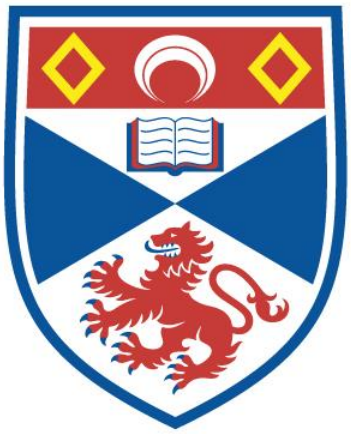
ARTHUR MELVILLE AND PRESBYTERIAN REALISM

CHRISTOPHER M. BRICKLEY

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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"Arthur Melville and Presbyterian Realism."

(PhD Thesis 1996.)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the significance of 'Presbyterian Realism' in the context of Scottish painting in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with particular reference to the early development of Arthur Melville.

Melville travelled in Egypt and Persia in 1881-'82, reflecting the contemporary taste for Eastern subjects at the Salon and Royal Academy exhibitions. However Melville's reactions to Islam contrasted directly with his peers, whose choice and treatment of contentious themes reveal the mentality of the imperialist male *bourgeoisie*. Melville's redefinition of Orientalism can be attributed to the particular social, religious, moral and ethical codes he had absorbed during his formative years, a conditioning which ensured that his patrons and the governing élite in Scotland were in sympathy with his approach. The unity of discourse between these indigenous codes and the aesthetic of Melville's proto-modernism' is also examined.

Melville emerged from the Scottish landscape and genre school towards 'proto-modernism', where his more radical stylistic and optical advances were reconciled against traditional themes. He was one of the first modern Scottish artists to live and work in Paris, and the reasons for the reluctant assimilation of the industrialised urban environment into his art are discussed in the context of his Scottish peers and contemporary French movements.

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To my parents who have never failed to give me their encouragement and support, especially during the leaner periods.
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University of St.Andrews Library, Courtauld Institute (Witt Library), National Library of Scotland, Galashiels Library, Borders Library (Selkirk), Kyle and Carrick District Library, Victoria and Albert Museum and British Art Library, Royal Academy Library,
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INTRODUCTION

Arthur Melville was, arguably, the most significant Scottish painter working in the latter half of the 19th century. His painting style evolved swiftly from genre and rustic naturalism in the mid-1870's to a more modern sensibility bordering on abstraction by 1882, a development which reflected the contemporary achievements of the European vanguard. The influence of Melville's technical transition was far-reaching in Scotland through his critical success and relations with the Glasgow Boys in the early and mid-1880's.

These facts make Melville an obvious subject for a Scottish art historical thesis. The major problem, however, has been the dearth of quality published material on the subject and this may explain why a similar project has not been realised before. The principal sources for this thesis were empirical and critical and the first step was to compile a fairly extensive pictorial overview of Melville's *oeuvre* from auction house sale catalogues, augmenting these with contemporary critical notes from Royal Scottish Academy and Glasgow Institute reviews in the Edinburgh press.[1] Current dealers and private collectors have granted access to pictures and recounted anecdotes, and it is fortunate that major caches of pictures have been passed down through generations making them relatively simple to trace.[2]

I will begin by exploring the methodology I employed while researching and planning this thesis. After cataloguing Melville's work between 1877 and 1883 and gaining an overview of his stylistic development, I examined the themes he had chosen. It became clear very early in my research that I would have to rely primarily on my own interpretative strategies and secondary sources, as there was so little primary material available. Aside from the works themselves, on which I relied heavily, there was the transcription of the Eastern journal which helped me to trace most of his journey from Cairo to Baghdad and back to London. Thus I had to utilise

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[1]Principally the Scotsman and Courant.

[2]The collection of John Tullis, the Glasgow industrialist, is the only major private collection which has failed to resurface in numbers.

secondary material as discussed below to contextualise the themes he selected and the situations in which they were realised.

These themes made it clear that he favoured rural or, to be more precise, non-industrialised contexts and this was what had led him to Grez and ultimately Egypt and Persia. I have accounted for this motivation by examining his artistic training in Edinburgh and, more importantly, his social background in East Lothian.

I have compared his work with other exhibits he would have seen at contemporary shows at the Royal Scottish Academy or Glasgow Institute, and then extended my sphere of interest to encompass the trends in Continental painting. The social status and requirements of Melville's patrons were also relevant, and I traced much of this information through biographical dictionaries and directories in local libraries. The requirements of these patrons were crucial as their support funded Melville's travels in Europe and beyond. They also dictated the themes he chose during his swift stylistic development, as he had to weigh technical unorthodoxy against suitable subject matter for the New Town houses which they were intended to decorate.

It was crucial that I gain an insight into the social climate which produced these works. For example, I studied Scottish historical material on the nature of East Lothian farming and employment systems to contextualise important Scottish pictures like Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter. It was also necessary to examine the contemporary state of Haussmann's Paris to situate many of Melville's works such as images of the suburbs at Bercy and Charenton, the *grands boulevards* or particular establishments like the turkish bath or Moulin Rouge. Equally, Cairo was a city which had undergone considerable redevelopment as a tourist centre since the construction of the Suez Canal, and I had to predict how this would have affected Melville's depictions or choice of subject.

By the same logic, I had to examine contemporary accounts to gain an impression of English imperialist attitudes towards the East, as Melville enjoyed expatriate hospitality throughout his stay in the Orient. In arguing that Melville's work contradicted authoritative notions of Orientalism, I had to be sure that he remained uninfluenced by the ethnocentric bearing of his hosts and fellow travellers.

This thesis is an empirical study of Melville's role in both a Scottish and European context between 1875 and 1885. However, I am not concerned with overwhelming biographical detail or in providing a chronological monograph or catalogue, as this has been achieved more or less adequately in earlier sources. I do however attempt to account for Melville's stylistic development in this period, and to contextualise it within a wider Continental framework.

I wish now to explain the purpose of the thesis and the conceptual strategies contained within the argument. My intention in writing this thesis was to attempt a serious examination of Arthur Melville's role in Scottish, and European, art history in the last quarter of the 19th century. To date, the artist has elicited only cursory critical appraisals and he remains a peripheral figure. I aim to redress the balance and argue that Melville is of greater significance than an exotic watercolourist or peripheral Glasgow Boy, as he is represented in the literature.

This thesis will cover new ground, exploring for example the difficulties faced by Scottish painters from rural backgrounds[3] in adjusting to and representing urban contexts. It was not until his final months in Paris, for example, that Melville broached the city in subjects such as Evening Charenton or Dancers, Moulin Rouge which reflected contemporary Impressionist themes of the suburbs or leisure. I suggest that the quest for the 'rural' took Melville to France and, ultimately, the East. Popular literature of the period described Oriental society as pre-industrial and 'undeveloped', where local people worked the land using methods which had not changed over the preceding centuries. Melville travelled there to seek new subjects and his work realised a new humanism in such as Pilgrim's Prayer and Arab Interior which successfully explored the indigenous harmony of the spiritual and secular.

