearly six and a half feet by nine and a half, *The Last Voyage* covered more than double the canvas of Bridgman's *The Funeral of a Mummy* (slightly more than 3 1/2 by 7 1/2 feet); it dwarfed Gérôme's *The Prisoner* (about 18 by 31 inches). Even now, stacked in the storage vaults of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, its has a striking effect. The viewer is pulled into the painting, especially when standing slightly to the left of center. The boat (the oblique measurement a full six feet) that ferries the dying man and the central figures appear but a few yards off. The entire work is very broadly painted, if carefully controlled, in depths ranging from a fairly thick impasto accentuating the boat, trees and some architectural elements to almost bare

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67. T. C., "The Paris Salon," *Art Amateur* 13, no. 2 (July 1885): 23–24 at 24. "T. C." is likely the Englishman Theodore Child, art critic and contributor to numerous arts publications who died in Persia on an overland trip with Weeks.

canvas in other areas. This variability is much more in keeping with the tenets of Bonnat, who typically applied paint with a full brush, than the uniformly smooth finishes preferred by Gérôme.

Close inspection reveals a wealth of incidental detail that adds interest, even for a modern audience. Some of these details are somewhat lugubrious (scavenger birds picking at floating bodies, a burning corpse atop the pyre) but because they are so minor and indistinct they never sensationalize or overwhelm the subject. Subordination of the details to the overall effect was a tenet of Bonnat's teaching, as was an emphasis on building a unified picture from planes of light and color. *The Last Voyage* demonstrates this attention to the interplay of light and shadow, and to the intersection of multiple planes, to create convincing three-dimensionality. As art historian Alisa Luxenberg noted of Bonnat, "This kind of naturalist painting attempts to recreate a visual experience through strong appeals to the viewer's senses, quite the opposite of Gérôme's passive views constructed through literal translations of objective fact."<sup>68</sup>

The colors of *The Last Voyage* are certainly at the extremes of Gérôme's more limited palette. Weeks applied layers of unmixed azure, muted teal, ochre, apricot and faded lilac, roughed in gray and umber, with varying degrees of concern for precise rendering. For the water, the juxtaposition of hues with similar values suggests Weeks' familiarity with the technique of "equal luminescence" to create a shimmering effect of movement, pioneered by Claude Monet in the 1870s and modified by various Impressionist artists.<sup>69</sup> This subtle

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68. Luxenberg, 233, 235.

69. Margaret Livingstone, *Vision and Art: the biology of seeing* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2002), 37–40.

manipulation of color conveys the brilliance of intense midday sunlight on water and dusty, weathered stone.

Concerning subject and mood, although *The Last Voyage* superficially shares the "morbid content" of *The Prisoner* and *The Funeral of a Mummy*, it conveys neither the subtle mockery of the former nor the visual operatics of the latter. It is an image of a common sacred ritual for the dead in the context of contemporary Indian culture as Weeks experienced it. The figures and the viewer occupy a shared space, "with air to breathe and move in" like the figures of Bonnat. They appear solemn and dignified, not lethargic, histrionic or sinister. This is not the new European urban reality of dance halls and smokestacks, but neither is it "the artificial combinations of models and antique accessories to which he gives fanciful titles," as critic Theodore Child wrote of Gérôme in his review of the Salon of 1884.<sup>70</sup>

Robert Barrie, the wealthy scion of an American publisher who had traveled in India and later made the acquaintance of Weeks while in Paris, compared Weeks' interpretation of the burning ghats to what he had personally seen in Benares:

They placed the long, naked body on a pile of wood, much too short for it, however, so they doubled up the legs and worked them down among the sticks . . . we saw some coolies bring down a body, covered with flowers, on a light bier to the edge of the bank, where priests took it and placed it in the sacred river so that it lay in the water with only the uncovered face above the surface. One of the priests gathered water in his cupped hands and poured it into the open mouth of the corpse. In former times the custom was to allow the body to float off down the river, but the authorities had stopped this. Some years later, in Edwin Lord Weeks's studio in the Avenue de Wagram in Paris, his *Souvenir of the Ganges*, which I think the truest painter's record of the burning-ghats I have ever seen, and

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70. Weeks' figures recall Edwin Blashfield's description of those of Bonnat: "His pictured people were round and stood out, they had air to breathe and move in, you could walk around them." Blashfield, 50. Theodore Child, "The Paris Salon," *Decorator and Furnisher* (June 1884): 87–89 at 87.

which I had etched and reproduced in colors, reminded me of this morning. In talking over the custom of burning the bodies, Weeks, who had had ample opportunity to see what went on while he was making his sketches, remarked that the most revolting thing about it all was the way in which the bodies moved under the influence of the heat when it first struck them in force. I had not noticed this as we had not stayed long enough to see the effect on the newly arrived body.<sup>71</sup>

Weeks had little need to turn to Gérôme for inspiration. The scene of *Le dernier voyage*;— *souvenir du Gange*, a meditation on death, religious difference, time and myth, was right in front of him.

### An American Point of View

Though to many modern art historians Weeks' style demonstrated in *The Last Voyage* may seem nearly indistinguishable from that of nineteenth-century French Orientalist painters, this opinion was not shared by art critics of the 1880s even though they were keenly sensitive to a perceived domination of American students by their French teachers. As the century wore on American critics developed a general reluctance to praise American artists or to promote an art that overwhelmed and eroded a growing national desire to assert an independent American identity. This posed a universal dilemma for American artists in Paris, who had to balance the need to obtain the highest level of professional training, access to international shows, exhibitions and dealers, and the cosmopolitan allure of Paris against their reputations at home.

French critics commonly dubbed American students as "true sons" of their French masters. While in many circles this would have been interpreted as a compliment, it was not so for more wary commentators on American culture. Expatriate Henry James' well-known quip

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71. Barrie, 52–53.

touches on this sensitivity: "It sounds like a paradox, but it is a very simple truth, that when to-day we look for 'American art' we find it mainly in Paris. When we find it out of Paris, we at least find a great deal of Paris in it."<sup>72</sup>

*The Last Voyage* established E. L. Weeks as an exception to the view that American art students in Paris were so immersed in French culture that they became incapable of independent expression. A common observation of American artists was that whatever "Americanness" they may have possessed was smothered by the imperatives of the French atelier system, the competitive demands of the salons and the seductive charms of Parisian life. Writing on this topic English arts journalist Robert Sherard decried the striking "transformative powers of exteriorities over inherited and national characteristics":

A long residence in France, the training in the French ateliers, the study of French models, the teaching of French masters, the contemplation of French masterpieces, and the effective and constant influence of French inspirations, combine to cast in a mould entirely French the American art-student.<sup>73</sup>

According to Sherard, most American artists lacked originality of conception or execution. The superficial outward bravado of American independence and originality folded under a lack of artistic confidence. American art students in Paris became merely the "docile imitators of one or the other of the French masters." How did this happen to a country with a

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72. Fink, 282 quoting Henry James from *The Painter's Eye. Essays Selected by John L. Sweeney* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 216 (James' remarks first published in *Harper's Magazine*, October 1887). Expressing a similar sentiment in 1900 the American Department of Fine Arts of the Paris Exposition launched a concerted campaign to confirm "a new position for the United States as an art-producing nation" free of "foreign trammels." Diane P. Fischer, ed., *Paris 1900: the "American School" at the Universal Exposition* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 26.

73. Robert Sherard, "American Artists in Paris," *Magazine of Art* (January 1895): 224–29 at 226. Sherard (1861–1943), friend and first biographer of Oscar Wilde, was a long time resident of Paris.

distinct literature and a talent for commerce and industry bordering on “a grandeur which is almost artistic”?

It is regrettable; for America, with her magnificent landscapes, her boundless horizons, her lakes, her mountains, her forests, her bright and vivid colours under the purest of skies, might produce a school of artists superior to any possible to the Old World . . .

Yet some American artists could indulge in the gravitational pull of the world’s center of art without becoming overpowered by it. They were few in number, but their works shared a common theme of pushing against established limits. For Sherard this distinctive individual vision defined them as American artists. He offered the examples of Sargent, “with his fondness for striking colours and his accentuation of the leading characteristics of his subject, which in some cases has been carried almost to the point where caricature begins” and of Whistler, “who so spiritualizes that in the picture with its infinite subtleties the portrait is almost overlooked . . .”<sup>74</sup>

Sherard included Edwin Lord Weeks among these exceptional American artists distinguished by a highly individualized vision. He found Weeks’ creativity not so much in his choice of subjects, but in his superb handling of light:

. . . in the grey of a Parisian studio, [Weeks] floods his charming canvases with that bright sunlight of British India which, for the purposes of his art, he explored in every direction. His “Fin d’une Promenade,” a Jodpore [sic] scene, will be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to see it in the Paris Salon of 1888. The warmest note of colour in this picture is the warm blue of the Indian sky, seen athwart the glittering minarets; but there is art in this use of subdued colours as displayed in the general effect of brilliant sunlight.<sup>75</sup>

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74. Sherard, 226.

75. Sherard, 227–29.

Voicing a similar concern to Sherard's, in 1885 influential Scottish critic R.A.M. Stevenson expressed dismay that the French atelier system swallowed whatever sparks of creativity American art students may have once possessed. Professional training (or as Stevenson suggested, imitation of imitation) for many artists was bought at the price of individuality, a hard bargain for the students of America, who “has chosen France to be her foster-parent in the arts.”<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, Stevenson found a few noteworthy, "naturally original" Americans—Edwin Weeks among them—who managed to escape the enforced orbital pattern:

. . . the sweeping charge so often brought against American artists is only true of a limited number . . . it does not follow in the least that it clips the wings of those who are naturally original . . . . But the most advanced of the new school of Americans . . . their work is not only sound and bold in treatment; it displays besides traces of the working of the Teutonic sap, a sympathy with the eccentric, a more fervid sentiment, and an original feeling for nature.<sup>77</sup>

Like Sherard, Stevenson also placed Weeks, "brilliant" and "novel," in the company of such strong individualists as Whistler and Sargent:

Some of the most striking work of the year is, however, from the brush of men not hitherto officially recognised; and conspicuous among this is 'Le Dernier Voyage' of Mr. E. L. Weeks. This is a work which would stand out in any gallery by the forcible originality of its conception.<sup>78</sup>

Although Stevenson found fault with Weeks' figural drawing, he pointed out that Weeks "does not aim at the Academic" but rather he adjusts his technique to suit the purpose before him, that of creating a forcible presentation of his subject:

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76. R.A.M. Stevenson, “The American Salon,” *Magazine of Art* 8 (Jan 1885): 512–19, 512.

77. Stevenson, 513.

78. Stevenson, 518, 516.

In its wide range and greed of colour, its strong and somewhat riotous effect and novelty, the painting of Mr. Weeks contrasts with the refined choice of harmony and slavery to key which distinguishes the work of the school descended from Corot.<sup>79</sup>

Ironically, it was British arts writers Robert Sherard and R.A.M. Stevenson who identified what was most American about the paintings of Edwin Lord Weeks and what distinguished him from his compatriots in Paris. Indirectly they pinpointed the more elusive link between Weeks and his teacher Léon Bonnat, that common dedication to the pursuit of individual artistic vision rather than replication of an academic formula. Writers lauded those American artists, among them Edwin Weeks, who were able to take advantage of French training but not succumb to the strictures of the Academy or to foreign styles:

In portraiture, still-life, genre, and especially in landscape and pictures directly under the influence of landscape feeling, we see enough boldness and enough sincere personal observation of nature to refute the often expressed fear of an 'atelier' system of education and to relieve the most timid student of fears for his precious individuality. Bonnat, for example, has certainly not inspired that striking and audacious piece of imagination and vigorous personal handling, 'Le Dernier Voyage,' of E. L. Weeks, though he doubtless inculcated that habit of observation by masses and that attention to delicate values which have enabled the young American to realize his strange Oriental dream in such a bold and original manner.<sup>80</sup>

Whether the subtleties of "individuality" or "Americanness" manifest in a given painting is a matter of opinion, but nonetheless vital for a contextual understanding of the artist. This

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79. Stevenson, 518.

80. "The Salon," *Saturday Review*, 59 (20 June 1885): 824–25, at 824. A similar concern was expressed in *The Art Amateur* of December 1882: "For example, would not Mr. Bridgman have been a better artist than he is if he had taken Gérôme's precepts to heart and attempted to apply them independently, instead of essaying to paint themes as nearly identical as possible with those of Gérôme and in Gérôme's manner?", Sigma, "Pennsylvania Academy Exhibition," *Art Amateur* (December 1882): 8–11, at 8.



issue is relevant when evaluating Weinberg's final comparison between Weeks' *The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India* (c. 1886; 33 5/8 x 54 1/2 inches, Figure 3-23) and Gérôme's *Egyptian Recruits Crossing the Desert* (1857; 25 1/4 x 43 1/4 inches, Figure 3-24). First, her observation that both paintings are "uncannily photographic" in their precision is certainly valid.<sup>81</sup> In the era before widely available color photographs, the pursuit of near-photographic representation was common to many artists. Gérôme was known for his representational precision as well as for an absolute, glassy finish, not unlike that of an actual photograph. Weeks was less concerned with tactile distractions. Although he sought a high degree of representational precision, Weeks' looser facture and selective applications of thick paint resulted in a very different viewer experience, one modulated by surface texture. The extent of his manipulations of the canvas topography to create emphasis can be seen in a photograph of *The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India*, taken under raking light (Figure 3-25).

Despite some stylistic similarities, the paintings differ in tone, subject and intent. In *Egyptian Recruits*, dozens if not hundreds of men trudge across a barren landscape of seemingly endless sand and cloudless sky, bound in twos by handstocks. With this and other paintings of the 1850s, Gérôme established a reputation for visual truth and scientific exactitude in the

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81. *The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India*, now at the Portland Museum of Art in Maine, is a variation on Weeks' 1886 Paris Salon submission, *Retour de cortège impérial de la grande mosquée à Delhi, sous la règne de l'Empereur Shab Jehan;—XVIIe siècle*. "E. L. Weeks sends a picture, of about the same dimensions as that of Mr. Pearce, representing 'The Mogul Emperor Returning from Prayer at the Great Mosque of Delhi, Seventeenth Century.' This subject has been treated on a smaller scale, and with a quite different arrangement in a picture by Mr. Weeks, recently sold in New York." Child was referring to Charles Sprague Pearce's twelve by eight foot canvas. Theodore Child, "American Pictures at 'The Salon,'" *Art Amateur* (May 1886): 123–26, at 124.

rendering of racial "types."<sup>82</sup> A bleak comment on the brutality of contemporary Egyptian life, the mood alternates between a grim pessimism and admiration for the perseverance of the "recruits," conscripts for the Egyptian army or forced labor camps. Théophile Gautier observed that Gérôme avoided the usual pathos associated with such scenes in favor of emphasizing the figures' stoic resignation.<sup>83</sup>

By contrast, the richly imagined *The Great Mogul and His Court* celebrates the pageantry, splendor and political power of the mid-seventeenth century Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, depicted departing the southern gate of the Jama Masjid in Delhi, near the immense fortified palace known as the Red Fort.<sup>84</sup> Shah Jahan reigned in the prosperous "golden age of the Mughals." This was also the golden age of early modern Indian architecture; Shah Jahan actively oversaw an unparalleled construction program which included the Red Fort complex depicted as well as several other splendid monuments, including the incomparable Taj Mahal. Weeks treats the architecture with his usual precision. Closely observed details of the procession such as the cavalrymen's helmets (*khula khud*), chest armor (*chahar-aina*, the "four mirrors") bordered in scrolling gold motifs with leather straps, and mail shirts (*zirah*) testify to Weeks' careful study of early modern examples. In this respect Weeks subscribed to the practices of

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82. Peter Benson Miller, "Gérôme and Ethnographic Realism at the Salon of 1857," in *Reconsidering Gérôme*, ed. Scott Allan and Mary Morton (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010): 106–118, at 113–15.

83. Ackerman, 46–47.

84. It is estimated that approximately 57,000 people lived within the walls of the Red Fort, all there to serve the needs of the emperor. Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, The New Cambridge History of India Part I, 4 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 200.

artists such as Jean-Léon Gérôme and Laurence Alma-Tadama, who lavished attention on artifacts and materials in order to convey historic and archaeological exactitude. But more importantly (setting aside possible layered allusions to the British as the "White Mughals") Weeks' painting invests Indian society and civilization with a prestige, vitality and political agency that has no parallel in Gérôme's North African scenes.

Weinberg makes a final point regarding the comparison of Weeks and Gérôme. She notes that "Weeks's working methods emulated Gérôme's as well," citing in support a short article on Weeks in the April 1893 number of the *Art Interchange*:

. . . he conscientiously filled his portfolio with sketches and studies, and his head with impressions and souvenirs, while forbearing to paint 'pictures.' When he returns to his European studio he is enabled to put all these impressions and studies together and produce elaborate compositions that apparently have been painted from nature and art in the blazing sunshine of Jetnan or Delhi . . . . At present Mr. Weeks occupies a handsome studio in Paris, crowded with the trophies of his travels, by the aid of which and the atmosphere which fills such an interior, he is enabled to conjure up again, on the banks of the Seine the life of the Ganges and the Jordan.<sup>85</sup>

The convenient practice of housing props and costumes in the studio was widely practiced among visual arts professionals, from fine artists to cartoonists. For those intent on marketing paintings to an upscale clientele, a lavish work space and reception area filled with exotica served as atmosphere and advertising for the studio that often doubled as a gallery. Weeks shared this common practice with Gérôme and many successful painters of the Orient.

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85. "Edwin Lord Weeks," *Art Interchange*, 94, 96; Weinberg, *American Pupils*, 54–55.

Aside from a generalized setting of the Orient (Egypt and India) and the inclusion of many figures, further comparison of Weeks' *The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India* and Gérôme's *Egyptian Recruits Crossing the Desert*, suggests little in content, composition or attitude to link securely Weeks and Gérôme, or for that matter Weeks and Bonnat. The *Art Interchange* reached this conclusion in the same 1893 article about Weeks quoted above:

As an Orientalist he may be said to stand about half way between Fromentin and Verestchagen. The charm of the immemorial east is upon him and yet he cannot shut his eyes to her absurdities—he paints very frankly the inelegant cut of an Indian gentleman's back hair, and of his white linen pantaloons. He will not deliberately embellish and smooth away like Fromentin and Hugué; he has much more sentiment and right feeling than the much-advertised Russian traveling painter; and he has not quite that admirable science of the artist which makes him to render his facts faithfully, and yet make them truly artistic and satisfactory—e.g., Gérôme, who is not generally esteemed a good painter, and Guillaumet, who is.<sup>86</sup>

Despite his long acknowledgment of Bonnat as his teacher and the over-arching influence of Gérôme, as the above excerpt demonstrates, nineteenth-century writers on the visual arts were invariably hesitant to locate Edwin Lord Weeks comfortably within the penumbra of either master. In fact, they were hesitant to tether Weeks to any other Orientalist painter. Contemporary critics saw in Weeks an amalgam of influences threaded together by an intrinsic American individuality. From the outset, as S.G.W. Benjamin observed in 1879, Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings revealed that he was very much his own man:

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86. Though admiring of Weeks' "great cleverness and technical ability," the writer was not impressed with Weeks' ability to draw nor with the originality of his compositions, save that of *The Last Voyage*. Yet he found Weeks' evocations of India to be ". . . in a mood that apparently hesitates between the frankly and brutally realistic and the judiciously poetical." "Edwin Lord Weeks," *Art Interchange*, 94.

They are marked by a powerful individuality, which delights in glowing effects of light, and revels in the brilliant coloring of tropical scenery of the varied splendor of Oriental architecture and costumes. There is something Byronic in the fervor of this artist's enthusiasm for the East, and the easy adaptability that has enabled a son of New England to identify himself with the life and scenery of lands so exactly the opposite of his own. Although a pupil of Bonnât, and an ardent admirer of the excessive realism now affected by some of the followers of the later French school, Mr. Weeks is, in spite of himself, an idealist, and no imitator of any style.<sup>87</sup>

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87. Benjamin, *Art in America*, 196. Benjamin was a friend of Weeks from their Boston days. Despite his usual praise, in this same work Benjamin faulted Weeks for "finding difficulty in mastering the technical or mechanical problems," "a lack of knowledge or feeling for form," "a weakness in drawing," and "sometimes an apparent opaqueness in his pigments." However he concluded by granting Weeks "the fire of genius."

## Chapter Four

### Edwin Lord Weeks in North Africa

Although Edwin Lord Weeks is best known for his proto-cinematic paintings of British India, works that fully reflect his mature style, his professional stature had been well-established long before he journeyed to the sub-continent. For roughly the first third of his career, from the mid-1870s until after he made his initial trip to India in 1882, Weeks' subject focus was almost exclusively the people, architecture and landscape of North Africa. This period launched his international reputation as an "artist-explorer" who was determined to venture well beyond the comfortable, protected confines of Cairo and Tangier that had satisfied many of his European and American contemporaries.

North Africa was Edwin Lord Weeks' proving ground, as a man and an artist. Audiences deemed his Moroccan camel caravans, dusty and crowded midday market scenes, and looming desert monuments especially credible because they were invested with the artist's personal experience. The press consistently presented this experience as hard-won, forged by unusual daring combined with the physical stamina and courage to pursue the artist's vision at the risk of his own life. Much of this is true.

The novel persona of the artist-adventurer coupled with Weeks' more romantic interpretations of North Africa is a combination that intrigued the public, impressed critics and distinguished Weeks in a thematic sense from many of his Orientalist colleagues. Surprisingly, Weeks' North African paintings were rarely compared to those of his contemporaries, or for that matter to works by his teacher Léon Bonnat or to those of the most famous Orientalist,

Jean-Léon Gérôme. He prompted other stylistic, intellectual and international associations. Early reviewers were more likely to reach back a generation for comparisons to the North African grandeur evoked by French painter and arts theorist Eugène Fromentin (1820–76) or to the expressive brushwork, light and color drenched Moroccan scenes of the influential Catalan artist Mariano Fortuny (1838–74). But even when critics had a ready comparison, they often agreed that Weeks' North African paintings were highly original, individualistic, even notably American.

Today scholars tend to aggregate nineteenth-century artists' versions of the East. Individual motivation and intent as well as contemporaneous responses generally have been ignored or subsumed in the modern academic discourse of the West's domination of the East. Orientalist scenes by Weeks and others are most often discussed in terms of imperialism, sexism, overt and latent violence, overlaid with inscriptions of cultural degeneracy, lassitude and decay. But to evaluate more fully an artist like Edwin Lord Weeks, whose work stands at the intersection of multiple cultures, requires a more nuanced approach that considers the critical reception of the artist and his work in its social and political context. In no case is this more evident than with the charged political environment that enveloped American Edwin Weeks when he first journeyed to the East, not long after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, just as the European powers' scramble for control of the African continent was heating up in earnest.

#### Brief Overview: European Interests in North Africa

Before discussing the travel dates and selected paintings related to what might be termed Weeks' North African period (mid-1870s–early 1880s), it will be helpful to consider in a dozen

or so pages the common geopolitical awareness that a mindful educated viewer of the time would have brought to an exhibition of his paintings (Figure 4-1). Not unlike today, politics and religion often undergirded a Victorian's intellectual command and emotional response to issues concerning the region. A profound interest in visualizing scenes of the Bible sent waves of American and European artists to the shores of the eastern Mediterranean to explore the terrain and cultures of the Levant and Egypt, a phenomenon that gained a new religious, scientific, political and commercial urgency after the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.<sup>1</sup> Concurrently, European commercial rivalries that began in the eighteenth century continued to drive political priorities in the Mediterranean and on the African continent. The race to acquire African markets, natural resources, cheap labor, military outposts, soldiers, coaling stations and that ultimate Victorian status symbol—the far-flung colony—continued to escalate through the 1880s. Heated negotiations did little to diminish a relentless cycle of European military incursions to gain control of coveted North African territories and to quell armed, fiercely determined local resistance.

Against this commercial and political backdrop, with a reinvigorated passion for biblical lands driven by Darwinian debates, American and European travel to the Holy Land and North Africa increased dramatically in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Like many leisure travelers, professional artists typically sojourned in cities with temperate winter climates like

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1. See Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Israel Exploration Society, 1979) and also John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).



Cairo, Algiers and Tangier. Despite being the sites of ongoing international political wrangling and sporadic violence, these tourist and commercial hubs generally remained open to Europeans and even supported flourishing expatriate communities thanks to aggressive diplomacy, military threats, financial leverage, systemic corruption and harsh criminal penalties for violating European persons or property.

Most Western travelers to North Africa seldom ventured beyond comfortable European enclaves. The verandas of Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo or the Hôtel St. George in Algiers became social magnets for monied refugees from the gray December skies of Paris or London in search of an exotic locale with impeccable service. Once in Cairo, for example, few strayed farther than the hour and a half carriage ride to the pyramids (for which by 1880 a macadamized road had obviated Edwin Weeks' 1872 bumpy day trip astride a small donkey) or risked more than a leisurely tour of the Nile by *dahabiah*, where they could sit in a comfortable chair to sip a "peg" or two as they glided along.

However, European excursions into the desert interior were not always met with the same reliable hospitality. Although in the 1870s and early 1880s Europeans had secured the vital North African ports with superior weaponry and bombardments, the interior routes and towns of Egypt, Tripoli, Algeria and Morocco were sites of active unrest. Egypt and Barbary were soon to succumb to European control, but it was not without a protracted fight.

When Edwin Weeks journeyed to Egypt in the 1870s it was still under the hereditary governance of the family of Muhammad Ali, an Albanian commander who in 1805 had seized power in an exceptionally bloody and confusing civil war. Muhammad Ali acknowledged the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan and the commands of the Porte, though early in his rule he

proclaimed himself Khedive (hereditary viceroy) and in effect ruled Egypt as an independent entity. In the coming decades Egypt's economic policies, essentially centered on the cultivation of cotton and associated industries and exports, led to a close alliance with European merchants that eventually resulted in an economic dependence on Britain and France. In a grand play of later nineteenth-century geopolitical one-upmanship, both European powers sought to dominate Egyptian affairs to enhance their respective international and strategic advantages.

A major source of contention was the Suez Canal, begun in 1858 by a French conglomerate with close ties to the Khedive. The British, fearing for their continued control of access to India, ostensibly opposed the canal on the grounds of the use of forced labor, and employed a range of diplomatic and financial pressures, including fomenting a Bedouin-led insurrection, to obstruct its progress. In the end, pragmatism trumped diplomacy; after the Suez Canal's opening in 1869 the British soon dominated canal shipping, carrying more than eighty percent of tonnage by 1882.

In the meantime, eager to modernize its infrastructure and strengthen its military, Egypt under Isma'il (1863–79) incurred vast debts as well as dependence on French military advisors and British capital investments. Soaring debt and declining exports due to the reemergence of the American South on the cotton market forced Isma'il Pasha, under intense pressure from European banks, to sell Egypt's forty-five percent interest in the canal to Britain in 1875; the balance was retained by French shareholders. In 1876 the country officially defaulted on its loans. To protect their investments, British and French representatives were sent to Egypt to oversee its revenues and expenditures and to "advise" various ministries. Laws were instituted to protect Europeans in Egypt, including one that permitted European creditors to attach the

property of small landholders, abolishing the long cultural tradition of life tenancy.<sup>2</sup>

Severe drought exacerbated the country's growing fiscal problems. The Nile's flood crest of 1877 was six feet below average; one-third of the crop acreage could not be irrigated. Despite widespread starvation and depressed cotton prices, in the villages of the Nile Valley tax collectors confiscated properties of delinquent *fellahin* and brutalized them with public floggings. English poet and writer Wilfred Blunt, traveling through Egypt during the famine, wrote:

It was rare in those days to see a man in the fields with a turban on his head, or more than a shirt on his back . . . . The principal towns on market days were full of women selling their clothes and their silver ornaments to the Greek usurers, because the tax collectors were in the village, whip in hand.<sup>3</sup>

The suffering and humiliation inflamed anti-European and nationalist sentiment as well as resentment of the Turco-Circassians and Egyptian-Albanians who dominated the military command and prestigious government posts.

In 1879 the formation of the Egyptian Nationalist Party and the subsequent 1881 coup attempt against the Khedive Tawfiq (the more pliable son of Ismail), led by the charismatic

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2. "From about 10,000 in 1848, the number of Europeans in Egypt grew nearly ten times by 1882 . . . the sheer numbers of immigrants might have been enough to generate a certain amount of conflict . . . The Europeans were present everywhere the Egyptian worker, artisan, or merchant looked, whether as competitors for work, or as owners acquiring workshops, or as creditors. Europeans demanded cash crops like cotton, transforming the economy. But they also insisted on immunity from Egyptian law and taxation, seeking an advantage over Egyptians in their own country that led to seething frustrations." Juan R. I. Cole, "Of Crowds and Empires: Afro-Asian Riots and European Expansion, 1857–1882," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 1 (Jan. 1989): 106–33, at 111.

3. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (New York: 1922), 8–9 quoted by Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London, New York: Verso, 2001): 104.

Egyptian general Ahmed Urabi, put the British in fear of their pocketbooks and their shipping routes. Concerned that the debt continued to be serviced and that the canal be protected, in May of 1882 Britain and France dispatched complementary fleets of warships to Alexandria, prompting a cascade of anti-European riots. For three days in July the British fleet bombarded Alexandria (by this time the French had sailed), commencing with some three thousand shells on the first day. They followed the shelling with an invasion of marines. By August, General Sir Garnet Wolseley had converged a force of over thirty thousand troops and forty Royal Navy warships to seize the Suez Canal, decimate the Urabi Revolt and secure Cairo, all of which was accomplished in short order. From mid-September 1882, although formally an independent country and Ottoman province ruled by the Khedive, in reality the British maintained possession and control of the Egypt well into the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

Although they had to relinquish Egypt to the British, French colonizing efforts fared much better on the Barbary Coast, which included Tripoli (now Libya), Tunis (Tunisia), Algeria and Morocco. In the mid-nineteenth century Tripoli was a feuding, disorganized, minor province of the Ottoman Empire. However, as Europeans gobbled up regions to the east and west, it became the focus of Ottoman reform efforts and an attempt to establish a political and commercial bulwark against aggressive European encroachment. Emphasis on land and administrative reform, agricultural production and settlement met with varying degrees of success, in part due to the limited arable land (in today's Libya, a little more than one percent is

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4. See generally, *Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century*, vol. 2, The Cambridge History of Egypt, Cambridge Histories Online, <[histories.cambridge.org](http://histories.cambridge.org)>.

arable). Modernizing reforms could scarcely compete with the province's well-established and profitable slave trade, even after its formal abolition in 1853. In 1872, the year of Edwin Weeks' first trip to North Africa, the British Consul in Benghazi reported on the

enormous proportions which the trade in slaves has assumed. Extraordinary prices have ruled, both in Egypt and Constantinople, and the local Government has openly permitted and encouraged the slave dealers, and thousands of these poor wretched creatures have been exported. It may be asked how this affects commerce; but the answer is simple. British subjects dare not mix themselves up in any way in this nefarious traffic; and the natives, protected by their government, buy slaves in the interior and ship them to Alexandria, where they quadruple their capital.<sup>5</sup>

The Ottoman Empire's willingness to invest considerable capital in building forts, digging wells and raising mosques in a concerted effort to protect the caravan routes that supplied the province's principal export discouraged Europeans from developing alternative commercial interests in the area. With limited commercial prospects to be gained only at the expense of extreme moral compromises, most Europeans concluded there simply were easier and safer profits to be made elsewhere in North Africa.

Immediately to the west, Tunis offered improved opportunities, especially for the French. France's decades-long occupation of neighboring Algeria spurred keen interest in Tunisian governmental and commercial affairs. By the mid-nineteenth century Tunis was home to several European consulates and sizable expatriate communities, whose activities centered on the influx of European manufactured goods that increasingly overwhelmed local production.

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5. Lisa Anderson, "Nineteenth-Century Reform in Ottoman Libya," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, no. 3 (Aug. 1984): 325–48 at 334, quoting from British Accounts and Papers (1872), "Report on Bangazi," 1080.

Like Tripoli, Tunis was formally a province of the Ottoman Empire although the Bey of Tunis (Muhmmad III as-Sadiq) governed autonomously and maintained an independent armed force. To counteract Europe's intimidatory advances, the Bey instigated a number of reforms to modernize the Tunisian economy, infrastructure, army and navy. But European banks' onerous terms, balanced on the back of a tottering economy, left the government in dire financial straits. Taxes skyrocketed, leading to mounting popular dissatisfaction, insurrection, and a desperate bargain with European bankers. In the late 1860s crop failures, famines, and devastating typhus and cholera epidemics further decimated the region. Bankruptcy was declared in 1869; a Commission Financière Internationale, led by France, Italy and Britain, took over management of the Tunisian economy.

In the coming decade France gained virtually complete control over Tunis. As one of the outcomes of the Congress of Berlin (July 1878), convened to address Balkan nationalism and the European balance of power thrown akilter by the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78), Tunis was used as a bargaining chit to placate France. Initially somewhat ambivalent about its colonial objectives in Tunis, a series of devious commercial maneuvers by the British and Italians prompted French troops to invade Tunis in April 1881. Using the pretext of driving the troublesome Tunisian Kroumer from overstepping the borders into Algeria, ten of thousands of French soldiers crushed the indigenous resistance, paving the way for the Treaty of Bardo (May 12, 1881) which granted France a protectorate over the province nominally controlled by the Bey of Tunis, Muhammed as-Sadiq.

Decades earlier, the French had exhibited a similar *modus operandi* in next-door Algeria. Disputatious relations dated to the Napoleonic Wars, aggravated by outrages perpetrated against

European and American shipping and enslavement of sailors by Barbary pirates. The pirates, actually privateers acting in concert with the rulers of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, stoked the coffers of the Ottoman provinces and helped ensure their autonomy. Rightly offended by the corsairs' common early-nineteenth century practice of enslaving sailors and Christians, not to mention impeding commerce, the European powers and the young United States conducted a series of successful naval operations against the Dey of Algiers and his fellow Ottoman provincial rulers. When the Dey of Algiers struck the French consul with his ceremonial fly whisk on April 29, 1827, it was all the French needed to precipitate an international incident. General de Bourmont sailed six hundred ships to coast of Algiers, landing about 34,000 troops just west of the Dey's stronghold. The Dey and his family hastily departed for Italy as the French army ended centuries of local Ottoman rule.

Sparing no means, the French army surmounted fierce resistance to gain control of northern Algeria by the late 1840s. Algeria was thence forth governed as an integral part of France. Land was seized and sold to *colons* at bargain prices; French prisoners were dumped on Algerian shores; traditional social, communal structures and land holdings were dismantled. The French army, however, could scarcely contain seething popular resentment. In 1871 fighting spread throughout the region, fueled by soaring wheat prices and the same drought and famine conditions that had spread throughout the Middle East in the late 1860s. With a long list of grievances against the army's ruthless suppression, facing starvation and unable to obtain promised governmental loans to replenish seed supplies, an insurrection that began with the Kabyle people quickly spread to the *spahis*, the French light cavalry regiments comprised of indigenous soldiers. Retribution was swift and severe. A *régime d'exception* was imposed on

insurrectionist areas that enabled Muslims to be jailed for years, without trial, for minor offenses that seemingly threatened French authority.

Morocco, the focus of Edwin Weeks' early travels, had close cultural ties to Algeria but, for various reasons, was able to remain relatively autonomous until the end of the nineteenth century, primarily by politically buying off the major powers. In the 1840s a testy conflict with France over the Algerian border and the harboring of Algerian resistance leader 'Abd al-Qādir (who had fled Algeria to regroup in northern Morocco) led to France's bombardment of coastal Tangier and Mogador. Morocco was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Tangiers with which it acknowledged France's claims to Algeria. Although it bought some measure of peace with France, the treaty deeply divided factions within Morocco, further destabilizing the region. Always keeping a wary eye on developments near the Strait of Gibraltar and its Mediterranean shipping interests, Britain was not about to let Continental powers gain the upper hand on the Moroccan coast. However, Britain was able in effect to gain substantial economic control over Morocco (and keep other European interests at bay) through an 1856 commercial treaty that negotiated away the sultan's lucrative monopolies on exports and capped customs duties.

With Britain and France mollified, second-rate power Spain stepped up its military threats. Spain posed an imminent menace to Moroccan independence due to its proximity just across the Strait of Gibraltar as well as to its possession of two port cities located on the Moroccan coast, Ceuta and Melilla. These cities, part of the Spanish empire, were under constant assault from Moroccan raiders (the Kabylas) who easily evaded Spanish soldiers by galloping straight for the desert. When promises and covenants failed to halt the attacks, and of course with an eye on its economic interests and investment opportunities, as early as the late



1850s Spain began to whip up a frenzy of rhetoric to justify invasion of Morocco. Spain declared war on Morocco on October 22, 1859 after the Rif attacked and destroyed Spanish fortifications and, in an unforgivable slight to the Spanish, took down and damaged the Spanish shield. A Spanish force of thirty-six thousand (backed up by heavy artillery, naval power, and a surge of patriotic feeling) took only a few weeks to vanquish the Moroccans in the 1860 Battle of Tetuan. A month later Morocco recognized Spanish control of Ceuta and Melilla in perpetuity, agreed to restrain the unruly attackers, ceded a few other territories and paid a hefty cash indemnity to the victors—which Morocco could only pay by taking out a loan from the British.

Lacking the industrial and manufacturing base of Britain and France, Spain was slow to follow up its military successes in Morocco with commercial ones. (The real winner was Britain, which was enabled to strengthen its presence in the Straits, a benefit to the British steamship line that recently had started operating between Gibraltar and Tangiers and was critical to the strategic defense of the Suez Canal, just underway.) Despite numerous attempts to establish commercial momentum, a series of internal economic and civil crises in Spain deterred progress in Morocco. Again and again Spanish commercial initiatives and ambitious plans for a Moroccan railway were thwarted by the combined machinations of the British and French, who by 1863 had won the rights from the Moroccan government to purchase properties as well as acquired immunities from local jurisdiction for their citizens.<sup>6</sup> Other commercial schemes were

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6. Alberto Elena and Javier Ordóñez, "Science, Technology, and the Spanish Colonial Experience in the Nineteenth Century," *Osiris*, 2nd series, 15 *Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise* (2000): 70–82.

undermined by weak urban and agrarian structures in Morocco, its largely mobile population and a countryside that was disquietingly inhospitable to Europeans. European merchants were constantly on guard against tribal insurrection and unwilling to invest surplus capital in land and production as they had in other North African regions.

At the mercy of European military and commercial ambitions, with mounting debts and onerous taxes, prices of staples escalating due to export demands and the growing resentment of the indigenous population, the sultan was forced to pour money into the army in order to maintain order. Using European military advisors and weapons, the army was routinely employed as an internal police force. Rural groups rallied around their shaykhs; calls for *jihad* were common, directed not only against a Christian foe but a monarchy seen as steeped in oppression, betrayal and collusion with Europeans.<sup>7</sup> Politically disunited and economically floundering, in the coming decades Moroccan independence waned as the faltering Spanish colonization plans gave way to the more aggressive designs of the French.

### American Interests in North Africa

Because the United States had no direct colonial interests in North Africa, as an American Edwin Lord Weeks' interpretations of the sites and cultures of the region were accorded more objectivity than if he had been a French or British citizen. The question arises whether Weeks' perceived objectivity arose from the content of his paintings, or whether the appreciation of their

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7. Susan G. Miller and Amal Rassam, "The View from the Court: Moroccan Reactions to European Penetration during the Late Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (1983): 25–38.

content was amplified by a contemporaneous understanding of American national character and opinion.

Though Americans viewed developments in North Africa from afar, each new episode covered in the American press roiled Yankee arguments on the morality of imperialism and the advisability of European alliances. Distance did not prevent educated Americans from taking a serious interest in European colonial affairs or from developing stubborn, divisive opinions on the relative merits of the English versus the French brand of imperialism and, ultimately, whether colonizing expeditions were really worth the trouble.

Of all regions of the world, Americans were particularly wary of North Africa, the scene of the earliest, and some of the bitterest, international humiliations of the young nation at the hands of the Barbary pirates, labeled "sea dogs" and "a pettifogging nest of robbers" by Thomas Jefferson.<sup>8</sup> For years Americans were forced to pay millions in tribute to the corsairs (in 1800, 20% of U.S. government expenditures), who sailed primarily from Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers. The relative costs of buying a dishonorable peace or waging an uncertain war was a determination that the isolationist Congress was unable to resolve in favor of military mobilization. However, after the close of the War of 1812 and the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in December of 1814, the newly-confident public clamored for retribution against the degradations perpetrated upon American citizens and trade.

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8. Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present* (New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 32, without further citation to Jefferson.

After more than thirty years of indignities and the capture of thirty-five American vessels and seven hundred sailors, in 1815 a reluctant James Madison requested from Congress and received a formal declaration of war. He dispatched American naval hero Stephen Decatur, at the command of the flagship U.S.S. Guerriere and ten warships, to the Barbary Coast. The expedition was an unqualified triumph for Decatur, who obtained the unconditional release of American captives, a \$10,000 indemnity and a favorable treaty from the Dey of Algiers "dictated at the mouths of our cannon." After next proceeding to Tunis and Tripoli to secure the release of additional hostages as well as compensation for seized ships, Decatur and his victorious fleet returned to the United States to resounding jubilation. These triumphant international forays enormously elevated the young nation's military stature and recharged Americans' sense of national identity and mission in the world.<sup>9</sup> On the coast of North Africa, America had entered the world stage.

Though in subsequent decades American trade in the Mediterranean dramatically increased, the country remained divided on the moral, political and economic advisability of colonizing expeditions. Each new North African extra-territorial foray by a European country churned popular opinion in the United States. The central issue was plain, invariably presenting a stark choice: to stand with a European ally and garner the reciprocal benefits, or to stand against, and remain loyal to a legacy of anti-colonialism.

Popular American opinion was surprisingly astute. As the shaky 1878 Conference of Berlin accords finally fell apart in April 1881 when the French marched from Algiers into

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9. Oren, 21–75.

Tunisia (to establish a French protectorate that lasted until 1956),<sup>10</sup> the American consul in Tunis, George Washington Fish, lamented “It looks as though the French are coming here to stay.” Distressed by the French troops’ brazen and violent actions, he observed with dismay: “In plain Anglo-Saxon language . . . the French are . . . using the [Tunisian] government for their own purposes.”<sup>11</sup>

Overall, American supporters of imperialist incursions tended to view the French as less capable colonizers than the British. With a degree of naïvete and cynicism shielded by distance, the American press lost no time shoveling heaps of derision on what was considered the sheer silliness of the most recent French advances in North Africa:

But the French do not look upon colonization as a means of building up either the prosperity or the power of France. They want to convince England that in spite of the disasters which have overtaken France she can still cultivate those noble field sports for which England is famous, and they therefore cheerfully incur the expense and trouble of colonizing Tunis.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, to many Americans, the French efforts were a lesson in colonial futility and the failings of national character:

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10. The Congress of Berlin, held in 1878, convened the European Great Powers to develop a plan to address the weakening Ottoman Empire, the "sick man" of Europe, and the implications for the balance of power among Western nations. It was agreed to allow France (which had already colonized Algeria) to incorporate Tunisia (a welcome distraction from France’s humiliating defeat in the earlier Franco-Prussian War); Italy was promised what is present-day Libya; Britain gained a protectorate over Cyprus and an agreement from the French to look the other way while Britain settled a revolt in Egypt. When diplomatic relations with the Bey failed, the French used the pretense of defending its colony, Algeria, from the marauding Khroumer, and marched tens of thousands of troops straight into Tunis in the spring of 1881. Tunisia became a French protectorate on May 12, 1881.

11. Fish quoted by Oren, 260 and 644 note 2: “USNA, RF 59; Dispatches from U.S. Consuls, Tunis: Fish to Hunter, April 22, 1881 (“It looks as though”); Fish to Hunter, May 5, 1881 (“In plain Anglo-Saxon”).

12. “A Field Sport,” *New York Times*, 1 July 1881, 4.

The scheme of conquest or colonization which the French Government undertook to execute at once in several quarters of the world has all along seemed to all foreigners ridiculous and impracticable. It has been a tacit assumption that the French were not fitted for the work of colonization, either military or commercial.<sup>13</sup>

If Americans viewed the British as more capable in the imperial arena, they nonetheless expressed reservations about Britain's methods and the legitimacy of its foreign incursions. While the French were knee-deep in the Tunisian dunes, Britain sent the famed Sir Garnet Wolseley, backed by a forty-thousand-man expeditionary force, to bombard Alexandria and crush the Urabi revolt in Egypt. For some vocal Americans, it was "an act disgraceful to a great and civilized nation":<sup>14</sup>

. . . British guns have, without sufficient provocation or adequate justification in law, necessity or public morals, been turned upon Alexandria and worked sad havoc upon one of the famed old historic cities of the world. Small honor has England earned for herself by that shameful act of flagrant brutality!<sup>15</sup>

[England is that] . . . most courteous highwayman among nations . . . When has England willingly taken her hands off a desirable province once in her power? [quoting the words of Herbert Spencer, it was] . . . the unscrupulous greed of conquest, cloaked by pretenses of spreading the blessings of British rule and British religion.<sup>16</sup>

Yet, as the British became more entrenched in Egypt and the perilous Sudan, American objections were often smothered by equally insistent ovations. Some in the United States

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13. "The French in Asia," *New York Times*, 16 Mar. 1884, 8.