I introduce and define the concept 'Presbyterian Realism' to represent a peculiarly Scottish approach to rural figurative themes in the late 1870's. Melville and John Robertson Reid, for example, displayed a much less

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[3]Obviously taking Melville as the focus, although it does encompass J.R. Reid and R. MacGregor.

polemical view of life on the land than French peers such as Millet who were keen to stress the physical discomfort and social injustice witnessed in the provinces. I argue that Melville's particular social and religious background led him to represent field workers in moments of repose or reflection, features averted to retain an impersonal bearing and to avoid commuting suffering, exertion or pain. Presbyterianism espoused content with ones lot, tolerance, restraint and dignity in the face of physical hardship and these values are evident in the treatment of themes. Equally, its austerity and constraints enabled Melville to fully appreciate the positive aspects of Arabic life such as meditation, and the mosque as place of refuge.

Furthermore I suggest that this same background allowed Melville to empathise closely with the Arabic peoples, representing their spiritual and secular lifestyle with a measured and objective sincerity. Thus, I am confident that Melville's choice and representation of themes in the East challenge the authoritative notion of Orientalism. Melville's work was not overtly ethnocentric as he eschewed the typically exploitative slave market, snake charmer and *harem* scenes favoured by the academic Orientalists such as Jean-Léon Gérôme. These themes were tailored for expressing imperialist notions of racial superiority and sexual prejudice, and Melville avoided them in favour of more restrained and humanistic interior views and street markets. Although his selection of subjects was dictated in part by the demands of his Edinburgh patrons, these were in sympathy with his own.

Melville executed a number of compostions of street types in Baghdad, figures from all levels of the caste system. Melville's depictions of snake charmers are typically restrained, the serpents small and innocuous in the street setting. However Edward Lane's description of snake charmers in his seminal 'Modern Egyptians' emphasised the vulgar suggestiveness of the act, incorporated to drum up business in the streets. Therefore it appears that Melville went so far as to sanitise aspects of the East for his Edinburgh patrons' consumption, a remarkable contrast to the hyperbolic and contentious approach commonly employed by the Orientalists.

I will now offer an exegesis of the available literature relating to the artist. Melville's early death and penchant for travel outside Britain have

conspired to deny him wide public acclaim. However, critical success was forthcoming virtually from the outset of his career and Sir James Caw championed Melville in 1908[4]. Contained within an exhaustive survey of Scottish painting, Caw's brief examination of Melville's style was perceptive. He also identified the *plein air* 'school' of rural naturalists revolving around Melville, John Robertson Reid, Robert MacGregor and James Campbell Noble and their interest in the effects of bright direct sunlight.

An article by Romilly Fedden appeared in 1923[5], the first major account of Melville's artistic development. Although the text was overtly biographical, it featured Basil Long's comprehensive catalogue which Mackay would utilise in her monograph. Information from this early article has reappeared in most subsequent literature pertaining to the artist. W. Graham Robertson reminisced fondly in Time Was[6] of their friendship in 1931 and although his account of Melville's later working methods is fascinating, the author's anecdotal style renders his contribution essentially peripheral.

The limited-edition monograph by the artist's niece Agnes Mackay was published in 1951 and is notable principally for the full transcription of his Eastern journal. However the text remained ostensibly biographical in approach, offering scant empirical detail beyond the catalogue and primary sources to which she gained access through her family connections. She too featured a strong anecdotal component, ensuring that her book was suitably entertaining with its narrative style and lavish plates. Mackay's principal purpose seems to have been a celebration of her uncle's short career, and she advanced little critical insight. In essence, this was an exhibition catalogue notable primarily as the first 'modern'[7] monograph to take a Glasgow Boy as the subject.

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[4]Caw. J. Scottish Painters Past and Present.

[5]Fedden, R. Old Watercolour Society's Club, Vol 1. Featured Basil Long's catalogue, the principal source for Mackay.

[6]London 1931.

[7]By this I mean post-1950. Figures such as James Guthrie and John Lavery had been the subject of biographies in the first half of the century, but Mackay's work anticipates the rediscovery of the Glasgow Boys in the late 1960's.

William Buchanan's exhibition renewed interest in the Glasgow Boys in 1968, complemented by the Fine Art Society[8] where Andrew MacIntosh Patrick's enthusiasm for Melville has been unstinting. The only major exhibition since his retrospectives[9] some seventy years before was organised by Dundee Museums in 1977, but the brief catalogue revealed no new insights or interpretations.

More recent surveys of Scottish painting by William Hardie, Duncan Macmillan and Roger Billcliffe have celebrated Melville's role in bridging the gap between Scottish naturalism and Continental modernism. These contemporary studies take a more thematic line than earlier material and I will attempt to expand on these concerns. I intend to forward new and original theories which differ from the published material available, establishing the social context in which Melville's subjects were selected and realised.

To contextualise important pictures such as Melville's Cabbage Garden as a social document, I have referred to studies by T.M. Devine[10]. Publications on Scottish social history are extremely useful in examining pictures such as this and Gardener's Daughter, which can be located specifically to Melville's home county of East Lothian and reveal aspects of the artist's background. This of course is central in formulating the concept of 'Presbyterian Realism', a device which is significant not only in Melville's Scottish work but also in France and the East as it dictated both his choice and treatment of figurative subject matter.

Contemporary source material on 19th century Western attitudes towards the Orient is plentiful, generally taking the form of travelogues or archaeological studies. I have selected Wallis Budge and Amelia Edwards[11] to extol the imperialist attitudes and prejudices of the day, but these are typical of many other authors who could have been employed to

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[8]'The Glasgow School of Painting' exhibition. Fine Art Society, London, 1970. Foreword by William Hardie.

[9]At the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle in 1906 and the Glasgow Institute and Nottingham Art Gallery in 1907.

[10]Transformation of Rural Scotland, Edinburgh 1994; and ed. Farm Servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland 1770-1914, Edinburgh 1984. I have also referred to Whittington, G.W. and White, I.D., ed, An Historical Geography of Scotland, London 1983.

[11]By Nile and Tigris, London, 1920; and A Thousand Miles Up the Nile, 1877, London respectively.

similar ends. I felt that such erudite members of the English establishment would exemplify the typical contemporary mindset, and that presenting the thoughts of both male and female travellers would give a more rounded impression.

'Orientalism' in the widest sense has become a significant component in Western scholarship over the last two decades. Edward Said's Orientalism[12] is the original study of Occidental ethnocentricity complemented in more recent work by Linda Nochlin[13] and Thierry Hentsch[14]. However, I have also utilised authors such as Sarah Searight[15] whose empirical approach was useful in contextualising Cairo, Baghdad and the colonial outposts which Melville visited in the Gulf. Catalogues of recent exhibitions such as J. Thompson's The East Imagined, Experienced and Remembered[16] successfully relate social insights to particular works of art.

Melville emerged in the late 19th Century Scottish tradition of rural naturalists such as John Robertson Reid, James Campbell Noble and Robert MacGregor. These Edinburgh-based painters also explored genre and pure landscape subjects, but sketching in the south of England and Northern Europe had served to lighten their palettes considerably. I would argue that Melville's encounters with William MacTaggart at the Royal Scottish Academy life class around 1877 may also have precipitated his discovery of a free, expressive style.

By the early 1880's, Melville had become a major influence on the Glasgow Boys. Several had followed his example and gone to France to study at Julian's *atelier* and work at Grez, and later Melville sketched with them at Cockburnspath and Brig 'O' Turk and visited them in Glasgow. Melville's Cabbage Garden was shown at the Royal Academy early in 1878, and proved to be the first 'Kailyard'[17] painting of any note. This theme was

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[12]New York, 1979.

[13]Her essay 'The Imaginary Orient', from Politics of Vision, London 1991.

[14]Imagining the Middle East, Montréal, 1992.

[15]The British in the Middle East, London 1969.

[16]Dublin, 1988.

[17]The Kailyard School of literature described Scottish rural life in a nostalgic manner, popular towards the end of the 19th century. It included writers such as J.M. Barrie and

later explored by the Glasgow Boys, and there were also significant subjects by James Guthrie, with whom he visited Orkney and Paris, John Lavery and George Henry which were anticipated by Melville. In a more general vein his expressive style was influential on Edward Walton and Joseph Crawhall and later the work of Scottish Colourists such as his godson Francis Cadell, and John Duncan Fergusson.

Melville may have been the first major Scottish painter to reflect the contemporary advances of Impressionism in his work. He had first hand experience of these artists in Paris and his work revealed certain leisure and urban themes which may have been derived from Impressionist sources. Melville was also the first Scot to produce a significant body of Oriental subjects for sale at home and artists such as Lavery, Fergusson and Crawhall travelled to North Africa in search of comparable exotic themes. As such, he was one of the most original and influential Scottish artists of the latter half of the 19th Century.

Melville's stylistic development runs parallel to the major artistic movements. He emerged in a realist vein although his subjects were less strenuously polemical than his French peers, while his Parisian works occasionally revealed similar concerns to the Impressionists. In France, he discovered academic Orientalism which spurred him to visit the East and it is clear that Melville's development had points of reference with contemporary Continental styles.

It would be wrong to cite Melville as a major painter in a European context, however he seems to have formulated certain stylistic traits which anticipated or reflected major Continental advances. In France, Normandy Shepherd and La Vieille Maraîchère of 1880 display a thematic proximity to Bastien-Lepage's oils of the early 1880's. Melville placed these single figures in the foreground and employed square brushstrokes in a similar way to the French artist, whose subsequent influence on the Glasgow Boys is well documented.

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utilised vernacular language. It was seen to complement a characteristic theme in rustic landscape and figurative painting explored by Melville in 1877, and subsequently explored by James Guthrie (eg Hind's Daughter, Cottar's Garden), George Henry, Harry Spence, Robert MacGregor, JR Reid and many other Scottish painters.

As early as 1880, Melville was producing works of near abstraction. The four Dancers at the Moulin Rouge are only small-scale sketches done *in situ*, but their expressive pure colours applied wet and merging together traverse the boundaries of mere representation and look towards Kandinsky. They also reveal Melville's exploration of contemporary urban and leisure subjects, some years before Toulouse-Lautrec depicted the same dancehall. Equally, the minimalist blots and dots of unmixed colour in Gateway of the Kirkuk, Kurdistan made no attempt to model form, but simply to suggest a *plein air* scene under the effects of harsh light. This tendency towards abstraction revealed a desire to jettison the formal constrictions of naturalism for a more personal expressionism.

In terms of structure, the first three chapters of the thesis relate directly to Melville's Eastern experience between the period 1881-1883. In the fourth chapter I return to Scotland and his early career in the mid-late 1870's, examining his major work of the period, while the final chapter deals with his residence in France 1878-80. I shall explain the reason why I have chosen not to approach my topic chronologically.

Although he was there less than eighteen months, the Oriental period represented his most rapid development as he attained artistic maturity. As such the Eastern output encapsulated the realisation of ambitions articulated in his early career, and featured his most significant work. I argue that Melville arrived in Egypt as a logical extension of his quest for non-urban subjects. This aversion to the industrialised city which he had displayed in Scotland had largely been confirmed in France, as he spent a year in rural Grez among the provincial population. His themes had been landscape and peasant life, and although he broached some contemporary themes in Paris early in 1880 these were rather the exception than the rule.

Cairo was different to Haussmann's Paris. Although Westernised to accommodate tourism and expatriates after the building of the Suez Canal, the country remained ostensibly unaltered and most of the population lived a pastoral existence. They tilled the fields using ancient methods, a fact which attracted Western artists and writers pursuing the contemporary rural fixation. Initially Melville was no different as Egyptian Sower revealed, working in a naturalistic vein much as he had in Scotland and France. He represented bazaars, mosques and domestic

interiors as they were not modern urban situations, using an objective style appropriate for an itinerant artist.

Gradually, however, works such as Pilgrim's Prayer and Arab Interior came to represent something more than the dispassionate and technically breathtaking watercolours of frenetic Eastern life. I detect a remarkable empathy with the Arabic peoples, a humanistic quality hitherto absent from his sensory and responsive painting and argue that this was consistent with 'Presbyterian Realism'. By this, I am referring to the restraint exemplified in Melville's Scottish and French figurative work which shunned polemical overtones.

Thus, Melville's Presbyterian upbringing in rural East Lothian predicated his treatment of other cultures and in particular Islam. The harsh austerity of the Kirk and its dogmatic constraints contrasted overwhelmingly with his Eastern experience. These two works, considered in tandem, exemplified the harmony of religious and secular life in the East with the mosque as refuge and the power of meditation in the home. These principles could be applied in the West to counteract the erosion of 'rural' values by industrialisation and urbanisation, and Melville's images celebrated this.

Although these works are not exactly typical, they seemed to pave the way for an increased humanism conspicuous in his work in Baghdad, where Melville executed a series of street 'types' of all castes. Incorporating an ethnographical component, these are restrained and objective studies which again contrasted vehemently with the contentious and exploitative subjects of the academic Orientalists in France and England. As I have suggested, Melville even appears to reverse the Orientalist trend by understating or sanitising certain subjects[18], motivated again by the constraints of 'Presbyterian Realism' as imposed by himself and his Edinburgh patrons.

Thus the first three chapters examine the resonance of 'Presbyterian Realism' in the East. Opposing the ethnocentricity which blighted contemporary painting, these were generally restrained and accurate images which sought to empathise with the indigenous population. I

[18]Assuring that they did not imply sexual or racial prejudices, or imperialist allusions.

would argue that this is where Melville challenged the authoritative notion of Orientalism, and the final two chapters seek to trace the roots of this concept and contextualise his achievements.

In a Scottish context 'Presbyterian Realism' espoused modest content with one's lot, humility and the belief that reward would come in the next life. The idea of predestination, central to Presbyterianism, ensured that the 'elect' sought to justify their position by virtue of hard work in a democratic, authoritarian society. It stressed the intellect over the imagination and the simple over the decorative and this, allied to the 'work ethic', reinforces Realism as the most natural and logical painting style for Scottish artists from such a background. These factors were also clearly responsible for the tension I will identify in Melville's art, as he struggled to reconcile his technical 'proto-Modernism' with more traditional themes and attitudes.

Melville's mother had burned his juvenile drawings as graven images which were frowned upon by the Kirk, and this may have contributed to the fact that the artist eschewed controversy. It will be argued that Presbyterian Realism was not simply a style, nor a particular set of themes, nor even a phase through which certain Scottish artists passed in the latter part of the 19th Century. It was an overreaching value system evolving from the 'Scottish Tradition' in its widest sense, dictated by particular social, religious and geographical determinants absorbed since birth. Their chosen themes were closely allied to a bourgeois nostalgia for rural values which were seen to have been eroded by industrialisation and urbanisation. Melville's Gardener's Daughter or the old women clearing the field in Robert MacGregor's Gathering Stones represented the virtue of the family effort and the strength of the village community. This of course extended to incorporate the timeless values of diligence, piety, thrift and honesty which were required by Presbyterianism.