14. "The English in Egypt," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 Feb. 1885, 2.

15. "American Trade Opportunities in Egypt Destroyed," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 July 1882, 2.

16. "The Conquest of Egypt," *New York Times*, 15 Sept. 1882, 4.

dismissed all the imperialist hubbub as the sentimental, misplaced outrage of the ignorant. For these Anglophiles, invasion by England was “the best thing that could happen” to Egypt:

An American who considers how England’s attack on Egypt originated in motives which will not bear the slightest scrutiny, and how this final violent seizure of the country is only the last of a long series of oppressive acts which had for their result, if not for their deliberately contemplated object, the uprising led by Arabi, will naturally, and perhaps in heated terms, condemn this and other similar attempts to suppress all manifestations of the natural resentment of the natives for their foreign despoilers. Such sentiments can originate only in the biased and imperfect understanding of the sentimentalist.<sup>17</sup>

The opinion of Gen. Grant that an English protectorate of Egypt would be the best thing that could happen for Egypt is quoted throughout the press, but generally without comment, only that you can see in the way it is proclaimed that the press and the public welcome with gratitude the kindly words of the great General and ex-President of the United States.<sup>18</sup>

However, often the staunchest American defenders of the British imperial mission alloyed their opinions with provisory remarks. In September 1884, the *Century Magazine* recognized the futility of an attempt to rescue the British hero, General Gordon, then hopelessly trapped in the Sudan, and the resultant blow to British pride, in this detailed letter from an American expeditionary officer:

No wonder the situation in Egypt is galling to British pride. They seized that country by a doubtful exercise of power; they have forced Egypt to abandon the vast empire of the Soudan with a disregard for the loss of life consequent upon a hasty and unprepared evacuation.<sup>19</sup>

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17. “Flogging the Egyptians,” *New York Times*, 4 Oct. 1882, 4.

18. “Europe and Arabi’s War: England’s Mistakes and Bismarck’s Manipulations,” *New York Times*, 6 Aug. 1882, 8.

19. R. E. Colston, “Open Letters: The Rescue of Chinese Gordon,” *The Century; a popular quarterly* 28, no. 5 (Sept. 1884): 790–91 at 791.

It is clear that, regardless of the side argued, Americans were skeptical of the purity of European motives and the wisdom of British and French actions in North Africa. What is equally apparent is that educated Americans were often well-informed on the subject, held vociferous opinions, and did not hesitate to express them.

As an increasingly industrialized America grew in economic and military strength in the latter half of the nineteenth century, opinion translated to political and cultural capital. In the Gilded Age, how Americans viewed the world and moved society in response to that vision (which in turn drove a new vision) became a vital power in international affairs.

#### North African Chronology: Early Travels

Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings of the 1870s and early 1880s may be viewed as particularly relevant to the heated American discussions on the legitimacy of French and British imperialism. As these arguments played out in the newspapers, legislatures and parlors of Europe and America, Weeks was up to his pith helmet in the sands of North Africa, traveling during a time of active European military engagement with the region. A clearer understanding of Weeks' personal circumstances will foster a more complete analysis of his paintings as transnational documents.

By the early 1880s, Edwin Weeks had already trudged through Syria (1872), Egypt (1872 and 1875); Morocco (1872, 1875, 1877 (?), 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881), probably Algeria and possibly Tunisia. As no known personal diaries or significant cache of Weeks' letters has come to light, to develop a chronology of his travels has required piecing together references and dates



from a wide variety of sources.<sup>20</sup> Much of the initial tedious work was accomplished by Ulrich Hiesinger in his 2002 gallery catalog *Edwin Lord Weeks: Visions of India*. The chronology presented here was developed independently of, but is broadly consistent with, that created by Hiesinger. The accounts diverge in a few respects due to newly discovered material that clarified obscure points, affirmed or negated previous assumptions. Substantial space has been devoted to the details of Weeks' travels in order to fill in the many blanks in his biography, to clarify erroneous accounts, and to assist in the dating and subject identifications of his paintings.

Some scholars have asserted that Weeks spent several uninterrupted years in North Africa, but at present this does not appear to have been the case. However, Weeks did indeed spend months at a time there throughout the 1870s and 1880s, though he frequently returned to Paris for exhibitions and dealer negotiations as well as for the social season. He also occasionally traveled to the United States and to other cities in Europe, although always maintaining Paris as his residence. It is hoped that future research will be able to fill in many of the blanks that are now an unavoidable feature of Edwin Lord Weeks' travel biography.

Weeks' peregrinations started very early in his career, with his first trip to the Holy Land, Egypt and Morocco. His earliest journey to the Middle East and North Africa was in 1872, when he was accompanied part of the way by Boston artist A. P. Close, who died en route in Beirut. In Syria, Weeks traveled overland, camping along the way, from Beirut north to the cliffs of

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20. Unfortunately, the dates gleaned from these sources (dated paintings and sketches, acquaintances' memoirs, occasional letters, newspaper accounts) can seldom be corroborated and therefore must be considered tentative. In this section I have tried to adhere to a strict chronological framework so that the "blanks" in Weeks' career may be more easily spotted and addressed by future research.

Akoura, then pushing farther through the mountains to Hasroun. Around the time of Close's death Weeks made a trip to Damascus; after his companion's burial he continued on to Tyre, Lebanon; Jerusalem; Jaffa and, by November 1872, to Cairo.

Weeks may have traveled to Morocco after he left Cairo; this would date his initial trip to Morocco to the last weeks of 1872. The primary evidence for citing 1872 as the year of his first trip to northwest Africa is the painting entitled *Tangier, Morocco* dated 1872.<sup>21</sup> Further support is offered by another small oil-on-board sketch, *Moroccan Market Scene*, signed "E. L. Weeks" and dated 1873, that appeared on the auction market in 1999.<sup>22</sup> However, save those inscribed by the artist, many of the titles of Weeks' early works are vague and/or misidentify the subjects and settings. Absent some corroborative information, dating Weeks' first Moroccan trip to 1872 should be considered tentative.<sup>23</sup>

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21. *Tangier, Morocco* (1872) was reproduced in Gerdts, "Americans in faraway places in the Roderic H. D. Henderson collection," 647.

22. "*Moroccan Market Scene*, signed E.L. Weeks and dated 1873, 1.1. oil on board 12 by 9 in. (30.5 by 22.9cm.) Provenance: Nat Schwartz, Delray Beach, Florida. By descent to the present owner (his niece)," Sotheby's auction Lot 53, 11 March 1999, New York; Sotheby's, *American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* (New York: Sotheby's, 1999).

23. Two examples of this labeling issue are *The Moorish Bazaar* and *Courtyard, North Africa*. The subject of the watercolor vaguely entitled *The Moorish Bazaar* is actually a depiction of one of the medieval gates of Cairo; the street vendors are somewhat incidental to the architecture. A watercolor that appeared on the auction market in October, 2012, entitled *Courtyard, North Africa* (formerly *Near East Courtyard*—see Barridoff Galleries, 24) may be identified as another Cairo scene, an interior corner of the Sultan Qaytbay Funerary Complex (the same corner was painted some years later by British artist Robert Talbot Kelly, 1861–1934). Further corroborative information in the form of letters, sketches or ancillary references will help establish the Moroccan chronology. For example, S.G.W. Benjamin describes an incident near Ceuta that took place when Weeks was in Morocco "for the first time." The Spanish governor's party was attacked by "Moors;" during the night the governor's escort, also "Moors," were killed, beheaded and their heads "planted on spears around the camp of the Spaniards." If a record of this event could be found it would serve to place the approximate dates of Weeks' first trip to Morocco. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 28.

Weeks arrived back in Boston very early in 1873 and worked steadily through the spring and summer on scenes derived from his recent travels to the East. A September 23, 1873 article in the *Boston Evening Transcript* noting "E. L. Weeks is at work on a Mohammedan dervish at prayer," suggests that the artist remained in Boston through the summer into the fall. Little information is available for later autumn and winter of 1873 or early 1874, although notices in the *Boston Evening Transcript* suggest that he was working steadily in Boston through the following spring and summer.<sup>24</sup> By June 1874 Weeks was aboard the *Pereire*, on his way to Paris with J. Foxcroft Cole and family. Over the fall and winter of 1874–75 Weeks remained in Paris to further his arts training, even as he continued to send paintings of Eastern scenes to the Boston gallery of Elliott, Blakeslee and Noyes.<sup>25</sup>

But prior to his departure for Paris, as early as the summer of 1874 Weeks was already planning to return to the East at his earliest opportunity.<sup>26</sup> That next opportunity came late that

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24. "E. L. Weeks has several excellent Eastern subjects, and a view in Florida, all of which are good. The effects in the Eastern subjects are quite good, and his Florida sketch is full of pleasing color and conscientious work." "The Fine Arts," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 14 May 1874, 4 col. 5; "Several of our resident artists will spend the summer across the water, among them Rouse and Weeks, J. Appleton Brown and others," "Art Item," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 1 June 1874, 1 col. 2.

25. "Mr. Weeks, as is well known, has made a specialty of Eastern subjects, and most of his works in the present collection are scenes in Egypt and the Holy Land. One of the best . . . 'The River Nile,' held a prominent place on the walls at the last Art Club Exhibition and attracted particular attention. Better even in some respects is No. 67, 'A Nile Sunset,' the last picture, we believe, from the brush of Mr. Weeks before his departure from the country. No. 40, 'Pilgrim Caravan at Damascus,' is full of good qualities, as also are Nos. 23 and 11, 'A Bedouin Herdsman' and 'The Pyramids of Ghizeh.' Besides the paintings in oil, Mr. Weeks has two exceedingly meritorious water colors in the sale, No. 24, 'The Gate of Thomas, Damascus,' and No. 56, 'Tower of Hippieus, Jerusalem.'" "The Fine Arts. The Sale at Elliot, Blakeslee & Noyes's," *Boston Daily Globe*, 16 Nov. 1874, 5.

26. Ulrich Hiesinger wrote of "his [Weeks'] intention to remain in or near Paris for a time before going on to the Near East," citing the *Boston Evening Transcript* of 23 June 1874. Hiesinger, 14 and note 22.

winter, as reported on March 2, 1875 by the *Boston Evening Transcript*: "E. L. Weeks has just left Paris for Cairo, to be gone for two or three months."<sup>27</sup> In early April 1875, according to the *Evening Transcript*, he was "now in the East, working hard" even as his paintings were being shown in Paris at the Société des Amis des Beaux Arts.<sup>28</sup>

Early July 1875 found Weeks once again in Paris, presumably not long returned from his North African travels, laden with sketches and brimming with ideas for new works.<sup>29</sup> However, the restless twenty-six year old remained only about four months in the City of Light. By the second week in November 1875 Weeks was already headed to Morocco (via Italy)—probably his third visit—where he planned to pass the winter, intending to return again to Paris in the summer of 1876.<sup>30</sup> All the while he was traveling, Weeks provided a steady inventory of paintings for

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27. Hiesinger 16 and note 30, quoting *Boston Evening Transcript*, 2 March 1875, 6.

28. "A late letter from Paris gives an interesting sketch of what the Boston artists located there are doing. The writer says, 'American art I am very pleased to find in a flourishing condition here; some of our art students are working hard, while some who have already acquired a home reputation are doing their best to improve and give encouraging signs for an art of our own; one of the most prominent points about the dozen or more of our better artists here is the development of original power . . . J. Foxcroft Cole is developing a new style, and now has on his easel two large landscapes with cattle that are full of vigor and nature, with rather more life and variety and warmth than in his earlier works . . . E. L. Weeks is now in the East, working hard. He has a very good painting in the exhibition of the Société des Amis des Beaux Arts, now open in the Rue Les Polletier. S.G.W. Benjamin left on the 12th of March for Havre,' "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 6 April 1875, 6 col. 2.

29. "Alma-Tadema and Jules Breton, in my opinion, are represented by two of the best specimens in the Salon. . . . Boston is quite well and respectably represented in Paris art circles at present . . . E. L. Weeks has lately returned from the East with a number of fine sketches, among them several grand subjects, which he may use for large pictures with great success. All of them are fine in color and vigorous in drawing." "Art in Paris. The Pictures at the Salon," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 2 July 1875, 6 col. 5.

30. "Weeks has left Paris for Morocco, where he will pass the winter, returning to Paris again for the summer," "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 9 November 1875, 6 col. 3. Citing a letter about American artists in Florence, the *Boston Evening Transcript* mentions that "Edward Weeks" was there. "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 12 November 1875, 6 col. 4. "The illustrations of Eastern

Boston exhibitions:

Another group of great interest is that clustered around E. L. Week's [sic] large sensational canvas, "On the Suez Desert," (130), which, brave in color and full of swinging motion as it is, yet suffers in its conscious posing, and in its fresh, hard lines, from its juxtaposition with the sweetly mingled chaste refinement, clearness and softness of touch in the beautiful Kensett landscape beneath it. A better success of Mr. Weeks's is its vis-à-vis, the 'Pilgrimage' (79), with its fine atmosphere, its natural, but not less effective grouping, its brilliant composition and pleasing story, and still another most excellent Weeks picture is the 'Garden' (124) with a monk picking flowers, strongly conceived and most capitally executed as to color and especially as to 'values.'<sup>31</sup>

In his 1881 essay on Weeks, S.G.W. Benjamin wrote that during this Moroccan trip the artist toured Spain, crossed the straits of Gibraltar, and "passed several months in that little visited and remarkably picturesque city of Tangiers." The available evidence indicates that Weeks remained in Spain and Morocco from autumn of 1875 through the winter of 1876. Dating to this period are *A Moorish Guard, Tangier: Soldier of the Bashaw of Tangier* (signed and dated on the lower left "E.L.W. / Tanger '75") which shows a new boldness (Figure 4-2); *Tending the Sheep North Africa* (signed and dated 1876); and *In the Garden* (signed and dated 1876,

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life by E. L. Weeks are striking and full of merit. One of them—camels and their riders on the desert, with a boy marching along playing the flute—has the charm of simplicity, and much good color. The camels are drawn with understanding, and are well planted on their feet, while the figure of the boy is naïve and in good action. Mr. Weeks has made immense strides the last season, and promises to rank high in the branch of art he has chosen to follow." *Boston Advertiser*, 17 January 1876, quoted by Clara Erskine Clement and Laurence Hutton, *Artists of the Nineteenth Century and their Works*, vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton, Osgood and Co., 1879), 341 (no further citation).

31. Weeks' paintings were part of an exhibition of some two hundred works. "Art Club Exhibition," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 18 January 1876, 4 col. 3. Blakeslee and Noyes also received steady shipments from Weeks: "A picture by Weeks is also daily expected at the same gallery, which the artist writes is his most important work." *Boston Evening Transcript*, 7 March 1876, 6; "The pictures by Weeks and Enneking for the Centennial have been received by Mr. Blakeslee," "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 21 March 1876, 6 col. 4.

inscribed Tangier).<sup>32</sup>

### Back to Boston

Whether the young artist returned directly to Paris as planned is not documented. But even the most worldly, sophisticated travelers get homesick. September of 1876 found Weeks busy at work in his cozy studio in Newtonville on the outskirts of Boston.<sup>33</sup> S.G.W. Benjamin recalled:

. . . he had a little studio whose windows were fitted up to resemble the casements of oriental houses, while around the walls were clustered the costumes and ornaments he had collected in the far East. Beneath the windows stretched a divan strewn with embroidered stuffs from Grand Cairo. There were few spots in the vicinity of Boston where one could spend a pleasanter hour than in that little studio at Newtonville, chatting with the enthusiastic young artist.

There he painted some charming scenes, not only of oriental subjects, but also bits of the quiet Charles river close at hand.<sup>34</sup>

Weeks had evidently packed up his Moroccan and Spanish sketches and perhaps photographs and shipped them home with him. Stationed in the incongruous surroundings of his suburban Boston studio they inspired a new series of canvases on the East noted for their refined treatment

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32. Auction results for "Edwin Lord Weeks" as listed by Artifact, <[www.artifact.com](http://www.artifact.com)>, accessed 12 November 2012.

33. "Weeks is very busy at work at his studio at Newtonville. An exhibition of his pictures at the Art Club is in early prospect." "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 22 September 1876, 6 col. 5. "A collection of pictures and studies by Mr. Weeks will be exhibited at the next informal exhibition of the Boston Art Club, Saturday night, Dec. 2. It will be open to the public on the Monday and Tuesday following, after which it will remain for some time at the gallery of Blakeslee & Noyes, 127 Tremont street. The subjects are Oriental, and comprise phases of Eastern life in Morocco, Granada, Egypt and Palestine." "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 17 November 1876, 6 col. 3.

34. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 28.

of color and reflected light, among them: *Alhambra Windows* ("a scene in the chamber of Lindaraxa, a Moorish Sultana"); *A Tiled Mosque and Fountain, Tetuan, Morocco*; *Under the Orange Trees, Tangier, Morocco*; and *An Old Well in a Moorish Garden*. Weeks' residence in Spain and Morocco, followed by diligent production in the latter half of 1876, culminated in an end-of-year exhibition of some fifty paintings at the Boston galleries of Blakeslee and Noyes. The *Boston Daily Globe* singled out one of the exhibition's larger scenes of Tangier, *They toil not, neither do they spin*, as a work of "truly wonderful merit":

[the painting] . . . represents a groups of beggars, some of whom are so-called saints, in every attitude of listless laziness. Every figure is a study from life, and the lazy sentiment of the scene is shown even in the dogs, which form a conspicuous feature of the foreground. There is a fine display of color in this picture, which is of marked merit.<sup>35</sup>

The well-attended private reception for the press and friends of the artist acknowledged Weeks' increasing stature as a professional artist, but more importantly the press reviews marked the public recognition of his rapid technical advancement and his growing reputation as a penetrating observer of Eastern culture. The *Boston Daily Globe* stated, "We have never seen such a choice collection of paintings of Oriental scenes as this in this country":

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35. *They toil not, neither do they spin* was a scene of "the streets of Tangiers." S.G.W. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 28. *A Moorish Guard* is described in the auction catalogue text for Christie's *19th Century European Paintings, Drawings, Water Colors, and Sculpture*, 14 February 1996, New York, Lot 32 (New York: Christie's, 1996); Edwin Lord Weeks: "A MOORISH GUARD, TANGIER: SOLDIER OF THE BASHAW OF TANGIER signed and dated 'E.L.W./Tanger '75' lower left—oil on paper laid down on canvas 20 7/8 x 14 1/4 in. (53 x 36.2 cm.)," [www.artfact.com](http://www.artfact.com), accessed 2 May 2012. The other paintings mentioned (including *Twilight in the Garden of Gethsemane*, *Camels at Supper* and *Camel and Arab*) are listed in "At the Picture Galleries . . . The E. L. Weeks Collection," *Boston Daily Globe*, 7 December 1876, 3.

Mr. Weeks has made careful study of some of the most characteristic scenes in the East, and he has not only depicted their outward aspects, but has interpreted their interior significance. In his paintings the features of the country, the buildings, the people, their costumes and modes of life are reproduced with singular felicity and fidelity. The pictures bear the marks of having been painted from the life, in the open air; there is a freshness, vitality and force about them, which prove this, and the opportunities which their subjects afford for vivid and striking contrasts have been fully improved.<sup>36</sup>

Increasing recognition through private galleries and public exhibitions, such as the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876, translated into rising prices for Weeks' paintings, spurred higher by the consistent advertising of Blakeslee and Noyes.<sup>37</sup>

For the twenty-seven year-old Edwin Weeks the next year was one of dreams deferred and realized. His ambitious plan to sail to India around the first of March 1877 for a sojourn of two to three years was canceled three weeks before his expected departure.<sup>38</sup> Presumably Weeks

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36. "At the Picture Galleries," 3. "The Art Club rooms will be hung on next Saturday with a collection of the pictures of E. C. Weeks [sic], the first time of their exhibition in public. On the Monday following they will be removed to the gallery of Noyes & Blakeslee, where a private reception will be given on the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 6, to the press and the friends of the artist. The pictures will remain at that place on exhibition the ten days following." "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 28 Nov. 1876, 6 col. 2.

37. Weeks exhibited *An Arab Story Teller* at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. Thompson, 41 citing United States International Exhibition, 1876 Official Catalog. The sales prices of Weeks' painting were garnering attention: "Noyes & Blakeslee sold on Monday, at private sale, four of E. L. Weeks's Eastern subjects for a thousand dollars—a pretty encouraging figure in these times. They were sold to two parties—two to each." "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 31 Jan. 1877, 6 col. 6. Blakeslee and Noyes were astute marketers who kept up steady advertising: "For this week only! / The exhibition and sale of / Pictures / by E. L. Weeks, / at the Art Galleries of / Noyes & Blakeslee." *Boston Evening Transcript*, 19 December 1876, 5.

38. "E.C. Weeks [sic] proposes to sail for India in about three weeks, for two or three years absence. The remainder of his collection of pictures at Noyes & Blakeslee's gallery will therefore be disposed of at public sale at an early day. The pictures will be hung Monday next. Eleven were sold at private sale during the past week at the artist's own prices. Among them were those which appear in the catalogue as 'The Old Clothes Bazaar, Cairo'; 'Going to Market, Tangier,' 'The Dervish'; 'The Carpet Bazaar, Cairo'; 'The Pilgrimage to the Jordan'; 'The Olive Grove, Bethlehem'; 'Landscape, with Moorish Horsemen'; 'Camels at Supper, Tangier'; and 'An Old Well in a Moorish Garden, Twilight.' The 'Camels at Supper'



was detained in Boston by the prospect of his upcoming marriage or perhaps by his father's illness. There is little news of the artist until late summer, when on September first he applied for a passport in order to travel abroad in the company of his wife Fanny [sic] whose age on the application is given as twenty-three years.<sup>39</sup> This was putting the cart slightly ahead of the horse, as Edwin and Fannie (Francis Rollins Hale) were married a few days later at the Evans House in Boston on September 12, 1877 by the Reverend George J. Prescott, of the Episcopal Church.<sup>40</sup>

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was purchased by Ola [?] Bull, who will take it back to Norway with him." "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 8 February 1877, 6 col. 7. The trip and auction were canceled: "Mr. Week's [sic] departure having been deferred for the present, the sale of his works at Noyes & Blakeslee's will not take place as announced. Several, however, have been sold at private sale within a few days. The large picture, 'Shoeing a Moorish Charger, Tangier,' 'An Olive Grove at Bethlehem,' 'Moorish Horsemen Crossing a Brook,' and 'The Reconnoissance,' a Bedouin horseman by the Dead Sea," "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 15 Feb. 1877, 6 col. 2.

39. The 1877 passport application notes Weeks' birthdate as October 9, 1849 [though the 9 looks like an 8]. It was witnessed by his friend, the illustrator Frank T. Merrill. The gallery catalog for the Weeks exhibition at the University of New Hampshire states that "When Weeks was not in America, a close friend and fellow illustrator, Frank T. Merrill, arranged Weeks' business affairs and American exhibitions. Merrill and Weeks grew up together and remained lifelong friends. In Weeks' absence, Merrill became the 'uncle' to Minnie Weeks Goodwin's family. Edwin and Frances did not have any children. Thus, Weeks became a strong paternal figure to his younger sister Minnie and her family." Ganley 9 (no further citation). A passport application made by Fannie Weeks at the U.S. Embassy in Paris on 17 October 1916 states that her date and place of birth was 24 February 1856 at Dover, New Hampshire, but the year was more likely 1854. National Archives and Records Administration, *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795–1925*, U. S. Passport Applications, January 2, 1906–March 31, 1925, ARC Identifier 583830/MLR Number A1 534, NARA Series M1490, Roll 341, Fannie Hale Weeks.

40. Unidentified newspaper clipping, Weeks Family Scrapbook, "In this city, Sept. 12, at the Evans House, by Rev. George J. Prescott, Mr. Edwin Lord Weeks of Newtonville to Miss Frances Rollins Hale, daughter of F. W. Hale, Esq., of Rollinsford, New Hampshire." All previous authors date the marriage of Weeks to September 1871. However, somewhere along the way 1877 was misread as 1871, resulting in an understandable error. Weeks' official marriage record notes his residence at the time as Boston, his occupation as Artist, the bride's residence as Rollinsford, New Hampshire, and the bride's parents as Frank and Susan L. Hale. Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts, *Massachusetts, Town Vital Collections, 1620–1988*, Marriages Registered in the City of Boston for the Year 1877, Record No. 1733, September 12, 1877. Online records available through Ancestry.com indicate that Frank Hale (Francis W. Hale) was born in 1827 or 1828 and died on 18 October 1896 at Rollinsford. He married Susan Hays Lord on 15 July 1850, when she was twenty-two and he twenty-five. In 1870, Frank (described as a "clerk" in the 1850 U.S. Census, a "merchant" in 1860 and a "cotton trader" in the 1870 U.S. Census) and

Fannie (Figure 4-3) was Edwin's first cousin, the daughter of his mother's sister Susan (Hays Lord) Hale. For a time, the Hale family lived with Weeks' grandparents on their farm in Rollinsford, New Hampshire, where Edwin had likely come to know Fannie. In the eyes of a girl who spent a good deal of her life on a farm in Rollinsford, surely Edwin Weeks cut an impressively dashing and romantic figure. No doubt the darkly handsome, energetic world traveler had his share of admirers at home and abroad, but the tall (for the time, at 5'6"), slender blond had accomplishments and allure of her own. Fannie must have been a young woman of considerable pluck, judging from accounts of the adventures the newlyweds were soon to encounter in Morocco.

#### Return to Morocco

It is unclear exactly when in the new year Weeks headed back to Morocco for what was likely the fourth time. Only a few months after the artist's marriage, on January 28th Edwin Weeks' father, Stephen Weeks, died of cancer.<sup>41</sup> During the period of his father's illness Weeks continued to exhibit in Boston to favorable reviews.<sup>42</sup> Arts writers repeatedly singled out Weeks'

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Susan lived for a time with Susan's parents, Edwin P. and Maria Lord, in Rollinsford. Fannie had at least one sibling, William (b. 18 January, 1856 in Dover, New Hampshire). There were likely two other children, Samuel and Martha. It appears Samuel died at a young age.

41. His age was recorded as 63 years, birthplace Greenland, New Hampshire, occupation merchant, cause of death cancer. Massachusetts Town and Vital Records, "Deaths, Registered in the City of Newton for the Year Ending December 31, 1878," January 28, 1878.

42. "The one thing to be noticed in all the paintings of this artist is the remarkable skill he displays in keeping the individuality of the colors. By this he produces most charming effects of color, where a less skillful artist would fail to make the picture more than interesting. There is a decided out-of-door look about this picture ['Midsummer'], too, which tells the beholders that the artist painted Nature just as he

dedication to craft as well as to the merits of his paintings as personal experiences of the East. In the 1879 *Artists of the Nineteenth Century and their Works*, Clara Erskine and Laurence Hutton reprinted the *Boston Advertiser's* assessment: "Mr. Weeks has taken up a field for study in which he finds himself almost alone, and has given every effort to the increase of his knowledge of the life and character of these people who toil in the field. For years Mr. Weeks has traveled in the East, filling his sketch-book with scenes with which to illustrate his experience there."<sup>43</sup>

Regardless of family travails, Weeks and his wife had departed Boston by the time Blakeslee and Noyes had mounted their mid-February exhibition of the artists' recent works:

An extended absence of several years in the East is the occasion of this sale of Pictures and Studies by Mr. Weeks. The collection offered includes several pictures painted during his former visit in Syria, Egypt and Morocco, together with others finished just previous to his recent departure from this country and which are now for the first time exhibited. As a student of Eastern life, with its rich color and unique effects, Mr. Weeks stands entirely alone among our Boston artists; having marked out for himself a bold path in which he has scarcely a rival in this country.<sup>44</sup>

By April 1878 the couple was in Tangier.<sup>45</sup>

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found her." Clement and Hutton, 341, quoting from *The Boston Advertiser* of November 20, 1877.

43. Clement and Hutton, 341, quoting from *The Boston Advertiser* of February 16, 1878.

44. Introduction to Noyes and Blakeslee, *Exhibition and Sale of Pictures by E. L. Weeks (Feb. 19, 20, 1878)*, (Boston: 1878), quoted by Hiesinger, 18 and note 40.

45. "Notes," originally published in the April 1878 number of the *Art Journal* (New York) provided the following regarding a Boston gallery exhibition of Weeks' paintings: "An exhibition at one of the galleries presented a number of pictures by E. L. Weeks, who is at present studying and painting in Tangiers. The result of Mr. Weeks's residence and observations in the East appeared in many interesting illustrations of Egyptian, Moorish, and Arab life, as it appears to the modern and artistic eye. The most striking, perhaps, was the picture entitled 'An Arab at Prayer in the Desert,' exhibiting with graphic and even imposing force a picturesque aspect of the sacred ceremonies of Islam. Others, well worthy of study, were 'A Caravan crossing a Brook, Morocco,' 'Arab Camp: Sunset near the Dead Sea,' 'Pyramids of Sakara, Egypt,' 'Sunset Effect on the Nile at Boulak,' 'The Arab Story-Teller,' and one, a beautiful Spanish landscape, 'The Alhambra and Sierra Nevada.' 'A Slave Caravan' brought forcibly before the fancy one of

In the interval between Weeks' departure from Morocco for Boston in 1876 and his return in 1878, the country had endured the horrifying effects of the worst drought in five hundred years. Nonetheless, Weeks was determined to investigate the interior of the country, even though these were the regions most devastated by the drought. This latest excursion in search of Moroccan subjects, which doubled as an exotic honeymoon for the recently married couple, nearly killed them both.

The very limited documentation suggests that the couple first went to Tangier, which was least impacted by the severe conditions.<sup>46</sup> With ready access to Europe, a large expatriate community and well situated port, Tangier and other areas along the northern coast were insulated from the worsening food shortages in the south and the interior. In Tangier they developed a close friendship with the Scottish artist Robert Gavin (1826/7–83), who became a housemate; the trio became quite inseparable.<sup>47</sup> Biographer S.G.W. Benjamin wrote that, after

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the most dramatic and frequent scenes of the East." "Notes," *Art Journal* (New York), n.s. 4 (1878): 126–28 at 128.

46. Weeks listed his address as simply "Tangiers" for the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1878 (which opened on May 1st). He submitted *A Moorish Pastoral*. Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, Vol. 8 (London: Henry Graves and Co., George Bell and Sons, 1906), 196 and noted by Ganley, 9 who adds that Weeks also contributed two figure drawings. Also, the April 1878 issue of the *Art Journal* (New York) in its review of a Boston exhibition of Weeks paintings noted that ". . . E. L. Weeks, who is at present studying and painting in Tangiers." "Notes," *Art Journal* 4, n.s. (1878): 126–28 at 128. However, Weeks did maintain a correspondence address in Paris in 1878, as the entry for the Salon catalogue of 1878 records "Chez M. Vallet, boulevard Haussmann, 108/ élève de M. Bonnat." *Un Chamelier morocain, à Tanger* was Weeks' first Salon contribution. Fink, 403.

47. Robert Gavin, R.S.A., a native of Leith, had "a great gift of color" and distinguished himself by his travels in America and paintings of "Negro subjects." He traveled about 1875 to North Africa where he specialized in scenes of "Moorish subjects" that he exhibited at the Scottish Academy. Robert Brydall, *Art in Scotland, its origin and progress* (Edinburgh, London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1889), 406. Weeks possibly could have met Gavin earlier in Tangier or even in the United States. Curiously, Weeks

spending some time on the coast, the party traveled to Tetuan, where they "took a house" and enjoyed "a number of romantic camping adventures" in the Atlas Mountains.<sup>48</sup> Although Benjamin makes this sound rather bold, the reality seems rather more tame than the retelling. Tangier in 1878 was a town of about ten thousand, located about forty-five miles from Tetuan, a town about twice as large, situated on the slopes of the Riff range. An 1878 guidebook noted that the "perfectly safe" twelve-hour trip could be made by camels, mules or horses, after application to the English or American consul for an escort.<sup>49</sup> Dating to this trip is *Shepherd on a Hill, Tetuan* (signed and inscribed Tetuan, 1878; Figure 4-4).

This was all too predictable for Weeks, who longed to explore areas of the country seldom experienced by Europeans. When a quarantine of Algerian ports forced the trio to abandon plans to travel to Algeria, the three settled on taking a steamer down the west coast from Tangier to Rabat and the nearby holy city of Salé, about five hours by sea from Tangier (or twelve overland north of Casablanca).<sup>50</sup> According to an 1878 guidebook published by John

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contributed *The Escort of a Moorish Prince—Sunset* to the Royal Scottish Academy's 1877 exhibition. George R. Halkett, ed., *The Royal Scottish Academy Notes* (Edinburgh: Thos. Gray, 1879), 34. Gavin lived with Weeks and his wife in Tangier, per Edwin Lord Weeks to Alexander Twombly, 8 December 1878, Rabat.

48. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 29. From this trip Weeks produced the oil *Shepherd on a Hill, Tetuan* (inscribed *Tetuan* and dated 1878), described by Dr. Emily Weeks in the catalogue notes for Lot 126, Edwin Lord Weeks, Sotheby's, *19th Century European Art including Important British Paintings*, New York, October 22, 2009 (New York: Sotheby's, 2009).

49. Richard Ford, *A Handbook for Travelers in Spain*, 5th ed. (London: John Murray, 1878): 357. "The soldier is responsible with his life for the safe return of his charge; he is usually selected from the sultan's body guard."

50. "We did not go to Algeria on account of the quarantine. But I am quite reconciled to the exchange. Besides being better and more novel this costs only about a third of the Algerian journey and it is the cheapest place I know of in spite of the famine." The party was advised "on no account" to travel to Rabat by sea due to the difficulties of landing, but Weeks ignored that advice. Edwin Lord Weeks to

Murray, Rabat had no inn although lodging might be obtained "at the house of any respectable Jew." Salé was more inhospitable: "No Christian is permitted to enter within its walls."<sup>51</sup> In one of his rare surviving letters Weeks admitted he knew virtually nothing about these destinations, despite their relative proximity to Tangier:

Although the place has business relations with Tangier and is distant only one night by steamer and five days by overland post I would get no reliable information about it but I knew it was an interesting country and so resolved to "go it blind." We were advised on no account to attempt going by sea, as it is only at rare intervals that lighters can get over the surf at the bar, which is truly gigantic at most times. But the journey by land involves so much bother and expense and there was no prospect of getting food for the horses on the road, by reason of the famine, we decided to risk the steamer—we were most fortunate in getting ashore.<sup>52</sup>

From the vantage of a couple of years later, in a rather understated characterization Weeks called this excursion "the most notable campaign in a hostile country that I have indulged in as yet, and we got out of it by the skin of our teeth, as it were."<sup>53</sup>

So the Weeks party traveled south, aware of the famine but not fully comprehending the prevalent dire conditions. The drought that had begun in 1876—when Weeks left Morocco for Boston—was exceptional in its severity and its duration. By the summer of 1878 starvation in the interior had become endemic; huge swaths of the population had flocked to the seaports in hopes

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Alexander Twombly, 8 December 1878, Rabat. As Benjamin recalled, satisfied with their "novel and picturesque experience" in Tetuan, the trio agreed "to take a very perilous trip to some of the cities along the coast of Morocco, in some of which no foreign lady had ever been seen."

51. Ford, 358.

52. Weeks to Alexander Twombly, Rabat, 8 December 1878, Alexander Stevenson Twombly papers, Box 1, Folder 2 (vol. 2), 16–23, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

53. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 29.

of obtaining imported grain. There were few imports to be had; Morocco's economy was already in a freefall for several reasons: the falling price of wool and grain (already compromised) on the world market, the spiraling trade deficit, the unrelenting schedule of payments to Britain for loans to pay war indemnities due Spain, and rising domestic inflation.<sup>54</sup> There were simply no economic reserves to help Moroccans confront the winter drought of 1877–78 and the literal plague of locusts which followed. In Mogador (Essaouira), a Moroccan port town farther down the western coast, mothers reportedly ground up bones found in the streets to feed to their children. The British consul wrote in April 1879 that thousands lay dead by the roadsides; in some towns half of the population had died of starvation. The desperate flight to the coast in search of food produced another problem. Unsanitary conditions rose dramatically in seaports; cholera claimed innumerable victims weakened by hunger. When the cholera subsided in December 1878, it was replaced by a raging typhoid epidemic.<sup>55</sup>

This was the Morocco that Edwin and Fannie Weeks and their traveling companion, Robert Gavin, R.S.A., confronted on their arrival in Rabat.<sup>56</sup> Still, no doubt confident that they could sail away whenever they wished, the drought and its consequences did not deter Weeks' artistic ambitions. His own words make it quite clear that for him the most compelling aspect of

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54. Mike Davis, 106.

55. Mike Davis, 99–108.

56. "Being burdened with much baggage, including household utensils, as we knew that we should find neither hotel nor pension in Rabat, we preferred to face the perils of the sea. The evening preceding the sailing of the steamer West we passed at the German Legation, and the Chancellor, recalling his own experience and the tumultuous horrors of the bar, which he described to us with unnecessary and appalling realism, predicted that we should not be able to make a landing." Weeks, "Two Centres of Moorish Art," *Scribner's Magazine* 29, no. 4 (April 1901): 433–52 at 441.

this journey was the opportunity to produce novel, even ground-breaking visualizations of Eastern life:

This is virgin soil for a painter, I believe I am the first who has been here, and no American or English writer has done much for it . . . I have seen nothing since Cairo so interesting and so rich in subjects.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, he turned the famine to his professional advantage:

Although we did not expect to find models here on account of the fanaticism of the people we have been able to turn the famine to account. There are magnificent types grand looking old men squalid Arab girls with faces like African madonnas and such lustrous eyes, stranger types from the far of [sic] provinces . . . such as Gerome [sic] has never rendered because in ordinary times nothing could induce these people to pose or enter the house of a Christian.—But now on account of the famine the streets are full of them and for a franc or a little bread they will squat all day. We are famous for this sort of interested charity and now we are beset by women with babies and pestilential beggars so we have a choice.

Weeks' letter from Rabat to Boston family friend Alexander Twombly indicates that he was enthralled by the chance to create images of unusual ethnological merit in addition to one-upping Jean-Léon Gérôme. It carries an upbeat, confident, even cheeky tone in the face of perilous circumstances, although at this point for Weeks they were merely inconveniences:

Here the people behave very well although they have a haughty and rather sinister air. We are not very pleasantly situated, however, after Tangier. We occupy the only house which could be procured in the only street in which Christians are permitted to live. There is no hotel or inn of any sort, and the house is a rather beastly affair, but it keeps the rain off, which is an important item as it has rained incessantly since our arrival. We most providentially brought two of our Tangier servants, Mohammed the Black [cook?] and the boy waiter. Without them we could not exist as there are none to be had here. We sold our horses before coming and although we were very sorry to part with Mrs. Weeks' dapple grey, I am very glad now, for he went into good hands and here he would have starved to death. A mere handful of dried straw sells for a franc—In ordinary times it costs

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57. Weeks to Twombly, 8 December 1878.



next to nothing to keep them here or in Tangier but the price of grain is frightful now—

[7] All the outskirts of both towns and the roadsides are lined with dead and dying animals horses mules and donkeys. It is painful to look at the poor animals that still live they are all joints and pinnacles like gothic cathedrals—as for the people their wretchedness beggars description—I do not speak of the towns people but the dwellers in tents who have come from the country to beg in the streets of the town. I suppose there is absolutely nothing to eat for man or beast away from the towns and precious little in them. We depend for all on our supplies on the occasional French steamers that are sometimes able to land goods here. We have nothing to complain of really, except a limited bill of fare.<sup>58</sup>

Not one to heed the advice of others to the detriment of his own calculations, Weeks was determined to paint in the holy city of Salé, across the river from Rabat. In his letter, he underscores the word "holy," but the ban on entering the sacred city made it all the more desirable. This passage, in a voice somewhat querulous and tinged with arrogance, reveals both the artist's determination and his impatience:

Sometimes we are ferried over to Sallee accompanied by our soldier and there we are usually mobbed before we get back by the small boys. Our guard protects the rear and menaces the enemy with his stick. There are two or three Europeans in Rabat, but no Christian has ever lived in Sallee and before the bombardment [?] by the French about twenty years ago, no Christian was allowed to enter the city. Sallee is a Holy city—that is the reason, however there are things in Sallee [ineffably?] picturesque and when I want excitement I am going over there to paint them. I will take my soldier and demand another from the bashaw of that holy town and we will see what can be done. It is not a pleasant prospect however—

Despite the warnings of the Spanish consul that sketching in Salé would be "out of the question," Weeks trudged to the city walls on foot through the deep sand, picking his way around the scavenged bones of dead animals along with Gavin and "the lady of our party of three, whose

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58. Weeks to Twombly, 8 December 1878.

curiosity was stronger than her discretion." Obviously, Fannie Weeks, described by her husband as "the first American or European lady to my knowledge who has ever set foot" in Salé, was no wallflower:

We had got well into the town, through the inner girdle of ruins and gardens, before the inhabitants began to realize that their sanctity was being profaned. Our reception was milder than we had been led to expect; most of the citizens who lined the walls and crowded the doorways contented themselves with merely staring at our companion with speechless amazement, for only those adventurous souls who had journeyed to Tangier, or whose business took them to Rabat, had ever seen a European lady face to face, and there were but two living at that time on the other side of the river. A few stones were thrown, it is true, but by street urchins, who immediately took refuge behind the inviolable sanctity of mosque doors when pursued by our escort.<sup>59</sup>

Once back in Rabat, life returned to quiet, if spartan, security. Weeks lamented that "It is rather dull for my wife as there is not a lady in the place of European extraction and the only being she can sympathize with is the Spanish consul's puppy which we sometimes borrow for the sake of his company." Nonetheless, the couple seemed to enjoy the simple pleasures of rowing on the Bou Regreg that runs between Rabat and Salé or, on clear and windless days, sitting perched on the ancient walls of the Casbah and gazing out to sea.

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59. Weeks To Alexander Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879, Alexander Stevenson Twombly papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. "After a few subsequent visits had accustomed the citizens to our presence the spectre of Moslem intolerance faded into thin air, and more than once the intervention of venerable and authoritative Moors cleared the streets for us, and there was always some sturdy bystander who volunteered to perform police duty." Weeks, "Two Centres of Moorish Art," 445–46. In S.G.W. Benjamin's 1881 account this incident is made out to be much more hazardous. Weeks is quoted as stating "Upon entering Sallee, which is the Mecca of the Moors, although we had a soldier to precede us, we were actually pursued by a mob, who finally gave us a shower of stones . . . They told us it would be impossible to paint in Sallee on account of the fanaticism of the inhabitants—only recently have Christians been allowed even to enter the gates. I always had a cavalry soldier with me, however, and after the excitement of the first frenzy, I found no difficulty in getting studies." Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 29.

The lack of social engagements was muted by the satisfactions of sketching life along the broad river, the massive architecture of the Red Castle ("a lesser Alhambra"), the "buried remains of Roman baths," and the Hassan Tower, as well as the prospect of desert escapades just beyond "the least known cities in Africa after Timbuctoo."<sup>60</sup> Even the often temerarious Weeks was careful not to venture too far from Rabat without his "soldier from the Bashaw," lest he be swept off by hostile Berbers.<sup>61</sup>

Brimming with confidence in his new work, and no doubt weary of negotiating the increasingly acute famine conditions, in December Weeks was already thinking ahead to the 1879 Salon. By this time Weeks had been in Morocco eight months or more. He wrote to Alexander Twombly:

However we must [?] not have to stay here long and the next place she will see will be I hope the Champs Elysees and the Salon [?]. I shall send a large picture there which is far ahead of anything I have done yet, and I have some new ones which I think are better in quality and sounder in values than anything I have yet exhibited.<sup>62</sup>

But by the end of December matters went drastically awry. Relentless pounding surf made the silted bar at the mouth of the river impossible for supply boats to cross.<sup>63</sup> Food became

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60. Weeks to Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879.

61. "Inland and beyond the tall 'Hassan tower' the river winds away into a region of high table land. I am told that if we venture very far in this direction we are liable to be captured by the Berbers but it is safe for an hour and a half." Edwin Lord Weeks to Alexander Twombly, 8 December 1878.

62. Weeks to Twombly, Rabat, 8 December 1878.

63. "The difficulty of landing there is on account of the bar at the river mouth. The surf somewhat resembles the rapids at Niagara, and in my sleeping room which looked out onto it I would hear the thunder of it all night and sometimes feel the jar and concussion—", Weeks to Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879.

even scarcer. The couple's plan to stay in Rabat for three months stretched into six as disease and misery spread even to the town's European residents. In this excerpt from a letter to Twombly from Weeks, written some months after he, his wife and Gavin had made it back to Paris, all traces of arrogance have evaporated:

We were in Rabat during the height of the famine and I never before saw such misery, such living skeletons clad in rags—our \_\_\_\_ was surrounded by them the whole time, and although we had four or five pensioners in the house all the time and gave away a good deal of bread we were not rich enough to make much impression on the mass of suffering: during most of the time two or three steamers [lay?] outside with cargoes of flour, but could not communicate with the shore, although desperate attempts were made daily by the lighter men. It was curious to see the starved dogs greedily licking up the flour spilt in the streets. One incident which I witnessed one day may give you some idea of it. Just beyond our door there seemed to be a great commotion in the main street, a dense crowd of ragged and [forlorn?] humanity was surging and seething above some hidden object. Soldiers and shopkeepers were interfering and beating some of those on the outskirts, but blows could not take them away from the centre of attraction. Although I stood some six feet above them on a step I could not make it out at all but it seemed like a sort of Donneybrook fair. My impression was that they had some criminal there and were tearing him limb from limb. At last, through an opening among all the legs and bodies I saw a ragged basket with a few carrot tops protruding—at that moment a boy emerged with a mouth full of green leaves and he was seized by an old hag who captured and swallowed them herself. The mystery was solved—such sights were of everyday occurrence.<sup>64</sup>

With escape from the famine impossible by sea, Weeks planned a camel journey overland to Casablanca, from there to catch a steamer to Tangier and thence to Europe. But as they were making the final arrangements to leave Weeks was struck down by "typhus fever." Near death, he languished for a month.<sup>65</sup> At the height of his illness, Fannie contracted it:

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64. Weeks to Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879.