Moving from this essentially rural context to the final chapter, France signified a more overt tension between the rural and the urban. The *Exposition Universelle* of 1878 in Paris and the city itself as the cultural capital of Europe would have attracted the artist, but his natural instincts led him to Brittany and a year in rural Grez-sur-Loing. Here, I argue that he pursued an original expressionism featuring a strong decorative quality exemplified by the French Peasant, Grez with its high colour and flat

simplified forms. However he retained the traditional vehicle of expression in the form of rural landscape and figurative subjects.

This would explain why he concentrated on the working life of the Seine, rationalising the modern city into a more timeless *tranche* of rural toil. It was only in the latter stages that he assimilated contemporary Impressionist subject matter, acknowledging Haussmann's Paris. Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris bridged the gap between the modern leisure theme and a superficial exoticism redolent of academic Orientalists such as Pasini, whose work he saw in Paris. This work could be seen as a convenient indication of his imminent odyssey to the East, or indeed as another attempt to obfuscate the indigenous city by selecting a particularly unrepresentative localised view. Either way, the modern urban context still intimidated Melville and the Oriental journey was the next logical step.

MELVILLE IN EGYPT

Melville arrived in Egypt, at the port of Alexandria, in February 1881.[1] Since his return to Edinburgh from France in the summer of 1880, he had been working on a variety of themes with considerable significance to his *oeuvre*[2] but the Eastern journey represented a radical new departure. Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris had demonstrated a technical maturity and interest in superficial exoticism, but the decision to actually travel to Egypt to live and work was ambitious.

There are several plausible reasons for Melville's Eastern odyssey. The financial and artistic success of his eighteen months' residence in France had imbued the necessary confidence to undertake the venture. It promised a rich vein of subject matter to complement technical and thematic interests pursued in France, where he had responded most favourably to rural life and figure scenes. Of peasant stock, Melville's early Scottish and French work demonstrates his suspicion and unease with contemporary urban societies and such images are conspicuous by their absence in his *oeuvre*. The ancient, intransigent Eastern cultures would clearly have appealed to an artist who spent the majority of his French sabbatical in the peasant community of Grez-sur-Loing rather than cosmopolitan Paris.[3]

A trip to the East often denotes some kind of pilgrimage and in Melville's case this may have been appropriate, as he had been raised in a

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[1]It is possible to date his itinerary precisely through the ship's log of the screw brig 'Magdala' (See Plate 26), the vessel which took him from Liverpool to Alexandria. Melville's journal does not commence until August 1881 but a watercolour On Board the Magdala, (14.5x20.5"), Berwick Museum, is inscribed with the above title and the date 'April 1881'. This would be the date of completion of the naturalistic depiction of the ship's deck with passengers reclining to read below an awning. The vessel left Liverpool on January 19 1881 with four passengers and docked at Gibraltar, Syracuse and Constantinople en route for Alexandria where it terminated on the 24 Feb. Interestingly, Melville's image features only four men and their warm apparel suggests that the picture may have been sketched in the early stages of the journey. Thanks to Chris Green at the Berwick Museum for the above information.
Amelia B.Edwards in One Thousand Miles Up the Nile, 1877, described how simple such a journey proved to undertake. She had been sketching in France, found the weather inclement, and virtually journeyed to Egypt 'on a whim'.

[2]Such as Tennis Championship, Corstorphine , Skating, Duddingston Loch and The Philosopher. These encompassed portraiture and contemporary society themes.

[3]The Orient had long been represented in Western art and the popular press as a timeless rural Utopia. This image proved an incentive for many disillusioned artists and travellers (many of urban stock) throughout the nineteenth century.

Presbyterian family in a small East Lothian village community. Principally though secular factors would have held precedence, and Melville's journey acknowledged a Scottish history of pioneering adventure through figures such as Mungo Park, Alexander Selkirk and David Livingstone. Eminent Scots such as James 'The Abyssinian' Bruce had travelled in Egypt seeking the source of the Nile, while Robert Hay had excavated in Thebes in the 1820's and '30's, employing figures like Edward Lane for cataloguing and recording artefacts. In reality, though, these have little relevance to Melville and artistic influences remain the principal motivation.

Scotland's international reputation in the field of photography is of more direct significance. Images brought back from all corners of the globe in the 1850's and '60's by Scottish travellers like John Thomson and James Robertson had a profound effect in Europe, helping to create a kind of mania for exotic geographical and cultural paraphernalia.[4]

France had propagated an Orientalist cultural obsession which reached its artistic zenith in the 1860's. Scotland had a comparable artistic heritage which also stretched back to the time of the Napoleonic campaigns in the East. Given the discrepancy in magnitude of these traditions, Scotland produced several key figures whose artistic travels were of significance. Sir William Allan had visited Russia and the East around 1810, and David Roberts illustrated and published his journeys in the Holy Land to great effect. Of more 'local' interest, John Faed had sketched in the Near East in the 1850's, carrying this Scottish 'tradition' to within a generation of Melville.[5]

There is little doubt that Melville knew of the major Orientalist painters by 1878, the year of his arrival in France. I would suggest that the

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[4]This is comparable to 1860's France, where shops such as 'Porte Chinoise' appeared after the opening of the trade routes to indulge the tastes of Whistler, Monet and other bourgeois collectors. Conversely, Cook's Tours to the East were established in the latter half of the century. These made the Orient eminently more accessible to the itinerant artist, writer and tourist

[5]Melville would also have been influenced by artists such as Robert Gavin and William Ewart Lockhart. Gavin returned from residence in Tangiers shortly before his death in 1883, but had sent many Moorish subjects in rich, harmonious colour and broad brushwork to Scottish exhibitions. Lockhart had been influenced by John Phillip's late work, and his Orange Harvest, Majorca was a major exhibit at the RGI 1877 where Melville would have seen it.

Exposition Universelle [6] was a major factor in attracting Melville to France, and the exhibitions therein featured work by Jean-Léon Gérôme, Mariano Fortuny and Alberto Pasini[7] (Plate 29). These artists received favourable contemporary coverage in the press[8] and if Melville had conspired to miss the *Expo* and all the reviews, as is highly unlikely, he could have seen all three at their dealer Goupil's Gallery.[9] Pasini showed prolifically at the Salon[10], and Gérôme's reputation and theories were common knowledge as he ran a major Paris *atelier*. Although Melville would have been aware of certain aspects of his own Scottish cultural heritage, his French experience seems to have provided the initiative for a year in Cairo, the circumnavigation of the Arabic peninsula and the journey across Persia and Turkey to the Black Sea.

Melville's Egyptian Subject Matter

Melville's Egyptian themes can be subdivided into four generic groups. These categories display a consistency redolent of Orientalist painting in a wider European context.[11] I intend to examine each in turn, commencing with the set of themes which cover the widest range of subjects. These are essentially 'tourist' views, completed in the early months of his Eastern residence, exploring indigenous motifs which would have struck an Occidental visitor as unusual or characteristic. The largest category is that of bazaars or street views, while the other two comprise architectural interiors and rural figures in landscape.[12]

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[6]Held in Paris early in 1878.

[7]Melville's works Arab Interior, Paysanne à Grez and Sentinel reveal the influence of Gérôme, Fortuny and Pasini respectively. The last is inscribed 'After...'.

[8]For example 'Gazette des Beaux-Arts', 1879 series, and 'Magazine of Art' 1878, p15.

[9]Arthur Sanderson, one of Melville's Edinburgh patrons, owned works by Fortuny. He loaned three to the London Loan Exhibition1901 eg An Arab.

[10]Over 50 works between 1853 and 1897.

[11]French painters such as Delacroix, Ingres, and Gérôme had defined themes in the mid-century which were subsequently explored by Orientalists across Europe. Principal examples included Turkish Bath or *hammam* scenes, *harem* scenes, slave markets, bazaars, pyramid/desert scenes, mosque interiors, snake charmers. There was also the theme of the Eastern male as noble savage, a handsome warlord whose closest companion is his steed. These themes, whether observed *in situ* or contrived in Western studios, provided an ideal vehicle for precision brushwork, a colourful palette and stunning light effects.

[12]It becomes clear that in the East, and particularly Egypt, Melville's thematic interests are an extension of those which stimulated him in France. Street markets, harbours, rural figure types and landscape all recur in his Egyptian images. Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris is an obvious precursor to Egyptian mosque interiors.

Melville's earliest dated work is entitled Fringe of the Great Desert, Pyramids[13] (Plate 27), and exemplifies the kind of theme which would have attracted a recent arrival. Given Melville's rural bent while in France, it is no surprise that his earliest Egyptian image should feature a timeless landscape expanse rather than a city view.[14] The image displays several symbols which were integral to French Orientalism in the 1860's, including the pyramids themselves, palms, camels and dark-skinned natives resplendent in *burnous* and jewellery. However the medium, modest scale, restrained colour and tonality and sympathetic rendering differentiate Melville's approach from the French masters.

The work is based on a two-colour scheme, grounded in modulated golden-beige and formulated in cobalt blue. This swift, economical technique was conducive to *plein-air* execution[15] and suggests from the outset a desire to avoid the sensationalism of his more prestigious peers. It was all too easy for an artist to make Eastern scenes a gaudy riot of colour and flesh bathed in harsh, probing light.

Markedly different from Melville's own fastidious Scottish landscape oils, this first Eastern picture is an exercise in concise, spontaneous expression. While its formal qualities recall French watercolours such as Winter Fuel (Plate 13), the geometric design evident in this work mark a departure from earlier landscape images. The visual triangles which accentuate the single-point perspective in a vista devoid of natural fixed spatial markers exemplify the maturity of his design. His economy had successfully created a self-contained and bound image through eloquent use of the void and tonal modulation, as well as simple forms. It also displays that he understood the risks of basing pictures on detailed observation alone.

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[13]W/c (14.5x20"). Dated 'May 15, 1881'. Now Dundee Gallery.
Two other works, now lost, were dated to this year. Amber Twilight, inscribed 'July 17', and Exterior of a Mosque, inscribed 'July 18'. Both oils, they would have made interesting comparisons although falling into other thematic categories.

[14]The desert and pyramids were accessible, some fifteen miles from the city itself.

[15]This approach was used consistently throughout the Eastern odyssey. He could block in forms quickly in beige, use blue for definition and add colour highlights at a later date. It meant that he was also working in a small portable scale, c14x20", and only had to carry a couple of blocks of colour. This technique had been formulated on the banks of the Seine, for example in the colour scheme in Fuel of Paris (not ill.)

To an extent Melville's first Eastern image is a remarkably truthful representation of the scene as he perceived it[16]. This, however, can only be true in the context of Fringe of the Desert as a work of art. Melville carried with him a Western sensibility which makes this a subjective reflection of a desert scene. It is unlikely that he was the only tourist present at the site, suggesting the eradication of any Occidental content to convey a suitable impression of the East.[17]

Painted a short distance from Cairo, Melville still manages to inject a romantic element within the scene. The principal figure has all the androgynous grace of a Tuareg nomad woman, stooping to glean yet every inch a wild daughter of the desert. Within such a spartan vista, these types bolster the credibility and majesty of the desert in a fashion which the throngs of tourists and anglified guides would not. Cairo was an extremely popular destination for tourists by the middle of the century[18], and Melville would have had to visit the site at an extremely antisocial hour to avoid the throngs.[19]

A watercolour illustrating (Port of) Boulak[20] (Plate 32) represents a typical sketchbook piece. This picturesque harbour was a popular subject with

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[16]He has staunchly resisted the temptation to exaggerate or sensationalise the scene into a conglomeration of motifs. He could, for example, have made the pyramids more imposing than the two diminutive humps on the horizon, placed exotic paraphernalia in the foreground or made one of the women naked. The result would still have comprised an aesthetically pleasing image denoting the Orient, as can be seen in Thomas Seddon's Pyramids of Giza - Sunset Afterglow. Léon Belly's Pilgrims Going to Mecca, Gérôme's View of the Plain of Thebes or Guillaumet's The Desert. These present several interpretations of the majesty, beauty and danger of the desert but they consistently employ hyperbole and melodrama to create vast exhibition-pieces for Western 'appreciation'.

[17]In this sense, Melville conforms to Orientalist principles. Another keynote of Orientalism was 'pseudo-authenticity'. Artists such as Gérôme disguised brushwork and used incredible detail to create an illusion of reality. Thus they could convey their own Western male perception of the East to a Western, principally male, public by passing the images off as 'reality'. This is where the selective range of themes, and the racial and sexual prejudices which underpin these themes, originated.

[18]Cook's Tours, facilitated by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, had made the East a very popular destination for tourists. The Prince of Wales wintered in Egypt in 1872, establishing a fashion.

[19]In effect this would not have been unusual for him. He regularly sketched *en plein air* at dawn in Duddingston, Grez and Paris. Therefore he may have recorded the scene as he saw it, devoid of Western presence. However as a rule this Orientalist tenet holds throughout his Eastern works.

[20]Harbour in Cairo, w/c, (14.75x21.125"). Inscribed 'Cairo '81'. Sold and ill. Christie's New York 15.02.95.

artists, lying two miles downstream from Cairo[21]. It could have been completed during a day or afternoon trip out of the city, and is executed in a fluid naturalistic style encapsulated in the focal sail in the bay.

Formally, it recalls French harbour and river scenes, with a strong diagonal thrust countered by the characteristic sweep of the ships' masts. The handling in the foreground is wet, with conspicuous brushstrokes, while the town on the horizon is economically rendered. He has simplified the shapes and forms into a decorative arrangement, where the power of the blank paper provides a foil to areas of flat colour.[22]

As a tourist resident in the city, Melville was privileged to witness indigenous seasonal festivals and processions. The Cutting of the Kaligue[23] (Plate 64) was clearly planned as an illustration for a British journal, representing an interest in customs and traditions which he would pursue more fully while in Baghdad and the Persian Gulf. Such subject matter was obviously of interest to the British public, whose awareness of Egypt was heightened around this time by imperialist machinations. Home involvement in Egypt escalated after the quelling of the insurrection in July 1881, and Britain was attempting to 'rebuild' the country using her own resources. Coverage of the Egyptian issue was extensive in the popular press, incorporating detailed articles, commentaries and cartoons.[24]

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[21]Searight employs an illustration of Boulak by the Scottish Egyptologist Robert Hay, (p144). The caption reads :
"...it was from this port on the Nile that travellers made excursions by *dahabiya* to Upper Egypt and where Thomas Cook eventually set up his workshop and dockyard."

[22]This technique would be employed in townscapes throughout the East, notably Suez and Aden.

[23]Original now lost. Commissioned as an illustration by The Graphic, finally published on Sep. 2, 1882, a year after he despatched it to London:
"I have sent off today to the 'Graphic' a large sketch of the 'Cutting of the Kaligue', the grand canal in Cairo. Please look out for it. They may not put it in.' (August 28, 1881).