65. Benjamin, *Our American Artists*, 30.

Poor Gavin was the worst sufferer for while we were insensible most of the time he had to combine the functions of doctor and nurse. No European came near us when the nature of the disease was known. Gavin was hardly able to stand up from sickness and want of sleep as well as scarcity of grub. We always lived well before, but it required much engineering to supply our table I assure you, and he had no time to think of himself.<sup>66</sup>

All of them survived, only to be nearly drowned when their boat was swamped by a storm as they approached Tangier ("What a lark—" wrote the understated Weeks).

Eventually they made it back to Paris, where the reliable Gavin remained a member of the household. Weeks reached Paris too late to contribute to the Salon of 1879.<sup>67</sup> Although one American newspaper reported in October that the resilient Weeks was planning to return to Africa "at once," on December 10th Weeks was still in Paris, writing to Alexander Twombly of his intention to remain there until after the upcoming Salon.<sup>68</sup> To the Salon of 1880 Weeks submitted *La porte de l'ancien 'Fondat,' dans la sainte ville de Salé (Maroc)* and the sun-drenched *Un embarquement des chameaux sur la plage de Salé (Maroc)* (36 x 61 inches, Figure 4-5), a study in diagonals, contrasts and bold color.<sup>69</sup> His reputation was gaining momentum, as

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66. Weeks to Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879.

67. "E. L. Weeks of Boston, who for three years has been maturing in Morocco his peculiar faculty for atmospheric expression, had two pictures well placed in the Royal Scotch [sic] Academy, and they were favorably criticised; but he reached Paris too late to enter for the '79 Salon." "Art Notes," *Art Amateur* (July 1879): 32. Weeks to Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879.

68. "E. L. Weeks has sent from Paris a collection of paintings that are indicative of very decided progress and ability. He returns to Africa at once." "Art News," *Art Amateur* (Oct. 1879): 98.

69. Fink, 403. Weeks' residence is listed as Paris, rue d'Orsel, 42. To the Royal Academy exhibition for 1880 Weeks contributed *The Bashaw of Rabat and his escort at the gate of the Kasbah-Rabat-el-Fath, Morocco*; his address is listed as 7, Rue Scribe, Paris. Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, Vol. 8 (London: Henry Graves and Co., George Bell and Sons, 1906), 196.

a Paris correspondent for the *Boston Evening Transcript* noted:

The American artists show well this year. Weeks of Boston (the catalogue bestows on him a title, and calls him Lord Edwin Weeks) exhibits two very strong pictures of Oriental life, both of which were sold before the Salon had been open two weeks. Mr. Bridgman must look to his laurels, as Mr. Weeks is a powerful competitor in his own line.<sup>70</sup>

Another American reviewer found "very pretty" the "line of camels against the blue, coming reluctantly down a steep sand-bank," but added that it was a pity that Weeks "could not add to his stock of good qualities the surplus of academic correctness possessed by certain of his neighbors."<sup>71</sup>

The French critics were also beginning to pay attention. *La Press* was captivated by Weeks' camel, but perhaps more importantly appreciated the artist's technical dexterity, precision and presentation of visual truth, not an insignificant compliment for an upstart American:

Il y a une très grande vérité dans l'*Embarquement des chameaux* sur la plage de Salé, au Maroc, par lord Edwin Weeks. Rarement nous avons vu peindre avec plus de talent l'utile mais peu gracieux animal que les poètes orientaux appellent le *navire du désert*.

Sa laide tournure, sa physionomie désagréable, la maladresse de ses long membres grêles, les colorations fauves de son corps à moitié pelé, tout cela a été saisi avec justesse et rendu avec habileté par lord Edwin Weeks, à qui nous devons un tableau vraiment très pittoresque et très vrai.<sup>72</sup>

But his recent Salon successes, the pleasures of Paris and the still-fresh memories of nearly dying in Rabat and drowning in the Mediterranean could not keep Edwin Lord Weeks, nor the

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70. "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 22 June 1880, 7 col. 2.

71. This last was a likely reference to the work of F. A. Bridgman. Sophia A. Walker, "Fine Arts. Letters on the French Salon," *Independent* 32, no. 1643 (1880): 6.

72. Louis Enault, "Le Salon de 1880," *La Press*, 1 June 1880, 1 col. 6, at col. 2.

formidable Fannie, from Africa:

We shall remain here probably till after the Salon opens and then I think we shall all go south again. I certainly do not care to fare another winter here. The conceited Parisians think Paris the only place in the world, but its attractions cannot compensate for the long dark nights of winter / when one cannot do half a day's work and must pay double for the privilege of living here. It is the foremost place in the world to study technique and measure one's self by comparison with others but not a place to live in when you know the Mediterranean. Mrs. Weeks seems ready for an expedition to Fez which we could not reach before, on account of the famine: if it is next fall, we may try it.<sup>73</sup>

Next fall it was. The travelogues of two contemporaries offer a glimpse into the Weeks' 1880–81 sojourn to North Africa. "In the Footsteps of Fortuny and Regnault," penned for *Century Magazine* by Elizabeth Williams Champney (wife of fellow Boston artist James Wells Champney) records Edwin Weeks working in the Granada studio of Mariano Fortuny, which was likely a prolonged detour prior to the Weeks' autumn arrival in Morocco. Before his death in November of 1874, Fortuny had taken a home with a huge open courtyard-atelier in the Realejo Bajo, at the foot of the hill of the Alhambra.<sup>74</sup> Mrs. Champney recalled of this idyllic setting:

The beauties of Granada have been sung so often and so well, that we fancied we knew the place before we drove up the long hill, arched by noble trees, which leads from the city to the Alhambra . . . we realized that the charm of the place cannot be conveyed by any amount of fine writing. It must be felt to be appreciated, and the longer felt the stronger the fascination. Fortuny's studio was occupied by Mr. Edward [sic] Weeks. The hospitalities of the place were offered us most cordially, and here, while the gentlemen painted from Fortuny's models,—pretty Candida, in dazzling white, rose, and orange, and old Mariano, the gypsy, who posed for the 'Torreoro Andaluz,' belonging to M. de Goyena,—

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73. Weeks to Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879.

74. "This courtyard served for an atelier, when he wished to work in open air. On one side a garden, from which was a splendid view, then the offices and a number of rooms . . ." Jean Charles [Baron] Davillier, *Life of Fortuny with His Works and Correspondence* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1885): 107.

we sat and chatted, or listened to the tinkle of a guitar, and caught a glimpse of a graceful girl dancing the fandango in a neighboring garden, to the timing of castanets.<sup>75</sup>

Certainly Fortuny had a significant influence on the work of Edwin Weeks, a topic that will be taken up later in this volume.

According to the *Art Amateur*, in late summer of 1880 Weeks was "diligently cultivating Oriental subjects in Algiers."<sup>76</sup> By winter Edwin and Fannie were back in Morocco. The December entries from *A Winter in Tangier and Home through Spain*, the travelogue of Mrs. Howard-Vyse (a close friend of Lady Drummond-Hay, wife of the British consul stationed in Tangier) describe the Howard-Vyses and the Weeks enjoying the hospitality of Bruzard's Hotel (the "Villa de France") in Tangier where they became acquainted over leisurely dinners and garden conversations. At the time Weeks kept a studio at the American Consul's residence, a building still owned today by the United States government that now houses the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies.<sup>77</sup>

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75. Elizabeth Wells Champney, "In the Footsteps of Fortuny and Regnault," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* n.s. 23, 1 (Nov. 1881–Apr. 1882): 15-34 at 29-30. The Champneys left for their journey in the summer of 1880. It should be noted that James Champney, and possibly his wife, were also in Spain in 1875, as was Weeks; thus there is a remote possibility that they encountered Weeks working in Fortuny's studio some years prior to the 1880 trip. The 1905 auction catalog for Weeks' estate lists an oil sketch, "*Mariano*" *Playing Guitar—Well Known Gypsy Musician—Granada, Spain*.

76. Greta, "Boston Correspondence," *Art Amateur* (October 1880), 94.

77. "The approach to it is up a narrow lane, which was ankle-deep in mud, as far as a gateway, which led into a pretty terrace-garden, full of all sorts of flowers. I was most thankful to reach the hotel after a most fatiguing walk of more than a mile. The hotel is quite a small house, what would be called an *auberge* in France, but a large wing is now being added to it. It has a fine view of the town . . .," Mrs. Howard-Vyse, *A Winter in Tangier and Home through Spain* (London: Hatchards, 1882), 4 (the hotel), 5 (dined together in the company of British officers on leave), 26 (Fannie gave a tour of Edwin's studio), 39 (garden conversations with Fannie), 41 (purchased a sketch of the Holy Well at Salé for Christmas gift), 42 (Weeks sketching in the animal yard), 43 (Weeks breaks his rule about never selling a sketch; sends



Weeks, however, was not content to remain for long in familiar Tangier. When an extended season of bad weather derailed the couple's long-held plans for a trip to Fez, they decided to start again for the west coast of Africa. This time they would venture farther south, to Mogador (Essoueria) and then to the city of Morocco (Marrakech), the imperial capital of the Almoravid dynasty. On New Year's Eve 1880 they embarked on the French packet steamer *Souerah*, a booking that little pleased the normally fearless Fannie:

She wished to wait for an English vessel. She said "they had made a great many voyages in both English and French ships. The French feed you best, but the English never lose their heads in danger." — N.B. The *Souerah* was afterwards wrecked on her return voyage at Casablanca, but all hands were saved.<sup>78</sup>

Mogador in January proved delightfully salutary. Brilliant warm weather, southern breezes and "almost uninterrupted sunshine" beckoned the couple to linger.<sup>79</sup> Weeks was reluctant to leave. However, with a military escort assigned by the governor of Mogador the party set off for Marrakech through the 129 miles of deep sand and scrub, stunted with "thorn trees of ghostly paleness," overrun with "hordes of small ground rats," and infested with stinging

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photographs of his paintings as Christmas cards).

78. Weeks, *Two Centres of Moorish Art*, 449; Howard-Vyse, 41. Apparently the steamer *Souerah* ran the Tangier-Rabat-Casablanca-Magazan-Mogador route, per Adophe von Conring, *Marrocco, das Land und die Leute* (Berlin: G. Hempel, 1884), 197.

79. Works such as *A Camel Caravan at the Shela Gate* ("E.L. Weeks/Shela 1880", lower right; oil on canvas; 35 ½ x 61 in.; noted in Thompson 249) indicate that the Weeks may first have returned to Rabat, and then went on to Mogador. Also from this period is Weeks' *Desert Prayer* signed and inscribed "mogador 1881." The 1878 cholera and typhus epidemic, which afflicted both Edwin and Fannie Weeks, killed half the population of Mogador. Felix A. Mathews, "Cruise of the United States Steamer Quinnebaug to the Western Ports of Morocco," in Department of State, *Reports from Consuls of the United States on the Commerce, Manufactures, etc., of their Consular Districts, No. 1—October, 1880* (Washington: Department of State, 1880), 23.

insects and annoying vermin. The trek involved considerable discomfort and known risk, which is perhaps why years would go by without Europeans visiting Marrakech.<sup>80</sup>

Once there the party, which presumably included Fannie as well as at least one unnamed other (likely Robert Gavin), came under the protection of Sid Bou Bekr, a wealthy local capitalist with ties to British trading firms in Mogador.<sup>81</sup> Although greeted with general courtesy Weeks was restricted in his movements around the city, corralled in an assigned house or, when sketching in the streets ("a highly objectionable business to the orthodox Moor"), followed closely by two guards.<sup>82</sup> Weeks wrote most enthusiastically about sketching the medieval Koutoubia (Kutubiyya) Mosque, its minaret soaring some 250 feet; the twelfth-century Bab Agnou, entrance to the royal casbah and one of the nineteen gates of the city; and the snow-crowned summits of the Atlas Mountains that served as backdrop for the "somewhat grim and sombre" architecture. Yet his description of the city is elegiac; the "relics of its prouder days" now forlorn and decayed:

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80. See Weeks, "Two Centres of Moorish Art," 449 and Arthur Leared, *Morocco and the Moors* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1876), II, 2, 101 and relevant chapters. While Weeks was in Morocco his representatives in America continued to maintain his exhibition presence, showing for example "Moorish Shepherd" at the Lotos Club in New York (with works by Edward Moran and Wordsworth Thompson among others). "Saturday Night at the Lotos," *New York Tribune*, 27 March 1881, 12 col. 2.

81. Sid Bou Bekr was both "envied and hated by his countrymen" according to Leared, 125. A French account reports that Weeks was there with his wife and "M. Gavier [sic] artiste anglais de l'Académie royale de Londres." Triolet (Paul Mahalin), "Au bout de la lorgnette: M. Edwin Lord Weeks," *Le Gaulois*, 11 October 1881, 2 col. 3.

82. Sid Bou Bekr had only to hold up a finger to discourage the curious from getting too close to Weeks: "The first man who approached too near was arrested and hustled off into the fondak . . ." Weeks, "Two Centres of Moorish Art," 450. Weeks' experience closely tracks that of Arthur Leared as described in his *Morocco and the Moors* (1876).

It would be impossible to imagine a spot more deeply buried beneath the dust of ages, or bound more irrevocably to the past, and more remote in every way from the life and movement of the present.<sup>83</sup>

### The North African Paintings: Reception and Reputation

Parisian reviewers were deeply impressed by Weeks' last two trips to Morocco. For the French, a glimpse into those coveted and controversial desert territories and peoples made Weeks' paintings interesting; that Weeks obtained them only by dashing about in peril of his own life made them compelling. The artist's on-the-spot observations and experiences added credence to his personal interpretations of North Africa, but more importantly, at least for marketing purposes, elevated them to achievements gained by a rare combination of artistic vision, raw courage and dogged perseverance.

Moreover, though Weeks' images did not glorify or even obviously support the French or European presence in North Africa, neither did they pose difficult questions. This was a welcome contrast to American officialdom, especially the American Consul in Tunis George Washington Fish who denounced the violence and subterfuge of the French when on a flimsy excuse they launched into Tunis in April 1881 (to the humiliation of the Italians and the consternation of the British). Echoing Fish, the American popular press had kept up a steady drumbeat roundly criticizing the French for stirring up trouble in Tunis and eastern Morocco with the obvious intent of expanding their protectorate outward from Algeria. Although unstated, considered against the background of general American public opinion of the French as

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83. Weeks, "Two Centres of Moorish Art," 451.

politically conniving and administratively inept, here at last was an American who apparently had French interests at heart.

Transatlantic political conversation about harsh social, economic and military realities in North Africa as well as deep personal experience and professional ambition framed Weeks' early submissions to the Paris Salon, each devoted to a Moroccan subject. The first of these was the 1878 *Un Chamelier morocain, à Tanger*; followed in 1880 by *Une embarquement des chameaux sur la plage de Salé* (*The Camel Transport, Morocco*) and *La porte de l'ancien "Fondat," dans la sainte ville de Salé*; and in 1881 by *Chameaux auprès d'une citerne* (39.25 x 77 inches). In 1882 Weeks submitted *L'avant-garde d'une caravane du Soudan allant à Maroc* and *Une caravane du Soudan entrant dans une Fondat à Maroc*, the last of his Moroccan-themed Salon contributions.<sup>84</sup>

Caravans and camels, the ubiquitous modes of transport in nineteenth century North Africa and the Levant, were staples of nineteenth-century paintings of the region. Weeks incorporated the animals and their riders into many of his North African and Indian paintings either as principal or secondary subjects. Not only did he enjoy drawing animals of all kinds—a favorite occupation of his youth—but they were proven pleasers of crowds and critics. Weeks' *The Camel Rider* (Figure 4-6) of 1875 (12 x 14 inches), in which the backlight strips the landscape of color and the figure of definition, is highly reminiscent of Léon Belly's much-lauded *Pilgrims Going to Mecca* (a monumental 63.5 x 95.25 inches, Figure 4-7), awarded a first

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84. Fink, 403. For these entries, Weeks' various Parisian addresses were listed as follows: 1878, Chez M. Vallet, boulevard Haussmann, 108; 1880, Paris, rue d'Orsel, 42; 1881 and 1882, avenue de Villiers, 136.

class medal at the 1861 Salon. The singular success of Belly's painting rested on the artist's dramatic manipulation of glaring light and foregrounded positioning of the viewer, a formula that Weeks was clearly experimenting with in *The Camel Rider*. The immediacy of Belly's mounted riders, precisely rendered against a sweeping desert panorama, with the winding caravan disappearing into the horizon had set a high bar for the portrayal of North African life.

Weeks' similarly-themed Salon submissions were, in terms of conception, composition and technique, indisputably more conventional than Belly's *Pilgrims Going to Mecca*. Regardless, what does emerge from *The Camel Rider* and Weeks' earliest Salon submissions is the artist's preoccupation with the visual effects of intense sunlight, his exploration of color and contrast, and his interests in the prosaic scenes of everyday North African life. They portray a culture ancient, vital, peaceable—though armed and independent.

In addition, these early Salon submissions reveal an artist still experimenting, investigating, molding his personal style and defining his signature subjects, although affinities with Bonnat and Gérôme are readily identifiable. *Un embarquement des chameaux sur la plage de Salé* (Figure 4-5) employs a sharply defined diagonal wedge that spans the canvas to backlight the figural groupings, in a manner strikingly similar to that employed by Léon Bonnat in *Cheiks arabes dans les montagnes* (1872; Figure 4-8). In *Chameaux auprès d'une citerne* (Figure 4-9) Weeks bisects the canvas with a swath of azure, recalling Gérôme's gradient sky in *Bonaparte Before the Sphinx* (1867–68; Figure 4-10), but with a bold uniformity and intensity of color.

Weeks' paintings however bear few of the hallmarks of many by Gérôme, in which the ostensibly mundane figures and settings are often manipulated to create a subtext of violence,

degradation, sensuality and decay. Although it may be argued that images such as *Un embarquement des chameaux* or *Chameaux auprès d'une citerne* were likely to impress Salon patrons with the backwardness of Moroccan society and, by implication, the superiority of French. In this sense Weeks' Moroccan paintings may be read as promoting the "civilizing mission" rationale for French imperialism.

However, the leaden, smoke-filled skies, wretched poverty and overcrowded slums of industrializing Europe were beginning to produce a new apprehension regarding progress divorced from the natural world, indifferent to the past. This was the foundation of a contemporary counterargument to the much louder, general clamor for colonialist incursions into Africa. Weeks' paintings, and his words, speak to this as well:

No other Moslem country has so long resisted and successfully baffled the aggressive progress of modern civilization . . . Although the isolation which has permitted the inhabitants to live on in the same conditions which were dear to their ancestors is mainly owing to the political and geographical causes which have made Morocco a bone of contention between European powers, not a little of its comparative immunity from the blessings attendant upon modern progress is due to the ingenious and subtle diplomacy of the Moorish race— . . . aided by the seeming naïve but devious policy of these natural diplomats, as well as by the mutual jealousy and mistrust with which each European power views its neighbor's advances in Morocco, we may yet have many years in which to enjoy what is almost the only country left to grow old in its own way.<sup>85</sup>

Weeks' sentiments may be perceived as disturbing and patronizing, evidence of his knowing collusion with Western attempts to mystify, separate and tacitly condemn a society that, through perceived sloth and militant ignorance, allowed a once magnificent civilization to fall to ruin. As Linda Nochlin pointed out in her seminal article "The Imaginary Orient," images of Eastern

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85. Edwin Lord Weeks, "Two Centres of Moorish Art," 433–34.

societies became valuable only on the point of their destruction; finally they were seen as picturesque "subjects of aesthetic delectation" to be preserved as "precious remnants of a disappearing way of life."<sup>86</sup> Indeed Weeks mused that Morocco should be left:

. . . for a few decades yet, or even a century, and allow it to exist as a museum of antiquity, a working model of the Middle Ages; the silence of its cities undisturbed by noise of factories and tramways, and its broad, sunny reaches of open country untraversed by railways or macadamized roads.<sup>87</sup>

Edwin Weeks falls squarely into Nochlin's analysis, an art historical approach that has dominated the interpretation of paintings by Weeks and his Orientalist contemporaries for decades.

Might there be a more layered reading? If Weeks termed Moroccan policy (and national character, by extension) "seeming naïve but devious," he also recognized that it existed only to counter the European powers' "mutual jealousy and mistrust," in effect creating a cultural stalemate held steady by the superior negotiating abilities of the cornered, out-gunned Moroccans. What of his somewhat sarcastic reference to "the blessings attendant upon modern progress"? Weeks may well have feared that the accelerating imposition of European-defined "progress" would destroy those picturesque scenes that Nochlin argues appealed to refined aesthetic tastes, but what he wrote about was the potential damage to the character of the Moroccan people and to the "surpassing beauty" of the country. He wrote in similarly wistful terms about the encroaching tourist trade in the Alps.<sup>88</sup> In Weeks' opinion, the vast open

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86. Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *Art in America* 71 (1983), reprinted in Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision, Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 33-59 at 50.

87. Edwin Lord Weeks, "Two Centres of Moorish Art," 434.

88. Weeks, "The New Switzerland."

landscape, free of factories, trams and macadamized roads, molded the unique culture of Morocco and fostered memorable, stunning, deeply moving expressions of art, architecture and music. Stronger than his fantasy of a living museum is his lament that there is *no* country left to "grow old in its own way;" modern "progress" means inexorable integration and cultural loss—and not only for Morocco.

Seen in this light, the rhythms of everyday life captured in such paintings as *Open Market, Morocco* (Figure 4-11); *Arrival of a Caravan Outside the City of Morocco* (Figure 4-12); *Scene at Salé, Morocco* and *Powder Play City of Morocco, Outside the Walls* (4-14) address what Weeks termed the "marked and subtle affinity" of the landscape, the people, and the culture. They speak to a sentimental regard for the past, as they also speak to a valid concern for the future and an awareness of the social and political integrity of the present. This attitude did not escape French or American writers on the arts, who in the coming decade were more likely to compare Weeks' paintings to those of Eugène Fromentin rather than to the markedly different vision of Gérôme.<sup>89</sup>

With his paintings of Algeria, leading French Orientalist and highly-regarded critic Eugène Fromentin (1820–76) established a reputation for work of intellectual depth and dramatic power even as he strained against the repressive conventions of the Academy.<sup>90</sup> Dispensing with

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89. "Un joli tableau est celui de M. Weeks, le *Voyage du rajah à Jodhpore*. Il y a un peu du Fromentin dans cette peinture qui, pourtant, ne cherche pas à l'imiter." "Petits Salons," *La Presse*, 28 January 1891, n.p. col. 2. This perception was echoed in an article by "an eminent art critic resident in New York" who found Weeks, as an Orientalist, to stand "about half way between Fromentin and Verestchagen." "Edwin Lord Weeks," *Art Interchange*, 94.

90. The first of Fromentin's three trips to Algeria was in 1846, a surreptitious visit to attend painter Charles Labbé's sister's wedding. Two longer stays in 1847/48 and 1852/53 provided notes and sketches



the notion of the Orient as feverish fantasy, a model perfected in Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827), Fromentin grounded his images in his personal experience of North Africa. The transformation was so complete, contemporary critic Albert Wolff observed that the "Orient does not resemble any of the African pictures which were painted before Fromentin."<sup>91</sup>

Although the casual references to Weeks and Fromentin do not surface in print until the early 1890s and were never insistent (as was the association of F. A. Bridgman with Gérôme, for example), they offer some insight into the interpretation of Weeks' Moroccan paintings and his later paintings of India. To invoke Fromentin's vision of North Africa in the context of Weeks' paintings is to recall a particular artistic attitude toward visualizing the Orient as vast, majestic, noble, graceful, dignified. Also, it is to acknowledge the artists' common attention to intense, burning light; precisely modulated color; dramatic organization of space; and dedication to authenticity filtered "with absolute but never with brutal truthfulness."<sup>92</sup> There is the sense in Fromentin's work that the region cannot be circumscribed by a painted canvas—not geographically, not temporally, not culturally: "He always and everywhere confers upon the

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for paintings and for two travel books, *Un Eté dans le Sahara* (1857) and *Une Année dans le Sahel* (1859).

91. "This Orient does not resemble any of the African pictures which were painted before Fromentin; it is from the artist's personal accent that the charm of the work arises . . ." Albert Wolff, *Notes upon Certain Masters of the XIX Century* (New York: Gilliss Bros. & Turnure, 1886), 64. Albert Wolff, born in Germany and naturalized French citizen, was a highly respected critic: "There is no other man with influence as great. His power was absolute. A word from him made or unmade a man; a favorable notice of a particular picture in the columns of Figaro sold that picture at the artist's own price." "Albert Wolff. From a Paris Letter to the Tribune," *Critic* (New York), n.s. 17 (9 January 1892): 28-29.

92. "Eugene Fromentin," *Art Amateur* 12, no. 1 (Dec. 1884), 9.

creature of the Orient the real grace, the distinction of the whole race."<sup>93</sup> This is the poetic, romantic Orient, at once a projection of Western fantasy and a counterweight to Western society.

Whether Weeks was familiar with the works of Fromentin is not known, but close correspondences may be observed in certain works of the two artists, for example *Arrival of a Caravan Outside the City of Morocco* (Figure 4-12) and *Halte de muletiers, Algerie* (1868; Figure 4-13). Weeks' *Powder Play City of Morocco, Outside the Walls* (1881–82; Figure 4-14) and Fromentin's *A Fantasia* (Salon of 1869; Figure 4-15) both depict a wild spectacle of daring horsemanship, "a luxury of vision for the eye."<sup>94</sup> Although Weeks' figures are not caught in quite the same frenzy of action, the painting shares with *Fantasia* a similar division of space,

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93. "When he paints the Arab at rest with his horses browsing untethered beside the tent, he is awed by the mysterious grandeur of such a scene . . . He always and everywhere confers upon the creature of the Orient the real grace, the distinction of the whole race;" "In Fromentin the draughtsman caught the most admirable movements; the colorist saw the matter with his choice sense of hue; and the poet, for his part, added some mysterious, delicious reverie to the compositions borne off from the suggestions of actuality . . . Africa inspired the painter and got it into his canvas; and that is just the essence of charm in the incantations of our charmer." Wolff, 65, 67. Fromentin wrote of Algeria in terms similar to those used by Weeks: "Le silence est un des charmes les plus subtils de ce pays solitaire et vide . . . On croit qu'il représente l'absence du bruit, comme l'obscurité représente l'absence de la lumière; c'est une erreur . . . [c'est] plutôt une sorte de transparence aérienne (p.54);" "Une remarque de peintre . . . c'est qu'à l'inverse de ce qu'on voit en Europe, ici les tableaux se composent dans l'ombre avec un centre obscur et des cours de lumière. C'est, en quelque sorte, du Rembrandt transposé; rien n'est plus mystérieux" (p. 106); "On ne connaît pas en France l'effet de cette solitude et de ce silence sous le plus beau soleil qui puisse éclairer le monde . . . Ici, le soleil de midi consterne, mortifie, et c'est l'ombre de minuit qui répare et à son tour redonne la vie" (p. 162). Quoted in Elwood Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/Artists and the Maghreb: the literary and artistic depictions of North Africa by Théophile Gautier, Eugène Fromentin and Pierre Loti* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1994), 46, 54, 106, 162.

94. Fromentin described a fantasia: " 'Imagine,' he says, 'that which can never be revived in these notes, cold as they are in form and halting in phrase; imagine the most impetuous disorder, the most inconceivable swiftness, the utmost radiance of crude color touched by sunshine; picture the gleam of arms . . . vivid reds, fiery orange, cold whites, inundated by the grays of the sky . . .'," M. Louis Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin: Painter and Writer*, trans. Mary Caroline Robbins (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1883), 80.

proportionality, punctuations of red color, and sense of vast openness. The skies are agitated and clouds scumbled; the brushwork is roughened and textural. Both paintings are bisected horizontally just below the midpoint; a local dignitary, marked by vivid red, views the tumult from nearly the exact spot on the left horizon line; a diagonal leads from this vantage point completely across the picture, terminating at the same point in the right foreground.

However, these formal correspondences belie the true affinity, the shared point of view of North Africa as vital, limitless, ennobled by history as it is unconstrained by modernity. These paintings rely less on staged, authenticating details than on attentive observation grounded in personal experience, and a desire to translate that emotion, excitement and physical immediacy to the viewer. Memories and imagination conspire to romanticize that experience, but the result is more than reverie. It is a reimagining of the Orient, a recasting of its place in the minds of Western audiences.

And yet, no matter how Edwin Weeks may have strived to share with Western viewers his captivating experiences in Morocco and the vitality of its culture, however carefully he may have avoided depicting its inhabitants as treacherous militants, indirect collaboration with French hegemonic designs proved unavoidable. This collaboration rested not so much on the subject of the paintings but on the context of the retelling of the artist's travels in Morocco. By themselves, the paintings were only a part of the story.

Shortly after the close of the 1881 Salon, beginning in October Weeks exhibited thirty works at the *salle des dépêches* or public gallery space of the conservative but widely circulated daily newspaper, *Le Gaulois*. Prompted by the exhibition, *Le Gaulois* and French periodicals such as the literary and artistic weekly *La Vie Moderne* wrote about Weeks' travels in North

Africa in terms that amplified French political self-interest. Weeks *had* to be extraordinarily courageous to face the daily perils of existence in a region replete with threats (real and imagined) from rebellious tribes, religious fanatics and mismanaged economies—that is, a region desperately in need of the French civilizing mission. In the pages of *Le Gaulois* Edwin Weeks was cast as the artist-adventurer, an intrepid soul whose passion for his subject struck near the heart of current political affairs, in effect a new kind of free-lance war artist:

Nous ouvrons aujourd'hui, dans notre salle de dépêches, une exposition des plus intéressantes. M. E.-L. Weeks, artiste américain, qui vient d'explorer l'intérieur du Maroc, la Tunisie, l'Algérie, et les pays avoisinants, a rapporté de son voyage une collection d'études très curieuses qu'il a bien voulu nous confier pour quelques jours.

M. Weeks, qui a pénétré très loin dans les provinces où l'insurrection a pris naissance, a pu saisir sur le vif, et souvent au péril de sa vie, des types de guerriers et de chefs indigènes.

Il a poussé ses explorations jusqu'à la province de Sus, au pied du Grand-Atlas où peu d'Européen ont osé pénétrer jusqu'ici.

Cette exposition, d'un intérêt d'actualité saisissant, attirera certainement le tout-Paris artiste et boulevardier.<sup>95</sup>

Certainly, *Le Gaulois* was trying to drum up interest in its exhibition by emphasizing Weeks' scrapes with death. But, as "the most popular newspaper in army circles," there was clearly a broader political purpose afoot.<sup>96</sup> The newspaper followed the next day with a second article on the instant success of the exhibition that documented "a country at war":

Le public peut admirer depuis hier, dans notre Salle des Dépêches, une brillante série d'études et de tableaux récemment exécutés en Tunisie par M. Weeks, l'excellent peintre américain. Le succès de cette Exposition a été très vif dès la première heure; nous ne doutons qu'il s'accroisse et grandisse encore, car

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95. "Nous ouvrons aujourd'hui, dans notre salle de dépêches . . .," *Le Gaulois* 749, 1 Oct. 1881, 1 col. 4.

96. Robert Tombs, *The War Against Paris, 1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 110.

on y voit tout ensemble de charmantes oeuvres et de sincères documents sur les pays où se fait la guerre.

M. Weeks est de la race de ces vaillants et consciencieux artistes qui vont devant eux et plantent leurs chevalets même en plein désert, partout où quelque chose les frappe.

Tous les sujets sont abordés dans ses esquisses: vous y verrez une entrée de mosquée, un passage de rivière, des cavaliers et des piétons des types originaux, de vives silhouettes, des paysages brûlés par le soleil.

Les plus difficiles connaisseurs sont unanimes [à ?] louer son entente de la lumière violente de l'Afrique et de l'atmosphère surchauffée qui rayonne autour des édifices et des figures. Ils loueront aussi la scrupuleuse vérité des attitudes et des physionomies arabes produits par le peintre, la correction de son dessin et l'harmonie de sa couleur. Sa facture est légère et facile, imprévue et spirituelle. Tout le monde aura plaisir et profit, en somme, à venir regarder ses toiles.<sup>97</sup>

Taking up where *Le Gaulois* left off, the November 19, 1881 issue of *La Vie Moderne* devoted a double-page spread, "Les Peintres Explorateurs: Edwin Lord Weeks," to the artist's last two trips to Morocco (Figures 4-16, 4-17, 4-18). Recognizing Weeks as an artist of "prominent reputation in America" the article described how, after months of harrowing experiences in Rabat during the height of the famine, the following year Weeks returned undaunted to push farther into the treacherous Moroccan interior. Building on S.G.W. Benjamin's already dramatic account of Weeks' Moroccan experiences in his just-published book *Our American Artists*, aimed at the youthful reader, *La Vie Moderne* ratcheted up the rhetoric:

Après avoir traversé un pays absolument désert et infesté par les tribus insoumises, qui tentèrent d'attaquer son escorte à plusieurs reprises et qui l'obligèrent de se tenir continuellement sur le qui-vive, il arriva à Maroc. . .

Maroc a toujours eu la mauvaise renommée d'être la ville la plus fanatique de ce pays. Les amis de M. Weeks lui avaient conseillé de ne pas entreprendre ce

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97. "Notre Exposition," *Le Gaulois*, 2 Oct. 1881, 1 col. 3. The references in these two articles to Tunisia and Algeria are all the documentation available concerning Weeks' travels in those countries.

voyage à cause des périls nombreux et de l'impossibilité d'y faire aucune étude, par suite du caractère ombrageux et fanatique des habitants.<sup>98</sup>

The perils of the journey guaranteed the veracity of the vision; the powers of the press recast that vision to suit audience expectations of a "country at war."

Given France's long engagement in North Africa, its clearly hegemonic designs on Morocco, and the well-publicized American suspicions of French colonial motives, the French press might well have been captious and dismissive towards American portrayals of the region. On the contrary, Parisian critics invested Weeks' images of Morocco with unusual gravitas. Edwin Lord Weeks' North African scenes, cast in the context and terms of France's colonial entanglements, established his reputation in Paris as more than just another artist with a penchant for the exotic East.<sup>99</sup>

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98. B. Mariott, "Les Peintres Explorateurs: Edwin Lord Weeks," *La Vie Moderne; journal hebdomadaire*, 19 November 1881, 749–50.

99. "C'est de ces voyages remplis d'aventures nombreuses que M. Weeks a rapporté ces études intéressantes et ces curieuses esquisses qui ont commencé à fonder sa réputation à Paris et lui ont valu notre attention." Mariott, 749.

## Chapter Five

### Weeks and the French Visualization of India

From the early 1880s, as Edwin Lord Weeks' career advanced his geographical focus shifted from North Africa to India, but his profound interest in Eastern culture never wavered. The passion that he developed in Morocco for architecture and scenes of everyday life—from dusty, balking camels to intricately carved, weatherbeaten door frames—only intensified as he traveled through India. Weeks' paintings of India, inspired by both French and British sources, demonstrate his especially keen interest in the monumental architecture of the Mughal period. These enduring symbols of strength, visible testaments to political power and the richness of local culture, thematically unify many of Edwin Lord Weeks' brilliantly-hued paintings of the region.

Despite Weeks' use of photography to help capture views and to lend a sense of immediacy to the grand Indian panorama, that vital immediacy never directly bridges to contemporary social or political concerns, no matter how dire, obvious or compelling. It is a selective, often ennobled, dream-like vision of the East, where the realities of the colonial present seldom encroach on the splendors of the imperial past. Regardless of their verist qualities, many of Weeks' paintings of India exist in a reverie that merges past and present without fully engaging either.

This romantic attitude distinguishes Edwin Weeks from the French artists usually associated with him, namely Léon Bonnat and Jean-Léon Gérôme, as well as from the long British artistic visualization of India, discussed in the next chapter. It also sets him apart from

those contemporaries, mainly French, whose popular images of "the East" were often visual forays into violence, salacity and cultural torpidity. However, this attitude did not apply to all French painters of North Africa and the Levant, nor did it apply generally to French artists' interpretations of India. French paintings of India broadly align with an alternate strain of French Orientalism exemplified by Eugène Fromentin's medievalist, idealizing meditations on Algeria (*The Heron Hunt*, Figure 5-1). For some critics Weeks recalled not Gérôme's precisely-rendered fantasies of sex, violence, piety and subjugation, but rather Fromentin's translation of vast spaces and the cultural vitality and agency of the pre-colonial era. In this context Weeks' paintings of India are in agreement with, and may be viewed as a continuation of, both the interpretations of Fromentin and the French visualization of India.

For most of the nineteenth century the French tended to embroider their images of India with lively romantic fantasy, in parallel to their nation's underlying political interest in viewing India as noble but oppressed. In contrast, tempered by the realities of administering a distant colony and restive population, British artists throughout the Victorian era were almost universally wedded to envisioning India in the more static terms of the Picturesque. British artists' deep allegiance to these eighteenth-century artistic conventions visually suspended India in a static, controllable, pre-Rebellion state. Nonetheless, echoes of the British Picturesque emerge in Weeks' paintings through his interest in the work of Scottish artist and architect James Fergusson and through the influence of readily available commercial photographs and albums of India, both later nineteenth-century manifestations of the Picturesque.

Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings of India are best understood as distillations of both the French and British traditions, filtered through the experiences of a sophisticated, often skeptical



American and realized in terms that engaged contemporaneous transatlantic artistic concerns. Because they were produced at the intersection of multiple cultures, Weeks' paintings of India stand apart from, even as they are a part of, the American, British and French national schools. To locate this intersection requires a consideration of the visual legacy crafted by the British and the French, a legacy well in place long before the American Edwin Weeks first ventured to India in 1882.

### Engaging the French Tradition

For strategic reasons France had been keenly interested in India since the seventeenth century. Through the French East India Company, established to keep up with trading rivals set up by the Dutch and British, France had targeted India for various commercial enterprises, colonizing efforts and associated political intrigues. However, in the mid-eighteenth century French ambitions were dealt a terminal blow by Robert Clive, who secured for the British control over Bengal in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Thereafter, France's territorial interests were restricted to a handful of trading posts on the Coromandel Coast (Pondicherry, Karikal and Yanaon), one on the Malabar Coast (Mahé) and Chandannagar in Bengal.

Shielded by distance and liberated from the practical responsibilities of governance, the French had considerable psychological latitude in their imaginings of India. Though long a stalwart of British artistic visions of India, the Picturesque failed to cross the channel to steer French interpretations of the region. Regarding India, French colonial psychology simply never aligned with the formulaic rules and constraints of the Picturesque. Unlike the British, French artists had no reason to fit India into an aesthetic ideal that flirted with the rough and the strange

only to fit them into a prescribed formula, as if India were a slightly more exotic version of the Lake District.

Rather, to visualize India as vital, mutable and somewhat ungovernable fit much more comfortably into the French fantasy. It explained why France had not conquered India, why Britain managed it poorly, and gave sustained hope for the eventual utter failure of Britain's colonial enterprise. In consequence, a mythical, romanticized image of India arose in France over the course of the nineteenth century. As Amina Okada, curator of the Musée National des Arts Asiatiques Guimet in Paris, noted:

La réalité indienne s'estompait ainsi au profit d'une vision idéalisée de l'Inde, où l'imaginaire avait la part belle, où le mythe avait bien souvent valeur de dogme, où le rêve l'emportait volontiers sur le réel.<sup>1</sup>

Despite, or perhaps because of, the dashed hopes for a French colonial empire in India, the subject simmered on a low burn in the French artistic imagination. Among the earlier French images of India are those of Eugène Delacroix, the most expressive of French Romantics, who filled pages of sketchbooks with prancing Indian cavaliers inspired by Count Alexis Soltykoff's illustrated *Voyages dans l'Inde*.<sup>2</sup> In the same high spirit is the 1851 *La Chasse du Rajah* (Figure 5-2) by painter, illustrator and inveterate traveler Évremond de Bérard (1824-81), which gave full rein to the theatricality underlying this mythical vision. Under the pale golden sky in *La*

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1. Amina Okada, *L'Inde du XIXe Siècle, voyage aux sources de l'imaginaire* (Marseille: AGEP Editeur, 1991), 7.

2. Okada, 10-13. Regarding Alexei Dmitriyevich Soltykov (b. 1806), other spellings include: Saltykow, Soltikoff and Saltuikov. In 1849 he published a selection of his letters in French accompanied by his drawings, which became very well known in Europe. *Lettres sur l'Inde*, (Paris: Amyot, 1848). In 1851 the book was translated into Russian and became an instant success; the drawings were published separately in London in 1859 as "Drawings on the Spot."

*Chasse*, dozens of turbaned, bare-chested, lance-wielding hunters, atop a troop of quite determined-looking elephants, encircle a tiger. Ignoring the lances and arrows that dangle from his body, the tiger lunges at his stalkers. In the dark foreground two bloody combatants, a hunter and another tiger, lay side by side on the gray dirt, having met a common end.<sup>3</sup>

To seize briefly on this theme for purposes of comparison, in British depictions of Indian hunts the tiger (long an Indian symbol of strength and royal power) had a much diminished chance of survival. Throughout the nineteenth century, tiger-hunting was a popular theme in British depictions of India, but to find such a lively portrayal of a similar scene in British art one would have to reach back to *Tiger Hunting in the East Indies* (c.1800, Figure 5-3) by the German-born Johan Zoffany (1733–1810). Yet even here Zoffany arranged the tiger, the elephants, the Indians, the landscape and British officers commanding the action such that the outcome is not in doubt. The symbolic tiger is no match for the superior organization and firepower of the British, a lesson again presented in *The Tiger at Bay* (Figure 5-4), from Thomas Williamson's *Oriental Field Sports* (1808).<sup>4</sup> Even less mystery attaches to *The Prince of Wales Tiger Shooting with Sir Jung Bahadoor: the Critical Moment* (Figure 5-5), from the *Illustrated London News* of March 25, 1876 (a reprise of an 1836 engraving by Thomas Landseer, *The Shoot*.) The British were not about to let the Indian tiger win, even in a painting.

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3. Lion and tiger hunts were popular themes in the nineteenth century, and of course held many more meanings than those alluded to above. For example, Delacroix's series on the subject may be viewed as a struggle between man and the destructive forces of nature. Eve Twose Kilman, "Delacroix's Lions and Tigers: A Link between Man and Nature," *Art Bulletin* 64, no. 3 (Sep. 1982): 446–66.

4. Thomas Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1808).

As the cold realities of governing a distant population seeped from commerce to politics to art, British artists responded by restricting their visions of India, what it once was and what it could be. After the Indian rebellion of 1857, although a number of British artists visited India they continually depicted it in formulaic eighteenth-century terms, discussed more fully in the following chapter. However, no such practicalities intruded on the French visual imagination, as two paintings by Charles-Emile Vacher de Tournamine (1812–1872) suggest.<sup>5</sup> *Chasse Indienne* (Figure 5-6) of 1868 (another hunting scene, apparently very popular with the French) again features the luminous golden sky and the requisite pachyderms. Bows now augment the lances; dead deer or other ruminants are slung across the elephant saddles; feisty hounds chase low-flying tropical birds. In the far distance, just above the dense palm groves emerge the shadowed tops of unknown temples. Indian hunters on sprightly white mounts, smartly turbaned and colorfully robed, direct the hunting party. No British officers needed, only the free, noble, medievalising essence of Fromentin's *The Heron Hunt*.

It appears that those same horsemen, bows still at the ready, rode straight from the *Chasse Indienne* into *Une fête dans l'Inde—Lac Sacré d'Oudeypour* (1870; Figure 5-7), a work by the same artist. In this lively scene, tasseled crimson howdahs complement the riders' splendid wardrobes. The whole party enjoys a promenade through the shallows of the sacred lake, with the stark white, ornately carved temple in the background, etched against a pure azure sky. Richly jeweled saddle blankets, turbans of red, white, yellow, blue and pink carry hints of glimmering chivalry, of the European medieval seigneur, of the fabulous in the fact. Moved by a

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5. Okada, 16.

similar poetical spirit, decades later Weeks described his visit to the sacred lake:

A long perspective of white palaces, with many domes and oriel-windows, with solid masses of dark foliage rising from the water here and there, reaches to the great supporting walls of the Rana's castle, and at this point the lake opens out into greater width; its horizon of gardens and hills beyond is interrupted only by the fantastic silhouettes of the island palaces, which seem to float between water and sky; it is as if the elusive mirages which we had so often seen on our way across the white salt deserts of Persia, and which had always melted into thin air, had at last become materialized here.<sup>6</sup>

Two of Weeks' illustrations of the same locale, *Castle of the Ranas of Oudeypore* and *Elephants Drinking—Pichola Lake* (Figures 5-8, 5-9), attest to the Rajputs' impressive bearing painted decades earlier by Tournemine.<sup>7</sup> Weeks observed: "When arrayed in his court dress, and mounted on his horse caparisoned with corresponding splendor, the Rajpoot noble is at his best, and in the full glare of sunlight he is decorative to a dazzling degree."<sup>8</sup> Lamenting the sartorial shortcomings of the West, Weeks found the most well turned-out "dude" but a "crude and unfinished production" by comparison. In typical fashion, Weeks was quick to point out misleading Western prejudices. Decorative did not mean incapable: "Notwithstanding the bejewelled daintness of their attire . . . many of them are experts with a boar spear or an express rifle."<sup>9</sup> Similar images of splendid bearing and active competence abound in paintings by Weeks, but are virtually absent from British depictions of Indian life.

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6. Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 270–71.

7. Reproduced in Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 275 and 261; Weeks, "Oudeypore, the City of the Sunrise," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 90, no. 587 (1895): 435-56, at 441 and 447.

8. Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 285.

9. Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 289.

## The Influence of Louis Rousselet

Perhaps the most profound impact on the nineteenth-century French visualization of India were the photographs and books of Marie Théophile Louis Rousselet (1845–1929), a close contemporary of Weeks. Rousselet traveled extensively throughout India in the years 1863–68. His photographs were published by Goupil et Cie of Paris in a two volume set of 160 mounted albumen prints, *Voyage dan L'Inde de M. L. Rousselet*.<sup>10</sup> This was followed in 1875 by Rousselet's book, with 317 engravings, *L'Inde des Rajahs, Voyage dans l'Inde centrale et dans les présidences de Bombay et du Bengale*, published in translation in Britain and America in 1876 as *India and Its Native Princes*.<sup>11</sup> It is very possible that the reproductions in Rousselet's book were the ones that Edwin Weeks was referring to when he wrote from Paris in December of 1879 to Alexander Twombly about his Moroccan excursion to the "ruined city of Shela" with its "with grand old gateway of carved stone, like things I have seen in photographs of India" (Figures 5-10, 5-11).<sup>12</sup>

Rousselet published to raves in Britain, despite his continental perspective. Though the translation had been in production for a while, its well-timed release coincided with the Prince of Wales' visit to India in 1875–76, with a note on the title page "Dedicated by express permission to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales." The prince purchased fifty copies of the book to use as

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10. Hélène Lafont-Couturier and Pierre-Lin Renié, *L'Inde: Photographies de Louis Rousselet, 1865-1868* (Bordeaux: Musée Goupil, 1992).

11. Louis Rousselet, *India and Its Native Princes*, trans. Charles Randolph Buckle (London: Chapman and Hall; New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1876).

12. Weeks to Alexander Twombly, Paris, 10 December 1879.

presentation volumes to Indian rulers. In a rapturous review of the “truly superb” volume, London's *Art Journal* acclaimed its

. . . marvelous structures, its singular scenery, and its picturesque people. As engravings they have not been surpassed . . . It is a volume perfect in all respects, which thoroughly brings before us a country that is almost a world—deeply interesting to all nations, but more especially to England.<sup>13</sup>

The progressive *Westminster Review* welcomed Rousselet's refreshingly independent point of view:

. . . is of much value as the best existing popular description of the large portion of India through which he travelled . . . We recognize throughout the advantage of the French traveller's having brought ‘a fresh mind and independent ideas to bear on his subject, free from any preconceived bias or prejudice.’ The exceeding fidelity of his picture can be thoroughly apparent only to those who have been in India . . .<sup>14</sup>

Not to be outdone by the *Westminster Review*, *The Academy* polished its compliments of Rousselet with a swipe at the calculated taxonomic preoccupations of British ethnologists.

As far as *The Academy* was concerned, when it came to describing India, being French—or at least not being British—bestowed a critical advantage:

We must commend the editors for having required of the artists—I count fourteen contributors to the book, all of more or less eminence—to confine themselves to the literal rendering of the documents entrusted to them, instead of allowing them, as was the custom until very lately, to arrange scenes which set at defiance the bearing, habits, passions, prejudices peculiar to each race, to each people,

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13. "India and Its Native Princes," *Art Journal*, n.s. 2 (1876): 145. However, some reviewers expressed reservations, particularly regarding the appropriateness of the books as gifts to Indian rulers. The subject of one illustration, the Prince of Wales' attendance at a brutal elephant fight, was greeted by one reviewer with “unmitigated disgust” and deemed hardly the proper royal image or example. Other detractors found particularly offensive the “elephant executioner crushing the skull of a prostrate criminal”—a scene worthy of Gérôme.

14. “Rousselet’s Travels in India,” *Westminster Review* (American edition) 105 (1876): 187–204, at 187.

according to the degree of latitude, climate, origin, and contact with European civilisation. Here, then, is the proof of what I said at the beginning of my letter, that there is a higher average of critical sense in France.<sup>15</sup>

The French could not have agreed more. There, Rousselet's works were considered the most thorough and most up-to-date commentary on British India. Finding common ground with the *Westminster Review* and *The Academy*, French writers dismissed the English as too close to the situation to gain proper perspective on the country and its peoples. The *Revue archéologique* called Rousselet's work the most serious on India since that of early nineteenth-century biologist and geologist Victor Jacquemont.<sup>16</sup> The illustrations were appreciated for their absolute accuracy and for their scientific value, a characteristic that impressed many in Britain as well, including Sir Richard Burton.<sup>17</sup>

*L'Inde des Rajahs* was published not long after Edwin Lord Weeks arrived in Paris in 1874 to further his professional training. Although it is not known exactly when Weeks encountered the works of Rousselet, it is certain that he did and that Rousselet's vision of India made a deep and lasting impression on him as may be seen through a number of Weeks' texts and

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15. Ph. Burty, "French Christmas Books," *Academy* 7 (2 Jan. 1875): 21–22, at 22.

16. "Le livre de M. Rousselet est peut-être ce que, depuis Jacquemont, on a écrit en France de plus sérieux sur l'Inde," and "... il a pu juger la situation du pays, les idées et le caractère des indigènes, l'administration et la politique de l'Angleterre dans l'Inde, avec une liberté d'esprit qu'un Anglais, trop intéressée dans la question, aurait difficilement conservée dans toute cette étude." He also found Rousselet's images believable: "Rien ici de donné à l'invention, à l'à peu près; chacune de ces illustrations traduit soit une photographie, soit un croquis fait sur les lieux mêmes par un vif et sincère crayon." G. Perrot, "Bibliographie," *Revue archéologique*, n.s. 29 (Jan.–June 1875): 268–71, at 268.

17. Burton was considerably interested in Rousselet's illustration of the naked miners of Pannah. Richard F. Burton, "The Nizam Diamond—The Diamond in India," *Quarterly Journal of Science and Annals of Mining, Metallurgy, Engineering* . . . , n.s. 6 (Jan. 1876): 351–60, at 356.



paintings. For example, in his article for *Harper's Magazine*, "Oudeypore, the City of the Sunrise" (and in its slightly revised version published as a chapter of Weeks' 1895 *From the Black Sea through Persia to India*), the author relied on Rousselet for topographical information, quoted him directly concerning architectural decoration, and included a full page excerpted from Rousselet's concise genealogy of the Rajputs given in *L'Inde des Rajahs*. Elsewhere, sections of Weeks' text track Rousselet very closely, though usually without citation.<sup>18</sup>

Edwin Weeks' representations of India reveal visual as well as textual correspondences with Rousselet. One striking example is found in a comparison of Weeks' illustration of the *Castle of the Ranas of Oudeypore* (Figure 5-8) with Rousselet's *The Great Entrance of the Palace of Oudeypore* (Figure 5-12).<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the upper left section of Week's illustration of the *Palace of the Maharajah of Gwalior, Scindia* (Figure 5-13) precisely mirrors the cropping and perspective of Rousselet's image *The King Pal Palace, Gwalior* (Figure 5-14). In a third example, the top and right borders of Weeks' painting (*Indian Horsemen at the) Gateway of Alah-ou-din, Old Delhi* (n.d.; Figure 5-15) correspond closely to the Rousselet's cropped photograph *La porte d'Ala-Oudīn* (1868; Figure 5-16).<sup>20</sup>

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18. Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 278, 281, 289–90 reproduced earlier in Weeks, "Oudeypore, the City of the Sunrise." Elsewhere, Weeks' paraphrasing tracks Rousselet very closely, though without direct citation. Compare, for example, Weeks' description of a rider's dress and accoutrements on page 286 of *From the Black Sea* with Rousselet's *Native Princes*, page 150.

19. *Castle of the Ranas of Oudeypore* in Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 261; *The Great Entrance* in Rousselet, *Native Princes*, 160 (opposite page). The central figure in *Castle* is quite similar to that in Weeks' oil painting, *Indian Prince and Parade Ceremony*.

20. *The Palace of the Maharajah* illustration appears in Weeks' *From the Black Sea*, 247. *The King Pal Palace* may be found in Rousselet, *Native Princes*, 302. *La porte d'Ala-Oudīn* is reproduced in Musée Goupil-Bordeaux, *l'Inde Photographies de Louis Rousselet 1865-1868* (Bordeaux: Musée Goupil, 1992),

Other correspondences suggest a similar conclusion, that Weeks quoted selectively from both Rousselet's literary and visual records of his travels through India. The architectural ornament highlighted in Weeks' *The Fort of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh* (Figure 5-17) is just that captured by Rousselet's *Side View of the Pal Palace, at Gwalior* (Figure 5-18). One of Weeks' most famous works, *The Golden Temple, Amritsar* (c. 1890; Figure 5-19) is presented from the exact angle of Rousselet's illustration, *Temple at Umritsur, and Lake of Immortality* (Figure 5-20).

Rousselet's impressions of India retained their currency even in 1890s Paris, although by this point it was all too apparent that France's claims on India were forever out of reach. Nevertheless, for the French India remained "that country of astonishing enchantment."<sup>21</sup> French political opportunities had evaporated, but France's intellectual claims endured. Indeed, they escalated. France may not have controlled India but, at least in the minds of French intellectuals, she understood India better than the British ever did or ever would.<sup>22</sup>

For the French, subordinate colonizers with a handful of trading outposts, to view India as culturally stagnant served no political, social or economic purpose.<sup>23</sup> In fact, it was quite the opposite. France had everything to gain by believing that the people of India were not only

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21. India was described as "le pays des féeries étonnantes" in "Vereschagin," *Le Figaro Supplément Littéraire du Dimanche* no. 52 (28 Dec 1879): 229, col. 6.

22. For a vivid example of this point of view from one of Weeks' contemporaries, see Gustave Le Bon, "Ethnographie: L'Inde Moderne," *Revue Scientifique* no. 21 (20 Nov. 1886): 648–57.

23. For more on this theme and a discussion of the "psychological colonization" of India, see Jyoti Mohan, "Claiming India: French Scholars and the Preoccupation with India during the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2010), 1–20.

wrongly oppressed, but that India was capable of making its own progressive strides without the overbearing "guidance" of Britain. If France had lost the greatest colonial prize in Asia, the salve to French pride was to dominate India intellectually, to create a vicarious empire that rested on superior knowledge, penetrating cultural and historical analysis. The resultant view of India, constructed around French concerns, was not consistent with the British view of India as a fractious country in need of firm guidance. French Indology was shaped by loss and the need to recapture the possibilities of the past and the glory of what might have been.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, the study of India took overlapping but divergent paths in Britain and France, steered often by opposing political and commercial agendas. Entangled in the competing national projects of either re-imagining an India hopelessly lost or governing an India precariously acquired was the perplexing matter of Indo-European racial relations. For, according to Victorian pronouncements on the hierarchy of races, the Indian people were the identifiable, if down-at-heel, cousins of the French and the British.

This understanding matured over decades. In the nineteenth century, the foundation of European Indological studies rested on comparative philology, specifically the linguistic

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24. Mohan, 23–31. See also Joan Leopold: "Moreover, the linkage between Indo-European language, culture and race was from the 1830s no longer largely restricted to the past. Comparative philologists with an Idealist emphasis upon common language and mentality as the key to common ethnic origin and an exaggerated estimate of the continuity of Indo-European language, culture and thought from 2000 B.C to their own time, held that modern Indo-European language speakers were in some sense the direct descendants of ancient ones. From 1850–70 perhaps the majority of comparative philologists accepted the principle that in the classification of contemporary human 'races' linguistic criteria were the most reliable and should supercede as yet scarcely formularized ethnological criteria such as hair, eye and cuticle colour or cranial and skeletal measurement." Joan Leopold, "British Applications of the Aryan Theory of Race to India, 1850–1870," *English Historical Review* 89, no. 352 (July 1974): 578–603, at 579.

affinities identified among classical Greek, Latin, the Germanic languages and Sanskrit. Many philologists were convinced that Indic and Hebraic texts had contributed substantially to ancient Greek civilization.<sup>25</sup> The unsettling but hard to sidestep conclusion was the radical idea of an ancient Indo-European "Aryan" civilization (from the Sanskrit *ārya*, noble), a proposition that upended conventional Western interpretations of global history.<sup>26</sup> In the Victorian era the terms "Aryan" and "Aryan race" became commonplace referents for the descendants of the original speakers of the Aryan languages. That is, they referred to the inhabitants of Europe and, problematically and controversially, India.

In the later decades of the nineteenth century linguistics was linked with ethnology and the emerging science of anthropology, igniting furious debates on race, progress, civilization, history, human potential and cultural superiority. These ideas were insistently topical and invariably contentious. Serious proposals to address them, both intellectual and practical, had sweeping domestic and international implications for the European colonial powers.

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25. Mohan, 164.

26. "The work of Sir William Jones and his contemporaries—the translations into various European languages the Rig Veda and other texts—demonstrated the fundamental relationship between Greek, Latin and Sanskrit that demanded a new comparative vision of history that insisted on a common Indo-European cultural heritage. . . . this common heritage was welded onto a Vedic framework by a later generation of scholars, most notably Friedrich Max Müller . . . whose Company-sponsored translation of the Vedas (six volumes, 1849–74) marked a pivotal point in the reconfiguration of understandings of religion and ancient history, was the most influential popularizer of 'Aryanism'. His work, which reached a large popular audience in Britain and its colonies, depicted the Vedas as the foundational source for the study of 'civilization' and made the term 'Aryan' an indispensable part of the analytical vocabulary of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnology and history." Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York and Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Publishers Ltd., 2002), 5–6.

So, in Edwin Lord Weeks' time, to engage seriously the culture of India was more than a foray into the exotic; it was to wade into a raging debate on history and ideology that carried immediate political implications. These disparate currents of thought formed the backdrop for the reception of Edwin Weeks' images of India in the fashionable galleries of late nineteenth-century London and Paris. Arguably, as politics and scholarly debate inevitably shaped the works of informed artists, so in turn did their paintings become a part of the broader discussion.

In the nineteenth century the boundaries between artist, writer and scholar were more permeable. The French writer and photographer Louis Rousselet, for example, was held in high regard as a noted anthropologist; he published essays on India in *Revue d'Anthropologie* and was appointed a permanent member of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris. He characterized the peoples he encountered in the various communities of India in terms of race, as Aryan, Turanian or Dravidian, although he refrained from attaching labels indicative of developmental superiority or potential.<sup>27</sup> Despite a late-Victorian wave of pseudo-scientific theories that popularized the notion of racial categorizations based on "types" derived from anthropometric formulae,<sup>28</sup> Weeks'

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27. Rousselet was far more neutral in tone than other French theorists such as Arthur de Gobineau, whose *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1884) proposed that the downfall of Indian civilization was a direct result of miscegenation, the dilution of the original Aryan stock. Prolonged intermixing of ethnicities so diluted the vigor of the Aryan population that it fell prey to successive invaders, including the English. Weakened over centuries, Gobineau predicted that India could never regain its former strength. Mohan, 205.

28. For more on this topic, see Elizabeth Edwards, ed., *Anthropology and Photography, 1860–1920* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1992); Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1994); and Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

writings and paintings retained a more neutral tone consistent with that presented in the 1870s by Rousselet in *India and Its Native Princes*.

### French Enthusiasm, British Ennui

Though Weeks' interpretations seem to have adhered to the spirit of Rousselet, at the time Weeks was traveling and painting scenes of Indian culture, current in European intellectual circles was French sociologist Gustave Le Bon's comprehensive *Les Civilisations de l'Inde* (1887), a highly influential 743-page book with over 350 reproductions of photographs, drawings and maps.<sup>29</sup> In chapters such as "Origine et classification des races de l'Inde" and "Races de l'Inde septentrionale ou Hindoustan" Le Bon embraced prevailing theories of hierarchical racial categorizations. Although Le Bon was primarily interested in defining race in terms of psychological characteristics, he backed up his views with illustrations typical of the ethnographically-driven photography of the time: front, side and three-quarter views of the human body and staged poses that demonstrated occupations and the use of common implements. (He was, after all the inventor of the pocket cephalometer.)

Le Bon's work was considered a reliable reference on historical and contemporary India, cited as authority on both sides of the Atlantic as well as in prominent journals such as *Revue*

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29. Gustave Le Bon, *Les Civilisations de l'Inde* (Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1887). Le Bon believed it to be only a matter of time before the English lost power in India: "que les plus funestes ennemis des Anglais dans l'Inde sont précisément les Anglais eux-mêmes." Le Bon, "Ethnographie: L'Inde Moderne," 657.

*Scientifique* and in various English language periodicals.<sup>30</sup> His texts would have been nearly inescapable to the professional or amateur Indologist, especially one like Edwin Weeks, a long-time Paris resident at the height of his career when *Les Civilisations de l'Inde* was published. Interestingly, Weeks did not mention Le Bon in any of his writings. Though obvious formal similarities unite the works of Rousselet and Weeks, none of Le Bon's images call to mind any of Weeks' representations of India. As Weeks often cited sources he respected, a reasonable conclusion is that Weeks found little in Le Bon to add to his own interpretations of Indian culture.

An apparent disinterest in Le Bon is not to say that Weeks was not steeped in the nineteenth-century preoccupation with racial classifications and hierarchies. Like many of his contemporaries, Weeks used the term "race" broadly and in a variety of contexts.<sup>31</sup> He was

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30. Mohan, 214–15.

31. The concept of "race" was interwoven throughout Weeks' *From the Black Sea*: "crooned to himself with the wailing cadences of his race" (14); "this strange gathering place of races" (73); "to chronicle deeds which, if performed by another race and in another age" (93); "often applied to all races from India to Morocco" (140); "dense mass of brown and yellow humanity in which every race of India might seem to be represented" (143); "they are lighter in color than any race of India" (150); "originally a military race" (152); "not only a different race, but a different specie of the human animal" (153); "of Mongolian race" (153); "the elastic and supple attitudes of his race" (158); "the more modern race seems to have inherited the taste of the older one" (190); "of whatever race or nation" (196); "the hereditary stamp of his race" (226); "some physiological peculiarity of the race" (238); "each race has left traces of its occupancy" (248); "the higher Rajpoot race" and "the leading race characteristics" (287); "the governing race" and "the whole Rajpoot race" (288); "the 'hoary antiquity' of the race" (292); "the English-speaking races", "the conquered races" and "the warlike races of India" (306); "by artisans of the same race as the original builders" and "men of an alien race" (308); "artisans of Hindoo or Jaina race" (329); "he belonged to a race remarkable for keen intelligence," "a more cultivated race than their conquerors" and "the work of a widely different race" (332); "the conventional dress of their race or order" and "clinging drapery of her race" (334); "a complete fusion of the two races" (347); "no races of Europe can show" (350); "this once dashing race of freebooters" (351); "various were the races represented" (354); "the error of judging a race by rare exceptions" and "showed himself to be far freer from race prejudice" (362); "monopolized by Western races" (383); "momentary blending, of races" (408); "not unpardonable

keenly aware of the theories of Indo-European Aryan civilization that were fundamental to then-current anthropological and historical assessments of India. He refers more than once to the deep Indo-European cultural connection, and through that connection recognizes his own genetic affiliations:

[describing "an itinerant fakir"] Of all the children of Aryan stock he is the most conservative, unchanged and unchanging; and even in India, where in these days one is seldom out of hearing of the locomotive whistle, he is an anachronism.

[on decoration of houses in Bikanir] An equally strange and persistent impression remained that the houses of this remote capital had a certain affinity with our own, as if some appreciative native had recently visited America and had brought back with him the idea of the artistic little homes of Boston or Philadelphia . . . . Vacant wall spaces, as elsewhere, are often stuccoed and made interesting by frescoes representing the usual rampant elephants and tiger-hunts. One frequently recurring theme, which shows, in spite of what the Rajpoot nobility may secretly believe, that we are all of the same Aryan stock, represents a sort of Noah's ark riding on a stormy sea of the deepest indigo; on the hurricane-deck are stiffly seated a company of Bikanir gentlemen, complacently looking down at the unfortunate beings of lower castes who are vainly struggling with the waves.

The Hindoo globe-trotter takes delight, not altogether free from a spark of malice, in pointing out the beam in the eyes of other Aryan brothers which has been thought to exist only in his own. 'You too have caste,' said one of the Hindoos at the Chicago Fair, 'but your caste is founded on money alone.'<sup>32</sup>

This last excerpt, a pithy spin on Matthew 7:3, places the Indian traveler on par with the American as it takes direct aim at Western values and casual hypocrisy. The barb is all the more

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in a race where one family" (410); "the amiable characteristics of their race" (412); "contrast of races" (413); "alien races" and "each race now has its experts and semi-professionals in the cricket-field" (424); "by people of every race and caste" (426); "adopted by the parent race" and "for the same race prejudice exists here (432); "of whatever race or caste" (434); "the wretched Pariah, the outcast and scapegoat of his race" (437).

32. Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 376, 236, 356.



pointed given that the setting is the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, where all the world was staged for American examination and entertainment, an exhibition self-congratulatory but by no means self-critical.

It was typical of Weeks to see not only the relationships among cultures but also the chinks in his own armory of Western ideas. Though he never allowed those chinks to develop into deep fissures, he made a practice of poking at them. American hypocritical attitudes were fair game, as were British. But by the mid-1890s, when Weeks spoke of America's "Aryan brothers," few British intellectuals cared to follow the Aryan chain of reasoning to its obvious conclusion, that British rule of India was unjust.<sup>33</sup> In Britain, the parameters of the Aryan theory were firmly set in the service of empire.

Justification of imperialism was not the only factor delimiting British Indology. In the same year that Louis Rousset's profusely illustrated *L'Inde des Rajahs* reignited French scientific and artistic interest in India (shortly after Edwin Weeks arrived in Paris), in Britain jurist and crown advisor on India Sir Henry Maine's Cambridge Rede Lecture on "The Effects of Observation of India on Modern European Thought" was greeted with a collective yawn. The tedium of the subject in Britain was all too apparent in contrast to the spirited enthusiasm for India on the continent.<sup>34</sup>

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33. Leopold, 592–93.

34. Thomas R. Trautman, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 1. "In England . . . Indian topics were regarded as the epitome of dullness, while in other European countries . . . India was regarded as providing the most exciting of new problems, holding out the promise of new discoveries."

That colonial familiarity had bred indifference was regrettably obvious to prominent London artist Valentine Prinsep, born in Calcutta to a family who had served in India for generations. Prinsep, commissioned in October 1876 to memorialize the Imperial Assemblage of Delhi in a painting to be presented to Queen Victoria on the occasion of her assumption of the title "Empress of India," remarkably described India as "a country artistically unknown."<sup>35</sup> After traveling from rajah to rajah for over a year in India, Prinsep wrote in 1878:

As a field for artists, India has been of late years sadly neglected. While the more fortunate countries of the East—Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Arabia—have been frequently depicted, India has remained almost unknown to the painter. Zoffany and Daniel, both Royal Academicians, in the old time, when the voyage alone to India was an affair six months or more, thought it worth their while to visit the unknown land of Hind. Now in six months much of India may be seen, and yet since the time of these two artists no painter of note has thought it worth his while to convey to his countrymen an impression of our Eastern empire. The only painter of eminence who has visited India for the last eighty years has been a Russian, M. Verestchagine.<sup>36</sup>

Coming from one of the most successful and pervasively networked artists in London, Val Prinsep's statement demonstrates just how thoroughly disinterested his colleagues were in the subject, despite a long history of British artists' engagement with India.

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35. Val. C. Prinsep, *Imperial India, an artist's journals*, 2nd ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879), 350.

36. Prinsep, 350. In a footnote, Prinsep adds: "I must except one or two water-colour painters, who were only landscape sketchers."

## Chapter Six

### Empire of the Imagination: the British Visual Legacy

Regardless of Val Prinsep's observations on the paucity of his contemporaries' interest, the collective passions of British artists for India charted a singular phenomenon in the history of art. This was especially true of English landscapists. As Giles Tillotson observed, "in no other case has the topography of one country been so extensively and systematically depicted by artists from another."<sup>1</sup> The British produced an enormous trove of images of India, mostly cast in a vision surprisingly pervasive, uniform and long-lasting. The following overview of the sporadic history and narrow conceptual range of paintings of India executed by British artists reveals how startlingly novel Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings must have appeared to European audiences.

Inspired by visions of the exotic and driven by prospects of considerable fortune, London artists of the latter Georgian era who had never step foot south of Bromley shipped off with John Company for Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. For over a century the visions of India that they brought back to Europe invariably adhered to familiar formats. The most enduring and pervasive of these approaches were the prescribed views of the Picturesque. What started out in Britain as a cultivated pastime, a way to sharpen perception, appreciate the roughness of nature and the irregularities of architecture, to tinker artistically around the edges of reality, was applied wholesale to India.

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1. Giles Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire, The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000), 59.

There were of course exceptions, especially early on. In the eighteenth century, India was perceived to be a much grander subject that demanded a grander method, especially when it came to portrait artists whose patrons were frequently wealthy Indian rulers. While resident in Madras, Tilly Kettle depicted one of his patrons, *Muhammad Ali Khan, Nawab of Arcot* (1749–95, 94 x 58.3 inches, Figure 6-1), in as close to a dignified swagger as the artist could manage given the fully robed subject.<sup>2</sup> James Wales flattered the Maratha Peshwa with the equally huge *Madhu Rao Narayan, the Maratha Peshwa* (1792; 90 x 73 inches, Figure 6-2), in which the principal subject is seated along with his minister, Nana Fadnavis, as two standing attendants hold the sword and yak's tail fly-whisk, unmistakable symbols of authority.

For royal portraiture of Indian subjects, the protocols of flattery lingered well into the mid-nineteenth century. Franz Winterhalter, a favorite portraitist of Queen Victoria, portrayed the teenage *Maharaja Duleep Singh* (1854; Figure 6-3)—who had recently relinquished sovereignty of the Punjab—with considerably more cosmopolitan panache and romantic appeal than the artist's rather wooden portraits of Princes Albert and Albert Edward.

British administrators and officers of the East India Company were no less eager to memorialize familial wealth and status, and were equally interested in the possibilities offered by history painting's staged heroics to record battles valiantly fought, treaties cagily negotiated, and peoples firmly subjugated. A British artist's lack of personal experience of India was apparently no bar to producing a grand history painting in a nominally Indian setting. For example,

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2. Mildred Archer and Ronald Lightbrown, *India Observed: India as viewed by British Artists 1760–1860* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982), 32 plate 1.

Benjamin West (1738–1820) employed a few neoclassical overtones to embellish *Shah 'Alam (Mughal Emperor 1759–1806) conveying the grant of the Diwani to Lord Clive* (c. 1818; Figure 6-4), his testament to Clive's victories in Bengal in 1757, no doubt the earliest Anglo-American depiction of India.

Although the popularity of British history painting waned, its decline hastened by the upstart Pre-Raphaelite movement, while operative it lent an undeniable grandeur to the visualization of India. Not surprisingly, the Indian rebellion of 1857 prompted a revival of interest in grand-scale history painting, with works such as Thomas Jones Barker's *The Relief of Lucknow, 1857* (1859, 108 x 190 inches; Figure 6-5). *Relief* commemorated the harrowing defense of the British Residency and the heroic death of Sir Henry Lawrence, with recognizable portraits of Lawrence's fellow officers, amid thrashed and dying Indians whose bodies lay scattered around the canvas.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from these mid-century exceptions, this sweeping, monumental vision of India, always intermittent, almost completely disappears from British art in the second half of the nineteenth century. After the sparks of rebellion were extinguished, the responsibilities of management superceded the mysteries of the exotic. In Britain, the grand concept gave ground to the more contained narrative, but in India the grand concept vanished. For professional British artists, India became more pedestrian than provocative, more suited to the modest ambitions of the Picturesque and the domesticities of genre, with appeal for patrons with tastes

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3. The larger version was destroyed in World War II; the smaller version is 41.5 x 71.4 inches. C. A. Bayly, *The Raj: India and the British 1600–1947* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1990), 246–47.

for the conventional, the morally ordered and the socially controlled. It is this constrained vision of India that prevailed until upended by Edwin Lord Weeks in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

### Early British Artists and the Picturesque

The aesthetics of romanticism, grand portraiture and the dramatic possibilities of history painting influenced British artists' interpretations of India from the mid-eighteenth century through the first quarter of the nineteenth. But, during roughly the same period a humbler mode of representation arose in Britain, the "Picturesque," that was to foster an even more enduring Western visual language of India. The key practitioners of the Indian Picturesque, their contemporaries and their followers, not only defined India in the British imagination for most of the Victorian era, they also determined the predominant professional legacy that confronted Edwin Weeks when he first visited India in the 1880s.

The aims and conventions of the Picturesque were established in the eighteenth century. They had a penetrating and pervasive impact on British landscape painting, but their applications to India proved truly tenacious. For over a hundred years few British artists, whether amateur or professional, were able to resist the temptation to view India in terms of the Picturesque: a broad landscape that referenced the sublime yet brimmed with textural variety, curious or exotic details, irregular outlines, all gently spiced with requisite *staffage*. Drawing on seventeenth-century landscapists Claude Lorrain, Nicolas Poussin, Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Dughet, the signature quality of the Picturesque was an approachable roughness, uninhibited by too careful an insistence on actuality. The spiky thatch of a cottage roof, a jagged mountain outline, an

unkempt field, a deteriorating ruin were all employed to useful advantage. To create a scene that sparked interest and contemplation, a free and fluid hand was laudable, a slavish adherence to detail was not:

A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree . . . Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet instead of the chissel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a smooth building we must turn it into a rough ruin.

. . . .

To this it is enough, that the province of the picturesque eye is to *survey nature*, not to *anatomize matter*. It throws its glances around in the broad-cast stile. It comprehends an extensive tract at each sweep. It examine *parts*, but never descends to *particles*.<sup>4</sup>

The Picturesque welcomed restrained embellishment in service of a noble ideal. It rejoiced in the imperfect, jagged edges of life and landscape. It sought out the underlying beauty of nature, fitted it to a classical taste, and never paid too close attention to the bits that were left over or broken in the process. It was, in short, a handy artistic tool with which to hammer out an empire.

Although the Picturesque grew out of an appreciation for mid-seventeenth-century continental styles, it was an unquestionably British phenomenon. Among the more ardent promoters of the picturesque ideals was the Reverend William Gilpin (1724–1804), quoted above, whose *Essay on Prints* (1768) and *Observations on the River Wye and several parts of South Wales, etc. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770*

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4. William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape*, 3rd edition (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1808), 7 and 26.

(1792) extolled the gentlemanly pleasures of domestic travel and sketching expeditions in rural England.<sup>5</sup> Gilpin's work proved exceedingly timely and well-targeted. It dovetailed nicely with the middle class tourist boom and appealed as well to the sons of the aristocracy, bound for the Grand Tour. With regard to the topic at hand, its popularity perfectly coincided with the rise of the East India Company and the expansion of the British Empire in India.<sup>6</sup>

The East India Company was not a consistent patron of the arts, but as early as 1730 it had commissioned George Lambert and Samuel Scott for paintings of its settlements to grace the Court Room at East India House in London. That neither of these British artists had set foot in India was of no apparent concern.<sup>7</sup>

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5. The rules of the Picturesque were expounded further and applied to landscape gardening and architecture by Richard Payne Knight (1750–1824) in *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste, 1802*; Uvedale Price (1747–1829) in *Essay on the Picturesque, As Compared With The Sublime and The Beautiful* (1794); Thomas Johnes (1748–1816) at Hafod House; and John Britton (1771–1857) in *The Beauties of Wiltshire* (1801) and *Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain* (1805–14). For a treatment of Gilpin, Edmund Burke and the philosophical underpinnings of the Picturesque, see Tillotson, 12–27.

6. The conventions of the picturesque were not applied exclusively to India and other regions of the "East." Wherever British travelers ventured, including destinations in Europe, they sketched and recorded their travels in accord with the dictates of the Picturesque, an aesthetic norm in Britain at this time. Thus it is problematic to associate the Picturesque exclusively with an imperialistic point of view. For a fuller discussion of the Picturesque as the political, see G.H.R. Tillotson, "Indian Architecture and the English Vision," *South Asian Studies* 7 (1991): 59–74, reprinted in David Arnold and Peter Robb, *Institutions and Ideologies, A SOAS South Asia Reader* (Richmond, Surrey: RoutledgeCurzon, 1993), 120–144; and more recently in Zahid R. Chaudhary, *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2012), 107–51.

7. Brian Allen, "The East India Company's Settlement Pictures: George Lambert and Samuel Scott," in Pauline Rohatgi and Pheroza Godrej, ed. *Under the Indian Sun: British Landscape Artists* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1995), 1–6. These images of Fort St. George, Fort William, Bombay, Tellicherry, the Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena were intended to represent the vast reach of the Company's trade rather than to be accurate topographical representations.



No professional British artist did so for thirty more years. In 1757, London artist Francis Swain Ward (1736–94) abandoned his lackluster career with the hope of improving his prospects in the military service of the Company. After a stint of seven years in the Madras Army, armed with a portfolio of sketches Ward returned to London to resume his former pursuits. His artistic career fared no better for his absence. All that survives of his work are ten oils that he donated to the Company prior to returning to India in 1774, among them the serene *Mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sasaram (Bihar)* (c. 1772–73; Figure 6-6). These paintings, inspired by classical landscapes, are the earliest images of India by a professionally-trained artist who had visited the sub-continent.<sup>8</sup>

William Hodges, R.A. (1744–97) was the first to travel to India in the capacity of a professional artist. Hodges had apprenticed under landscapist Richard Wilson (1714–82) and gained unmatched experience as the expedition artist for Captain James Cook's second voyage to the South Seas of 1772–75. Under the patronage of Governor-General Warren Hastings, Hodges arrived in India in 1780, as Fort St. George, Madras came under escalating attacks. Lamenting that the "opportunities that offer to a painter are few, in a country which is over-run by an active enemy" after a year he embarked on the first of three tours of northern and eastern India, attached to either military or diplomatic missions.<sup>9</sup> Each of these three excursions had specific

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8. Although Ward produced many paintings of India, his collection is lost. Only about a dozen of Ward's images are known. Pauline Rohatgi, "Preface to a Lost Collection: The Pioneering Art of Francis Swain Ward," in Rohatgi and Godrej, 31–52.

9. William Hodges, *Travels in India during the years 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783*, 2nd ed. (London: 1794), 8.

objectives. The first was devoted to the topography of the British territory, the second to the observation of manners, art and customs in the area of Bengal and the third focused on Mughal sites and history.<sup>10</sup>

Hodges did not linger at Calcutta. Benefitting from "that liberality and attention to the arts which has ever characterized" Warren Hastings, Hodges joined the Governor-General and party on several prolonged tours of the country.<sup>11</sup> Occasionally Hodges stayed on for months at the home of some Company official whom he had befriended along the way, furthering his introductions into Anglo-Indian society and seeding the ground for future commissions.<sup>12</sup>

His paintings from this period reveal little of the armed conflict around him. This was perhaps not so much political editing as a devotion to the sentimentalized, classical landscape that comported with Joshua Reynolds' freshly delivered lectures on decorum to the Royal Academy.<sup>13</sup> As Hodges' images of the crisp lines and formidable mass of British buildings project power, vitality and progress, his depictions of Indian architecture, crumbling in poetic

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10. Geoff Quilley, "Hodges and India," in Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill, ed., *William Hodges, 1744–1797: the Art of Exploration* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2004), 139.

11. Hodges, *Travels in India*, 37.

12. Pratapaditya Pal and Vidya Dehejia, *From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India, 1757–1930* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 102.

13. According to Reynolds, the artist must "sometimes deviate from vulgar and strict historical truth, in pursuing the grandeur of his design;" the painter is to "correct nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original; and what may seem a paradox, he learns to design naturally by drawing his figures unlike to any one object. This idea of the perfect state of nature, which the artist calls the Ideal Beauty, is the great leading principle by which works of genius are conducted." Edmund Gosse, ed., *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1884), 36 (Discourse III, December 14, 1770) and 50 (Discourse IV, December 10, 1771).

ruins, gesture to the classical ideal and the discourse of imperial decline.

Hodges' inherent flair for drama tested his oft-stated commitment to strict visual fidelity.<sup>14</sup> Long hours spent studying meteorological conditions while atop the deck of Captain Cook's *Resolution* fashioned a keen observer of Indian light and atmosphere.<sup>15</sup> He seldom hesitated to exaggerate light and shadow to create atmospheric drama (*A View of a Mosque at Mounher*, c. 1781?; Figure 6-7) or to define the alien geometry of an Indian monument (*A Group of Temples at Deogarh, Santal Parganas, Bihar*; c. 1782; Figure 6-8). Yet the dramatic flourishes were mere complements to scenes otherwise carefully constructed within the borders of the Picturesque.

Through his fundamentally non-confrontational, picturesque images Hodges embraced empire, its concept, fact and future. He bristled at the very idea that indigenous forces would challenge the right of the Company to establish a commercial monopoly. Writing of Lord Clive's victory at the battle of Plassey in June 1757, he lauded the heroics of the general and the politician, stating:

. . . on that plain was laid the foundation of an empire in India, the influence of which has extended over a larger tract of country, and greater numbers of people, than have been united under any one government since the time of Aurungzebe.<sup>16</sup>

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14. Despite Hodges' apparent liberties, he assured his readers: "It will, I flatter myself, not be disagreeable to my readers to be informed, that they consist of a few plain representations of what I observed on the spot, expressed in the simple garb of truth, without the smallest embellishment from fiction, or from fancy." Hodges, *Travels in India*, iv and v.

15. Pal and Dehejia, 101–102.

16. Hodges, *Travels in India*, 18. Quilley argues that, because the artist traveled in India prior to "the full-scale systematic, administrative hegemony of the nineteenth-century Raj," Hodges' work "cannot properly be appropriated as part of the account of Orientalism, theorized by Edward Said, as a consistent western discourse about 'the Orient' that served the political and ideological ends of western imperialism, by presenting the east as 'naturally' inferior, decadent and incapable of self-government." Quilley,

Moreover, the benefits of empire were personal and pecuniary. Some of Hodges' most impressive canvases were intimately associated with his friend and steadfast benefactor, Governor-General Warren Hastings (*A View of the West Side of the Fortress of Chunargarh on the Ganges* (c. 1785) and (*Storm on the Ganges, with Mrs. Hastings near the Colgon Rocks*; c. 1790; Figure 6-9).<sup>17</sup> Both of these works refer to the courage and perseverance of the Governor-General and his wife.

Many of his larger oil paintings evince a "hybrid aesthetic" based on a picturesque, subtly classicized landscape executed in visual language both accessible and academically creditable. They address contemporary interests, among Hodges and his patrons, in Mughal miniatures, popular notions of climatic determinism, current moral philosophies and vague associations between the British and the Mughal empires (*View of the Ghats at Benares*, 1787; and *A Camp of a thousand Men formed by Augustus Cleveland three miles from Bhagalpur, with his Mansion in the distance*, 1782).<sup>18</sup> For the broader audience, Hodges marketed his images less on intellectual concerns and more on the basis of their purported accuracy and political, social and sentimental appeal:

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"Hodges and India," 138.

17. Quilley and Bonehill, 162 plate 55, 185 plate 70. Hastings sought refuge at the fort during his campaign against Raja Chait Singh of Benares. J. Talboys Wheeler, *India and the Frontier States of Afghanistan, Nipal and Burma*, Vol. 1 (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1899), 434. *Storm on the Ganges* memorializes the perilous journey that Marian Hastings made in order to be near her husband when he fell dangerously ill. The painting was the centerpiece of the Hastings collection. Quilley and Bonehill, 185 plate 70.

18. Natasha Eaton, "Hodge's visual genealogy for colonial India, 1780–95," in Quilley and Bonehill, 35–37.

The intimate connexion which has so long subsisted between this country and the continent of India, naturally renders every Englishman deeply interested in all that relates to a quarter of the globe which has been the theatre of scenes highly important to his country; and which, perhaps, at the moment when he peruses the description of it, may be the residence or the grave of some of his dearest friends.<sup>19</sup>

Hodges' collection of forty-eight aquatints published as *Select Views of India, Drawn on the Spot, in the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783* proved to be his most influential contribution to the European visualization of India. In contrast to his canvases, firmly grounded in an "orientalized classicism," *Select Views* recalled the "roughness" of a departed empire so prized in picturesque interpretations (*A View of the Ruins of Part of the Palace and Mosque at Futtypoor Sicri*).<sup>20</sup> The aquatints, many hand-colored by the artist, focused on the sites of British victories or sensationalized anecdotes. Unlike Hodges' *Travels in India* of 1794, more of a dispassionate narrative befitting the artist-gentleman-historian, *Select Views* was intended to appeal to patriotic sentiment as well as to curiosity about Indian topography and culture.<sup>21</sup>

### Thomas and William Daniell

Hodges was soon eclipsed by successors Thomas Daniell and his nephew William, though Hodges' images deeply informed the Daniells' interpretations of India and their choice of subjects. If Hodges pioneered the Western visualization of India, the Daniells popularized it.

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19. Hodges, *Travels in India*, iii.

20. William Hodges, *Select Views in India, Drawn on the Spot, In the Years 1780, 1781, 1782 And 1783, And Executed in Aqua Tinta* (London: William Hodges; John Wells; J. Grives; 1785–88).

21. Quilley, "Hodges and India," 181. Unfortunately, *Select Views* was not the financial success Hodges had predicted.

The overarching influence of Thomas and William Daniell certainly may be traced through British art into the 1870s, and arguably even to at least one monumental painting by the American Edwin Lord Weeks (discussed in a later chapter).

Thomas (1749–1840) cannily secured permission to sail to India by touting his qualifications as an engraver, an uncertain claim but one that apparently convinced the East India Company. He took along fifteen-year-old William (1769–1837), inexperienced but eager, as his assistant. They established a studio in Calcutta where they produced the first topographical prints of the city, *Views of Calcutta* (1786–88), which circulated widely in India and Europe. When the publication reached Hodges, he wrote that the Daniells "are highly to be commended for their accuracy."<sup>22</sup> However, when Hodges' *Select Views* arrived in Calcutta sometime between 1786 and 1788, the Daniells found little in it to praise.<sup>23</sup>

Though the Daniells did not express reciprocal admiration they were sufficiently inspired to embark on their own artistic journey to see just how they might surpass Hodges' *Select Views*. The Daniells were much more ambitious than Hodges. Armed with the advice of the leading antiquarians, Sanskritists, and surveyors resident in Calcutta, in 1788 they set out "up country" on a self-financed expedition. They did not return to Calcutta for over three years, in late 1791.<sup>24</sup> Remaining only long enough to finish some works and raise funds, they set off again in March of

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22. Hodges, *Travels in India*, 16.

23. On comparing Hodges' drawing of the Red Fort in Agra to their own sketches, William declared that "like all his others" it was "exceedingly faulty." Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India, The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell 1786–1794* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 37 and quoting William Daniell, 43 (no further citation).

24. Archer, *Early Views*, 37–41.

1792, this time to the south.<sup>25</sup>

While the Daniells were occupied on the first leg of their expeditions, other British artists arrived in Calcutta in search of professional success. Among them, in 1799, was Scottish landscape artist and topographical engraver James Moffat (1776–1815), hired by a printing house to help churn out a steady stream of government publications.

Much of Moffat's work reflects attitudes no doubt prevalent among his employers. Whether from political posturing or lack of talent, Moffat's images convey little in the way of vitality, drama or active engagement with indigenous culture. They are neither pensive nor pictorial. For example, despite the possibilities inherent in the subject, the figures and buildings in *View of a Mosque at Moorshedabad with Representation of a Bazar or Indian Market* (1809; Figure 6-10) are undistinguished and interchangeable, locked in a stagnant culture and stripped even of the elegies of decay. Nonetheless, Moffat built a solid reputation among those administrators and tourists eager for a remembrance of India, however complacent and self-congratulatory. His popular, modestly priced subscriptions appealed to the prevailing tastes of a largely official clientele.<sup>26</sup>

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25. Archer, *Early Views*, 141. The first journey took the Daniells northwest from Calcutta as far as Srinagar, about 1,500 miles away (to Murshidabad, Rajmahal, Patna, Jaunpur, Benares, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Faizabad, Fatehgarh, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Delhi, Amroha, Kashipur and many other towns and cities on the route). The southern tour began with a ship to Madras, then a trek as far south as Cape Comorin at the very tip of the subcontinent (as well as Gingee, Tanjore, Ramesvaram, Kalaka, Kattalam, Madura, Atur, Trichinopoly, Sandaridrug, Anchetti, Bangalor, Kolar, Ambur, Arcot and back to Madras). For maps, see Archer 44–45 and 189.

26. Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Aldershot, Hants and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 249–252. The authors observe: "In the imperial simplicities of Moffat's views we see with clarity the process employed by British theorists of empire and colonial administrators to first neutralize the inhabitants, culture, and landscape of the Indian subcontinent and then return these to an original primitivity that is neither novel

As Moffat was busy in Calcutta generating politically-sanctioned views, the Daniells were furthering more ambitious plans on their southern tour. After landing in Madras, they tramped through territory familiar to the English from three decades of war between the Kingdom of Mysore and the East India Company. Their timing was a deliberate assessment of the marketability of first-hand field accounts. Hearing that a decisive battle was eminent, they set out into the teeth of the fighting, arriving shortly after the the siege of Seringapatam, during which General Cornwallis' army, allied with the Maratha Empire and the Nizam of Hyderabad, forced the surrender of Tipu Sultan, the Tiger of Mysore (inspiring Robert Home's *The Reception of the Mysorean Hostage Princes by Marquis Cornwallis, 26 February 1792, 1793*; Figure 6-11). With their retinue of forty-eight servants and bearers, the pair pushed on to the hill country to sketch imposing forts, picturesque architecture and monuments made famous to the British public by association with the earlier exploits of Major-General Robert Clive against the French. Circling northward, the Daniells arrived back in Madras eight months later, in November of 1792.<sup>27</sup>

After spending some months in Madras working up their sketches into oils and promoting sales, the Daniells planned to cap their nearly seven years in India with a western journey to Bombay. Their intentions took a more archaeological turn when they teamed up with artist James Wales (1747–95) to paint a number of ancient temples, including the sculpted cave temples of Elephanta in Bombay harbor, the rock-cut monuments in the Kanheri caves in the

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nor interesting—and wholly without a discerning consciousness of the new possessors of India." 252–53.  
27. Archer, *Early Views*, 141–44.



forests west of Bombay, and the early Hindu and Buddhist cave temples of Jogeshwari. Eager to return to England after an absence of some nine years, the Daniells booked passage to Canton when their plans to sail from Bombay were sidelined by the outbreak of war between Britain and France.<sup>28</sup>

Settling in Fitzroy Square, the uncle and nephew team immediately began production of *Oriental Scenery: Twenty-Four Views in Hindoostan* (Figure 6-12), a series of aquatints advertised beginning in March 1795 as available through subscription. This was succeeded by another twenty-four aquatints likewise entitled *Oriental Scenery*. Building on the apparent success was yet a third series in *Oriental Scenery* completed in 1803, as well as a fourth series completed in 1805, *Twenty-Four Landscapes: Views in Hindoostan*. With William's assistance, Thomas Daniell published a further twelve architectural engravings, *Antiquities of India*, (October 1799–June 1800; Figure 6-13); to this series was appended another (untitled) set of twelve engravings of buildings published in 1808.

Thomas Daniell was an indefatigable worker. In addition to the pricey subscription series, before the century turned he had exhibited a dozen India subjects at the Royal Academy, as A.R.A. in 1796 and as R.A. in 1799. Both he and William exhibited there and at the British Institution regularly. For wealthy patrons like the Earl of Egremont, the Daniells' oils perfectly combined topical interests with romantic landscape. To address demand for their work in a more affordable and widely available format, the lavish, limited print run folio sets of *Oriental Scenery* were published in smaller, less expensive quarto versions between 1812 and 1816. At this time

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28. Archer, *Early Views*, 190–92.

the images from all six sets were combined into one volume, also confusingly entitled *Oriental Scenery*.<sup>29</sup>

Unlike the more limited circulations of artists such as James Moffat, the Daniells' images boasted wide appeal. Reviewers and critics lauded the aquatints for their superior technique and production quality. The Daniells' series, in fine paintings and affordable prints, graced the libraries of the aristocracy, enlivened the walls of well-heeled merchants with lucrative Indian connections and hung proudly in the modest homes of thousands of soldiers, pensioners and commoners who had intimate associations with the subcontinent. *Oriental Scenery's* exotic architecture flourished in blue-and-white splendor on Staffordshire serving plates and water jugs. Exquisite panoramic wallpapers by French firms Jean Zuber et Cie and Joseph Dufour et Cie, *L'Indoustan* and *Paysage Indien*, featured images lifted from *Oriental Scenery*.<sup>30</sup>

The Daniells' reputation for precision and new insights into the variety of Indian temples and buildings prompted a revolution in English landscape and residential architecture. The onion domes, *chahhatris* and *chujjas* of Sezincote, the magnificent Cotswolds home of Sir Charles Cockerell, were partly designed by Thomas Daniell. This hybrid architectural expression culminated in the plans for the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, for which architect John Nash borrowed four volumes of *Oriental Scenery* from the Royal Library at Carlton House.<sup>31</sup>

Scholars and connoisseurs admired the Daniells' exactitude, adventuresome spirit, and

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29. Archer, *Early Views*, 219–23.

30. Archer, *Early Views*, 228.

31. Archer, *Early Views*, 230–33.

their combination of art with scholarly inquiry. Orientalist Louis Matthieu Langlès (1763-1824), Keeper of the Royal Library in Paris, republished several of the Daniells' aquatints in his *Monument anciens et modernes de l'Indoustan* (1812, 1821).<sup>32</sup> Collector, connoisseur and scholar Thomas Hope (1769-1831) turned to the Daniells to support his arguments regarding the aesthetic influences of world cultures. James Rennell, Surveyor General, used their sketches to correct his *Map of Hindoostan* (1784).<sup>33</sup> Langlès, Hope and contemporaries believed in the Daniells' mission and in their sentiments:

It was an honourable feature in the late century, that the passion for discovery, originally kindled by the thirst for gold, was exalted to higher and nobler aims than commercial speculations. Since this new era of civilization, a liberal spirit of curiosity has prompted undertakings to which avarice lent no incentive, and fortune annexed no reward: associations have been formed, not for piracy, but humanity: science has had her adventurers, and philanthropy her achievements: the shores of Asia have been invaded by a race of students with no rapacity but for lettered relics; by naturalists, whose cruelty extends not to one human inhabitant; by philosophers, ambitious only for the extirpation of error, and the diffusion of truth. It remains for the artist to claim his part in these guiltless spoliations, and to transport to Europe the picturesque beauties of those favored regions.<sup>34</sup>

Though the invocation of "guiltless spoliations" is suspect, there is no denying that Thomas and William Daniell transported to Europe the "picturesque beauties" of India and disseminated them across class and political boundaries. The Daniells defined the European vision of India for the better part of the nineteenth century, until it was re-interpreted—more boldly and expansively—by Edwin Lord Weeks beginning in the 1880s.

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32. Archer, *Early Views*, 223–25.

33. De Almeida and Gilpin, 190.

34. Thomas Daniell and William Daniell, *A Picturesque Voyage to India by the Way of China* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1810), i–ii.

## The Legacy of William Hodges and the Daniells

Even more so than the images of Hodges, the Daniells' definitions of India rested specifically on British audiences' appreciation of the Picturesque. In the coming decades, this definition was tweaked and somewhat expanded but never challenged. Over the course of the century, the collective Victorian images of India embody a remarkably cohesive vision that arose from this eighteenth-century aesthetic program. In effect the Picturesque froze interpretations of India and insulated them from contemporary aesthetic debates and practice in Britain. A brief survey of a few of the later British artists in India confirms this assertion.

Initially, admiration of the Daniells sparked imitation. Henry Salt (1780–1827), faced with an unpromising career as a portraitist, pleaded with family friend George Annesley, Viscount Valentia to accompany him as secretary and draughtsman on Valentia's tour through India from January 1803 to December 1804.<sup>35</sup> Planning from the outset to leverage his association with Valentia, before quitting England Salt advertised for subscriptions with the enticement that his works would pick up where the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery* left off.<sup>36</sup> Salt provided dozens of illustrations for Lord Valentia's three-volume *Travels in India* (1809). In the same year he published his own *Twenty-Four Views Taken in St. Helena, the Cape, India, Ceylon, Abyssinia and Egypt*, in every respect modeled closely on *Oriental Scenery*.

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35. Deborah Manley and Peta Rée, *Henry Salt: Artist, Traveller, Diplomat, Egyptologist* (London: Libri Publications, 2001), 7–15.

36. De Almeida and Gilpin, 246.

Salt never much strayed from the artistic protocols of his time. As *A View at Lucknow* (1809; Figure 6-14) demonstrates, Salt's India is a placid land of dirt roads and pastoral occupations, much like any English idyll except for the elephants. The hilltop mosque, identified by Lord Valencia as that of Aurangzeb, is more decorative than threatening, even for those aware of its long associations with Mughal power.

A few years later, James Baillie Fraser (1783–1856) survived shipwreck to land in Calcutta in October 1813. Distracted from the family mercantile business by his artistic inclinations, Fraser eagerly sketched his way through Madras, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, Bombay, Gwalior and, seeking the source of the rivers Jumna and Ganges, the Himalayas of the northwest. His journey resulted in twenty landscape aquatints published in London as *Views in the Himala Mountains* (1820). Another twenty-four aquatints formed *Views of Calcutta and its Environs* (1824–26), an homage to Britain's expanding government complex, despite Fraser's extreme disdain for the city he labeled "detestable Calcutta."<sup>37</sup> Fraser's sweeping views of Calcutta typically feature monumental imperial architecture that towers serenely over tiny local inhabitants, plodding along with buckets and oxcarts or entertained by a merry show of jugglers or flame-swallowers (Figure 6-15).

Salt and Fraser had more in common than their admiration for that proven success, *Oriental Scenery*. Both were students of George Chinnery (1774–1852), who turned his back on a faltering Dublin art market to join his older brother John, an East India Company civil servant,

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37. De Almeida and Gilpin, 235–36.

in Madras.<sup>38</sup> Chinnery was among the few professional artists to spend a lengthy time in India. Disembarking from the *Gilwell* in December 1802, Chinnery proceeded to make a name for himself as a portraitist. Early on he garnered a number of important commissions, including the ceremonial portrait of the new chief justice of Bengal, Sir Henry Russell, a project made more lucrative through the marketing of engraved reproductions sold in London.<sup>39</sup> Until he was forced to flee from creditors to Macao, Chinnery was an admired fixture in society, a "man of real genius in his profession" and "the very life and soul of painting for many a long year of his unrivalled triumph and success in Calcutta."<sup>40</sup>

Though portraits paid the bills (or some of them) Chinnery's great enthusiasm was for landscape and genre. An early appraisal describes him as a "fearless and successful distributor of broad masses of light and shade—as a sweet colourist in his landscapes, as a delineator of nature,—and of remarkable fidelity."<sup>41</sup> The British architectural triumphs in Calcutta held little fascination for Chinnery. His fluid, sinuous line was trained on everyday Bengali life in its surrounding villages. Bathers in the Hooghly River, mothers minding their children, crudely thatched cottages, lush vegetation, sagging ruins and fallen minarets were Chinnery's chief subjects (Figure 6-16). His genuine interest in the routines of village life imparted an

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38. Tillotson, 65; de Almeida and Gilpin, 234.

39. Patrick Conner, "Chinnery, George (1774–1852)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), n.p.

40. Henry Barkley Henderson, *The Bengalie, or sketches of society in the East*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: W. Rushton, 1843), 14–15.

41. Henderson, 16.

incremental vitality and prominence to his figures, though his scenes never strayed from period definitions of the poetic and the pictorial.<sup>42</sup> Yet, in light of the artist's fondness for his Indian mistress and refusal to give up the out-of-fashion hookah, they suggest a strong personal sentiment and awareness of the changes rapidly befalling India.<sup>43</sup>

Cumulatively, the works of William Hodges, Thomas and William Daniell, James Moffat, Henry Salt, James Baillie Fraser and George Chinnery express how practitioners of the Picturesque dominated the production of views of India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Bracketed at one end by Hodges' invocations of the sublime and at the other by Moffat's more sterile interpretations, the specifics of the Picturesque were negotiable but the overall structure was not. Nor was the content. Though Hodges wrote of his despair as witness to the plight of refugees "bearing on their shoulders the small remains of their little property, mothers with infants at their breasts," such was not an appropriate subject for the public.<sup>44</sup> The serenely composed views of the Picturesque were more palatable and more marketable.

Applied to India, the Picturesque was more than an aesthetic theory. As William Hodges wrote of the victory of Clive at Plassey in *Travels in India*, on that plain "was laid the foundation

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42. "Look at every goat at the village side, the bullock, the hackery, the discoloured mosque and ruined wall with its thousand-tinted coating of age and moss, and of every broken form and mellowed hue, so dear to the eye of the artist: these, as Chinnery used enthusiastically to affirm, 'ARE MADE TO BE PAINTED.'" Henderson, 22.

43. Rohatgi and Godrej, 73.

44. Hodges, *Travels in India*, 5. Interestingly, Hodges' descriptions were reprinted for the American public. "Description of Madras, or Fort St. George, and its environs," *Literary Magazine and American Register* 8, no. 51 (Dec. 1807): 321–24.

of an empire in India."<sup>45</sup> Hodges was convinced that his images were an inherent part of that foundation, that every Englishman was naturally "deeply interested" in the grand imperial project to command a distant "quarter of the globe," the "residence or the grave of some of his dearest friends."<sup>46</sup> Threading all of Hodges' picturesque views and his writings was a subtext both patriotic and personal: the ambitions of empire and the human stories behind them.

Tilting the Picturesque to the service of empire, the book of views of the theaters of the Indian wars became a publishing staple, a format that the Victorian public continued to snap up long after the arrival of photography. In seemingly inexhaustible favor were scenes of the last campaigns of the Mysore war, which saw Seringapatam fall and Tipu Sultan killed. Mining this rich vein were Robert Home's *Select Views in Mysore, the country of Tippoo Sultan, from drawings taken on the spot by Mr. Home; with historical descriptions* (1794); Captain A. Allan's *Views in the Mysore Country* (1793); Robert Colebrook's *Twelve Views in Mysore* (reissued 1805); and James Hunter's *Picturesque scenery in the Kingdom of Mysore* (1802).<sup>47</sup>

Picturesque views of India were linked with civic duty and British national pride. In his preface to *A Picturesque Voyage to India by the Way of China* (1810), Thomas Daniell noted: "There are other associations of sentiment, which in this country must lend to oriental scenery peculiar attractions: a large part of Hindostan is now annexed to the British empire: and it cannot but afford gratification to our public feelings to become familiar with a country to which

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45. Hodges, *Travels in India*, 17.

46. Hodges, *Travels in India*, iii.

47. Archer and Lightbrown, 82–83.



we are not attached by the ties of consanguinity and affection."<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the exigencies of empire and the conventions of the Picturesque, for Hodges, the Daniells and their contemporaries the foremost charge of the artist in India was to render his "guiltless spoliations" with a keen eye for accuracy and verity. Some succeeded more than others, but sincerity of vision was a constant theme and objective. Without doubt these artists were swayed by the preferences and political stances of patrons, but ostensibly they remained above the corruptions of imperial officialdom. In theory, at least, artists in the service of beauty and science were not to be intimidated by politics.<sup>49</sup>

However, the guiding premises for later British artists in India were not as apparent. Too often their artistic "spoliations" were decreasingly guiltless and increasingly derivative. Where earlier artists had traveled to record first-hand scenes of India that they had read or heard about, many later artists, particularly amateurs, gleaned inspiration from a careful perusal of widely-published images. Some of these amateurs were highly accomplished. Their landscapes were in turn engraved, published and disseminated in England and India, providing the public with inexpensive, expanded views of India generally cast in repetitions of the Picturesque.

Best known of the early amateurs was Charles D'Oyly (1781–1845), for ten years a student of Chinnery.<sup>50</sup> D'Oyly transmitted Chinnery's style to an entire generation of amateur

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48. De Almeida, 193 and note 30, quoting Thomas and William Daniell, 'Introduction,' *A Picturesque Voyage to India by the Way of China*, 1–2.

49. See discussion in de Almeida, 253.

50. "Although Chinnery's influence is seen most clearly in the work of D'Oyly and his circle, he had a number of other devoted pupils and followers. Amongst these were James Baillie Fraser, William Prinsep, a merchant in the firm of Palmer and Company, Jane Atkinson, wife of the surgeon James Atkinson (nos. 131, 132) and the Hon. John Elliot, son of the Governor-General, Lord Minto. James

Anglo-Indian artists. Born in Calcutta and educated in England, D'Oyly returned to India in 1798 as an officer of the East India Company. He was much admired by the European community. With its air of cheeky bonhomie, his studio became a fashionable hub for the viewing of recent works.<sup>51</sup>

D'Oyly's most prolific period was while resident in Patna in the 1820s where, not overly taxed by his nominal duties as the East India Company's opium agent, "His pencil like his hookah-snake was always in his hand."<sup>52</sup> The subjects of rural India captivated D'Oyly; like Chinnery, he turned to the prosaic scenes of village life and generally away from the bustling streets of Calcutta. His pen and ink drawings, usually executed from a slightly elevated viewpoint, are crammed with detail and frequently overflow with tropical vegetation.

In addition to his more serious landscapes, D'Oyly was known for his charming domestic sketches and irreverent caricatures, in which he was as likely to skewer the pretensions of the governors as to mock the customs of the local population (*The D'Oyly Drawing Room at Patna*, 1820-24; *The Immersion of the Goddess*, c. 1820). Often these small works carry an arrogance and subtle condescension that reveals the rapidly widening social chasm between the British and

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George of the Bengal Infantry (no. 113) and the engineer Robert Smith (nos. 107, 130) almost certainly knew him and his work. All these amateur artists were viewing India in the manner of Chinnery, who, as D'Oyly wrote 'Looks at nature with an eye bold and free/ And steals her charms more keenly than the rest.' " Archer and Lightbrown, 72.

51. Pal and Dehijia, 111. While at Patna, bon vivant D'Oyly formed the lighthearted "United Patna and Gaya Society or Behar School of Athens, for the promotion of Arts and Sciences and for the circulation of fun and merriment of all descriptions," Archer and Lightbrown, 71

52. Rohatgi and Godrej, 81, quoting William Prinsep (no further citation).

the Indians (*Tom Raw Hiring a Palanquin on the Esplanade*, c. 1818).<sup>53</sup> For all his love of India, D'Oyly apparently relished the visualization of indigenous servitude. The scenes from his compendium of lithographs, *The European in India* (1813), consist mainly of a broad taxonomy of servants, pipe-bearer to snake-catcher, in attendance upon languorous Englishmen. In the image *A Dancing Woman, of Bengal Exhibiting Before an European Family* (1813; Figure 6-17), the simple gesture of fan to cheek clues the viewer to the supercilious English woman, and underscores the outcome of her assessment. If that were too subtle, the accompanying text by Thomas Williamson runs:

Not, indeed, that much can be said by this meretricious tribe in general. The beauty of individuals, and the grace with which they dance, or accompany their songs, usually establishes the fame of the set to which they appertain. For the greater portion are either slaves, bought by adventurous bawds, during times of scarcity; or are deluded girls, that have been seduced from their families at a very early age; probably, when only five or six years old, and trained up to this infamous calling.<sup>54</sup>

These social caricatures represent D'Oyly's chief claim to originality, for many of the landscapes and genre paintings by "the most distinguished amateur lately in India" can scarcely be distinguished from those of Chinnery. The same tired, lumbering oxen and creaky wooden

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53. D'Oyly's satire illustrates the adventures of a clumsy—in every sense of the word—cadet recently posted to the East India Company's service. Charles D'Oyly, *Tom Raw, the Griffin: A Burlesque Poem, in Twelve Cantos* (London: R. Ackermann, 1828).

54. Charles D'Oyly, *The European in India; from a collection of drawings by Charles Doyley, Esq.* (London: Edward Orme, 1813). It is likely that D'Oyly was inspired by the satiric art of Kalighat painters that poked fun at the often preposterous attitudes and errors of the English; de Almeida, 261. D'Oyly's satires, however condescending, are far less exploitative than the fanatics and freaks, deformities and barbarities sketched by Captain Charles Gold and published for popular consumption in folio as *Oriental Drawings: Sketched between the Years 1791 and 1798* (London: G. and W. Nicoll (Bunney), 1806).

carts meander peacefully across the canvases of both artists (*A Ruined Mosque with a Thatched Hut, in Bengal*, c. 1810; *A View with a Tomb in Bengal*, c. 1810).<sup>55</sup> In D'Oyly's case, maturity did little to foster innovation. In his later career, D'Oyly's allegiance to Chinnery appears to have given way to a confident move backwards, in the direction of William Hodges (*The Chowsathi Ghat, Benares*, c. 1840; *Part of the City of Benares*, 1787; Figures 6-18, 6-19).<sup>56</sup>

Despite the numbers of accomplished and enthusiastic British amateurs, few after D'Oyly and James Baillie Fraser bothered to publish their works.<sup>57</sup> This was not due to superior competition from professional artists, whose collective interests in India continued to diminish. The East India Company's increasing focus on the bottom line led to fewer opportunities for fortune-making, hence a decline in the lavish lifestyles of the nabobs and a domino-effect on the art market. Perhaps more importantly, familiarity was beginning to sober the grand novelty of

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55. On D'Oyly as "the most distinguished amateur lately in India," see Henderson, 11. D'Oyly's sketches were engraved by John Landseer between 184 and 1827; lithographs of his views of Calcutta were published by Dickinson & Co. posthumously in 1848. In Patna in the mid-1820s he ran his own lithographic press, with the assistance of Indian artists, under the name The Behar Amateur Lithographic Press. From 1828 to 1831 he published hundreds of his own drawings and those of his followers, the most serious effort being his *Sketches of the New Road in a Journey from Calcutta to Gyah* (1830). For a comparison of Chinnery and D'Oyly, see Tillotson, 67.

56. Or, perhaps it was a backwards move in the direction of Richard Wilson. Typical of the small world of British artists in India, D'Oyly was a great admirer of Richard Wilson, a founder of the English landscape school and teacher of William Hodges. A contemporary manuscript notes that original drawings by Wilson hung in D'Oyly's drawing-room in Patna. Rohatgi and Godrej, 99.

57. Archer and Lightbrown (72–73) identify the following: watercolorist Ezekiel Barton, Assistant Surveyor in Garwhal, Sirmur and Hindur after the Nepal War; James Manson of the Bengal Army, Superintendent of the Geological Survey of the Himalayas from 1823–26; and Lieut. Colonel Charles Forrest, a staff officer in Bengal who in 1824 published *A Picturesque tour along the rivers Ganges and Jumna*. To this they append the work of Colonel James Tod, through whose efforts the sketches of various officers under his command were engraved and used as illustrations to Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829).

empire. As a consequence of shrinking coffers and narrowing minds, paintings became smaller in size and less ambitious in content.<sup>58</sup>

Of course, in the early 1830s there were still a number of professional British artists traveling to and resident in India. Despite the shifting economy, the ongoing wars and the constant press of commercialization, for many of them an improbable aura of romance still clung to Indian subjects. George Duncan Beechey (1797–1852), son of royal portraitist Sir William Beechey, settled in Lucknow in 1831 to succeed Robert Home as court painter to the king of Oudh. The idealization of Beechey's bejeweled, coquettish *A Hindoo Lady* (engraved as *Hinda* by G. H. Phillips, 1835; Figure 6-20), exhibited to favorable review at Somerset House in 1832, not only alluded to the heroine of Thomas Moore's *The Fire Worshippers* (one of the four narrative poems comprising *Lalla Rookh*), but also to India itself. Beechey was merely carrying on the tradition of an earlier generation (for example, Francesco Rinaldi, *Portrait of a Mogul Lady*, 1787) if making it a bit more coquettish.

Some years later Horace Hayman Wilson, chair of Sanskrit at Oxford and librarian to the East India Company, sought to capitalize on what he thought was the British public's continuing romance with India. He engaged David Roberts (1796–1864) to rework original drawings by army officer Thomas Bacon (1813–92) into the dreamy fantasies of the *Oriental Portfolio*, first published in 1839.<sup>59</sup> In the preface, Wilson noted professional artists' waning interest in India

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58. Archer and Lightbrown, 73.

59. Archer and Lightbrown, 105–6 and 122–25. The authors note that in 1837 Bacon had published illustrations for the travel book *First Impressions and Studies from Nature in Hindostan*.

since the departure of the Daniells, and proposed to rectify the lapse with the *Oriental Portfolio*:

. . . while other eastern countries—Turkey, Syria, Egypt, have been ransacked for objects of delineation, India, although so much more our own country, has been comparatively overlooked. The distance of its site, the difficulty and delay of a voyage thither, the supposed noxiousness of its climate, and the peculiarities of its social organization, have hitherto deterred artists of professional eminence from visiting India . . . we have therefore been indebted almost wholly to amateur accomplishments for those representations of Indian costume, scenery, and architecture, which have been made public; and although the works derived from this source have been of singular merit and extent, yet, as the production of independent taste and fancy, they have been more or less of a desultory and capricious character, and of contracted limits, leaving the public still in want of any thing like a comprehensive and systematic series of illustrations.<sup>60</sup>

But Wilson and Roberts were too late. *Oriental Portfolio* was not a commercial success.<sup>61</sup> Over the 1830s, the British public's shift in attitudes toward India had accelerated. The romantic visual language that had characterized most views of India for decades had lost much of its appeal. The Claudian overtones that sustained the allure of images like *Scene in the Zenana at Fatehpur Sikiri* (Figure 6-21) were far less mesmerizing in 1839 than they were in 1639.

No doubt this was a surprise to Roberts, fresh from his recent success, *Picturesque Sketches in Spain* (1837). But *Sketches in Spain* traded on that country's reputation as a land of love and romance. Undaunted, Roberts rebounded from *Oriental Portfolio* with the enormously popular *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia* (1842–49, three volumes), a

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60. Archer and Lightbrown, 123, quoting from Wilson's preface to *Oriental Portfolio*.

61. "The same objection that we made to the first part applies to this,—namely, that the atmospheric effects and vegetation are European, not Asiatic; a defect not lessened by the hazy, feeble style of Gauci's lithography." "Publications Received," *Spectator* 13, no. 629 (1840): 689–90 at 690.

work that appealed to Christian piety as well as cultural curiosity. Roberts' timing and his instincts were correct; there was indeed a burgeoning British interest in the "East." It simply did not extend to India.

### British Artists in India: 1830s and 1840s

Even as Roberts was working like mad on the *Oriental Portfolio*, broad currents of change were sweeping India, powered by the forces of liberalism, capitalism and evangelicalism. Spurred by the ideas packaged in James Mill's *History of British India* of 1818 ("with the severity of an eye unclouded by any experience of the East or any knowledge of its languages"),<sup>62</sup> India was cast as a backward, "hideous state of society" that had made "but a few of the earliest steps in the progress to civilization."<sup>63</sup> Reformist visions, like that of Lord William Bentinck, appointed Governor-General in 1828, became ascendant in Britain and among the British in India. The resultant, lofty justification for British interference in India was wound around the unique duty and destiny of Britain to apply the mechanisms of law, education, trade and administration to elevate India. India *would* be civilized. Thus the conquered people became the grand experiment.

However, it was not enough to propose that through the imposition of new schemes of property rights, justice and education India might be remade in the British image. To firmly

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62. Archer and Lightbrown, 113.

63. Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; reprinted 1998), 30. Metcalf quotes James Mill, *The History of British India* (reprinted Chicago, 1975), 226–27, 236–37, 246–48.

secure Britain's hold on the top of the cultural hierarchy, India must be ranked at (or near) the bottom. Ironically, the same cultural imperative that brought the promise of progress demanded the devaluation and denigration of the present.<sup>64</sup> British scholars and artists responded accordingly.

At first, a certain contempt for Indian studies began to develop. Deeper scholarly investigations discredited the claims of some early Indologists and denied the assertions of some philologists that Sanskrit—and by extension, ancient Indian civilization—surpassed in elegance and perfection Greek or Latin. Mill's influential Utilitarianism was not predisposed to award India any status in the ranking of civilizations that did not rest on a barbarous past and a denigrated present. This growing contempt was compounded by the rise of Evangelicalism, emanating from Cambridge. The Evangelical view of India was that of land steeped in idolatry and sin whose highest purpose was as a staging ground for the conversion of the world's heathen population.<sup>65</sup>

Horace Hayman Wilson, publisher of David Roberts' failed *Oriental Portfolio*, saw all of this unfolding in the 1830s. He laid the blame for the failed *Portfolio* squarely on James Mill. Writing in 1846 about the officers in the service of the Company, Wilson declared “a harsh and illiberal spirit has of late years prevailed in the conduct and councils of the rising service in India, which owes its origin to impressions imbibed in early life from the History of Mr. Mill.”<sup>66</sup>

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64. Metcalf, 34.

65. Archer and Lightbrown, 112–14.

66. Archer and Lightbrown, 114 quoting H. H. Wilson in his edition of James Mill's *History of British India* (5th ed., 1846), i, xii, xiii.



The noble, wistful, romantic India no longer had a British audience.

Writing about the second quarter of the nineteenth century, art historian Mildred Archer, curator of Prints and Drawings at the India Office Library and foremost authority on British images of India, noted:

But to the 1830s and 1840s India appeared all too often a land idolatrous and fever-ridden, its inhabitants stagnating in intellectual and social sloth, and in spite of earnest efforts to popularise her monuments and scenery, no attractive counter-image was ever successfully shaped in positive English minds. The literature of India produced in England now became even more what to some extent it always had been, a literature intended for that specialist public which had lived and worked in India, and learned to love it.<sup>67</sup>

Given the time, the expense, the market's waning interest and the uncertainties of critical reception, the stream of professional British artists willing to make the long and costly journey to India slowed to a trickle. India was best left to those prepared to address either its administrative needs or its spiritual ones. This is not to say that there were no British artists at work in India in the 1840s and 1850s. But their intentions and their means differed from those of their predecessors. Generally, they were either amateurs in military service or government households, attached to the Indian courts, or of independent means.

Though princely patronage was not what it once was, professional and amateur artists continued to be drawn to the Indian royal courts which afforded glamorous subjects and comparatively luxurious comforts. One such amateur was Emily Eden (1797–1869), who accompanied her brother, Lord Auckland (Governor-General, 1836–42) ‘up the country’ from

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67. Archer and Lightbrown, 125 and at 114: "The fascination of Hindu antiquity and the comparatively low esteem in which contemporary India was held contributed with Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism to diminish the attractions of contemporary India."

Calcutta to Lahore and back, between 1837 and 1841. Eden was entranced by the Rajas of Benares and Patiala, the King of Oudh, the lesser princes of the Punjab Hill States, but especially by the unmatched splendor of the Sikh court of Ranjit Singh. In the eyes of Emily Eden, favored son Sher Singh and his young son Pratap Singh positively glittered in jewels and rich clothing. Their proud mounts were “a map of living emeralds;” one even sported the Kohinoor diamond. Eden’s highly accomplished watercolor scenes were lithographed for *The Princes and People of India* (1844), a work resplendent with the details of court dress, the brilliantly woven coverings of elephants and camels, the aristocratic exoticism of cheetahs and the trappings of the hunt.<sup>68</sup>

Occasionally professional artists ventured to India, but stayed only when they could reel in that elusive prize, the wealthy and consistent patron. Typically this meant the artist’s work was conceived as a tribute to the patron of the moment. Overlapping the end of Emily Eden’s sojourns were those of Frederick Christian Lewis (1813–75), a specialist in court scenes. “Indian Lewis” arrived in India in 1839, two years before older brother John Frederick Lewis (“Spanish Lewis,” 1804–76) settled in Cairo.<sup>69</sup> For the next ten years Frederick Christian Lewis moved from princely court to princely court, memorializing durbars and grand occasions. Lewis benefited from the transitional circumstances of Indian princes, many of whom sought to boost their political and social standing by redecorating their castles with European furnishings and

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68. Archer and Lightbrown, 107.

69. Frederick Christian studied under his father, engraver Frederick Christian Lewis (1779–1856), as well as celebrated portraitist Sir Thomas Lawrence. A Third brother, engraver Charles George Lewis (1808–1880) was known as “Swiss Lewis.”

paintings.<sup>70</sup> Lewis was just the man, having trained under the celebrated portraitist Sir Thomas Lawrence. Not surprisingly, Lewis earned his money by flattering his subjects: the rulers, their many attendants and the British Residency agents.<sup>71</sup>

### James Fergusson and William Carpenter

The most impressive and distinctive images of India produced in the 1840s and 1850s were the meticulously rendered architectural albums of James Fergusson (1808–86), later an important source for the American Edwin Lord Weeks. After devoting limited but apparently useful time sharpening his business acumen at the Calcutta mercantile firm of Fairlie, Fergusson & Co., James Fergusson spent ten years building a fortune as an indigo planter in Bengal. Armed with a camera lucida, Fergusson spent his retirement redefining himself as an architectural historian and critic. Although he had no formal artistic training, Fergusson was an expert draftsman. Determined to establish a firm scientific basis for the study of Indian architecture, he explored India from one end to the other on camelback, taking meticulous notes, precise measurements and *in situ* drawings. From these early efforts he published in 1845 *Illustrations of the Rock-Cut Temples of India*.

Fergusson provided a horde of new information grounded in meticulous, objective observation and impartial analysis, yet accessible to a wide readership. Although he was not willing to manipulate his views to achieve what the Daniells termed "pleasing artistic

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70. Archer and Lightbrown, 133–34.

71. He returned to India again from 1851 to 1855 and from 1863 to 1866.

compositions," to engage a broad audience he purposefully presented his images in familiar visual terms: "in treating of a subject so new and unfamiliar to most people, I conceived that the best mode of making it intelligible would be to place a general view of the whole subject before them in a picturesque, and consequently, most easily understood form."<sup>72</sup>

For good reason, then, Fergusson titled his next book *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindostan* (1848; Figure 6-22). The book transformed extensive on-site sketches and notes into a scholarly treatise on Indian history and architectural style. By invoking the Picturesque Fergusson immediately associated his work with a history of visual investigations of India, and himself with a long line of intrepid artist-adventurers such as William Hodges and the Daniells. Though he adamantly maintained that his pictures were more "correct" than any that had preceded them, he also recognized that the Picturesque was the appropriate framework within which to situate even a rigorously scientific architectural survey.

In this sense Fergusson positioned his work within the very lineage he found constricting and often misleading. According to art historian Tapati Guha-Thakurta, the Picturesque as a mode of visualizing India was accepted, stable, and virtually inescapable:

From a filter, it grew into a frame, inscribing itself onto the body of the physical space and its structures. Fergusson, setting out on his tours in the 1830s, stepped into these already inscribed and pictured spaces.<sup>73</sup>

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72. Archer and Lightbrown, 127, quoting Fergusson (no further citation).

73. Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 7–8.

What distinguished Fergusson was his emphasis on the scientific over the aesthetic.<sup>74</sup> His images suggest a constant tension between accurate representation and pictorial effects, between emphasizing the coldly scientific and captivating his audience with an imposing scene of panoramic grandeur. Though his relentless preoccupation with accuracy led him on one hand to turn to Colonel Colin Mackenzie's (1754–1821) *Survey of India*, on the other he relinquished finalizing the details of foreground and background to artist and publisher.<sup>75</sup> While it emphasized architectural precision, Fergusson's brand of "scientific picturesque" adheres to all of the long-established conventions: ruins looming over small, static figures; scattered stones and relics; windswept or dense or twisted foliage framing the scene.

By his death in 1886, aside from his reputation for using "a warmth of language" to defend his theories, Fergusson was recognized as "the most eminent, and certainly the most copious, of modern writers on the subject of architectural archaeology."<sup>76</sup> Even skeptic John

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74. Fergusson emphasized that all his views had been taken with the camera lucida, "and never afterwards touched till put into the hands of the artist here. The foregrounds and the skies are generally the artist's, as I seldom put them in on the spot; but in all cases I have insisted on the buildings being literal transcripts of my sketches;" "At the same time I must acknowledge that Mr. Dibdin has taken every pains to carry out my instructions . . . and has succeeded in rendering the sketches much more faithfully than has hitherto been done in any work I am acquainted with; except, perhaps, Daniell's earlier works, where the defect is not the want on correct rendering, but an avowed attempt to make pleasing artistic compositions out of the sketches before they were delivered into the hands of the engravers—a circumstance which renders it infinitely more valuable than mine as a work of art, but entirely destroys its value as one of information or instruction. Whatever defects my views may have as pictures, I feel perfectly certain that they are the most correct delineations of Indian Architecture that have yet been given to the public." Archer and Lightbrown, 128, quoting Fergusson, *Picturesque Illustrations*, preface, iv.

75. Archer and Lightbrown, 127. Mackenzie's geographical survey included detailed sketches of temples, sculptures and other relics: ". . . the Mackenzie drawings stood (and they still stand) as the most valuable and earliest pictorial record of Indian antiquities and as a certified source for later scholars." Guha-Thakurta, 11.

76. J. H. M., "Obituary. Dr. James Fergusson," *Academy* 715 (16 Jan. 1886): 49. The article listed over a

Ruskin recognized Fergusson as a leading architectural historian of the East, quipping that he would have no reason to turn his attention to Venice if Fergusson were available for the task.<sup>77</sup>

Fergusson's most formidable achievement was his four-volume *A History of Architecture in All Countries*. Volumes one, two and four were published from 1862 to 1867; a decade later volume three appeared as *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876; Figure 6-24), a "still indispensable" reference for Mildred Archer in 1982.<sup>78</sup> With its 394 illustrations (many from photographs culled from 3,000 in the author's collection), this work was a particular touchstone for Edwin Lord Weeks. He quotes from it extensively and cites it seven times in his 1896 book *From the Black Sea Through Persia and India*.<sup>79</sup>

Clearly, Weeks was persuaded by Fergusson's substantive arguments. Weeks defers to Fergusson's interpretations of individual monuments, Indian history and chronology, as well as to

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dozen additional titles on architecture penned by Fergusson, some in multiple volumes.

77. "Through these books Fergusson had by the early 1850s made a name for himself as one of the leading architectural historians, at least of the East. Indeed, John Ruskin wrote to his father on 18 February 1852, 'If Fergusson and [Charles] Cockerell were both at work in Venice, I should not be; but the one works in India, the other in Greece,' " John Lewis Bradley, ed., *Ruskin's Letters from Venice, 1851–1852* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 185; David Boyd Haycock, "Fergusson, James (1808–1886)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), citing Fergusson's obituary in *The Athenaeum* (16 Jan. 1886), 109.

78. Archer and Lightbrown, 152.

79. James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1876), vii. In his book *From the Black Sea Through Persia and India*, Weeks refers to Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* numerous times: describing the palace at Oudeypore (Weeks, 259; Fergusson, 476); the palace of Rana Khoubou in Chitor (Weeks, 300; Fergusson, 476); "the high-caste Hindoo is almost always incapable of bad taste" (Weeks, 302; Fergusson, 475); Guzerat (Weeks, 313; Fergusson, 526 and following); on the Taj Mahal (Weeks, 322; Fergusson, 570, 599); dimensions of the Dewan-i-Khas (Weeks, 326; Fergusson, 594). Used for comparisons were *From the Black Sea* (1896) and *History of Indian Architecture* (1876).

his opinions on the soundness of Indian aesthetic tastes and the merits of Indian versus classical civilization. For example, Weeks supplemented his own assessment of the Great Tower of Victory, "the principal landmark of Chitor," with an observation from Fergusson:

. . . according to Fergusson [sic] "it is a pillar of victory, like that of Trajan at Rome, but in infinitely better taste as an architectural object than the Roman example." If I remember rightly, Fergusson says somewhere that "the high-caste Hindoo is almost incapable of bad taste."

Weeks again alluded to the "latest treatises" of Fergusson and Alexander Cunningham (1814–93), British archaeologist, army engineer and director of the Archaeological Survey of India, when appreciatively describing the architecture of the province of Guzerat:

. . . the latest treatises show an increasing respect and admiration for works which combine such wonderfully decorative qualities with dignity and often with sound taste.<sup>80</sup>

Fergusson's writings and drawings provided Edwin Weeks with a readily adaptable model for developing a textual and visual interpretation of India, as well as a recognized scholarly opinion on the aesthetic merits of Indian architecture and a comparative, historical framework in which to situate it.

In *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*, Partha Mitter argues that Fergusson's attentiveness to detail and deep feeling for Indian architecture, particularly of the Islamic period, was no guarantor of his cultural understanding. His was a confidence based on innocence, even ignorance, for his ostensibly neutral and scientific descriptions were inevitably cast against the avowed supremacy of Greek and Roman

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80. Weeks, *From the Black Sea*, 301–02, 313.

architecture, though certain elements of that art—as well as contemporary European architecture—he targeted for severe criticism. Perhaps more tellingly, Mitter contends, the art historical framework that Fergusson developed for India reversed the accepted theories of Western art that posited progress from simple to complex: [Fergusson] "presented a vivid picture of how the history of Indian architecture expressed itself only through a continuous decline as opposed to constant progress."<sup>81</sup>

Undeniably, Fergusson's claim that "It cannot of course be for one moment contended that India ever reached the intellectual supremacy of Greece, or the moral greatness of Rome" reflects the classical education (and indoctrination) of the typical Victorian man of letters. However, as Mitter recognizes, Fergusson was often ambivalent in his categorical assessments. On one hand he stated that India was without question "on a lower step of the ladder;" on the other he continued "her arts are more original and more varied, and her forms of civilization present an ever changing variety, such as are nowhere else to be found." Drawing on these oppositions, Fergusson was a tireless advocate and scholar of Indian architecture who felt that it had much to offer Western practice:

Those who have an opportunity of seeing what perfect buildings the ignorant uneducated natives of India are now producing, will easily understand how success may be achieved, while those who observe what failures the best educated and most talented architects in Europe are constantly perpetrating, may, by a study of Indian models, easily see why this must inevitably be the result. It is only in India that the two systems can now be seen practised side by side—the educated and intellectual European always failing because his principles are wrong, the

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81. Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 263.



feeble and uneducated native as inevitably succeeding because his principles are right.<sup>82</sup>

James Fergusson's insistence on exactitude, measured and systematic insights, reliance on first-hand field observation, pioneering application of photography to the study of architecture, comprehensive knowledge, and forthright presentation of materials and ideas were important touchstones for Edwin Lord Weeks. Weeks' close engagement with Fergusson, substantively and methodologically, places the American artist squarely at the late Victorian end of the long, interwoven trajectory of travel, science, art and the Indian Picturesque.

Following Fergusson's *Illustrations of the Rock-Cut Temples of India* (1845) and *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindostan* (1848) only one professional British artist produced notable work on India prior to the 1857 rebellion. Trained by the Royal Academy, William Carpenter (1818–99), son of portraitist Margaret Sarah Geddes and British Museum Keeper of Prints and Drawings William Hookham Carpenter, toured India from 1850 to 1857. Often traveling in lavish Indian dress, Carpenter traversed the subcontinent, from Calcutta to Bombay and Ceylon, then northwest to Rajasthan, Delhi, Kashmir, Lahore and to Afghanistan with the Punjab Irregular Force.<sup>83</sup>

The Indian traveling costume suggests that Carpenter was more interested than most Europeans in absorbing and probing Indian culture. His paintings bear this out by departing from the typical picturesque fare. Lively, curious and affectionate, Carpenter's paintings tend to

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82. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 4, 5.

83. Archer and Lightbrown, 108–09, 138.

the romantic yet evoke the colorful settings and individual characters of his subjects. His images suggest a genuine interest in the personalities of his royal sitters, the daily lives of the Indian people, the intricacies of local ceremony, and the distinctiveness of costume. Like those of Fergusson, Carpenter's scenes of architectural monuments and city life strive for accuracy, yet there is nothing stilted, remote or contrived about them. For example, *Gateway of the palace at Indore* (1852; Figure 6-25) employs movement and light to overcome the constraints of its medium (pencil and watercolor) and small size (13.8 x 9.7 inches). This view is of the main square before the gateway, with houses and shops to the right and a thronging crowd that parts for the maharaja's *sawari* or retinue of horsemen and royal elephants. Despite the painting's modest size, it conveys a sense of imposing scale. With its royal procession, careful attention to architectural detail and particular regard to shimmering, near-blinding full sunlight, Carpenter's work anticipates the interests of Edwin Lord Weeks in India explored more fully in the next chapter.<sup>84</sup>

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84. Carpenter returned to England in 1856, but ten years later was living in Boston; Edwin Weeks would have been in his teens in the 1860s, and very possibly may have known of Carpenter and his work. To date there is no evidence of this possible acquaintance. See accompanying text, *Gateway of the Palace at Indore*, V&A Search the Collections, Victorian and Albert Museum, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O108185/painting-gateway-of-the-palace-at/>. After his return to England, Carpenter exhibited Indian scenes at the Royal Academy 1857 and 1866; the *Illustrated London News* featured a number of his watercolors. Decades later, in 1881, the South Kensington Museum exhibited 274 of his paintings in its Indian Section. "They will be found of great value and interest to visitors, not only as representing the scenery and architecture of the country, but also as illustrating the daily life of the native inhabitants, and the uses of many of the implements, vessels, personal decorations, &c. comprised in the collection of examples of the industrial arts of India." Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education, South Kensington, *Catalogue of the Water-Colour Drawings of Indian Views, Groups, &c. executed and lent for exhibition in the South Kensington Museum by William Carpenter, Esq.*, (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1881), preface.