[24]See footnote 8. Artistic coverage of the East included Land of Egypt, 'Art Journal' Jan. 1879, pp1, 29, etc. These depicted detailed sketches of monuments such as Pompey's pillar, and figure types such as Alexandrian Pilot. Of more relevance are contemporary ethnocentric references in the popular press. For example Scotland's 'Quiz', June 3 1881, showed a cartoon entitled Latest Ethiopian Intelligence. Text beneath the two thick-lipped negro stereotypes reads :
"I say, Bones, what's come ob dat gal o' yourn?"
"O, she's lef' me for annuder, Sambo; she's lef' me!
And after I'd represented her wid o sich a beautiful bottle of puffume."
"Dat 'counts fo' it, Bones"
"De puffume, Sambo?"

Incorporating an element of the anecdotal Melville would have been aware of the numerous series in contemporary journals. The Graphic described the illustration thus;

> "Ceremony each August with the rising of the Nile. Trenches dug to direct the course of the water. Sacrifice of virgin in the legend. A crude wooden figure is still thrown in. The poor believe that the first rush of water brings with it healing qualities, and lie down in rows of trenches hoping the water may charm away their infirmities."[25]

The journalistic illustration is typically detailed and effective, but betrays little of Melville's style. It is, however, a wholly different proposition from the previous work as necessitated by the subject itself. This is a study of a custom and as such required more detail to convey an impression of the actual event narrative than he may have submitted.[26] His notes also allude that the subject was of his choosing rather than as a commission as he was unsure whether it would actually appear.

The image features numerous turbanned figures, of all ages and dispositions, arranged along the riverbed. Several are obviously crippled or malnourished, prostrate or propped on elbows, awaiting the water which is visible in the rearground. To augment the already considerable

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"Yeth. She knew you meant her to lub an-odour! Yah, Yah!"

Even more interesting is a poem in 'Quiz' (June 16, 1882), entitled AllisterMacArabi. It lampoons the situation in Egypt as clearly an English, rather than British, problem. The Scots press is clearly distancing itself from imperialist action, not least through the use of vernacular language. The second stanza read thus :

England cam' alang wi' France,
Their best fit thay did baith advance,
But feth, ye led them sic a dance,
The like they'd never seen.
They thocht they'd gi'en yer head a clour,
An' quite deprived ye o' yer power,
But sune ye rais'd them sic a stour
As blinded a' their een.

The Scottish press was revelling in the Arabic powers calling the tune to the great imperialist powers of England, Germany and France, but threatens 'Arabi' with the gallows if 'ye dinna min' yer way'. Whatever the intentions of these popular press examples, they were read by the public and were by no means isolated examples, thus raising the issue high in the public collective consciousness.

[25]Graphic, Sep.2, 1882. This is an altogether more melodramatic account of the festival than Edward Lane gave in Modern Egyptians, written in 1834. (p 500, 'Everyman'.)

[26]Melville described the work as a "large sketch" (Aug 28), suggesting that the finished illustration may have little relation to what he actually despatched.

dramatic effect, the fireworks described by Lane[27] are seen exploding in front of the city walls, possibly emphasized by bonfires. However Lane records this as a festival much enjoyed by the Egyptians with music, singing and eating on the banks. The only negative factor was the number of people who drowned trying to catch the money thrown into the water by the Cadi.

It is interesting to note that the author of the most celebrated book on modern Egypt does not mention the 'cleansing' aspect of folklore which the illustration seems to depict. It is unlikely that such a popular tradition could have been established in the fifty years between the book and Melville's picture, so we must assume that this is again western subjectivity. If the illustration is true to the original sketch subject, then Melville purposely chose the 'unofficial', more melodramatic interpretation of the festival as prospectively suitable for the Graphic readership. I hesitate to categorise this fact within the parameters of French Orientalist painting, with its exploitative and prejudiced visions of the east. Again, however, there is an indisputable ethnocentricity inherent in the Cutting of the Kaligue. Orientalist painting espoused imperialist impressions of the East by the West, and this picture clearly depicts the Egyptian *fellahin* as superstitious, weak and diseased. This is a blatant depiction of a 'backward and uncivilised' society which would have appeared in stark contrast to industrialised, conquering Britain.

This reading of the subject matter can be realistically extended to incorporate Britain's contemporary interests in Egypt itself. Home involvement had escalated since the purchase of Suez Canal shares in 1875, and a Franco-British condominium had been established three years later. The Eastern country was in disarray, with vast debts to European powers and several mutinies by the Egyptian army. It appears to have been an importune time for Melville to have gone to Cairo as Colonel Arabi Pasha was arousing nationalist fervour.[28] Although Melville's

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[27]"...the government supplies a great number of fireworks, chiefly rockets,to honour the festival, and to amuse the populace during the night preceding the day when the dam is cut, and during the operation itself, which is performed in the early morning." (p501). The boat which Lane describes, 'Akabah', may also be visible in the work, tied to the bank opposite the canal mouth.

[28]By the following May (1882), Britain sent forces to Alexandria to stave the nationalist riots, which duly ensued in June. These were quelled and the British took control the following month.

letters refer only obliquely to the conflicts and British interest therein[29], his works betray no trace of Western presence. While Melville's painting eschewed references to urban industrialisation, he also seemed relatively impervious to the influence of diplomats and English statesmen whose hospitality he enjoyed throughout his Eastern travels. It appears, then, that the subject matter of Cutting of the Kaligue was determined principally by its potential as a journalistic illustration. This, then, is a subtly sensationalist subjectivity which does not recur in Melville's Eastern work. It may be more than coincidence that this appears to have been his only published work of this type.

Whatever level of ethnocentricity one cares to measure within the picture, it is indisputably a powerful image. His first narrative picture since Old Enemies, it was intended to indulge the taste of the British public for an exotic Other. The nature of Egypt as an essentially barren country elevated its bodies of water beyond the functional to an almost spiritual significance. Religious parallels of course exist with the Hindu faithful bathing in the Ganges[30], but it is this mystical reverence for natural forces which proved irresistable to the Western public. I would suggest that another source for this subject was Melville's French works which featured the Seine, Loing or Loing Canal. These clearly connote a more secular vision of the river as lifesource of the Western rural community, while in Egypt Melville found a less adulterated and more 'primitively inspirational' cult attached to the properties of running water. There is, however, in Melville's figures an empathetic dignity and restraint which dismisses any hint of mockery or sarcasm. The nature of this spectacle would have facilitated sketching from life and we may assume that this scene is a relatively honest account of the festival atmosphere.

The City of Cairo in the 1880's

It is appropriate to give an impression of Melville's city of residence in the Orient. British presence had been escalating in Cairo throughout the

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[29]"Sir E. Malet, Sir W. Gregory, Sir H. Colin and Sir F. Guldsland (?) have all sent me invitations to dinner. If you read the newspapers during the last crisis you may remember their names." Letter of Dec.15, 1881.

[30]And, later, with Catholicism and bathing at Lourdes. The vision was recorded in 1858, and the canonisation of Bernadette in 1933. The influx of Catholics to Scotland introduced a mystical element to a Presbyterian country.

nineteenth century[31], but not only in a tourist capacity. Robert Stephenson, for example, had constructed the railway from the port of Alexandria to Cairo in 1855.