### British Artists in India after 1857

After the Indian Rebellion of 1857 (variously, the Mutiny, the Revolt, the Sepoy Rebellion, the First War of Independence), professional British artists demonstrated a flurry of renewed interest in India. This was almost exclusively focused on recording the scenes of war and the heroics of the British, and not on cultural or figural subjects that might suggest sympathy with the genuine and deeply felt discontent of the population. There remained no political or emotional space for colorful, vibrant images such as those painted not long before by William Carpenter.

Rather, the aftermath of the rebellion produced in England emotionally-charged works such as Henry Nelson O'Neil's *Eastward Ho! August, 1857* (1857; Figure 6-26), *Home Again* (1858) and Joseph Noël Paton's fictitious but sensational *In Memoriam* (Figure 6-27).<sup>85</sup> The "singularly taking and meritorious" *Eastward Ho!* was inspired by the artist having seen an embarkation of troops at Gravesend, bound for India.<sup>86</sup> *Home Again* was the sentimental, and somewhat inevitable, pendant. Paton's *In Memoriam*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1858, depicts a group of British women and children of Cawnpore huddled against the oncoming slaughter. Paton declined to depict the women as they no doubt really appeared after three weeks of relentless siege, lack of water, constant shelling, disease and temperatures over 110 degrees. Instead, Paton's women are well-clothed and fairly robust. Conceding that the sepoys originally

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85. For a well considered analysis see Alison Blunt, "Embodying war: British women and domestic defilement in the Indian 'Mutiny', 1857–8," *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, no. 3 (2000): 403–28.

86. "Mr. Henry Nelson O'Neil, A.R.A.," *Athenaeum* 2734 (20 Mar. 1880): 384.

pounding down the stairs represented a potential violation "too excruciating" for viewers, Paton replaced them with Highlanders coming to the rescue. Even the cleaned up version, however fictionalized, lent a searing image to contemporary newspaper accounts.

Perhaps equally shocking to the national conscience were the revelations of British cruelties perpetrated in retaliation for the rebellious acts.<sup>87</sup> These were brought home forcefully by photographs such as Felice Beato's infamous *Interior of the Secundra Bagh after the Slaughter of 2,000 Rebels by the 93rd Highlanders and 4th Punjab Regiment. First Attack of Sir Colin Campbell in November, 1857, Lucknow* (March or April, 1858; Figure 6-28). The rage that sustained the massacre at Secundra Bagh, a palace near Lucknow, was the memory of the incident at Kanpur. Almost as chilling was Beato's re-staging of the scene four or five months after the event, when he deftly positioned a riderless horse and four figures against a background of a crumbling, bullet-ridden façade and a foreground of disinterred, scattered skulls and bones.<sup>88</sup> Photography had begun to usurp painting as the means to visualize history, although with its own set of mediations and fictions.

British painters did not exactly leap at the chance to record the scenes of reputed Indian mutiny and massacre "on the spot." Eventually the lithographers Day & Son saw a profitable angle in the rebellion, and sent famed Crimean War artist William Simpson (1823–99) to capitalize on it. Convinced that "The public were interested in the cause of the Mutiny, and in

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87. Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 208.

88. David Harris, "Topography and Memory: Felice Beato's Photographs of India, 1858–1859," in Vidya Dehijia, *India Through the Lens, Photography 1840–1911* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2000, reprinted 2006), 125–26, 146 plate 58.

everything connected with the people of India. More interest had been excited in England about that country than had ever existed before,” Simpson planned an ambitious, large-scale commemorative book featuring the scenes of conflict, consciously modeled on the earlier work of the Daniells and David Roberts whose visions of the "East" were still predominant in the 1860s.<sup>89</sup> For over three years he toured India, crossing into Tibet, the Himalayas, Kashmir, and Ceylon. Upon his return to England in 1862, he consulted with James Fergusson on the particulars of architectural details to be depicted. Simpson's dedication to architectural precision and his debt to British predecessors such as the Daniells may be seen in images such as *Buddhist vihara cave, Ajanta* (1862; Figure 6-29), while others like *Worship of the Devi at Kothi, near Chini* (1860; Figure 6-30) demonstrate Simpson's lively individualism at work within the context of an established tradition. Although the ultimate publication run fell far short of Simpson's goals, his project and approach demonstrates the marked hold that the ideals of the Picturesque had on the British vision of India, even well into the 1860s.<sup>90</sup>

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89. William Simpson, *The Autobiography of William Simpson, R.I.*, ed. George Eyre-Todd (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), 91. Simpson arrived in India in October 1859 to join the party of Lord Canning, governor-general, on a tour of the scenes of the mutiny. He wrote of his preparations: “It was determined that we should take as a model for size the large work of Daniel [sic] Roberts on the Holy Land and Egypt. This had two hundred and fifty plates, and was published in four volumes, folio. But owing to the progress of lithography it was determined that the new work should be in colour, and that the pictures should be more or less reproductions of the originals,” 91; “I also spent a considerable time in the library of the India House, then in Leadenhall Street, looking over books about India, such as Daniels’ [sic], to see what had been already done, and to get hints as to places I ought to visit,” 92. The Queen gave permission that the book be dedicated to her (“a peculiar mark of confidence”), 92.

90. Studying the works of the Daniells, Simpson planned a project to rival theirs in scope and ambition, to contain 250 prints. After returning to Lincoln’s Inns Fields, he worked for four years on the project, with 250 completed drawings. The plan fell apart when Day and Son went bankrupt and Simpson’s drawings were sold off to liquidate the assets of the enterprise. Simpson received nothing for seven years of work. He was forced to published a much shortened, and poorly produced, version of the book with

With traits seemingly the polar opposite of those exhibited by war-hardened William Simpson, in the following decade Victorian nonsense poet and landscapist Edward Lear (1812–88) sketched his way across India as the guest of Thomas Baring, Lord Northbrook. Lear spent more than a year in the sub-continent, producing a prodigious number of watercolors entirely in the picturesque tradition. The sickly Lear was "cross, unwell and wretched" for most of the journey. He complained in his journals incessantly about the fuss of viceregal life, the lateness of his morning tea, the rawness of his duck, the hideousness of the jungle, and the bumpiness of the *garry*.<sup>91</sup> However, he anticipated a hefty profit for his troubles. In the tradition of earlier professional British artists, Lear drummed up a thousand pounds worth of commissions before embarking on his trip.

After a few false starts, Lear and his trusted servant Giorgio Kokali arrived in Bombay in November 1873. The pair made their way across India by train, sedan chair, cart and palanquin, always to the well-recorded detriment of Lear's spine and backsides. Despite a perpetual litany of complaints and a constancy of ailments minutely recorded in his diary, Lear produced over two thousand drawings on his trip, all in watercolor and sepia over graphite pencil.<sup>92</sup>

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only 50 chromolithographs. Tillotson, 68.

91. An arduous journey for one in delicate health, Lear was not reticent to record his trials: "health all wrong," "Impossible to get any tea before 7.30, so useless to go out," "Cross, unwell and wretched." Ray Murphy, ed., *Edward Lear's Indian Journal* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1955), 51.

92. Vidya Dehejia, *Impossible Picturesqueness: Edward Lear's Indian Watercolors, 1873–1875* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 2. More than half of these are what Lear termed "scraps", small drawings with wash, three by six inches. Even the largest measures only about fourteen by twenty-two inches. From these Lear worked up for sale some finished watercolors and a few oils.

Often Lear likened the landscape of India to that of Europe, frequently to England, and was primed to view India through the eyes of his predecessors:

How well I remember the views of Benares by Daniell R.A.; pallid, gray, sad, solemn. I had always supposed this place a melancholy, or at least a staid and soberly-coloured spot, a gray record of bygone days. Instead, I find it one of the most abundantly *bruyant*, and startlingly radiant of places full of bustle and movement. Constantinople or Naples are simply dull and quiet by comparison.<sup>93</sup>

Indeed, Thomas Daniells' *Dasashvamedh Ghat, At Benares on the Ganges* (1795; Figure 6-31) could hardly be called exuberant. Its warm tans, soft greens, pale grays and gentle sunlight suggest very early morning, and lend a classical forbearance to the scene. With its rapid and wonderfully fine strokes, Lear's softer and more informal *Bathing Ghat at Benares* (1873; Figure 6-32) is lively though still subdued. Infused with golden sunlight, soft pinks, shimmering reflections, roughed in shadows and scribbled figures, it has more movement and vitality than Daniells' print. But it is a small and quickly executed impression. Though some of Lear's earlier works demonstrate a bold use of color, few of his finished paintings of India (*Kanchenjunga from Darjeeling*, for example; Figure 6-33) retain the spontaneity or immediacy of his sketches.<sup>94</sup>

If with his scene of Benares Lear favored the quick impression over more studied precision, he confidently adopted the Daniells' strongly diagonal composition, distant view and muted coloring. Although occasionally Lear captured a more bustling sense of town life in

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93. Edward Lear, 14 December 1873, in Murphy, 46.

94. This version of *Kanchenjunga* (47 1/8 x 72 inches) is in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art. Lear painted a larger version (48 x 112 inches) for Lady Louisa Ashburton. Dehejia, *Impossible Picturesqueness*, 31.

works such as *Street in the Hindoo town of Bhurtpoor*, few of his hundreds of drawings of India stray very far from the overriding framework of the Picturesque that characterizes *Bathing ghat at Benares*.

Edward Lear's great friend, Lord Northbrook, was also a patron of another British artist working in India, John Griffiths (1837–1918). Griffiths, a lifelong friend and collaborator of Lockwood Kipling, taught for thirty years at the Sir Jamsetji Jimsethai School of Art in Bombay. Weeks, who knew of Griffiths in his capacity as school director, called him "an artist of rare ability."<sup>95</sup> Very little has been written about Griffiths' paintings, though a London gallery exhibition catalog of 1980 noted that "His importance for us is that he was the only truly Victorian painter—lying somewhere between Richard Dadd and Ford Madox Brown—to have lived and worked in India."<sup>96</sup>

As may be seen in *The Mid-day Sun—Camels Before a Shrine in Western India* (1868; Figure 6-34); *A Drink by the Way, a Street Scene in Bombay* (1876; Figure 6-35); and *The Temple Steps* (1893; Figure 6-36); Griffiths departed from the British picturesque tradition in favor of a more personal style and intimate subject matter that merged the brilliant coloring of William Holman Hunt and the mid-century watercolorist's precision of John F. Lewis with a touch of the

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95. Weeks, "Notes on Indian Art," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 91, no. 544 (Sept. 1895): 567–85 at 580.

96. Eyre and Hobhouse, *John Griffiths (1837–1918): The rediscovery of an important artist working in Victorian Bombay* (London: Eyre and Hobhouse, 1980). Griffiths studied at the National Art Training School (later the Royal College of Art), affiliated with the new South Kensington Museum. His career was spent largely in Bombay where he eventually became superintendent of the Bombay School of Art. His most important project was the exploration and copying of the paintings in the rock-cut temples at Ajanta.



classicism of Edward Poynter. Griffiths' paintings bring forth the harsh light of India and its clear color, with observation telling and minute, down to the wrinkled knees of the camels and the almost caricatured, if substantial, figures. However, despite routinely exhibiting at the Royal Academy from 1869 to 1904, Griffiths' reputation rested on his dedication to teaching rather than his individualized vision of contemporary India.

As this overview demonstrates, when Val Prinsep arrived in India in 1877 to prepare for his royal commission to commemorate the Queen's newly bestowed title of Empress, India was hardly "a country artistically unknown," but as far as contemporary British artists were concerned it had indeed "been of late years sadly neglected." Where British artists had once eagerly surmounted the trials of a distant journey, considerable expense, often deleterious climate, military demands and the constant jostle for commissions, few in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were willing to venture. Any lingering romance once felt by the British public had faded precipitously after the Indian Rebellion of 1857, drying up the market for Indian subjects. Even general curiosity about the scenes of gruesome violence and mass death associated with the rebellion could not resuscitate the field, a bitter surprise even to well-known war artist William Simpson and his publishers. As the century wore on India faded from the imaginations of British painters, leading Pratapaditya Pal and Vidya Dehijia to observe in *From Merchants to Emperors, British Artists and India, 1757-1930* that ". . . one would be hard pressed to name even half a dozen eminent artists who succumbed to the lure of India during the last century of British rule in the subcontinent."<sup>97</sup>

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97. Pal and Dehijia, 13; "A major contributing factor was the tragic events of 1857 which dramatically

Nonetheless, India maintained a high visual presence in Victorian Britain, but one defined primarily by amateur artists, illustrators and photographers. If the conventions of the Picturesque finally had loosened their hold on painters, as the work of William Carpenter suggests, by the 1870s those conventions had leaped to the new medium of photography.<sup>98</sup> This visual transition is particularly notable in the work of one of the foremost British commercial photographers working in India, Samuel Bourne (1834-1912), who as a young man joined forces with the more seasoned Charles Shepherd to establish a photography studio at Simla, the summer capital of the British Raj.<sup>99</sup> The firm enjoyed a brisk portrait business, but became especially well known for its highly-praised landscape views and photographic expeditions to remote areas. In short order, distributors were signed up to sell photographs in major cities throughout India as well as in London and Paris, permitting the firm to expand its studios and sales outlets to Calcutta (1867) and Bombay (1870).<sup>100</sup> One of the very last things Edward Lear did before departing India in

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altered the British attitude toward India. India was no longer a mysterious and unfamiliar country; the British public's curiosity had been well satisfied. With the widening social gulf between the rulers and the ruled, there was a marked decline in interest in the country's peoples and cultures. Fewer professional artists were inspired to visit India after it officially formed a part of the empire where the sun never set." Pal and Dehijia, 16.

98. Edwin Weeks was an avid photographer who took portable cameras with him on his trips through India and Persia. None of his photographs is known.

99. Taking visualization of India in a different, and highly suspect, ethnographic direction were John Forbes Watson and John William Kaye, whose eight-volume *People of India* (1868–75) used hundreds of photographs of Indian "types," occupations and family groups to attempt to methodically document Indian society. Watson and Kaye, ed., *The People of India. A Series of Photographic Illustrations, with Descriptive Letterpress, of the Races and Tribes of Hindustan*, 8 vols. (London: India Museum; Wm. H. Allen and Company, 1868–75).

100. James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 48.

January 1875 was to acquire a set of 120 Samuel and Bourne photographs.<sup>101</sup>

In particular, Bourne's technique and compositional skills were considered remarkable as were his extraordinary documentary excursions to the western Himalayas and to sites in Northern India of British military encampments and famous battles. Bourne's photographs were included in a number of popular, academic and scientific exhibitions where they were admired as much for their technical qualities as for the spirit of adventurous exploration that they represented. In 1867 the *British Journal of Photography* recognized Bourne's accomplishments by publishing a series of his articles describing his arduous photographic expeditions through India.<sup>102</sup>

Yet images like *View on Dal Canal Srinagar, Kashmir* (1866) demonstrate that Bourne's compositional approach was firmly rooted in the Picturesque, cementing what the British already knew, or thought they knew, about much of South Asia.<sup>103</sup> Bourne simply led viewers down a path carved out by Gilpin almost a century earlier, now made more accessible by portable technology worthy of progressive Victorian interests.

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101. "Wrote to Evelyn Baring, telling him I had drawn on the Viceroy for £200 and why: also to the Viceroy telling him of my decision to go back, which I know I have been in the right to make. Got my 120 photographs firm Shepherd & Bourne, and paid £24. Got my eighth hundred cashed at the Treasury and have taken my two places to Brindisi. So much, therefore is decided. I go," Murphy, *Edward Lear's Indian Journal*, 235.

102. Despite the nascent state of photography, one viewer pronounced "These are pictures not to be doubled up in a coarse scrap-book, but framed for the adornment of the drawing-room." Ryan, 48 quoting an anonymous correspondent to the *British Journal of Photography* 16 (1869): 571.

103. Ryan, 49.

The long association of the Picturesque with India is curious, given the many interventions in the broader culture of artistic style, popular taste, social issues and changing technology. Admittedly, the picturesque ideal, at least initially, had nothing to do with India or ideology. Its principles were based on the perceived aesthetic qualities of roughness and variety of form which provided interest for the viewer. The frame of reference was visual rather than political, with a touch of improving sentimentality but not with overtures of control. In a sense, it is an art of the abstract, more preoccupied with constructing pattern from the landscape and the objects in it than with the human enterprises the land supports.<sup>104</sup> The Picturesque was a kind of myth-making that largely ignored social and political realities; it was a rural idyll devoid of conflict, a pleasant diversion for the middle and upper classes, wherein may lie its most powerful political statement.

Subject is almost always privileged over style when considering how Orientalist painting sustained colonialist objectives, but the Picturesque may be the exception to the general rule. The ideals of the Picturesque and those of empire matured in parallel. In India their applications intertwined, called out specifically by William Hodges and the Daniells, who clearly saw the motives of empire in their writings and their images of India. Arguably, it was precisely because the rules of the Picturesque were tightly prescribed that they dominated images of India long after they faded in England. The artist was not only free to impose his will upon his subject, the landscape, he was also required to do so to meet successfully the artificial constructs of the Picturesque. To discard or rearrange reality in order to construct a decidedly British vision has

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104. Tillotson, 27.

obvious political parallels; the very idea of empire is embedded in the vision of controlled space.<sup>105</sup> The coherence and persistence of these visual habits prompted James R. Ryan to observe in *Picturing Empire*:

What is interesting then is the way in which British landscape photographers of the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s disguised their dependence on pictorial convention in order to promote photography as an objective record of sight, in the process reinscribing imperial landscape as a natural way of seeing.<sup>106</sup>

Even while Samuel Bourne frequently framed his objectives in aesthetic terms, for example describing his trip to Kashmir "in search of the picturesque" and to the remote source of the Ganges as "this holy and not altogether unpicturesque object," the wide dissemination of thousands of Bourne's prints over decades has undeniable associations with empire.<sup>107</sup> Bourne's efforts paralleled Britain's to secure political and commercial control over the subcontinent. He founded his practice in the summer capital of the Raj, wrote in his journal articles from an indisputably colonialist perspective and, like William Simpson and others, deliberately set out to document politically-charged territories.<sup>108</sup> Bourne's picturesque was at once loyal to the eighteenth century ideal and fully complicit in the goals of empire, beguiling the viewer with

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105. See W. J. T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape" in *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5–34.

106. Ryan, 47.

107. Gary D. Simpson, "Photographer of the Picturesque: Samuel Bourne," *India Through the Lens, Photography 1840–1911*, Vidya Dehejia (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2006), 163 quoting Bourne, "Ten Weeks with the Camera in the Himalayas," *British Journal of Photography* (1 February 1864): 50 and "Narrative of a Photographic Journey to Kashmir (Cashmere) and Adjacent Districts," *British Journal of Photography* (18 March 1870): 126; and 174.

108. Simpson, 174.

images of India engagingly exotic yet hauntingly familiar.<sup>109</sup>

Of course, there were Western photographers in India other than Samuel Bourne and Shepherd, as well as celebrated Indian photographers like Lala Deen Dayal, many of whom were far more intent on conveying with candor and compassion the grim realities of Indian life under the British. The foregoing brief overview of British artists was not intended to be comprehensive; such a survey has been covered far more thoroughly and no doubt more cogently by other scholars. Rather, to contradict Val Prinsep, the aim was to highlight the long visual tradition that shaped Western perceptions of India. Against this remarkably uniform British tradition Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings of Indian life and culture, at once integrative and groundbreaking, emerge as all the more novel.

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109. " . . . the colonial photographic picturesque stands at an aesthetic crossroads: it claims to represent indexical truth (Bourne notes the pleasures of photographing the highest peaks in India) and yet signals the forms of 'home.' " Chaudhary, 150.

## Chapter Seven

### An American Vision: India at the Paris Salon

Overwhelmed and inspired by his first trip to India in 1882, for the next dozen years Edwin Lord Weeks began to focus almost exclusively on paintings of its culture and people. In conception and execution these works both continued and challenged the British and French traditions that had defined the Western vision of India for over a century. Following a brief overview of Edwin Lord Weeks' three journeys to India, the balance of this chapter considers the artist's Indian-themed paintings submitted to the annual official exhibitions of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris ("Paris Salon"). Although Weeks also contributed works to the Paris Salon related to other places and subjects, his images of the architecture and life of India staked out new artistic territory, cemented his international reputation, and define his achievements as an artist even today.

The discussion introduces new topics and approaches to the analysis of Weeks' paintings. Although it is by no means exhaustive, the intent is to illustrate how Weeks' paintings may be dissected and contextualized in order to enrich the composite understanding of the artist and his work. For example, it is well known that Weeks was familiar with the writings of early modern European travelers to India and other historical sources. Some of those materials were mined for excerpts that relate to, and illuminate, particular paintings.

How viewers perceived the paintings as they hung on the walls of the Salons, and how they might have been compared to other Orientalist works in the same exhibition are likewise considered. Size, composition and manipulation of space and perspective are discussed in terms

of viewer experience and compared to the work of contemporaries such as Julius Stewart and the Russian war-artist, Vasili Vereshchagin.

Contrary to the modern tendency to associate Orientalist painters with academic attitudes and practices, many including Weeks viewed their efforts as thoroughly progressive, both intellectually and technically. Along these lines, investigating Weeks' preoccupation with the effects of intense sunlight, the "glare effect," connects him to broader nineteenth-century artists' investigations into optics and dissolution of form. How this interest relates to similar concerns expressed in the works of William Lamb Picknell, Mariano Fortuny, John Singer Sargent and James McNeill Whistler is also considered.

Modern scholars typically constrict and isolate the themes of Orientalist paintings to their most obvious subjects or, in the opposite extreme, aggregate them into a West versus East paradigm. Seldom are they linked to contemporary topics beyond a broad imperialist statement. At various points this section suggests how Weeks' paintings speak to contemporary debates, such as architectural preservation and Anglo-Russian relations.

In short, the major works of Edwin Lord Weeks were engagingly topical, stimulating, rich in detail, colorful and calculated, both painterly and precise. At the Paris Salons, it was India as it had never been seen before.

### Travels in India

Though Edwin Lord Weeks is best known for his paintings of India, he spent less time there than is commonly believed. Newspaper sources indicate that had been planning to visit



India for at least five years prior to his arrival in Bombay in the autumn of 1882.<sup>1</sup> Even before his departure Weeks was already keenly focused on the architecture of northern India and the everyday life of its inhabitants, writing to George Corliss of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts:

It happens unfortunately that I am very much occupied at this moment, as we (Mrs. Weeks and myself) are to sail to Bombay via Marseilles in a few days, and we are in the midst of packing. I intend to pass some months in studying northern India, its type of architecture particularly and the life in its cities . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Shortly thereafter Weeks and the ever-intrepid Fannie joined the Italian mail steamer *S.S. Singapore* in Marseilles and set sail for India. Accompanied by twenty-three other passengers, cargo ranging from cases of vermouth to packages of buttons, and an additional twenty-two unnamed "deck passengers" picked up in Aden, they arrived in Bombay harbor on October 17th.<sup>3</sup> Little is known of the pair's day-to-day itinerary while in India. However, their departure may be dated to May 1, 1883 when the artist and his wife reboarded the *Singapore* for their journey home from Bombay.<sup>4</sup>

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1. "E.C. Weeks [sic] proposes to sail for India in about three weeks, for two or three years absence," "Art and Artists," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 8 February 1877, 6. Subsequently the trip was canceled, "Art and Artists," 15 Feb. 1877, 6 col. 2.

2. Edwin Lord Weeks to George Corliss, 6 September 1882, Paris, (copy) Box 7, File 2, The Art of Edwin Lord Weeks, Jan.–Feb. 1976, Art Gallery Exhibition Files, 1941–2004, UA 9/3/1, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, New Hampshire, USA. (Original letter is in the archives of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.)

3. "S.S. Singapore . . .," *Times of India*, 19 October 1882, 3.

4. "Homeward Mail," *Times of India*, 20 April 1883, 3. Also Weeks to George Corliss, 10 May 1883, "Steamer 'Singapore' " in the Red Sea, (copy) Box 7, File 2, The Art of Edwin Lord Weeks, Art Gallery Exhibition Files, 1941–2004, UA 9/3/1, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, New Hampshire, USA. (Original letter is in the archives of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.) September found Weeks still in Paris, as documented by two letters to George

Following this introductory visit of six and a half months Weeks and his wife did not return to India until October of 1886, this time for a stay of five months.<sup>5</sup> There is no record of their daily movements around the country except a few details that can be correlated by sketches, paintings and the occasional letter. The cragged scrawl of one of Weeks' letters to Bostonian Alexander Twombly, penned December 18th on the way to Jodhpur, conveys the rattle and roll of the train compartment through the countryside more directly than Weeks' description. Close reading of Weeks' essays for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* offers a few clues about chronology, yet his articles often draw from more than one trip to the described locale, making it difficult to associate places with specific dates. Their second Indian journey concluded in late winter; the couple sailed for Marseilles aboard the P. & O. steamer *S.S. Kaiser-i-Hind* on March 4th, 1887.<sup>6</sup>

Weeks' final trip to India via Persia in 1892, undertaken with the English writer and art critic Theodore Child, is the best documented. In anticipation of the trip in May 1892 Weeks renewed his passport for himself and a "manservant."<sup>7</sup> Not one to while away the hours at home alone, Fannie planned to leave in August for an extended visit to her American relatives, presumably to stay for at least a time with Weeks' sister in South Berwick, Maine.<sup>8</sup> Sailing mid-

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Corliss in the University of New Hampshire files.

5. "The Week's French Gossip," *New York Times*, 26 Sept. 1886, 1.

6. "Homeward Mail," *Times of India*, 4 February 1887, 5.

7. National Archives and Records Administration, *U.S. Passport Applications, Emergency Passport Applications (Issued Abroad), 1877-1907*, Collection Number: ARC Identifier 1187503/MLR Number A1 515, NARA Series M1834, Roll 7, Volume 9, Edwin Lord Weeks.

8. Fannie arrived "the last of August" to stay with relatives, presumably in South Berwick, Maine, as noted in a copy of a letter from Burton W. F. Trafton, Jr. to Susan C. Faxon, 14 November 1975. Trafton's

July for Constantinople on the *Camboge* [or possibly, *Cambodge*], Weeks and Child arrived in Trebizond on July 22, 1892. Accompanied by a small, evolving band of guides, cooks and soldiers of varying reliability, from there they journeyed generally southward on horseback along the ancient caravan routes. By early November they had survived treacherous mountain passes, thieves, alternately freezing and burning temperatures, flea-infested caravansaries and cholera to reach Erzurum ("Erzeroum"), Khoy ("Khoi"), Tabriz, Tehran, and Isfahan ("Ispahan"). It was near Isfahan that Child suffered a relapse and died of typhoid before Weeks could get him medical attention.<sup>9</sup> After burying Child in Julfa, Weeks continued on to Shiraz thence to coastal Bushehr ("Bushire") where he caught a steamer to Karachi ("Kurrachee").

Although Weeks' *From the Black Sea Through Persia and India* chronicles each step of the often harrowing journey through Persia, the itinerary becomes more vague after Weeks arrived in Karachi during the first week of December 1892. It is certain that in January he

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letter includes an excerpt from a letter of Mary Jewett to Sarah Orne Jewett, dated 29 June 1892, South Berwick, Maine [Trafton referenced work for Harvard, so perhaps the cited letters are from the "Sarah Orne Jewett compositions and other papers" at Harvard University]. Some references in Weeks' published articles suggest that Fannie was with him in India, although she was definitely in Paris to meet Weeks when he returned there on March 6, 1893. So, Fannie's exact whereabouts during this period remain a little puzzling.

9. Dr. Mary Bradford of the Presbyterian mission in Julfa attended Weeks and Child when they first arrived: "One day word reached us that some Americans had arrived in the city, sick of the cholera. I immediately went to see them and found Mr. Theodore Child, author, and Mr. Edwin Weeks, artist, on a tour of Persia and India in the interests of Harper's Magazine. They were in miserable lodgings, and they and their dragoman were all suffering from the cholera. We invited them to occupy the large, airy rooms of the girls' school, which were turned into a temporary hospital. Mr. Weeks wrote in Harper's Magazine: 'It was to Dr. Bradford's constant care and untiring energy as well as to the devotion of our Armenian friend (the nurse Yagut) that our party owed their recovery.' Afterwards they proceeded on their journey, but Mr. Child, whose attack had been very severe, had a relapse with typhoid symptoms and died near Ispahan." S. G. Wilson, *Persia: Western Mission* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1896), 303–4.

traveled by train, stopping in Marwar, Jodhpur and Bikaner on his way to Lahore where he spent several weeks.<sup>10</sup> But this sojourn through northern India did not last long, for the diaries of George A. Lucas, American art dealer and executor of Theodore Child's estate, indicate that Weeks arrived back in Paris on March 6, 1893.<sup>11</sup> Therefore on this final trip Weeks spent a little over five months traveling through Turkey and Persia and less than two months in India.

### The Lure of India: Lost and Found

Inspired by the kaleidoscopic sense of color, light and life in India, after his return from that first 1882 journey to India Edwin Lord Weeks set about staking and building his reputation on depicting scenes of Indian life. From 1884 to 1903 eleven of the thirteen contributions he made to the Paris Salon were paintings of Indian subjects (one was a scene of Persia, one of Spain). These paintings were the artist's largest, most innovative works, calculated to attract the attention of juries, critics and patrons. Although Weeks continued to exhibit annually at the Salon until his death in 1903, in the last years Persian subjects dominated his submissions, interspersed with a couple of contemporary Parisian scenes (*Au Touring Club;—Bois-de-Boulogne*, 1898; *Après-midi, de novembre de Paris*, 1899). However, it was Weeks' paintings of India that solidified his international reputation and defined him as a mature artist.

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10. Weeks was headed by train to Lahore in late December 1886. Weeks to Twombly, 18 Dec. 1886. In 1893 he spent several weeks in Lahore; "Current Events, Indian," *Times of India*, 5 May 1894, 3.

11. Lucas recorded: "Note from Weeks saying he had arrived yesterday." March 7, 1893 entry, George A. Lucas, *The Diary of George A. Lucas: An American Art Agent in Paris, 1857-1909*, vol. II, transcribed by Lilian M. C. Randall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 764. Lucas visited Fannie Weeks on February 11 and learned that her husband was expected on March 4th.

Given the years Weeks had invested in Morocco, and the contemporary thematic countercurrents that emphasized Western urban life, why did Edwin Lord Weeks spend the most productive years of his career focused on India? There is no single answer. Clearly Weeks found India endlessly intriguing, a visual and cultural antidote to the gray, industrializing cities of Europe. Also, scenes of the Orient had sustained immense popularity throughout the later Victorian era, even as many artists took up themes of modern Western life.

More importantly, at least from a marketing and exhibition standpoint, in the 1880s India was a fresh subject. French Orientalists' attentions to South Asia had been sporadic. Vasili Vereshchagin, Russian war artist and Critical Realist, was one of the few European contemporaries of Weeks to depict India. Vereshchagin had executed huge paintings of India in the 1870s (for example, *The State Entry of the Prince of Wales in Jaipur in 1876*; 16.3 x 22.8 feet) but had moved on to Syria and Palestine after a brief return to anti-imperialist Indian themes in the early 1880s (*Suppression of the Indian Revolt by the English*, 1884).

British artists, who had long held the deepest ties to India, had dismissed it as a suitable subject. Their predecessors' visualization of India, arising from extensive travel throughout the subcontinent, invariably cast in terms of past artistic traditions and present political exigencies, had defined India in the European imagination for well over a century. Yet by the 1880s that vision was timeworn and virtually abandoned.

Preparing for his 1876 tour of India (to gather material for his commemoration of the Delhi durbar glorification of imperialism), English artist Valentine Prinsep wrote of "the lamentable ignorance of India found even in educated circles in England," and that "India has

remained almost unknown to the painter."<sup>12</sup> This was only six years before Weeks' first visit to the country. India's slide in the British artistic imagination had been long underway, as Henry Henderson recognized as early as 1843:

. . . we have heard it asserted frequently that India is no place for the cultivation of the arts, that it has nothing to interest the painter, that its landscapes are dull and insipid, its scenery unvarying; and it is affirmed that without adverting to the difficulty of keeping up any accomplishment at all in such a climate, and essentially this one, there are positively no fit subjects for its study, nor any field for its prosecution.<sup>13</sup>

With the advent of photography after mid-century, India as a subject for painting "lapsed into a hobby for British ladies and a few visiting professionals."<sup>14</sup> British artists had little interest and British collectors little appetite for Indian subjects.

Like most of their continental colleagues British artists remained far more interested in depicting North Africa and the Levant. The Euro-American market for scenes of Africa and the Holy Land was booming, fueled by colonial exploits, curiosity, evangelical interests, adventure stories, soldiers' and explorers' accounts, and impassioned political arguments that played out in the daily press. In these years demand and canny marketing had propelled leading Orientalist painter Jean-Leon Gérôme to the pinnacle of renown for works such as *Public Prayer in the Mosque of Amr* (1871), *Soloman's Wall, Jerusalem (The Wailing Wall)* (1876), *The Color Grinder* (1890/91), *The Whirling Dervish* (1889) as well as more sexually charged but factually challenged works such as *The Serpent Charmer* (1880). Determined to keep pace with

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12. Prinsep, 4, 350.

13. Henderson, 2.

14. Archer, *India Observed*, 110.

continental rivals, British painters as diverse as David Roberts and William Wyld in the 1830s, John Frederick Lewis in the 1840s, William Holman Hunt in the 1850s, Frederic Goodall in 1870s and 1880s, and Frank Brangwyn and John Lavery in the 1890s burnished their professional achievements with scenes that crossed from Syria to Morocco, from Solomon's Wall to Algiers harbor—but not India.

As British painters were busy seeking their Orient elsewhere, in the early 1880s Edwin Lord Weeks staked his claim on their discarded artistic territory. Schooled in Paris by Bonnat, counseled by Gérôme, intimately familiar with the architectural investigations of James Fergusson and current with British authors on Indian culture from Sir Thomas Roe to George Curzon, Weeks fashioned his own vision of India that drew from but was independent of British and French traditions.

Already critically acclaimed for his paintings of North Africa, after his initial trip in 1882 the people and culture of India quickly came to dominate Weeks' oeuvre. He pivoted away from Morocco with the first of his Indian subjects exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1884. It was a direction that he sustained at the Salon, and in his overall production, well into the mid-1890s.

And yet, however exciting it may have been to embrace a vital, complex subject that had lapsed in the European imagination, it was not without professional risk. Surely Weeks pondered why India had been so neglected by his fellow European artists. Would his vision of India, regardless of how fresh or compelling, kindle any interest? Or would it simply be overlooked or dismissed? Even for an established artist, to test a new venture on the walls of the Paris Salon must have been nerve-rattling.

Exhibiting at the Paris Salon was, for most artists, a professional imperative that opened

the doors to galleries in Europe and America. Held annually, crowds of up to ten thousand per day streamed through the vast halls of the Palais de l'Industrie to view thousands of paintings crammed frame to frame on the walls. Competitive admission to this "arena wherein the young and the strong enter into fierce conflict," depended on the caprices and prejudices of the jury.<sup>15</sup> Reputations, careers and livelihoods were at stake; such was the pressure over Salon strategies that Cecilia Beaux wrote in exasperation of her "blues and anxieties" when preparing her submissions.<sup>16</sup> The risks attendant to professional missteps ranged from being accepted but completely ignored, to being disparaged and ridiculed, to being outright rejected. With so much riding on the submission, artists prepared for the Salon with great care and deliberation.

From 1884 to 1895 nearly every contribution by Edwin Weeks to the Paris Salon featured an Indian subject: *Un sanctuaire Hindu à Bombay* and *Un souvenir de Jeypore* (1884); *Le dernier voyage;—souvenir du Gange* (1885); *Retour du cortège impérial de la grande mosquée à Delhi, sous la règne de l'Empereur Shab Jehan;—XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1886); *Bayadères;—Bombay*, (1887); *Un rajah de Jodhpore* (1888); *L'heure de la prière dans la mosquée de Perle, à Agra* and *Autour d'un restaurant en plein air à Lahore* (1889); *Le Temple d'Or d'Amritsar* (1890); *Les obsèques d'un fakir à Benares* (1892); *Les barbiers de Saharanpore* (1895). Although the first of these Indian subjects submitted to the 1884 Salon did not generate much critical attention, the following year's entry certainly did.<sup>17</sup>

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15. "The State of Art in France," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 135, no. 822 (April 1884): 427–51, at 430.

16. Adler, *Americans in Paris*, 40.

17. A number of contemporary sources report that Weeks was awarded an Honorable Mention for his



The Salon of 1885: *Le Dernier Voyage;—souvenir du Gange* (75 2/3 x 113 2/3 in.)

*The Last Voyage* (also called, less commonly if more appropriately, *The Last Journey*; Figure 3-14), a monumental work of shimmering color, garnered Weeks an Honorable Mention at the 1885 Paris Salon, a substantial accomplishment for an American artist. This was not only heady recognition, but exempted Weeks from the jury selection process for the following Salon.<sup>18</sup> At six and a half by nine plus feet, the first thing that a viewer notices about *The Last Voyage*, or indeed nearly any of Weeks' Salon submissions listed above, is size. These are huge paintings. The size alone made a new and dramatic statement about India as a subject. It is easy, for example, to compare print or digital reproductions of *The Last Voyage* and other scenes of Benares by Edwin Weeks with those of earlier British artists such as William Simpson and to conclude that the two artists shared a common mode of communicating interest in subject matter, lively color, animated figures, composition, and sometimes handling of light. However, the validity of this comparison rapidly deteriorates when comparing the physical paintings. Simpson's *Varanasi* (Benares), in pencil, ink and watercolor (14.2 x 20.5 inches; Figure 7-1), is intriguing, charming, perhaps quaint. Even sitting a few inches off the floor in the less-than-optimally-lighted vaults of the Art Gallery of Hamilton where it is now stored, *The Last Voyage*

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1884 submission (Société des artistes français, *Exposition annuelle des beaux-arts Salon de 1896* (Paris: 1896), 190; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Permanent Collections of Works of Art on Exhibition in the Galleries* (Philadelphia: 1897), 54; "Some Artists of the Day," *Parisian* 3, no. 5 (Dec. 1897): 537. However, the official Salon catalog for 1885, that listed artists who had won awards for works submitted the previous year, made no mention of Weeks among the award winners. Société des Artistes Français, *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographie des artistes vivants exposés au Palais des Champs Élysées* (Paris, 1885).

18. Société des Artistes Français, *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographie des artistes vivants exposés au Palais des Champs Élysées* (Paris, 1886); Fink, 116, 312.

is striking, powerful.

Because Edwin Weeks' large canvases are on limited public display they have become known mostly through digital media, easily accessible online. Digital imaging is the blessing and curse of modern art historical practice. Its enabling powers are as seductive as they are misleading. A couple of finger strokes can crop, shrink or zoom images on a computer screen or classroom wall, and in the process create deft visual juxtapositions that often lead to compelling comparative analyses. Stimulating as these comparisons may be, they override personal, first-hand experience—and the artist's intentions—by manipulating the viewer's visual field and distorting physical context. When considering the salon paintings of Edwin Weeks, it is important to bear in mind their actual dimensions and the affect of their size and placement on the viewer's first-hand experience.

*The Last Voyage* was executed on a scale not generally contemplated by British painters of India, but commonly adopted by the French Orientalists, especially for paintings intended to generate a commotion at the Salon. Also on display in 1885 was the Salon sensation, Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant's *La Justice du chérif*, an overwhelming 12 by 21.75 feet. But it was not just the painting's enormous size that caused such a stir. With an undertone of wanton violence and misogyny that characterizes much of French Orientalist work, the painting depicts the dark, opulent seraglio in the immediate aftermath of the slaying of five wives of the *chérif*. The bodies of the women lay strewn across the floor, in various states of undress, their blood still streaming into a courtyard fountain. A private showing of the painting in New York, limited to male invitees, occasioned the *New York Times* to describe its Salon debut as "altogether extraordinary," adding that "Scarcely anything in the exhibition attracted greater throngs or held

them longer."<sup>19</sup>

For sheer attention-grabbing effect, *The Last Voyage* was far more modest in size and circumspect in subject than *La Justice du chérif*. However, it is helpful to consider how Benjamin-Constant's work, which might well be considered the apex of a certain strain of French Orientalism, bracketed and positioned the work of Edwin Lord Weeks in the minds of viewers and critics. Less inclined to gratuitous scenes of mayhem and violence than the French, but arguably more imaginative and bolder than the British, at the Salon Edwin Weeks charted his own American brand of Orientalist painting. What was apparent to viewers was that *The Last Voyage* bore little resemblance to subjects related to India as conceived by any artist of the previous hundred years. R.A.M. Stevenson cited the painting's "riotous effect and novelty;" Theodore Child called it "a remarkable presentation of the Oriental world with its dazzling luminousness and brilliant color." Arts writers of the time, awash in Orientalist subjects, singled out Edwin Weeks for his bold originality of conception and handling:

Bonnat, for example, has certainly not inspired that striking and audacious piece of imagination and vigorous personal handling, 'Le Dernier Voyage,' of E. L. Weeks, though he doubtless inculcated that habit of observation by masses and that attention to delicate values which have enabled the young American to realize his strange Oriental dream in such a bold and original manner.<sup>20</sup>

Some of the most striking work of the year is, however, from the brush of men not hitherto officially recognised; and conspicuous among this is 'Le Dernier Voyage' of Mr. E. L. Weeks. This is a work which would stand out in any gallery by the forcible originality of its conception.<sup>21</sup>

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19. "Constant's 'Justice du chérif,'" *New York Times*, 27 April 1886.

20. "The Salon," *Saturday Review* 59, no. 1,547 (20 June 1885): 824.

21. Stevenson, 516, 518.

These excerpts, included in a discussion of *The Last Voyage* in Chapter Three, bear repeating because they demonstrate that with this painting Weeks claimed new ground. India appeared as it never had before, in a format and a venue that commanded attention. Its people and traditions, though curious to the Western eye, were portrayed with sympathy and interest. In contrast to the 1885 Salon submission of Benjamin-Constant and the celebrated works of so many other Orientalists, there was no trace of horror, salaciousness, cynicism, apprehension, suspicion or contempt.

Weeks achieved the "bold" effects and "dazzling luminousness" of *The Last Voyage* literally by the sweat of his brow, rocking unsteadily in a hot cabin on the Ganges in pursuit of authenticity worthy of the Pre-Raphaelites. Something of Weeks' methods and his intense dedication while working in Benares, akin to that of the early John Millais in Scotland or William Holman Hunt in the Levant, may be gleaned from a May 1883 letter he penned to George Corliss, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. While crossing the Red Sea aboard the steamer *Singapore*, bound for Marseilles, Weeks wrote:

As all my days were occupied in painting and my evenings in developing photos—I had but little time to write. The hot weather arrives in Benares in March, in the shape of hot winds . . . not unhealthy but monotonous. By placing oneself in a darkened room behind a wet kous-kous mat or "Tatty" filling the doorway, the hot wind becomes cool and fragrant. I passed my mornings, however, in the cabin of a boat on the Ganges and my afternoons on the shady side of the hotel painting coolly placed in the sunshine. Where I sat it must have been from 100° to 110 Fahr. Where my model stood it may have been 159° according to the published weather statements in the "Allahamed

Pioneer." We had the misfortune to spend a day in Allahamed on the way across to Bombay. The hot wind and glare of light in the roadway was something to be remembered.<sup>22</sup>

*The Last Voyage* became Weeks' signature work. It appeared at the 1888 International Exhibition in Munich, the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris, the 1891 Internationale Kunstausstellung of Berlin (awarded the Grand Diploma of Honor), in New York and Philadelphia in 1891–92, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the 1894 Exposition in Antwerp, the 1895 Empire of India Exhibition in London (special medal), and the 1900 Exposition Internationale des Beaux Arts in Monaco.<sup>23</sup>

After its debut at the 1885 Salon, *The Last Voyage* generated the most critical attention at the Universal Exposition of 1889 in Paris, a formidable retrospective of a hundred years of French painting along with a sweeping display of contemporary works exhibited to celebrate the centennial of the French Revolution. After the French, American artists were foremost in numbers with the largest showing of contemporary American art in Europe up to that time. The exposition was a sterling opportunity to prove that America could hold its own on the international arts scene and to reach a broader market—over 32 million people visited 61,722 exhibits in the six-month life of the extravaganza.<sup>24</sup> After considerable wrangling over the selection process, a tangled affair rife with slights, injustices and complexities that one artist

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22. Edwin Lord Weeks to George Corliss, 10 May 1883, Steamer *Singapore*.

23. Blaugrund, 224; Dr. Ellen K. Morris, "Lot 91: Edwin Lord Weeks, American, 1849-1903 'The Last Voyage—A Souvenir of the Ganges,' " *La Belle Epoque Paintings and Sculpture*, Sotheby's New York, May 24, 1995, Sale #6711 (New York: Sotheby's, 1995).