During the 1860's, anticipating the completion of the Suez Canal, Khedive Ismael ordered the beautification of the city to welcome Western visitors. By the following decade, European influence in the city was becoming more conspicuous over its mediaeval identity. The city began to offer the range of facilities and diversions which a European visitor would expect of a resort, with sumptious hotels being constructed around the square.

The Shepheard's Hotel, where Melville stayed on arrival in Cairo, was the most celebrated of these hotels although it had been built earlier in the century.[32] Amelia Edwards recalls in the first chapter of A Thousand Miles up the Nile that the two or three hundred guests who filled the dining room were an incongruous group of Cook's and independent travellers. They included sportsmen, artists, writers, invalids, scientists and collectors of artefacts of all backgrounds and means.[33] One could be assured of a good English breakfast at the hotel, and the staff could arrange donkeys or guided tours of the city or pyramids for guests.

The Westernisation of the city ensured the construction of beautiful gardens on the site of Ezbakiyah swamp and the Sporting Club for military types on Gezirah island, gifted by Khedive Tewfiq. There was also a fencing club, and an opera house for which Verdi's new work 'Aida' was commissioned. On a more prosaic level, there were many shops crowding the square to provide Western provisions for travellers and expatriates.[34]

After 1881, Cromer drafted numerous advisers into the country to assist with the reorganization of the Egyptian economy. These officials complemented British technical experts in land settlement and irrigation, railways, customs and engineering engaged to modernise the country.

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[31]Facilitated in 1869 by the opening of the Suez Canal and the initiation of Cook's Tours.

[32]See the contemporary photograph of the splendid hotel terrace by Pascal Sébah in Caroline Bugler's essay 'Innocents Abroad' ; Nineteenth-Century Artists and Travellers in the Near East and North Africa. From Orientalists : Delacroix to Matisse, ed Maryanne Stevens, RA London 1984.

[33]pp 1-2.

[34]Information from Searight op cit, pp100-101.

Most took accommodation in the Frankish quarter of the city. It is clear that despite the unstable situation in Egypt on Melville's arrival, there was a considerable European community and many more tourists to ensure an accessible and accommodating base for the artist.

Rural Figure Subjects

Having introduced Melville's residence in Egypt with his 'tourist themes', it may be logical to look next at the most marginal category. The rural figure subjects comprise only three extant pictures, the first of which has strong similarities with Fringe of the Desert. It has a similar title[35] (Plate 28) and viewpoint, but instead of a diminutive group of gleaners, Melville has focussed more emphatically on a goatherd and his flock. A third watercolour, Laban and his Flocks[36], is loosely based on a Biblical subject and again features a goatherd with his charges.

In formal terms a pyramidal structure is employed within Pyramids, utilising the diagonal axis of the well beam against the lines of the flock and light foreground to great effect. The pyramids themselves are as formally insignificant as in Fringe of the Desert, representing little more than a twin modulation on the dark horizon. The silhouetted background is a dark series of washes with little definition, where Melville uses the diagonal sweep of the masts or well-arms to provide a geometrical tension, linking the grounds. The handling in both of these images is again fluid and bold, balancing areas of light and dark washes against naturalistic treatment of organic matter such as the little mottled goats.

Melville reworked many pictures from Eastern sketches back in Edinburgh between 1882 and 1885, and Laban and his Flocks may have been completed in the Shandwick Place studio. Its later dating in combination with the Western appearance of the huge trees make it unconvincing as an Eastern subject, in that it does not conform to the Eastern stereotype of vast barren vistas and pyramids. The foliage canopy, prophet-like herd

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[35]Fringe of the Desert, The Pyramids w/c.(14.25x20.5") sold and ill Christie's London 3.3.78.

[36]W/c, (14x20"). S&D 'Egypt 1883'. Known only from a b/w photograph. Described thus at the RSA ('Scotsman', Feb.13, 1885) :
"...rich and powerful in colour and tone, but, as usual, taking little account of form."

and flock make a rather contrived pseudo-Biblical image, notable principally for the variety of the artist's handling.

With these bucolic themes Melville was reconciling his French rural experience with the dramatic developments signified by the Orient. These works were generally completed in the early stages of his Eastern residence, when he may have been seeking the timeless rural Utopia which the Orient represented in the West. It was a land where the *fellahin* toiled in the fields in much the same manner as they had centuries before. Having undergone minimal industrialisation, artists and writers visiting Egypt could be assured of an insight into a 'mediaeval' lifestyle, natural and 'undeveloped'. The country offered opportunities denied them in the West, and as long as the vogue for rural subjects endured[37] then an Oriental odyssey was the logical conclusion.

Melville's French themes had incorporated a strong figurative element, studying rural types such as shepherds and village innkeepers *en plein air* and portraying them within congruous settings or landscape vistas. These themes had been instilled from his Scottish training in the mid-1870's, and in Cairo he took this subject matter to its logical conclusion by depicting an iconic labourer working a field. This image represented the pinnacle of Melville's rural figure studies, although the feet of his Egyptian Sower[38] (Plate 33) are planted as firmly in East Lothian and French soil and betray all of the artist's naturalistic influences to date. It also seemed to confirm the above hypothesis, that Melville sought to encapsulate the timeless Egyptian rural type and present it in a monumental exhibition scale for Western consumption.

Measuring over six square feet, Sower was intended for the Royal Academy in 1882[39] and executed in oils to enhance the impression of

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[37]Bastien-Lepage's popularity in the early 1880's assured this.

[38]Oil. (36x25.5"). Now lost. Signed and inscribed 'Cairo '81'. First exhib. RA 1882. "...and, in a manner smacking of French influence, Arthur Melville's Egyptian Sower." Scotsman, Feb.5, 1883. RGI Opening criticism.

[39]Also shown were Old Enemies, Sinbad the Sailor, Pilgrim's Prayer. Unfortunately only the last-named is extant from his first major RA exhibits. Melville recorded : "Sent off pictures to Academy. Sinbad gone to Mr. Mylere for £150. Very glad to get them off my mind, they had hung like an incubus for months over me." (March 6, '82). The French work would have been loaned by Tullis from Glasgow, although Melville's address in the RA listings is 'Shepheard's Hotel, Cairo'. The other three are works from '81, although Sinbad was not finished until March '82. It seems to have been sold before

solidity and permanence.[40] Intrinsically this is a characterisation of a figure type, a theme which he would incorporate throughout the Eastern journey to depict males employed in a myriad of tasks from back-breaking toil to street entertainment. This idea, of course, was undoubtedly derived from the illustrations of Eastern figure types published in the art periodicals. These incorporated street vendors, rural types and the myriad of castes who populated the Orient presented in an attractive fashion for a Western readership.[41]

The motif was intended to connote something greater than a simple study of a field toiler, and Melville has tried to imbue a Biblical heroism to this tender of the earth. The fact that he sows alludes to the most worthy and symbolic agrarian task, one which Millet had projected beyond the boundaries of secular painting. A majestic icon with regal bearing the sower recalls Orientalist depictions of Rousseau's 'noble savage', at one with his horse and the terrain he patrols. His handsome black face, beard, skullcap and powerful physique create all the correct impressions about such a figure, with large sandalled feet firmly planted in the soil. His hands and limbs are vast and characterise the product of numerous generations specifically for this purpose, composed and measured. Melville has not attempted to represent a metronomic pacing or over-exertion, but a comfortable and controlled labourer who may even be whistling.[42]

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reaching the RA, possibly to a colonial contact. He dispatched the works a couple of days before leaving Cairo altogether, so he appears to have been under pressure to finish these pictures.