24. Blaugrund, 7, 14.

summed up as "chaotic blundering," 336 paintings by 189 American artists were hung across nearly 21,000 square feet of wall space. Weeks was enviably positioned as a member of the Parisian jury tasked with selecting works by expatriate Americans for submission and securing sufficient exhibition space.<sup>25</sup> *The Last Voyage*, holding its own on the wall (Figure 7-2) against monumental paintings by William Dannat (*The Quartet*, 94 3/4 by 91 3/4 inches) and Charles Sprague Pearce (*The Shepherdess*), was one of five submissions by Weeks that earned him a gold medal (first class).<sup>26</sup>

In a lengthy review of the exposition for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* arts and travel writer Theodore Child commented that Weeks was an artist "gifted with great facility," with a remarkable "sureness of eye and hand in dealing with vast scenes:"

No one has treated with greater effect and with such unhesitating directness the grand architectural backgrounds of India, with their pluri-color richness and splendor of detail . . . Such is the scene depicted, with, in the background, a vision of holy India—temples, pagodas, funeral pyres, fakirs, and men of all kinds sheltering themselves from the blazing sun under umbrellas that look like giant white mushrooms; and in the foreground, the broad Ganges, with its flotsam of pious corpses escorted by carrion-crows. This picture shows Mr. Weeks's dramatic and scenic qualities, and his careful observation of Oriental air and color.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Blaugrund, 14, 18 (citing E.W.H., "New York Notes," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 4 March 1889, 6 quoting James Fairman of the *Tribune*), 21, 25. By additional artists, the American section also included 117 drawings and grisaille paintings, 16 sculptures, 102 engravings, etchings, lithographs and an architectural drawing.

26. Blaugrund, 54. Grand prizes were won by Gari Melchers and John Singer Sargent. The two other Americans who were awarded gold medals were Eugene Vail and Alexander Harrison. Weeks' other submissions included *Hindoo Marriage Procession, Ahmedabad* (unlocated); *The Rajah of Johdpore* (56 5/16 x 74 inches, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin); *Sacred Lake, Study*; *The Mosque of Vazir Khan, Lahore, Study*.

27. Theodore Child, "American Artists at the Paris Exhibition," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 79, no. 472 (Sept. 1889): 489–521, at 514, 516. Child died in Persia in 1892 while on an extended trip with

*The Last Voyage's* "realism" was unquestionably defined by intriguing detail, an expansive sense of space and sumptuous color. Yet it was the collusion of these components with the rendering of strong midday light that immersed the viewer in the artist's experience, that invited the viewer to drift on the Ganges, to skirt by the crowded stone steps of the ghats, to feel "the burning wind" and "the full glare of the sun."<sup>28</sup>

William Gerdtz has termed this preoccupation with capturing intense natural light "the glare aesthetic," an alternative to the Impressionist's investigations of light and its optical effects. However, the "glare aesthetic" led to an outcome on canvas somewhat opposite to Impressionism. For the artists interested in "glare," light reinforced form rather than dissolved it. The glare aesthetic became popular throughout Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, in its early manifestations related to works such as the English Pre-Raphaelite artist Ford Madox Brown's *Pretty Baa Lambs* (1852). William Lamb Picknell (1853–97), a close contemporary of Weeks and a fellow student in Paris, was perhaps the foremost American practitioner of this technique. Picknell's *Road to Concarneau* (1880; Figure 7-3) imparts formal drama to an otherwise quiet pastoral by dividing the lower register with an obtuse triangle of flat, near-white, even color, sharpening the outlines of the landscape and small figures.<sup>29</sup>

The principal element of the glare aesthetic is a highly reflective, usually planar surface: pavement, still water, walls. In *The Last Voyage* the shimmering Ganges, reflecting strong,

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Weeks.

28. Weeks, *From the Black Sea Through Persia and India*, 385.

29. See generally the chapter "Glare: An Alternative Aesthetic," in William H. Gerdtz, *American Impressionism* (New York, London: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1984, 2001).

minimally-shadowed architectural forms clearly engages this concept. Weeks sustains it throughout the painting, from the tilted umbrellas on the distant shore, to the white temple on the far right, to the arched back of the dying man's final companion. Rather than interrupt the illusion of solidity the artist smudged the steps leading to the water's edge with a multitude of razor-thin horizontal shadows.

While many succumbed to the painting's "dazzling luminousness," the success of Weeks' glare aesthetic did not persuade every reviewer. In addition to obsessing about the idea that Weeks "a probablement usé de documents photographiques," the *Revue Française* noted:

Quand on fait des études sur place on ne s'attarde généralement pas aux détails d'architecture dont M. Weeks abuse: il les finit, les parachève au détriment de la vérité de la lumière. Voyez comme les palais dominant le Gange sont gris et sombres, en dépit de la prétention de l'artiste de nous faire assister à un effet de soleil.<sup>30</sup>

This opinion is difficult to reconcile when confronted with the painting, now in storage in Canada at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario. There, even in a windowless and fairly dim room, *The Last Voyage* appeared nearly incandescent with the radiant color and brilliant light of 1880s Benares.<sup>31</sup>

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30. P. Chassigne de Néronde, "Les Peintres Étrangers a l'exposition universelle," *Revue Française* 10, no. 77 (Sept. 1889): 258–79, at 266.

31. Fannie Weeks invited the Metropolitan Museum of Art to choose a painting from Edwin Lord Weeks' 1905 estate auction for its collections; the painting chosen was *The Last Voyage*. The museum deaccessioned the painting in the 1950s.



The Salon of 1886: *Retour du cortège impérial de la grande mosquée à Delhi, sous la règne de l'empereur Shah Jehan;—XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (76 x 117 in.)*

At a height of six feet and a width of nearly ten feet, *Return of the Imperial Court from the Great Mosque at Delhi, in the reign of the emperor Shah Jehan;—XVIIth century* (Figure 7-4) dwarfs nearly all paintings of Indian scenes by other artists.<sup>32</sup> The subject is a procession of the court of the fifth Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, with the eastern or royal entrance to the Jama Masjid in the middle background and its grand portal, towering minarets and marble-faced domes in the distance. Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58), who oversaw the Golden Age of Mughal architecture in India, initiated work on this enormous congregational mosque in 1650. Completed six years later, it stands atop a high plinth on a natural rise in Old Delhi. Called at the time of its construction the Masjid-i Jahanuma, or "the mosque commanding a view of the world," when built it was the largest mosque in South Asia.

The eastern, or royal, gate depicted is of red sandstone. Over eighty feet across, flanked by an arched arcade atop a high wall, it is the most prominent of the three entrance gates to the mosque's central courtyard. The immense ogee arch iwan, which Weeks placed in the center of the canvas, leads to the gateway's domed interior and thence into the courtyard designed to accommodate thousands of worshippers. Originally this entrance was restricted to the imperial court but during the British occupation was used by the Governor-General.

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32. In 2002 this painting was in the collection of David H. Koch. Hiesinger, 83 plate 26. Three paintings of India notably larger than those of Weeks' are Valentine Prinsep's royal commission (roughly 10 x 27 feet), *Imperial Assemblage held at Delhi, 1 January 1877* (1877–80), Vasili Vereshchagin's *Pearl Mosque at Delhi* (about 13 x 16.5 feet) and *The State Entry of the Prince of Wales in Jaipur in 1876* (about 16.3 x 22.8 feet).

At about the same time *Return of the Imperial Court* was painted Weeks executed a smaller (33 5/8 x 54 1/4 inches) but similarly themed work, *The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India* (Figure 3-23), now in the collection of the Portland Museum of Art in Maine. Although this smaller canvas was discussed at some length in Chapter Three, it is appropriate also to consider it in the context of Weeks' larger 1886 Salon painting. The style, palette and content of both paintings is essentially the same, though the royal entourage in *The Great Mogul* proceeds parallel to the less prominent southern gate of Delhi's Jama Masjid.

There are a number of possible textual and visual sources for these two works of color-saturated historical genre that added a new element to nineteenth-century European visualizations of India. Edwin Weeks was certainly familiar with the journals of Thomas Roe, English ambassador to the court of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, father of Shah Jahan. He also mentioned and occasionally quoted from the detailed, first-hand accounts of other early European visitors to India, such as those of Edward Terry (*A Voyage to East-India*, 1655), Dr. John Fryer (*A New Account of East-India and Persia, in Eight Letters. Being Nine Years Travels, Begun 1672. And Finished 1681*) and French physician François Bernier (1625–88), who arrived in 1658 and provided medical services to the Mughal court.<sup>33</sup>

Bernier's *Travels in the Mogul Empire AD 1656–1668* describes the emperor's Friday ritual procession to the great mosque of Delhi. Departing from the nearby Delhi fortress along a

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33. Edwin Lord Weeks, "Hindoo and Moslem," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 91, no. 545 (Oct. 1895): 651–69, at 561; Weeks, "Notes on Indian Art," 568.

line of "musketeers" that formed an avenue leading away from its gate, the kingly retinue was preceded by a cadre of retainers who watered the streets to temper the dust and alleviate the heat.

With these preliminaries accomplished,

. . . his Majesty leaves the fortress, sometimes on an elephant, decorated with rich trappings, and a canopy supported by painted and gilt pillars; and sometimes in a throne gleaming with azure and gold, placed on a litter covered with scarlet or brocade which eight chosen men, in handsome attire, carry on their shoulders. A body of *Omrahs* follow the King, some on horseback, and other in *Palekys*; and among the *Omrahs* are seen a great number of *Mansebdars*, and the bearers of silver maces . . . I cannot say that this train resembles the pompous processions . . . or the martial retinues of European Monarchs: its magnificence is of a different character; but it is not therefore the less royal.<sup>34</sup>

Undoubtedly Weeks also drew inspiration from Louis Rousselet's description in *India and Its Native Princes* of "the sacred Jummah Musjid, one of the monuments which the Mussulmans of Central Asia and of India most venerate and admire." Rousselet agreed with James Fergusson that "the great mosque of Delhi is the masterpiece of Indo-Mussulman religious architecture."

Describing the grand courtyard entrance to the mosque, Rousselet wrote:

but what no description can do justice to—and even engraving itself is powerless to assist it—is the incomparable effect produced by the vivid though severe colours which clothe every part of the building, when they are illuminated by the glorious sun of India. The dark red of the galleries, the black and white marbles of the facade, the whiteness of the domes crowned by glittering golden pinnacles, and the rose-coloured stripings of the minarets, stand out against the blue background of the sky without any crudeness, but rather with a severe harmony, proving the care with which the architect had combined and matched the varied shades, and skilfully calculated their effects, according to the different parts of the edifice they were connected with.<sup>35</sup>

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34. François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire AD 1656–1668*, trans. Irving Brock, rev. Archibald Constable (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1891), 280.

35. Rousselet, 480–81.

With these words Rousselet issued what Weeks must have taken as an artistic challenge, not only as a student and interpreter of Indian architecture but also as an artist keenly focused on color and sunlight.

Rousselet and Fergusson are among the likely French and British visual sources that argue for a conceptual and stylistic merger of these two traditions in Edwin Weeks' new visualization of the Jama Masjid. Illustrating his description, in *India and Its Native Princes* Louis Rousselet included two etchings of the "Jumma Masjid" showing the walled compound as well as the courtyard entrance (Figures 7-5, 7-6). James Fergusson provided an almost identical directional view from an aerial perspective in his 1876 *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (Figure 7-7). It is also likely that Weeks relied on his own photographs and possibly those of other photographers as compositional and drafting aids. The extraordinarily close perspectival correspondences between the entrance gate as depicted in *Return of the Imperial Court* and that in *General view of the Jumma Masjid, Delhi* (Figure 7-8) strongly suggest that Weeks may have utilized albumen prints from photographs taken of the Jama Masjid by Captain Eugene Clutterbuck Impey.<sup>36</sup>

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36. Impey published a very limited number of albums of his photographs of India, entitled *Delhi, Agra, and Rajpootana, illustrated by eighty photographs* (London: Cundall, Downes and Company, 1865). The publisher's advertising flyer noted: "The views of which this work consists have been carefully selected by the celebrated architect and art connoisseur, Mr. James Fergusson, out of an extensive collection of negatives taken by Capt. Impey, and are pronounced by him to be the most interesting series, both from an architectural and a general point of view, which has ever been brought to England . . . People interested in Indian architecture will find in this work the means of a complete course of study . . . To each photograph are affixed a few words of description, prepared under the supervision of Mr. Fergusson . . ." *General View of the Jumma Masjid, Delhi*, photographic print from Captain E[ugene] C[lutterbuck] Impey, *Delhi, Agra, and Rajpootana, illustrated by eighty photographs* (London: Cundall, Downes and Co., 1865), India Office Select Materials, British Library online collections, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/indiaofficeselect/PhotoShowDescs.asp?CollID=1757>, accessed 27 June 2013.

However novel or exact, architectural rendering alone was not likely to excite interest at the Salon. By setting the figures outside of the walls Weeks was able to energize his composition with the pageantry and drama of a royal procession while keeping the grandeur of the Jama Masjid a central subject of the painting. Again, British and French precedents may have inspired this compositional strategy. The most obvious is the Picturesque version of the same subject, Thomas Daniell's aquatint *Eastern Gate of the Jummah Masjid at Delhi* included as plate 1 in *Oriental Scenery: Twenty Four Views in Hindoostan* (1795; Figure 7-9). Weeks may have also looked to illustrations from Alexis Soltykoff's 1848 *Voyages dans l'Inde*, some of which featured processions with a multitude of animated figures bearing umbrellas and fluttering standards, cavaliers with lances and lumbering elephants against a skyline of distant domes and minarets (*Principale rue de Lucknow. Capitale du Royaume d'Aoude*; Figure 7-10). Weeks' *The Great Mogul and his Court*, with its figures proceeding generally from left to right within a strong architectural setting, positioned below an elevated arcade, is particularly resonant with Soltykoff's *Cortège du grand mogul a Dehli* [sic] (Figure 7-11).

Though it is fair to speculate that Weeks' primary goal, particularly with *Return of the Imperial Court*, was to produce surpassing work that was at once visually arresting, technically challenging and sufficiently novel to attract the attention of the the Paris Salon jury, the subject and its presentation intimate other purposes. Again turning to James Fergusson, his impassioned writings on the preservation of Indian architecture suggest that Weeks had a motive more compelling than the desire to lend the visual presentation of this Mughal monument and royal procession a lively update.

Fergusson was appalled by the wholesale destruction of the monuments of Delhi that followed the suppression of the rebellion of 1857. It was not enough that during the siege much of Delhi was irreparably damaged from mortar attacks. The British retaliatory plan, supported by high ranking officials in London and India, essentially was to wipe Delhi off of the map; Lord Palmerston stated that "every civil building connected with the Mohammedan tradition should be levelled to the ground without regard to antiquarian veneration or artistic predilections." Fortunately, the regional administrator and later Viceroy John Lawrence successfully argued to curtail most of the planned demolitions. Nonetheless, in subsequent years a number of the city's finest mosques and great Sufi shrines were destroyed; four of Delhi's most magnificent palaces were obliterated along with the homes of Indian nobles and important civic buildings. Although Lawrence was able to save the Jama Masjid, eighty percent of the nearby imperial fortress, the Red Fort, was destroyed, much of it to make way for a nondescript British barracks. The vast cleared space around the Jama Masjid, visible in Figure 7-8, was the result of further British demolitions. In a series of letters the Mughal poet Ghalib lamented that the everything from the banks of the Jumna river to the Jama Masjid, a distance of about a mile, "is without exaggeration a great mound of bricks."<sup>37</sup>

Edwin Weeks could not have failed to consider James Fergusson's opinion on the matter, forcefully expressed some twenty years later, in his 1876 *History of Indian and Eastern*

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37. William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 419–24; on Palmerston, 419–20, 499 note 20 as cited by Eric Stokes, *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, ed. C. A. Bayly (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 92, note 42; quoting Ghalib, 422, 501 note 28 citing "The Sack of Delhi as Witnessed by Ghalib," *Bengal Past & Present* 12 (Jan.–Dec. 1955): 110.

*Architecture:*

The whole of the hareem courts of the palace were swept off the face of the earth to make way for a hideous British barrack, without those who carried out this fearful piece of Vandalism thinking it even worth while to make a plan of what they were destroying, or preserving any record of the most splendid palace in the world.

The truth of the matter appears to be this: the engineers perceived that by gutting the palace they could provide at no trouble or expense a wall round their barrack-yard, and one that no drunken soldier could scale without detection, and for this or some such wretched motive of economy the palace was sacrificed!<sup>38</sup>

In England, preservation of Indian architecture became increasingly topical as the emotions roiled by war became more distant. An 1883 article on the recently issued first Report of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India noted that "without the valuable work of men like James Fergusson "it is within the bounds of probability that the magnificent remains of topes, citadels, palaces, baths, tombs, and mosques would have been left to take care of themselves, to be disintegrated, maltreated, or razed to the ground as modern requirements might dictate." The report cited numerous examples of neglect, indifference and purposeful desecration:

The great pillared Diwan-i-am at Delhi with its fine marble mosaic canopy and throne is used as a canteen; and the right of the throne is a bar for serving out liquor! To the left of the throne is an enclosure of bamboo screen-work, in which Nubbi Bux keeps a soldiers' coffee shop. Above and at the back of the throne is a small open apartment, the walls of which are faced with the celebrated black marble mosaic work; but this, as well as the inlaid patterns on the throne, has been villainously repaired in coloured plaster.<sup>39</sup>

The *Times* reiterated the report's cautions in the summer of 1886, while Weeks' *Return of the*

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38. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876), 595: 594–95.

39. "Conservation of Indian Architecture," *Times* (London), 13 August 1883, no. 30897, 3 E.

*Imperial Court from the Great Mosque at Delhi* was hanging at the Paris Salon, in a review of Sir Lepel Griffin's newly published *Famous Monuments of Central India*. Quoting the author, the article read:

The English in India are often reproached with vandalism, and with some justice, as the neglected state of the Delhi fortress and palace proves. In the whole world, if Rome and Athens be excepted, there is no place more impressive than the Delhi palace, where for thousands of years successive branches of the various Aryan races have fixed their throne. Yet there the marble hall of public audience beautiful in its grave simplicity has been turned into a canteen, where under a slovenly punkah British soldiers drink and quarrel, while tawdry prints of favored beauties are stuck against the throne from which the Emperor Akbar promulgated his decrees. No visitor of taste or sensibility can view this desecration without feelings of shame and disgust.<sup>40</sup>

Edwin Weeks was not only aware of these issues, he wrote informatively about "the havoc wrought by the rude conquerors who came in the service of 'John Company.'" In "Notes on Indian Art," a survey of the principal monuments and traditional crafts of (mostly northern) India for *Harper's* September 1895 number, Weeks recognized the futility of dwelling on the wanton destruction of previous years, whether its rationale was expediency or retribution. Instead, his discussion emphasized the positive: the glories of Indian architecture, the British government's recent restoration and preservation efforts, the institution of government schools for the decorative arts and the promotion of indigenous design.

While Weeks expressed hope that, with governmental and commercial encouragement, Indian artisans might continue to produce splendid examples of traditional crafts for a couple of more decades, he despaired of any sustained success. Palaces and public buildings, "the fantastic

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40. "Famous Monuments of Central India," *Times* (London), 22 July 1886, no. 31818, 13 A.



and graceful architecture which admits of such varied combinations," were destined to fall victim to the "utilitarian spirit" that demanded new roads, new buildings, new infrastructure, new city plans. The article's concluding sentence is notably discouraging: "Nothing can check the steady growth of these improvements; and their triumphant excuse for being ugly is that they are cheap."<sup>41</sup>

Weeks' opinions on Indian architectural preservation reached specialists as well as general readers. Despite Weeks' evenhanded assessment, the Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art (S.E.P.I.A.), closely associated with the undeniably imperialistic emphasis of the South Kensington Museum, took exception to his pessimistic views of the British government's attitudes towards Indian monuments. In a five-page review of "Notes on Indian Art" published in *The Indian Magazine and Review*, the Society praised Weeks' "splendid illustrations" and "attempt to create interest" in the subject of preservation of Indian architecture, but slammed his reliance on Fergusson, his occasional misspellings, his "confused history," and "carelessness and lack of information." In the next issue Weeks fired back. He supported his remarks with reference to the Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, decried his critic's failure to acknowledge the many instances of architectural destruction and neglect, and chided him for focusing on minutiae at the expense of the broader issue.<sup>42</sup> Suggesting that the excesses of the British government and military in India were "a somewhat tender subject with the author

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41. Weeks, "Notes on Indian Art," 585.

42. K-W., "Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art," *Indian Magazine and Review* 26, no. 298 (Oct. 1895): 529–33 and E.L.W., "Society for the Encouragement and Preservation of Indian Art," *Indian Magazine and Review* 26, no. 299 (Nov. 1895): 551–57.

of the pamphlet," Weeks repeated his desire to focus on the government's "laudable efforts to make amends for them." However, he did not back away from his critique or the independent point of view he expressed in the pages of the popular *Harper's Magazine*.

Although this public volleying on Indian architectural preservation took place some years after Edwin Weeks submitted *Return of the Imperial Court from the Great Mosque at Delhi* to the Paris Salon of 1886, it speaks to the strong convictions that Weeks had regarding the magnificent achievements of the Mughal period. Moreover, it reveals the personal sentiments that underlay his conception of the painting, shaped by the artist's sojourns in India as well as his close readings of the seventeenth-century accounts of European travelers to the Mughal court and the opinions of James Fergusson. Exhibiting a huge painting of the Jama Masjid at Delhi, in the very public space of the Paris Salon, was a way to commemorate and help preserve it.

This is not to claim that Edwin Lord Weeks' intentions were in any sense altruistic or aimed at questioning the legitimacy of British rule in India. It is however, to claim that *Return of the Imperial Court from the Great Mosque at Delhi* asserted the vitality of the Indian people and the worthiness of Indian culture, and gave European audiences a new, bolder vision of India only a few months after the fledgling Indian National Congress was founded in December of 1885. *Return of the Imperial Court* was moreover a direct counter to the violent and sexualized interpretations of the Orient favored by leading French artists Jean-Léon Gérôme and Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant. In addition, as it hung on the walls of the Paris Salon in the summer of 1886, it challenged the conventional British paintings of India then on exhibit at London's Colonial and Indian Exhibition, a self-congratulatory imperial extravaganza that had opened in

May.<sup>43</sup>

*Return of the Imperial Court* was favored in *The Magazine of Art* (London) with a full-page reproduction in its January 1886 issue.<sup>44</sup> The *Art Amateur* ran a large detail of the central group of figures, entitled *The Mogul Emperor Returning from Prayer*, to accompany Theodore Child's review of the American contributions to the Salon. Child found the composition "complicated and brilliant":

. . . with the vast wall and domes of the mosque in the background, and the gorgeous procession winding down the steps and joined by horsemen and soldiers of the guard, it is a work of very great ability, full of high qualities of observation and technical skill. Those whose tastes incline them to admire simple landscapes and anecdotic interiors little think what varied knowledge and what strong intelligence it requires to compose, hold together, and paint adequately and truly a scene of the extent and animation of this Oriental procession.<sup>45</sup>

Regardless of the keen powers of observation, command of color harmonies and technical skills they may display, today it is easy, even expected, to classify *Return of the Imperial Court from the Great Mosque at Delhi, in the reign of the emperor Shah Jehan;—XVIIth century* (Figure 7-4), submitted to the Paris Salon of 1886, or the smaller *The Great Mogul and His Court Returning from the Great Mosque at Delhi, India* (Figure 3-23) as little

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43. As listed in *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886. Official Catalogue*, 2nd ed. (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1886), xci–xciii. Weeks attended the exhibition, where he took particular notice of "a collection of large photographs which looked as if they might have been taken in the days of Saladin;" they were taken at Bikanir. Weeks, "A Painter's Impressions of Rajpootana," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 89, no. 534 (Nov. 1894): 835–57, at 842.

44. Confusingly entitled *Shah Jehan Leaving the Great Mosque at Delhi*, the image appeared in Paul Leroi, "The American Salon," *Magazine of Art* (London) 9 (Jan. 1886): 485–90 at 489.

45. Theodore Child, "Gallery and Studio. American Pictures at the Salon," *Art Amateur* (May 1886): 123–25.

more than works of historical genre. They might charitably be considered charming indulgences of an artist's fantasies of the past, or more in keeping with Saidian criticism, as discredited commentaries on the triumphs of imperialism and the backwardness of a colonial population. To this range of interpretations must be added another: that Edwin Lord Weeks selected the subject of these paintings, the Jama Masjid and the Indian imperial past, to reinvigorate the symbolism of Mughal architecture as well as to reposition it within the debates and events of his own time.

A few months after the close of the Salon, in the fall of 1886 Weeks and his wife embarked on their second trip to India. After a stay of five months the artist's return in mid-March left him a very compressed pre-Salon schedule. To the 1887 exhibition Weeks contributed *Bayadères of Bombay*. The usual Salon fare resonated in a lower key that year; "The work of the French artists, is freer from horrors, of the 'blood and thunder' kind than usual." Weeks' reviews were likewise subdued, although the *Independent* noted that "Mr. Weeks's 'Bayadères of Bombay' is a solidly painted, brilliant little work, which we understand is already sold to an American amateur."<sup>46</sup> Weeks' submission for the following year demonstrated that he had more time to prepare.

The Salon of 1888: *Un rajah de Jodhpore* (56.3 x 74 in.)

April thirtieth, the opening of the 1888 Paris Salon, was wet, "hopelessly, drenchingly wet; the chestnut trees, which have just begun to unfold their soft, green, fan-like leaves, dropped moisture from every twig; the restaurants in the Champs Elysées, usually so crowded, were

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46. "Fine Arts. The Paris Salon," *Independent* 39, no. 2008 (1887): 6.

deserted; and in the long lines of carriages and cabs not an open one was to be seen."

Undeterred, the acknowledged belle in attendance was the celebrated beauty from New Orleans, the exquisite Madame Gautreau, who apparently had recovered from her humiliations during the Salon of 1884. Perhaps it was the recollection of that scandal, the Sargent portrait of the aloof *parisienne* in fallen-strap gown, the hint of an imminent further "wardrobe malfunction," that prompted a reviewer of Edwin Lord Weeks' *A Rajah of Jodhpore* (Figure 7-12) to remark that it was "a little bit of the extreme East in which the figures do not appear to have dressed themselves for the occasion in all the clothes they possess."<sup>47</sup> Once past her initial concerns for the figures' modesty, the reviewer added: "The picture impresses with a sense of evident reality, and is brilliant with sun and atmosphere."<sup>48</sup>

No one else seemed to be concerned by the figures' attire. The overwhelming impression of *A Rajah of Jodhpore*, in pronounced contrast to the grey Paris skies and sheets of rain, was that of intense sunlight:

Mr. Weeks's *Rajah de Jodhpore* (2524) possesses much brilliancy and many splendid costumes. The picture glitters all over; its glow and the tact of the artist's swift touch charm painters who do not care about the subject.<sup>49</sup>

Brilliancy and glitter is precisely what Weeks was after. While the painting was still a work in

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47. Agnes Farley Millar, "Fine Arts. The Paris Salon. I." *Independent* 40, no. 2061 (1888): 7; Agnes Farley Millar, "Fine Arts.: The Paris Salon. II.," *Independent* 40, no. 2062 (1888): 7.

48. Agnes Farley Millar, "Fine Arts.: The Paris Salon. II.," 7.

49. The writer added, "Mr. Weeks came from Boston, U.S., and is a pupil of M. Bonnat, but he paints as a pupil of M. Benjamin-Constant might be expected to paint by those who do not know how seldom the pupils of Parisian *ateliers* follow their masters." "The Salon, Paris," *Athenaeum* 3164 (16 June 1888): 767-69, at 767.

progress Weeks commented to Robert Sherard, who was visiting the artist's Paris studio on a similarly leaden, monochromatic February afternoon:

This is what I intend to send to the Salon, but if I am not satisfied with it when it is finished it won't go and I shall send nothing. I mean if it looks fresh and bright and clear it goes; if it looks dried up it stays. It is bright, clear sunlight I want to depict in this picture.<sup>50</sup>

The artist's "wonderful handling of light" is what Robert Sherard recalled most about the painting some years later:

The same may be said of Edwin Lord Weeks, who, in the grey of a Parisian studio, floods his charming canvases with that bright sunlight of British India which, for the purposes of his art, he explored in every direction. His 'Fin d'une Promenade,' a Jodhpore scene, will be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to see it in the Paris Salon of 1888. The warmest note of colour in this picture is the warm blue of the Indian sky, seen athwart the glittering minarets; but there is art in this use of subdued colours as displayed in the general effect of brilliant sunlight.<sup>51</sup>

As Weeks stated and as Sherard well remembered, the primary subject of *A Rajah of Jodhpore* is the effects of bright sunlight. The painting is essentially a complicated study of the "glare effect," a challenge made more severe by the scene's varying architectural planes and angles, the sharply delineated shadows, the numerous figures, and the monochromatic treatment of building and foreground. It was a challenge confronted by Mariano Fortuny in the early 1870s; it is likely Fortuny's example that Weeks had in mind when he attempted to confront and

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50. A. [Robert?] H. Sherard, "Mr. E. L. Weeks's studio in the Avenue de Wagram . . .," copy of an untitled, undated clipping, probably from the Weeks Family Scrapbook, *The Art of Edwin Lord Weeks*, File 1, Box 7, Art Gallery Exhibition Files, 1941-2004, UA 9/3/1, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, NH.

51. Sherard, "American Artists in Paris," 228–29.

resolve this problem on canvas for the Paris Salon of 1888.

Weeks encountered the red "fortresslike" home on a ramble through the dusty streets of Jodhpur in December of 1882, which he wrote about for *Harper's Magazine*. A sketch related to the painting illustrates "A Painter's Impressions of Rajpootana" (November 1894), which describes the artist's travels through Rajasthan in northwestern India, whose principalities were among "all that is left of the 'India of the Rajahs.'"<sup>52</sup> Of the rajahs in general Weeks wrote at length, discussing their enviable position in remote states where "the ancient prestige of kingship has most completely escaped the levelling tendencies of the age," their oversight by British Resident Agents, their education in England's universities, and their social prominence in Paris. He lauded their charity and intellectual achievements; he poked fun at their usual preference for "shoes with side elastics, which mar the effect of his otherwise correct attire;" he acknowledged their studied nonchalance on the steps of the Grand Hotel and their command of lively dinners in the open-air restaurants of the Champs Élysées. Through these passages the reader senses that the rajah, placed at the exact center of Weeks' Salon painting, is both privileged and trapped, the pivot point of change in Indian society, caught between two vastly different and competing worlds.

Jodhpur was not a tourist destination in the early 1880s. A perplexed Weeks was not even sure how to get there: ". . . and in the event of our getting there should we find any shelter more hospitable than the cold ground, were questions which we tried in vain to solve, until we chanced upon a copy of the Rajpootana-Malwa Railway Guide, in the book-stall at the Ahmedabad

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52. Weeks, "A Painter's Impressions of Rajpootana," 836.

station." Relying on "that largely circulated but not always reliable authority" the artist and his wife boarded a train traveling northbound overnight. In the "dry chill of a December morning" the couple arrived at the Marwar Junction. From there they caught another train, bound farther north through the gravelly, treeless desert to Jodhpur.<sup>53</sup>

Once situated in the only accommodation in Jodhpur available to travelers, a nearby spartan "bungalow"—boasting a square table, a couple of chairs and two bed frames "guiltless of any covering" save a stout tape on which to lay—Weeks set off in search of the Resident Agent. Walking the narrow streets, craning to see the balconied windows, peeking into shadowed courtyards, Weeks came across the building he memorialized in the painting:

In one quarter a few groups of palaces surrounded a large tank. One of them, built of red sandstone of exactly the same color and value as the sand in front, seemed to me then—and will always seem, for I have kept a study of it—a marvellous [sic] combination of massive simplicity and graceful but not excessive decoration. The walls, which rose directly from the sand of the road, save for a species of ramp in front, leading up to the high Persian arch of the entrance, were unrelieved below by a single ornamental detail, while all the decoration was lavished on the projecting windows above. The great central window over the gate had the curved cornice or window-cap characteristic of the later Mogul style, the panels were filled in with beautiful stone lace-work, while on either side were slender bay-windows of varied forms. Through the open gate below, the green foliage of the garden made a pleasing note in the expanse of red. The beauty of this façade was greatly enhanced by the fantastic shadows thrown on the flat walls by these various projections.<sup>54</sup>

This is precisely what strikes the viewer. The dusty red forecourt and masonry walls dictate the predominant hue of seven-eighths of the canvas. This massive solidity is broken up by crisply

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53. Weeks, "A Painter's Impressions of Rajpootana," 836.

54. Weeks, "A Painter's Impressions of Rajpootana," 838.



detailed fenestration, sharp shadows thrown at acute angles and through the entryway a glimpse of the greenery beyond.

In its overall sense of color and architectural presentation, especially the left half, *A Rajah of Jodhpore* is very reminiscent of Mariano Fortuny's *Court of Justice, Alhambra* (1871; Figure 7-13). Photographs reveal that Fortuny's work was executed with great fidelity, including the hanging lamps which are believed to correspond to the originals. Thematically, the painting expresses Fortuny's concern with depicting the effects of light on a sheer architectural plane, a chief preoccupation of the artist while in Granada. The work was purchased in 1872 by the American William H. Stewart, a great patron of Fortuny, who for many years maintained an art-filled residence in Paris well known to European artists and collectors.<sup>55</sup> It is quite possible that Weeks studied this painting in Stewart's home, given that Weeks was an admirer of Fortuny and even spent significant time in Fortuny's Granada studio (noted in Chapter Four).

Obviously Weeks' and Fortuny's paintings differ in content and setting, but their presentations and technical resolutions are similar. *Court of Justice, Alhambra (Tribunal de la Alhambra)* is remarkable for the complexity of its intersecting lines and planes, with a strong diagonal swath of pale color emphasizing height and, paradoxically, both stillness and movement. Weeks employed a similar diagonal, also angled at about twenty degrees, that reaches from the right segment of the arch over the principal windows, to the top of the rajah's

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55. Mercè Doñate, Cristina Mendoza and Francesc M. Quilez i Corella, *Fortuny (1838–1874)* (Barcelona: Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, 2004), 254–58, 526. See also Charles De Kay, "The Stewart Collection," *New York Times*, 2 January 1898, *Illustrated Weekly Magazine* 10.

head, to the toes of the kneeling elephant. Both entryways, and their darkened interiors, are viewed from the same perspectival point. Like Weeks' *A Rajah of Jodhpore*, Fortuny's green garden is just visible through the deep passage, offering a welcome change of color from the uniformity of the walls and foreground. The uniformity itself was a central challenge of both paintings. Both artists had to confront the same formidable technical problem of how to differentiate the ground plane from the walls while holding color and value constant.

To this end Fortuny placed two figures, laying flat on their backs perpendicular to the wall, to help define the ground plane. Despite their plight as shackled prisoners they do not command nearly the interest (bearing in mind the Salon audience) of Weeks' gorgeously caparisoned elephants, one standing calmly awaiting his master's instructions and one kneeling low as if he were a well-trained little dog. Improbably, the great creatures lend a grandeur and dignity to what amounted to a commonplace, unexciting scene of the rajah dismounting from a somewhat awkward height.

Although Weeks frequently described witnessing similar activities, it is likely that this particular scene was invented for purposes of composition and popular interest. However, Weeks wrote about touring the cliff top palace fortress, the Mehrangarh Fort, which overlooks Jodhpur. There he encountered "dashing cavaliers, arrayed in brocade or fine muslin, each with his little turban so placed as not to hide the handiwork of the Rajpoot barber." Within the palace's "wilderness of courts and cloisters, of narrow corridors and pilloried halls" he observed a startling array of furnishings, including "old palaquins and dilapidated elephant-howdahs," "a museum of antiquated firearms," "richly furnished beds," and "old portraits of the emperors and kings of Delhi, by native artists." In the museums of the fort today there are elephant howdahs

sided with lion motifs, symbolic of royalty, similar to that prominently shown in Weeks' *A Rajah of Jodhpore*. Though the individual figures and the assemblage may be imaginary, in all likelihood the royal dress, the sumptuous trappings of the elephants, and the attendants' implements are based on the artist's careful observation of originals then in use.

Weeks' ability to summon from authentic components a scene that was plausible, rich with color, vibrant with heat and brilliant light, and brimming with the life of India stands in marked contrast to the efforts of his English and French counterparts. It was a talent for organizing the imagination, within the parameters of everyday reality and common perception, in a way that was open, engaging, foreign but not intimidating. As Theodore Child recognized, it was a talent increasingly rare among painters of the late nineteenth century:

In the 'Hindoo Marriage' and the 'Rajah of Jodhpore' we admire Mr. Weeks's faculty of composing and setting on foot a great scene comprising landscape, architecture, animals, and countless figures, with all their diverse costumes, attitudes, and multifarious accessories. And this faculty, it may be added, is not common in these days of a 'realism' which is too often content to limit its efforts to painting 'studies.'<sup>56</sup>

The Salon of 1889:    *L'heure de la prière dans la mosquée de perle, à Agra* (79 x 116 in.);  
                                  *Autour d'un restaurant en plein air à Lahore* (62 x 96.7 in.)

Due to preparations for the forthcoming blockbuster event of 1889, the Universal Exhibition in Paris, leading American artists were understandably distracted from the usual hubbub surrounding the opening of that year's annual Salon. No doubt bearing in mind tactical concerns about impact, placement and overexposure, William Dannat skipped the Salon entirely

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56. Theodore Child, "American Artists at the Paris Exhibition," 516.

and kept all three of his latest paintings for the Universal Exhibition, as did John Singer Sargent and J. Gari Melchers. Still, that left about a hundred and fifty American artists to show at the 1889 Salon, among them Edwin Weeks, Cecilia Beaux, Childe Hassam, Walter Gay, J. Carroll Beckwith and others. Making the pre-Salon studio rounds critic Theodore Child enthusiastically described the two works that Weeks was shortly to submit:

Edwin Lord Weeks sends "The White Mosque" and "Open Air Restaurant at Lahore." These two pictures are excellent; the 'Open Air Restaurant' is a very remarkable piece of work from the point of view of technique and composition, while the "White Mosque" is simply a tour de force; Mr. Weeks may justly hope for a medal on the strength of these two efforts.<sup>57</sup>

Child predicted accurately; Weeks was awarded a third-class medal, an unusual distinction for an American artist (Figure 1-23, Weeks with *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque* on his easel).

The subjects of both of the paintings that Weeks submitted cater to the interest in carefully detailed images of street life still popular in late-nineteenth century Europe as well as to common curiosity about exotic locales and unfamiliar religious practice. They balance bright, invitingly warm palettes and carefully modulated color with strong linear compositions. The key figures are not "types;" rather their expressions and postures reveal individual personalities. The cropped edges of both paintings suggest the influence of photography as they hint at the more expansive scene left to the viewer's imagination. This tension between an expanded visual field and a more controlled focus, as if through a lens, was readily apparent to Theodore Child, who wrote of Weeks' "remarkable talent for disposing on canvases of reasonable dimensions scenes

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57. Theodore Child, "The Paris Salon of 1889: What the American Colony are Sending," *Art Amateur* 20, no. 6 (May 1889): 126.

that have the immensity and manifold interest of a panorama."<sup>58</sup>

However, these placid views belie the military and political context that the 1889 Salon audience would have associated with the respective locales of *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque, Agra* and *An Open-Air Restaurant in Lahore* (Figures 7-14, 7-15). The languid scene in the courtyard of the Pearl Mosque (Moti Mashid), within the Mughal Red Fort, celebrates its iridescent beauty but betrays nothing of its military entanglements. The British had controlled the fort since Agra was annexed in 1803. In 1857 it was the site of a fierce battle, at which time the Pearl Mosque was commandeered for use as a military hospital. Subsequently the British razed most of the Mughal architecture within the fort compound to expedite construction of an army barracks, still garrisoned there when Weeks made his preparatory sketches for the painting.

Lahore is the capital of the northern province of the Punjab in present day Pakistan. It was a critical British outpost during the "Great Game," the extended political conflict between Britain and Russia for control of Central Asia (and access to India), at its height in 1889.<sup>59</sup> When *An Open-Air Restaurant in Lahore* hung on the walls of the Paris Salon, some ten to twelve thousand troops under British command were stationed in Lahore and the Punjab, supported by a recent flurry of railway construction that could rush additional troops to the Northwest Frontier.<sup>60</sup> This implicit subtext would not have escaped readers of the *Illustrated London News*, which

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58. Theodore Child, "American Artists at the Paris Salon," *Harper's Weekly* 33 (20 April 1889): 321–23 at 321.

59. Weeks refers to the popular opera *Le roi de Lahore* by Jules Massenet, first performed in Paris in April 1877.

60. Weeks described the "great fortresslike station of Lahore, built with an eye to possible military necessities" in "Lahore and the Punjaub," 660.

allotted a double-page spread to a reproduction of *An Open-Air Restaurant at Lahore* in its December 11, 1889 issue. The machinations of the Great Game, the relative strengths of Britain and Russia, the implications for France, Germany and world trade, were frequent topics of speculation and analysis in newspapers, magazines and specialist publications throughout Europe.

The geopolitics of Central Asia was a concern of Americans, as well. Describing his first tour of Lahore—about the same time Weeks was there—American bishop and prolific writer John F. Hurst wrote:

When one reaches Lahore, and climbs to the top of the lofty minaret near the ancient Mogul palace, his first thought is to cast his eye to the far northwest, where Afghanistan lies, and where Russian and Saxon are sure, sooner or later, to battle for the India at your feet.<sup>61</sup>

In a similar vein Edwin Lord Weeks began his October 1894 article for *Harper's Magazine*, "Lahore and the Punjaub." He devoted the first section of this otherwise chatty travelogue to a discussion of the British annexation of the Punjab, "the long-looked-for invasion from the north," "the recent negotiations at Cabool," the martial character of the "Afghans, Pathans, and Beloochees," Afghanistan as "a power to be reckoned with" and the stability of relations with its "Ameer as an ally." One of the article's illustrations, *Punjaubi Infantry*, a half-page sketch of a smartly-dressed rifle platoon marching shoulder-to-shoulder, testifies to Weeks' impressions of the inhabitants' superior soldierly capabilities that he believed were inherent in the native

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61. John F. Hurst, "The Fort and Palaces of Lahore," *Independent* 38, no. 1964 (22 July 1886): 1. Weeks was headed by train to Lahore in late December 1886, Weeks to Twombly, 18 December 1886. In 1893 he spent several weeks in Lahore; "Current Events, Indian," *Times of India*, 5 May 1894, 3.

population. The text is more explicit: The "tall, sinewy, and athletic" infantrymen appeared "endowed with a peculiar fitness for their vocation," so different from haphazard European recruits that they appeared "not only of a different race, but a different species of the human animal."<sup>62</sup> This is the language of ethnic stereotyping, but it is also the recognition of Indian cultural strength and British vulnerability.

In Weeks' assessment, though "sunburnt or tanned, and begrimed with dust," the fruit sellers, "peaceable peddlers of 'notions,' " camel drivers and horse dealers of Lahore were "excellent fighting material."<sup>63</sup> Going about their everyday affairs in the broad square before the mosque of Wazir Kahn, these are the men who populate *An Open-Air Restaurant at Lahore*. However, despite Lahore's contemporary associations with European political jockeying in Central Asia, it is a work in much the same sunny mood as William Carpenter's watercolor *View of the Mosque of Wazir Ali Khan, Lahore* (1856; Figure 7-16), with the emphasis on the everyday lives of the local inhabitants.

Judging from Weeks' accounts the locals were getting on quite well without England or Russia. Weeks described the experience of emerging into the square in front of the depicted mosque as crossing a boundary, abruptly leaving behind the well-trimmed avenue, the horse-drawn trams, red post office boxes and other reminders of Europe. In rich and evocative prose he wrote of the scene in the shadow of the mosque:

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62. Weeks, "Lahore and the Punjaub," 652–54.

63. Weeks, "Lahore and the Punjaub," 652.

Tailors and tailors' apprentices stitch all day at piles of dilapidated garments . . . cobblers busy themselves with heaps of dusty old shoes, and in the middle of the square there are open-air restaurants, where great kettles of tinned copper stand upon platforms elevated above the ground and surrounded by rough benches; sooty frying-pans sizzle on little clay furnaces . . . the benches are crowded with customers, who have the appearance of being peasants from the outlying country, or Pathan peddlers . . . A great deal of horse-shoeing and veterinary practice is carried on in one corner, under a great tree, and there is always a sound of hammering and clashing of metal from the smoky arches behind . . . The great open court of the mosque is seldom thronged except at noon; a few school-boys con their books under the eye of a master in one corner, and an occasional beggar strolls in, and stretches himself out to sleep on the pavement . . . To those who have been reared in other lands, in the fear of the stern sacristan and the autocratic suisse, there is something broadly democratic in the faith of Islam as it is practised to-day. While in most countries still under Mussulman dominion the unbeliever is rigidly excluded from the mosque, the humblest of the faithful may find there a refuge from the weather, sleep in the protecting shadow of its cloisters, and bathe in the water of its tank.<sup>64</sup>

That Weeks' image is true to the sense of place, to the quiet hum of the everyday in the shelter of the grand mosque of Wazir Khan, is confirmed by an 1895 photograph of the square (Figure 7-17).

At the 1889 Salon, *An Open-Air Restaurant at Lahore* eschewed the sensationalized East in favor of the quotidian. It was a striking contrast to the 1889 Salon submission of Benjamin-Constant, *Le jour des funérailles, scène au Maroc*, a "work of vast dimensions"<sup>65</sup> that depicted a dead Moroccan chief laid out for burial, surrounded by weapons and mourning women, and to works of other Orientalist painters who relished transferring their fantasies of sex and violence to canvas. Instead, *An Open-Air Restaurant at Lahore* invented conversations and invited

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64. Weeks notes that "The stranger is made welcome to-day in any of the mosques of India . . ." Weeks, "Lahore and the Punjaub," 665–66.

65. Theodore Child, "The Gallery: The Paris Salon of 1889," *Art Amateur* 21, no. 1 (June 1889): 7.



storytelling,<sup>66</sup> though the essence of the painting's appeal is that its narrative and construction appear uncontrived. This unaffected but nonetheless enticing quality is what captivated

Theodore Child:

This 'Open-air Restaurant at Lahore' has, furthermore, the merit of being the most complete picture that Mr. Weeks has yet painted—the firmest, the simplest, and the most direct piece of painting that he has accomplished.<sup>67</sup>

Yet it is due to the artist's meticulously plotted composition and balance of color that the viewer feels as if he has just rambled down a dusty Lahore street only to stumble across a sudden cultural divide, just as Weeks described. Studying the painting even for a few moments, the viewer half expects the foreground figures in blue and gold to break from lunch, turn around abruptly and inquire, "Who are *you*?"

There is something of that sense of boundary crossing and intrusion when considering the tranquil scene *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque, Agra* (Figure 7-14). The Pearl Mosque, or Moti Masjid, "a perfectly balanced marriage of form, mass and scale," dates to the mid-seventeenth century reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. It was intended for the use of the royal court and reflects the preference for "exquisite yet relatively unembellished" white marble for the emperor's private religious architecture.<sup>68</sup> The view of roughly the right third of the

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66. "An Out-door Restaurant in Lahore," *Harper's Bazaar* 23, no. 1 (Jan. 1890): 11.

67. Child, "American Artists at the Paris Salon," 321. In another review Child complained of the "funereal, dolorous, or elegiac subjects" and "empty-eyed peasants and ugly old hags" that were so noticeable in the Salon of 1889. Theodore Child, "The Gallery: The Paris Salon of 1889," 7.

68. Asher, 188. "The Moti Musjid stands as perfect as the day when the scaffoldings were removed . . . Everything is the purest white marble—floor, pillars, roof. You can see nothing else—glittering, polished marble everywhere." "A Dream in Marble," *New York Evangelist* 45, no. 17 (Apr. 1874): 3.

courtyard omits the three high, bulbous domes and numerous *chattris* that surmount the roof. Instead of the imposing outline of the mosque against the Indian sky Weeks filled the canvas with an expanse of white masonry, relieved by a small square of brilliant azure, the deep shadows of arches, and the postures and costumes of the figures. Again Theodore Child expressed the chief technical concerns that challenged the artist:

Over the facade of arches in the background the projecting roof casts a shadow, and the vista of arcades within appears mistily illuminated by the reflected light that glares upward from the white marble court-yard. On this ground of immaculate smooth white marble are disposed figures in various attitudes, some washing in the tank, others dreaming or sleeping, one in the foreground reading the Koran, while outside the mosque in the middle distance stands a row of men praying, their backs turned to the spectator—Afghans, northern Indians of various castes, and Persians with their round skull-caps. In the polished marble of the floor as well as in the water of the tank the bright colors of the Indian and Persian costumes are reflected. In this very clever picture Mr. Weeks has dealt successfully with a difficult scheme of color.<sup>69</sup>

The painting hosts a wealth of intriguing detail: the finely scalloped arches, the various attitudes of the figures, the differently patterned garments, the pigeons strutting on the tiles. Yet the rich detail does not confuse the eye or fragment the composition; outlines and edges sharpen and soften, as if captured alternately by peripheral or direct vision. A thin, gray line defines the architectural elements although the deft use of subtle color conveys the fold of a garment or a change in plane. Standing to the right of center, the receding diagonal of the tank edge pulls the viewer into the scene, creating the distinct illusion of presence and proximity to the central figures, a characteristic typical of Weeks' major paintings.

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69. Child, "American Artists at the Paris Salon," 321.

Edwin Weeks used color to unify these disparate elements while simultaneously tackling the difficult problem of a white-on-white tonal scheme. This challenge was commonly taken up by nineteenth century artists, including James McNeill Whistler in *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* (1862) and John Singer Sargent with his 1880 Salon entry, *Fumée d'ambre gris* (which Théophile Gautier called *Symphonie en blanc majeur*). The Goupil guide to the 1880 exhibition noted: "Ces variations sur une même couleur ne sont pas ce qu'il ya de plus difficile dans le metier; mais enfin il faut déjà être savant et très savant pour en jouer comme M. Sargent."<sup>70</sup> Like Sargent, Weeks carefully manipulated the application, variation and repetition of color to achieve what first appears to be a highly monochromatic work. However, the predominant tones of rich cream and eggshell are underlaid and overlaid by carefully modulated values of the hues seen more purely in the robes of the worshippers. For example, the same muted reds and tans repeat in the roof ornamentation, the reflective surface of the tank, the standing figures, the tiles and the plinth surrounding the tank. In the dead center of the painting, one turban, a cardinal red counterpoint to the striking blue sky, draws the focus.

Textural variations further interrupt the planar expanse of white. Short, often smudged brushstrokes break up visual continuity. The artist laid on paint roughly in some areas so that selected elements—the scalloped edges of the arches, certain garments, the pigeons' feathers—protrude from the canvas and catch the light differently, breaking the gaze. In other areas, the canvas is almost bare.

Weeks' self-definition as a "colorist" becomes apparent when comparing the tempered,

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70. Goupil et Cie, *L'Exposition des Beaux-Arts (Salon de 1880)* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1880), [n.p.].

soft-focus monochromaticism of *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque, Agra* with Vasili Vereshchagin's more severe *Pearl Mosque at Delhi (The Private Mosque of the Great Moguls in the Palace of Delhi, 1876–79; Figure 7-18)*. The war artist and pacifist Vereshchagin, a former student of Jean-Léon Gérôme, was the most famous Russian painter of the era and one of the few major Western artists to paint scenes of India and Central Asia. His highly controversial brand of photographic realism that depicted the horrors of war (the "slaughtered, shot, beheaded, hanged")<sup>71</sup> drew huge crowds and considerable critical acclaim in London, Paris, New York and Chicago. Though Vereshchagin painted a number of views of the Pearl Mosque at Agra (dating to about 1874), it is his colossal *Pearl Mosque at Delhi* that is conceptually closest to Weeks' *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque, Agra*.

This outsized painting, some thirteen by sixteen feet, is a virtuosic turn in perspectival drawing. The cropped corner view, the glimpse of clear blue sky, the bisected tank, the attitudes of the worshippers and other readily apparent compositional similarities suggest that it may have inspired Weeks, perhaps when it was on exhibit in the autumn of 1887 at the Grovesnor Gallery in London. But the similarities stop there. Weeks' looser handling of paint, his generous application of color and the relaxed, varying postures and interactions of the worshippers atop the tank differ markedly from Vereshchagin's more clinical depiction of the massive marble edifice and solemn, seemingly unconnected figures. Both artists used shadow to distinguish planes and create depth, but Weeks created a luminous quality by emphasizing the glare of the

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71. Quoting Vereshchagin, "Notes on Current Events," *British Architect* 28 (July–Dec. 1887): 425–26.

sun off of the flat surfaces of the huge columns and connecting eaves.<sup>72</sup>

As a result, the moods of the paintings differ dramatically. Vereshchagin's work is distant, reserved, an historical record in tribute to the majesty of Mughal architecture. Weeks' *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque, Agra* is more personal, approachable, and experiential; it is an invitation to immerse oneself in the atmosphere of the courtyard and common religious practice. Enhanced by its original Lockwood deForest frame, it is certainly among Weeks' most accomplished paintings.<sup>73</sup>

The Salon of 1890: *Le Temple d'Or d'Amritsar* (79.5 x 117 in.)

Thematically and, to some extent, compositionally related to *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque, Agra* is Weeks' 1890 Salon submission, *The Golden Temple of Amritsar* (Figure 7-19). The Golden Temple (more formally, the Harmandir Sahib) is the most famous Sikh Gurdwara, built by the fifth Sikh guru, Guru Arjan, in the late sixteenth-century and rebuilt in the eighteenth century. As referenced, it is located in Amritsar in northernmost India, according to Weeks a short thirty miles east of Lahore.

Weeks' description of the Golden Temple for his *Harper's Magazine* article "Lahore and the Punjab" closely corresponds to the elements depicted in the painting. Accompanied by a

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72. Writing of J.M.W. Turner's successes as the greatest "interpreter of nature" of any time or country: ". . . at last he attained to the zenith of a landscape painter's ambition—the power of rendering sunlight in something of its truth and fulness, a task which had baffled all his predecessors and still baffles his followers and imitators," N. D'Anvers, *Elementary History of Art* (New York: Scribner, Welford and Armstrong, 1875), 487.

73. Weeks wrote admiringly of deForest's efforts to popularize Indian art in "Notes on Indian Art," although he does not mention actually meeting him.

warning to readers "biased and hampered by preconceived notions of what is correct according to the canons of conventional good taste"—perhaps aimed at critic Léonce Benedite, who noted "des pagodes aux monstrueuses orfèvreries"—Weeks' lavish prose conveys the scene:

From the border of the tank, which lies in the afternoon shadow, the Golden Temple gives one the impression of a glittering jewel, or of some rare old Byzantine casket wrought in enamel and studded with gems. Small and compact, glowing with color and scintillating with light, its mirrored image reaching far down into the purple depth of reflected sky, it has at first sight a glamour of unreality, like an opium vision of De Quincey, or the "pleasure dome of Kubla Khan." Two colors predominate, the gold of the upper part and the clustered domes, and the white marble of its base, toned and softened by the faint color of its inlaid flowers; the curtained doors and windows add flashes of scarlet. In its environment of deep-toned dusky purple sky and water it has the intensity of a luminous point or focus of light, and the dark masses of foliage behind are of great value in the landscape.<sup>74</sup>

Again Weeks emphasized the striking effects of light: "The impression which one receives at first, and which remains in one's mind as a lasting souvenir, is that of a blaze of color and light . . ."<sup>75</sup> Even in this study of late afternoon the "glare effect" is a principal concern, here commanding a broad horizontal white stripe in mid-canvas, a more pronounced version of the similar effect realized in *The Hour of Prayer at the Pearl Mosque, Agra*. The most intense representation of light hovers at the center of the canvas, accented by the dark silhouette of the angular, bare-chested figure just below. Thicker applications of paint to the trees, contrasted with rather thin covering of paint elsewhere, further alters the viewer's perception of light and proximity.

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74. Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), referenced by Weeks in "Lahore and the Punjaub," 669.

75. Weeks, "Lahore and the Punjaub," 672.

Likewise the paintings share sharply receding right-to-left diagonals that slash deeply into the background at virtually identical angles. In *The Golden Temple* the principal diagonal is offset by opposing lines formed by the tiles, a pattern that Weeks manipulated to lead the eye directly to the central figure and the temple. The diagonals are countered by the verticality of the temple architecture lengthened by its reflection, and by the bright horizontal center line (less discernible but still present in *The Hour of Prayer*). The acute angles and strong linearity combine to break the picture into a set of intersecting wedges and planes, not unlike the framework animating some of the cityscapes of Weeks' close contemporary, Gustave Caillebotte.

Detail softens and complicates the geometric structure. The irregular shapes of the thickly painted foliage, the circular baskets repeated in the domes, the mound of orange-hued flowers, the reflected rhythms of the scarlet window coverings, the stems and petals scattered on the tessellated pavement and the variously posed figures interrupt the gaze. To the left a flower seller trades in sacred offerings. An older man, "priest or pundit," sits deeply absorbed in "a ponderous book" as his companions listen intently. The man seated to the right, his arm an awkward mirror of the tree trunk, contemplates the gilded temple and its reflections in the sacred lake before him. For some critics, like Léonce Benedite, it was too much of a glorious thing: "Il y a peut-être un excès de détails dans les orfèvreries du temple, qui atténue un peu l'effet . . ." <sup>76</sup> For Weeks, however, the competing and colliding visuals failed to disturb the affecting serenity of the view:

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76. Weeks, "Lahore and the Punjaub," 669; Léonce Benedite, "La peinture Orientaliste aux Salons de 1890," in *L'artiste*, vol. 2 (Paris: 1890), 89–90.

All these personages, pacing slowly and noiselessly along the tank, with always the same background of illuminated water, are like the figures in a decorative frieze, and one cannot but question whether another shrine exists so happily surrounded, and where all discordant elements are more completely shut out.<sup>77</sup>

Ultimately, if Benedite was not in complete accord with Weeks, he nonetheless admired the work as grounded in a genuine sense of place; the shaded figures, the bustling promenade, the flights of pigeons, the intense blue of the sky "ont un accent local, un goût de terroir avec le caractère pittoresque qui convient à une vraie oeuvre d'art."<sup>78</sup> The novel sense of place that Weeks conveyed in *The Golden Temple* is heightened when the painting is compared to another nearly contemporary work of the same subject, *The Golden Temple of Amritsar* (c. 1886; Figure 7-20) by Kapur Singh of Amritsar, one of the most famous Sikh artists of the nineteenth century. Kapur Singh had long trained in the Mughal tradition but also was greatly accomplished in Western style oil painting. Singh's canvas, revealing his mastery of eighteenth-century European styles, echoes the palette and formality of Canaletto. The comparison confounds the expected relationships among artistic training, cultural affinity, patrons' expectations and visual expression.

India at the Salon: The Later Contributions: *Les obsèques d'un fakir à Benarés* (Salon, 1892)  
*Les barbiers de Saharanpore* (Salon, 1895)  
*Une bayadère indienne* (Salon, 1900)

Perhaps not wanting to be too predictable, after seven years of exhibiting Indian subjects Edwin Lord Weeks veered in a more westerly direction. To the Salon of 1891 he contributed a

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77. Weeks, "Lahore and the Punjaub," 671.

78. Benedite, 89–90.



work set in southern Spain, *Trois mendiants de Cordoue* (66 x 98.5 inches; Figure 7-21), a study of three men in various attitudes of listlessness sitting in the full sun along an embankment. Though this painting was a particular favorite of the artist and "was considered his best work by the Spanish painters Bonnat, Madrazo, Melida, and others,"<sup>79</sup> the *New York Times* wondered "why Edwin Lord Weeks sends anything but his own, his very own Eastern scenes, where he need recognize no master . . ." The review aligned with those of French critics to declare the picture a success, but it also made clear that by the early nineties Weeks had become indelibly associated with the grand scenes of Indian life.<sup>80</sup>

*Les obsèques d'un fakir à Benarés* (Figure 7-22), submitted to the Salon of 1892, marked Weeks' return to Indian subject matter, but with a focus on urban ritual rather than the architectural and historical references of some of his earlier works. Thematically, *The Funeral of a Fakir in Benares* recalls Weeks' 1885 Salon success, *The Last Voyage*, also set on the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi. However, *Funeral of a Fakir* exaggerates what by 1892 had become Weeks' signature structure: sharply receding diagonals, cropped framing and integration into the viewer's space. With the painting hung a feet few from the floor the viewer is positioned right in the path of the procession, not set off comfortably to one side. As the viewer studies the painting, the lead figure seemingly breaks the picture plane to march down the steps of the quay,

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79. Weeks to Ed. S. Coates [President, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts], 13 July 1892, Steamer *Cambodge*, copy of letter in Box 7, File 2, Edwin Lord Weeks Exhibition, Jan.–Feb. 1976, Art Gallery Exhibition Files, 1941-2004, UA 9/3/1, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, New Hampshire, USA.

80. L. K., "Art at the Salon's Show," *New York Times*, 26 May 1891. The work was also exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and at the Philadelphia Art Club Exhibition, where it was awarded a gold medal.

the small, unwieldy cortege set to brush by on its way past.

This kind of participatory spatial illusion is akin to that sought by Weeks' close contemporary, fellow expatriate Julius L. Stewart (1855–1919), in *On the Yacht "Namouna", Venice* (1890; Figure 7-23). Both *On the Yacht "Namouna"* and *The Funeral of a Fakir* elicit the viewer's physical engagement with the painting. The former attempts to distort the viewer's equilibrium and balance, the latter signals to the viewer to step quickly aside. For the European gallery attendee Stewart's painting was likely the less alarming imaginary circumstance, for Weeks' *Funeral* placed the viewer uncomfortably proximate to a decidedly suspect and alien class.

Though it was widely reproduced in the popular press, with full pages in *Le Monde Illustré* and the *Illustrated London News*, *Funeral of a Fakir* generated little critical attention.<sup>81</sup> The *New York Times* found it among the "noteworthy." In a three-column report on the Salon, M. G. Van Rensselaer of the *Boston Transcript*, the newspaper that championed Edwin Weeks in his early days, gave it nothing more than a passing mention.<sup>82</sup> Agnes Farley Millar, correspondent

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81. "Beaux-arts," *Le Monde Illustré* no. 1856 (22 Oct. 1892): np; "A Fakir's Funeral, India' after E. L. Weeks, in the Salon des Champ Elysées, 1892," *Illustrated London News*, 22 Oct. 1892, 525. Other notices include: ". . . enfin l'Américain lord Weeks, pour clore ici notre énumération, continue à se montrer, dans les Obsèques d'un fakir à Bénarès, le peintre sincère et très heureusement coloriste du pays prestigieux que fécondent les flots sacrés du Gange," "La peinture au salon des Champs-Elysées," *L'artiste*, n.s. 3, no. 22 (1892): 338–39; ". . . the 'old Salon' offers nothing out of the ordinary . . . . Of Americans Charles Sprague Pearce's 'Annunciation' and Edwin Lord Weeks's 'Burial of a Fakir at Benares' are perhaps the most noteworthy," H. F., "A Return to Barbarism," *New York Times*, 1 May 1882, np; "and Mr. Weeks, also an American, whose pictures of Indian bazaar life are so cleverly rendered, contributes 'A Fakir's Funeral at Benares,'" "The Salons," *Academy* 1049 (11 June 1892): 573. The painting was also reproduced in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of 24 April 1892, 12.

82. "The Week in Art. Pictures of the Paris Salon," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 28 May 1892, 18.

for the *Independent*, was bored and unimpressed:

Edwin Lord Weeks can paint Oriental scenes; that we all know and have known for years; his "Burial of a Fakir at Benares" is as fine as anything he has ever shown us. A procession of natives are trooping along a quay; the dead body in the midst of them is borne on a red bier; a figure precedes the body with a pan of burning coals; this figure is perhaps the most defective in the picture. The drawing is not as good as usual in Mr. Weeks's figures; but what a fine scheme of color! And how cleverly the figures preserve each one their personality, in spite of the confused massing of the groups!<sup>83</sup>

With the closing of the 1892 Salon Weeks began to prepare for his upcoming journey over the ancient caravan routes through Central Asia with Theodore Child, English art critic, travel writer and Paris agent for *Harper's*. Child, who had instigated the trip, was in search of material to substantiate his theories of the influence of Egyptian art on that of India and China as well as to generate material for future magazine articles on "Living India." Weeks was to illustrate the planned series. As the departure neared, on account of "the political situation and the civil war in Afghanistan" they were forced to reroute the trip through Persia.<sup>84</sup> Two months into the arduous overland journey Child died of typhoid. Weeks carried on alone and fulfilled the agreement with *Harper's* by agreeing to write and illustrate two essays, the first of which appeared in October 1893.<sup>85</sup> The articles were so well received that *Harper's* engaged Weeks for another seven; the collected series was published as *From the Black Sea Through Persia and*

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83. Agnes Farley Millar, "Fine Arts.: Salon des Champs Elyzers [sic]. American Exhibitors," *Independent* 44 (16 June 1892): 7.

84. Weeks, *From the Black Sea through Persia and India*, vii.

85. Harper, 592; Henry Mills Alden to Weeks, 3 February 1893, quoted in Harper, 595. The first article in the series was "From the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf by Caravan. I. From Trebizond to Tabreez," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 87, 521 (Oct. 1893): 651-70. Previously Weeks had published "Street Life in India" for the August 1890 issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*.

*India* (1895).

Returning to Paris too late and too distracted to submit anything to the 1893 Salon, Weeks mined his Persian experiences for the following year's entry, *Le chargement de la caravane;—matin en Perse*. With a couple of exceptions, from that year forward Persian themes dominated nearly all of Edwin Weeks' contributions to the annual Paris Salon exhibitions. This shift in geographic focus is telling; judging from the reviews of the 1895 Salon, Weeks' preoccupation with India, and perhaps his inspiration, was wavering.

*Les Barbiers de Saharanpore* (Figure 7-24), accepted for the Salon of 1895, departs from Weeks' usual formula grounded in strong architectural components, although it retains the underlying structure of diagonals receding from lower right to upper left. Its interwoven rhythms of color and pattern, the intensity of full sunlight, the undifferentiated values that tilt the ground plane upward and the scumbled brushwork are technical and compositional approaches that complicate the more obvious subject. The viewer is once again positioned as if accidentally stumbling into a lively square; in this case it is the youth in white, clasping a small hand mirror, whose wincing glance invites the onlooker's participation and amused sympathy.<sup>86</sup>

Weeks would certainly have protested any association of this work with academic styles emanating from a strictly French perspective. But a few years later that is precisely the designation that Royal Cortissoz, art critic for the *New York Tribune*, slapped on it in his review

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86. "The village barber and his wife have a position above that of many other castes, owing to the variety and importance of their social functions. Hindoos alone have many different ways of wearing the hair, and we found amusement and edification at Saharunpoor in watching a row of these barbers seated on the ground, with their cases of tools beside them, as they operated on the heads of their constantly changing clientèle," Weeks, *From the Black Sea through Persia and India*, 354.

of the American fine arts section of the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900. Cortissoz deemed Weeks' paintings "un-American," along with those of Walter Gay, Gari Melchers, Julian Story, Walter MacEwen, F. A. Bridgman, and William Dannat. For Cortissoz, these artists belonged to France, having "exchanged their birthright for a mess of pottage." They did not take part in what the critic seemed to propose as the great collective duty of American artists, to "tell the foreigner what America is doing in her studios at home to lay the foundations of an art which that foreigner will some day come to America to see." Cortissoz had particularly cutting remarks for *Les Barbiers de Saharanpore*:

Mr. E. L. Weeks, in his Eastern subjects, especially the large picture of some barbers of India at work in the street, handles his brushes with flexibility and precision, gains a little breadth, a little luminosity—and leaves us absolutely cold. The scene is picturesque; the picture is commonplace, the sort of thing which one glances at in the pages of a magazine and then eternally forgets.<sup>87</sup>

Just three months earlier, in a review of the Paris Salon of 1900, a different critic from the *New York Tribune* applauded the advances of several of the same American artists that Cortissoz so thoroughly disparaged in July. Noting the "very strong work among the American canvases," that critic found nothing wanting in Weeks' Salon contribution *Une bayadère Indienne*. Rather, the earlier reviewer singled out the "exquisite bit of coloring," the "rich red and blue tones of the bayadère making one of his most effective compositions."<sup>88</sup> In a rather noncommittal paragraph

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87. R[oyal] C[ortissoz], "American Art in Paris," *New York Tribune*, 22 July 1900, II, 1 col. 1. To this exhibition Weeks also submitted *The Awakening of Nourredin* (c. 1899) and *On the Road to Ispahan* (c. 1896).

88. C.I.B., "Paris. Opening of the Champs Elysees Salon," *New York Tribune*, 8 April 1900, 2.

from another Salon review, the *Boston Evening Transcript* called it "notable."<sup>89</sup>

The sharp differences among reviewers of Edwin Lord Weeks' later work reflected the shifting aesthetic grounds occupied by artists and art critics at the turn of the century. In the salons of European capitals and particularly in the grand halls of the international exhibitions, as the century drew to a close more was at stake than expressive innovation, critical opinion and artistic reputation. In this era of American cultural insecurity and expanding global ambitions, art was an international power play, another way to sling America to the forefront of the world stage. Countless American newspaper articles dissected the successes or failures of American artists relative to their European rivals. American critics and patrons demanded work that was identifiably "American," produced by Americans who had retained strong native ties despite training abroad. As Royal Cortissoz observed when writing about the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900:

This exhibition revives, and then shelves forever, the old question of whether it is good for an American painter to come here and train himself irrevocably in French methods, or, having learned in Paris some needed lessons, to return to his native land and there develop along his own lines.

This last requirement, prompted by an increasingly clamorous nationalism, was a critical hurdle that Weeks, long a resident of Paris, could not surmount. Though in letters and articles he more than once emphasized, even insisted, on his American citizenship, Edwin Weeks demonstrated no interest in taking up America as a subject nor in living there for extended periods. For most artists of his generation, success in the ateliers, galleries and salons of Paris

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89. "The Fine Arts," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 1 May 1895, 6.

was a prerequisite to success in America. As with his near contemporary Henry James, Europe provided intellectual independence, critical insight and transnational perspective that Weeks could not have achieved had he remained in Boston.

More importantly, throughout his career Weeks was most inspired by the light, color and everyday life of the East; his life's work focused on recording and imagining scenes of North African and Indian life and history, and conveying the richness of those cultures to Europe and America. For the greater part of his career these mingled geographic and cultural allegiances had signified a remarkable breadth of interest and experience that defined a rare level of professional accomplishment. But in the closing years of the century perceptions changed. Cosmopolitan and transnational, Weeks simply did not fit the latest definition of the American artist.

## Conclusion

"I have had everything; I knew it all."

After departing Bombay for Paris in March of 1893, Edwin Lord Weeks never returned to India. He left no indication why. Perhaps his vision of India was too compromised by the endless miles of strung telegraph wire, the sprawling railroad network and the burgeoning architectural monuments to British rule. Or maybe he was simply looking for another personal and professional frontier. In the Paris Salons of the later 1890s Weeks' scenes of India gave way to those of Persia, which he first came to know when traveling there with Theodore Child for a few months in 1892. In the mid-nineties Weeks wrote about the clatter and bustle of modernizing India versus "the silence of unprogressive Persia" where "the splendid monuments of its former glory" stand "abandoned to picturesque but lamentable decay."<sup>1</sup> But shifting his subject focus to Persia did little to rekindle critical attentions. His last major paintings, inspired by *The Thousand and One Nights*, suggest an artist who is reaching backward rather than forward.

Overtaken by new aesthetic theories and experimental styles, the urgent preoccupations of modern life, advances in color photography and the shifting social role of the professional artist, by the end of the nineteenth century Edwin Weeks' images of "the East" were decidedly passé. This was especially true in America, where a rising generation of critics and patrons was eager to establish a strong national style untainted by European influence. Weeks' paintings,

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1. Weeks, *From the Black Sea Through Persia to India*, 161, 308.



once considered remarkable for their boldness, individualism and American point of view, fell sharply out of favor in his home country. The artist was keenly aware of his declining reputation. In 1897 Weeks wrote to John Beatty, organizer of the Pittsburgh International Exhibition, that "from a commercial point of view I have the honor of being perhaps the most unpopular of American painters—in America."<sup>2</sup> Within a few years after the turn of the century the critical enthusiasms that had once bracketed Weeks with expatriates John Singer Sargent and James McNeill Whistler had all but evaporated.

Weeks did not live long enough to witness the near total eclipse of his career. The "celebrated genre painter, explorer and author"<sup>3</sup> died at his home in Paris on November 16, 1903, after an illness of several months.<sup>4</sup> In "Death of Great American Painter," the *New York Herald* commented:

Mr. Weeks had been unwell for some time, being confined to the house the greater part of two months, but his condition was not considered serious, so that his death was a painful surprise to his many friends in Paris.

His health had been precarious for a year or two; but he would hardly admit the fact, and it may be said that his wonderful will-power long supported him against the encroachment of disease. It is thought that fevers contracted in India were responsible for the complications that finally resulted fatally.<sup>5</sup>

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2. Weeks to John W. Beatty, dated "Monday" 7 [1897], New York [Century Association letterhead], Edwin Lord Weeks Papers, [ca. 1885-1976], Box 1, Folder 1, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

3. "Edwin Lord Weeks Passes Away in Paris," *Washington Times*, 18 November 1903, 9.

4. U.S. Department of State records indicate a date of death of November 16, 1903. Other sources report that the date of Weeks' death was November 17th. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC, *General Records of the Department of State*, Record Group RG59-Entry 849, Box Number 26, Box Description *Aug. 8, 1903–Mar. 25, 1904 A–Z*.

5. "Death of Great American Painter," *New York Herald* (Paris), 18 November 1903, 1. Much the same story was repeated in various newspapers, including "Noted Painter Dies Suddenly," *San Francisco Call*,

It was also reported through the years that Weeks died of "Bright's disease" (after Dr. Richard Bright), an historical classification that refers to inflammation of the kidney. Weeks did not die from Bright's disease nor from a mysterious Indian fever. The cause is clarified in a poignant letter from Fannie Weeks to family friend Alexander Twombly, penned a month after her husband's death:

When I tell you that he seemed to go like a flash—slip away from me, only staid in bed 48 hours by the Doctors express orders—It was acute Diabetes that killed him, & now, too late I can look back & see it began as long ago as last March, for all the Spring he was consumed with an unquenchable thirst, & had a big appetite but what he ate did him no good, he only got thinner & thinner. The Doctors did not find it out until Sept & were treating him all spring & summer for a variety of ailments none of which was the right one—and [several?] themselves too astonished for speech when they realized what they had been doing. —Put not your faith in Doctors! —However he did not suffer much had no aches or pains, only grew gradually weaker & seemed at the last just to slip away from me—not expecting to die at all always “going to get better” & telling me “not to worry” I cannot yet realize that he has gone away from me forever, & I shall never have him any more to lean on & to direct my life. —& without him everything seems a blank.<sup>6</sup>

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18 November 1903, 9 col. 5.

6. Fannie H. Weeks to Alexander Twombly, 23 December 1903, Paris, Box 2, Folder 002 0031, Alexander Twombly Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. Fannie traveled to the United States not long after, remaining for about a year and a half. She then returned to Paris, where she was living at the outbreak of World War I. In poor health, her brother, Dr. William Hale, came to Paris to treat her. A passport application records that she intended to return to the United States "within two years or sooner if the war is over." American expatriate artist Elizabeth Nourse accompanied Fannie to the passport office. To date I have not found any indication of Fannie's return to the U.S., or indeed anything of her subsequent whereabouts. Mrs. Fannie Hale Weeks, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC, *Passport Applications, January 2, 1906–March 31, 1925*, Collection Number: ARC Identifier 583830 / MLR Number A1 534, NARA Series M1490, Roll # 341.

A letter from Weeks' cousin, Annie Lord, confirms the misdiagnosis. Lord had dined nightly with Weeks and his wife during her three-week stay in Paris that ended a little over a month before the artist died. She wrote of Weeks striking out in "a new departure" centered on portraiture, of his "stunning" latest work entitled *The Vase d'Or* [?], and his backlog of orders for paintings. She was impressed by his stoicism and selflessness:

not wanting one minute to dwell in his illness—a hero after doctors verdict of diabetes [sic]—& only two days before he died I had a letter from him full of good spirits, saying the doctors found all the engines working well, and if he could eat enough "grease" [?] he might pull through.

Whatever Weeks believed about his illness, he put on brave front for his family:

Neither he or his wife seemed to take in his serious condition. I think if his doctor, who treated him for malaria, had been a little more careful at first the disease would not have made such headway. He told me he didn't mind dying but he wanted while he lived to be a man and not a useless thing—adding "I have had everything. I knew it all—" <sup>7</sup>

Weeks' funeral was held at the American Church in Paris. Honorary pallbearers included author C. Inman Barnard and expatriate American artists Henry Bisbing, Walter McEwen, Gari Melchers, Julius Stewart, Harry Van Der Weyden, and Weeks' tennis partner and rival for the title of greatest American Orientalist painter, Frederick Bridgman. Paying their respects were marine painter Alexander Harrison, secretary of the American Art Association H. W. Faulkner, artist Lionel Walden, Mrs. Charles Sprague Pearce, and art curator Sara Hallowell. Weeks was buried in Billancourt cemetery.<sup>8</sup> A few months later the Society of French Artists paid tribute to Weeks

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7. Annie L. Lord to Alexander Twombly, 22 November [1903], South Berwick, Maine, Box 2, Folder 002002 21, Alexander Twombly Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

8. "Funeral of Mr. Weeks," *New York Herald* (Paris), 18 November 1903, 1.

at the 1904 Paris Salon by exhibiting "in a place of honor, appropriately decked with crêpe" Weeks' unfinished *A Game of Chess*, a scene from *The Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>9</sup>

### Edwin Lord Weeks: The Artist as Globalist

Over the course of his career the subjects of Weeks' paintings and writings, from Morocco to India to Armenia, engaged international political as well as aesthetic concerns. This was evident early on, when in 1881 *Le Gaulois* and *La Vie Moderne* cast Weeks as the fearless artist-adventurer who braved the perilous Moroccan interior to bring forth authentic views of a "country at war." *Harper's Magazine* heightened the artist-explorer associations by naming Weeks' trans-Persian/Indian expedition among the magazine's most vital foreign assignments. In this 1892 notice touting Weeks' and Theodore Child's planned journey, even Henry Stanley got second billing:

The arrangements made by the publishers of Harper's Magazine for the ensuing year include important enterprises in America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, engaging the work of popular writers and artists upon subjects of vital moment and interest to all readers . . . Henry M. Stanley, the distinguished African explorer, will tell the story of the African Slave-trade, bringing it down to its present interesting status, with graphic illustrations.

The enterprise of the greatest moment and magnitude is that undertaken in the interest of the Magazine by Theodore Child, so well known to our readers in connection with his timely and comprehensive articles on the Spanish Republics of South America. Mr. Child will contribute during the coming year several articles, the result of a special trip to India. These articles will, on the one hand, show England in the face of her great rival, Russia, and on the other, will show

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9. "The work, in soft, luminous tones, is greatly admired. It represents two figures, a man and a woman, seated on a terrace, playing chess." "Topics in Paris," *New York Daily Tribune*, 1 May 1904, 4 col. 4.

the English social contacts with native India. They will be illustrated by Edwin Lord Weeks, who accompanies Mr. Child.<sup>10</sup>

Over time, Weeks' paintings' marketability eroded, but not his personal authority on Asian and North African matters. Weeks' carefully crafted public image provided him with the cultural traction to engage issues beyond the brief of the typical artist. This is evident in an 1895 review in *The Watchman* that opened with:

It is high praise to say of Mr. Weeks's "From the Black Sea through Persia and India" that we have already given it a place on our shelves beside Henry Norman's and George Curzon's works on the Far East . . . it contains the material for large and just deductions upon the social and political conditions and relations of that extensive region between Asia Minor and Northern India which the movement of events is rapidly bringing within the European system.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, in 1900 the *New York Times* noted of Weeks' forthcoming *Scribner's Magazine* article:

In the same number, Edwin Lord Weeks, the painter and writer, will present an illustrated article entitled "Two Centres of Moorish Art." His visits to the little-known cities of Morocco will be particularly interesting at this time, when that North African state is in imminent danger of being invaded by the French from Algeria.<sup>12</sup>

As the century closed, Edwin Weeks' insights into the cultures of Asia and Africa were still valued even as his paintings of those regions were increasingly marginalized.<sup>13</sup> In a short

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10. "Harper's Magazine for 1893," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 85 (Nov. 1892): 1–3 at 3.

11. "Among the Books. Edwin Lord Weeks, The Oriental Painter as Writer," *Watchman* 85, no. 52 (24 Dec. 1903): 15.

12. "Notes and News. Items of the Day," *New York Times*, 2 June 1900, n.p. col. 3.

13. Weeks was admired by contemporary literary critics for his perceptive cultural insights and engaging tone. In a review of *From the Black Sea Through Persia and India*, the *Literary World* cited the author's "highly intellectual qualities," adding "It is difficult to say which leaves the most marked impression, the grace and vividness and picturesqueness of Mr. Weeks' literary style, or the number, brilliancy, and beauty" of the illustrations. Moreover, the reviewer felt that Weeks was fully up to the complex demands of the subject: ". . . he leaves his readers face to face with the momentous civic and social and economic questions which now confront India with the feeling that they have seen much and seen it under rare

chapter devoted to Weeks in *Aims and Ideals of Representative American Painters* (1901), John Rummel pondered critics' contentious demands that American artists paint American subjects. He argued that an artist must paint "what attracts him most;" that if he is "to express the best that is in him, he must be allowed to follow the bent of his own genius." Concerning Weeks, Rummel posed two important questions that remain relevant over a hundred years later: "But are not the intellectual and the spiritual life of a nation to be interpreted, too? And does not an American artist's impression of a foreign scene or a foreign incident reveal something of the mental life of the nation of which he is a part?"<sup>14</sup> Put differently, should not a nation with global ambitions foster in its artists and writers a curiosity that transcends its borders?

These questions strike at fundamental issues that have complicated evaluations of Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings in his lifetime and now. As an American artist professionally trained in Paris, who resided abroad and specialized in scenes of the "East" (particularly British India), Weeks eluded ready nationalist classification. The British called out his independent American point of view; the French referred to him as Lord Weeks; the Americans found him too French. Reproached by some contemporary critics for an insufficient allegiance to American subjects, and later by art historians for academic ties and ideological transgressions, since his death it has

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conditions of advantage." "Holiday Publications. The Black Sea, Persia and India," *Literary World* 26, no. 24 (Nov. 1895): 421.

14. John Rummel, E. M. Berlin, *Aims and Ideals of Representative American Painters* (Buffalo, NY: np, 1901), 73–74. Some of Weeks' projects with international political overtones remain to be thoroughly investigated, including his paintings of Persia, his drawings for Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, (serialized by *McClure's Magazine* beginning in December 1900), and Weeks' many illustrations for the *Harper's Weekly* series, "The Troubles in Armenia," that brought extensive coverage to the Ottoman Empire's massacre of the indigenous population in the mid-1890s.

been simplest either to ignore Weeks or dismiss him as a half-strength version of Jean-Léon Gérôme.

This serves neither Weeks nor Gérôme nor the broader understanding of nineteenth-century American art. Recent scholarship attempts to disentangle Weeks from the French Orientalists and to reposition his aesthetic concerns as consistent with those of the foremost American artists of his time (an effort initiated by critics R.A.M. Stevenson and Robert Sherard in the mid-1880s and 1890s). Admittedly this reassessment implies disruptive questions about the practice and value of academic art, and the idea of variant branches of modernism. Equally problematic are Weeks' subjects, that insistently raise the issue of whether his paintings must be read as expressions of the discourse of possession and control and the dangers of "otherness."<sup>15</sup>

There is no one-size-fits-all answer. In his brief discussion of *The Arab Gunsmith* (c. 1880; Figure C-1), Brian Allen argued strongly that Weeks brought a vital sense of agency to his depictions of local scenes and figures:

Rather than depict figures that are deprived, fallen, feminine, or lazy, Weeks gives us a collection of men, all of whom are black, virile, dynamic, armed and, because of their "otherness" (both racially as well as culturally), potentially dangerous. . . . a close look at the painting hardly shows a denigrating archaicism. The method of production is slow but nonetheless efficient. The painting in fact depicts something akin to an assembly line, with one gun fashioned at the forge, another inspected by the entry to the forge, possibly by another craftsman, a third

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15. The presentation of Weeks' subjects and figures were in marked contrast to works with more pointedly ethnographic concerns (such as John Forbes Watson's and John William Kaye's *The People of India*, 1868–75; Rudolph Swoboda's mid-1880s portraits of Indians for Osborne House; Herbert Risley's *The People of India*, 1908; and James D. Anderson's *Peoples of India*, 1913), as well as to widely-held opinion ("For the British after 1857, the Indian Muslim became an almost subhuman creature, to be classified in unembarrassedly racist imperial literature alongside such other despised and subject specimens, such as Irish Catholics or 'the Wandering Jew,' " Dalrymple, 440).

demonstrated to an attentive onlooker, and the fourth held by a man on horseback who seems ready to go shooting. It is not about weakness and depravity but strength, productivity, and purpose.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, one could argue that this village forge is a far cry from nineteenth century European arms and munitions factories, that the rifles depicted are antiquated and inferior, and that by extension the whole region is ripe for European incursions. Both of these interpretations are potent and plausible. It is the very strength of each of these conflicting positions, anchored in different ideologies, that argues for Edwin Lord Weeks' independent expression as an artist, as a keenly observant American abroad in a world that was "sprawling, tangled, contradictory, elaborate."<sup>17</sup>

This "simultaneity of multiple meanings" complicates and enriches Edwin Lord Weeks' paintings. They are amalgamations of personal experience, study, imagination and socio-political commentary, inspired not only by "on the spot" experiences in North Africa, India and Persia, but also drawing widely from French and British literary and visual sources. In this sense, they are triangulations of the colonial imagination, made bolder and more relevant through the artist's reputation for daring excursions in search of the authentic.

Granted, that authenticity was manipulated in service to the artist's individual sensibilities as well as to prevailing *fin de siècle* standards. But what captivated audiences is that they believed that the manipulations never undermined the fundamental truth of the scene. The subjects were not sensational; the conditions were not exaggerated; the figures were not

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16. Allen, 68.

17. Jan Morris, *Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire* (San Diego, New York: Harcourt, 1968), 9.



caricatured. Among Weeks' paintings there are no slave markets or executioners. There are decaying buildings, but the decay never detracts from their architectural grandeur. There are soldiers, shopkeepers, camel drivers and half-nude women, but they share a rarely conveyed dignity and agency. Works from every stage of Weeks' career suggest that the artist's sympathies aligned with his subjects rather than against them.

However, the goal of this study of Edwin Lord Weeks has not been to hold up a single artist as a counter-narrative to a widely-held art historical point of view. Rather, the task has been to pry apart the monolithic approach to European Orientalist painters with a more nuanced and discerning examination of one American artist who spent a lifetime traveling in and painting scenes of regions that were little known in the West. In lockstep neither with the more advanced nor the more conservative of his colleagues, politically detached from Anglo-French imperialist motives, Weeks carved out his own brand of American Orientalist painting. At its height, it reformulated the Western vision of India on canvases alive with the steady glare of the Indian sun, the color, pageantry and splendor of Mughal courts and Indian princes, the magnificence of monumental architecture, the solemnity of common ritual, and the vitality of everyday life.

As a body of work these paintings did more than bring fresh glimpses of distant, exotic lands to late nineteenth-century American and European audiences. Together with Edwin Lord Weeks' writings, they helped to expand and redefine the role of the American artist during a period of rapid, intensifying social change. More importantly, they prompted Gilded Age Americans to think more critically and deeply about the larger world and their place in it. For a young nation on a trajectory to global power, and for an older nation at the far side of it, they were and are paintings worth contemplating.

## Appendix 1

Rossiter Johnson, John Howard Brown, ed., *The Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 10 (Boston: American Biographical Society, 1906).

**WEEKS, Edwin Lord**, artist, was born in Boston, Mass.; son of Stephen and Mary (Lord) Weeks, and a descendant of Leonard Weeks, one of a Royalist colony which left England under the direction of Capt. John Smith for Jamestown, Va. Weeks and others landed at Greenland, N.H., in 1639, where he built the brick garrison house still standing in 1903. Edwin L. Weeks studied art under Gerome and Bonnat in Paris, where he opened a studio, exhibiting at many of the Paris salons and receiving honorable mention, 1885, and a medal in 1889. He was also awarded first-class medals at the Universal exposition in Paris, 1889, and at Munich and Dresden, 1897; the grand diploma of honor from Berlin and a gold medal from the Philadelphia Art club, 1891, and a special medal and prize at the Empire of India exhibition, London, 1896. He was a member of the Paris advisory committee for the World's Columbian exposition, 1893, and of the permanent committee of direction for the Exposition of H.S.H., the Princess of Monaco; was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France, 1896; an Officer of the order of St. Michael of Bavaria, 1898; a member of the Paris Society of American Painters, and corresponding member of the Secession of Munich. His canvases, many of them depicting scenes in the Orient, where he traveled extensively, include: *The Last Voyage*, a souvenir of the Ganges (1885); *Departure for the Hunt, India* (1888), now in the Corcoran gallery, Washington, D.C. ; *An Open Air Restaurant at Lahore* (1889); *The Pearl Mosque At Agra*, and *A Rajah of Jodhpur* (1891). the last- named picture purchased by the Emperor of Germany; *The Three Beggars of Cordova*, in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; *Packing the Caravan*; *Early Morning in Persia* (1897); *Indian Barbers at Saharanpur* (1897); *Ispahan* (1901), solicited for the Museum of the Luxembourg; *The Porter of Bagdad*, purchased by the Cercle Volney of Paris; larger motive of same (1908), and *The Princess of Bengal* (1903). He is also the author of: *From the Black Sea Through Persia and India* (1895), and of contributions to magazines.

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### Publications

“Evolution of a Victorian Critic,” in *Writing about Art in Britain Before and After 1900*, ed. Peter Trippi and Martina Droth (forthcoming, Ashgate Publishing, 2014).

"William Newman: A Victorian Cartoonist in London and New York," review, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 42, 4 (2009).

“Grand Designs: Labor, Empire and the Museum in Victorian Culture,” review, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 42, 2 (2009).

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### Conference Presentations

“The American Artist as Globalist: Edwin Lord Weeks in India,” Nineteenth Century Studies Association Annual Conference, “Money/Myths,” 2009.

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