[40]As was the case with rural subjects such as Normandy Shepherd.

[41]See for example Sketches in Egypt, from 'Magazine of Art'1884, pp15-. It features café scenes, a sherbet seller, donkey-boy, water-seller, a farmer, Cairene shopkeeper, and a native of Girgeh.

[42]Such 'content' in a rural labourer would have struck a chord with Melville as a Scot. The notion of a Presbyterian Realism, as expounded in Melville's Cabbage Garden, or in the oils of Robert McGregor like Gathering Stones, advocated the virtues of honest toil, humility and above all content with one's lot. The figures are often, as with Cabbage Garden, caught momentarily inert or at rest. In contrast with French Realism, Scottish Presbyterian Realist images rarely feature suffering or discomfort, and eschew political commentary. Thus the Nubian labourer provides a suitable point of reference for the Scot. The relaxed bearing of the figure is due to several factors, such as working methods and the climate. This demeanour and the stifling heat led to misinterpretations in Orientalism, as the Eastern peoples were often depicted as slothful while their cultures crumble around them. Hence also the number of café scenes in Orientalism, portraying the indigenous males as inert and frivolous beings.

A far cry from so many images of similar themes in Western painting, this sower seems to enjoy his work. It does not appear strenuous and he looks healthy, nourished and rested while to the rear another figure follows an ox and yoke ploughing. One could assert that Melville's sower rejects the myth of the indolent Eastern lazing in street cafés, smoking and being entertained while their ancient architecture is seen to fall into disarray.[43] Depictions of *fellahin* actually engaged in any type of work are extremely rare in Orientalism as this would not have been consistent with imperialist prejudices about the nature of these peoples. This ethnocentric attitude is part of the Western control mechanism, advocating the validity of industrialisation which the Orient seems to reject in favour of indolence. Thus the West appeared to have usurped the dominant role of the ancient cultures through a combination of urbanisation, mechanisation and diligence.

From what one can deduce from reproductions of Sower, the landscape is unremarkable and not intended to detract attention from the principal figure. In many respects this barren vista, with water and spindly tree, is similar to Scottish and northern French precedents and does not conform to the stereotypical exotic, sunbleached Eastern oasis. Although much exhibited, and for a considerable price, this work elicited minimal criticism and languished in his widow's collection until her death.[44] Rather than the work being a failure, as this unsold stigma might suggest for a relatively major picture, it underlined his intentions at the time. He obviously wanted to avoid contriving sensationalist Eastern potboilers which relied on the familiar Orientalist credentials of brash colour and light, and naked flesh. Melville instead favours a gradual assimilation of Egyptian aspects into his own style as a natural progression from his European experience, with an exclusion of Western presence his only acknowledgement of conventional Orientalist tenets.

This is not, however, to say that his work is purely naturalistic and objective in its depiction of 'Cairo' as inscribed. It is inevitable that a new

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[43]Note the allusions in Gérôme's Snake Charmer (Plate 70), for example. The tiles, so scrupulously reproduced in rear ground, are crumbling to pieces while the men sit around relaxing.

[44]It was shown at the RA 1882, GI '83 (£100); Walker AG '83 (£75). It is interesting that the only comment should refer (see 38) to its French qualities in the same way that his French work had been 'Impressionistic' and 'unfinished'. He obviously had not differentiated enough between the continents to fabricate a superficial exoticism.

arrival should inflict some of his own Western cultural consciousness on the East, and Melville's early works do betray his background. The tension experienced by rural Scottish painters in urban situations resurfaces here as he sought the ancient modes of life, unaltered by time or industrialisation processes, which the Orient symbolised in Western popular culture. As in Paris, his Cairo was revealed in subjective glimpses of the agrarian, non-urban character of the city devoid of historical markers and conspicuous Occidental presence.[45] Where his desert scenes, Exterior of a Mosque and Sower depict characteristically Oriental motifs, these eschew any contemporaneity in favour of an eternal myth of the desert, its people and their beliefs. This mythological Otherness is of course furthered by Cutting of the Kaligue where a tangible view of the city in 1881 is manipulated via a Western perception of Egyptian popular culture into a sub-Arabian Nights image of sorcery and fireworks.

In a sense I would argue that these early images characterise the survival of the ancient Eastern cultures and the heroic symbolic dignity of its people despite imperialist intervention and a want of industrialising forces. It is a celebration of the timeless modes of life on the land, unassailed by increasing Westernisation by Khedive Ismael's attempts to turn Cairo into a tourist trap. Generally Melville's subjectivity is sympathetic, but with Cutting of the Kaligue he was compelled to sensationalise, or Orientalise, the festival for Western popular consumption. It would, however, be unfair to use this against the artist as his next collection of Cairo watercolours move more visibly inside the city walls to tackle a more tangible theme.

Interior Scenes, Cairo

Melville's interior scenes were his most considered and significant Eastern work to date, espousing a virulent reaction against both rural and urban perspectives. Pilgrim's Prayer[46] (Plate 30) and Arab Interior[47] (Plate 34) represent the principal genres of Eastern interior painting, infused with a

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[45]No doubt Ismael's new Cairo was an attractive place with the grand hotels, gardens and so on but it obviously offered little to Melville as subject matter.

[46]W/c, (39.75x26.25"). S&D 1881, 'Cairo'. Ill Soth Scot 28.4.88. RA 1882. Dundee FA '82, (£150), GI '84.

[47]Oil, (37x28"). RSA 1883. National Gallery of Scotland. Ex-Coll Sir James Caw.

humanism hitherto absent from Melville's output[48]. Where his themes since the early Scottish landscapes were essentially vehicles for technical and stylistic progress, the mosque and residence interiors incorporated a natural philosophical element borne of Eastern man's relationship to his surroundings. Although depicted in different media, it is significant that these are large-scale exhibition pieces depicting urban interiors in an intrinsically naturalistic style.

On a superficial level, they explore respectively the religious and secular aspects of Eastern life through the bearing of the figures in their everyday environments. Stylistically, from Melville's own work they owe much to Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris (Plate 19) painted earlier that year. This French interior displayed the rich colour and mature draughtsmanship Melville had developed in Paris. It examined a modern leisure pursuit in a pseudo-Eastern, almost ecclesiastical setting making strong references to Hague School church interiors and the work of French Orientalists such as Gérôme.[49] However, both of these Cairo subjects transcend the sensuous aestheticism of the Parisian *hammam*, displaying an empathy with the Eastern male and offering an insight into the national psyche. Where the lolling painters and *flaneurs* in the Paris bathhouse exude an air of physical indulgence, the posture and execution of the Egyptians is redolent of more cerebral, spiritual concerns.

Melville would have witnessed prayer and religious activity punctuating secular life in the East, while customs such as smoking and meditation would have been equally conspicuous in the palaces and residences he knew. This indigenous mode of life differed greatly from his own

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[48]Although Cabbage Garden and Evening, Charenton have a distinct social content and are situated within particular indigenous historical contexts.

[49]Melville's exhibits at the RSA '82, all lost, are worthy of note at this stage. From the 'Scotsman', March 18, 1882:
"Arthur Melville submits Eastern studies in which he has evidently been preoccupied in light and colour rather than form. Past and Present finely realises the tone of the white marble wall, against which an old Turk (sic) lolls in Oriental insouciance. While admirably expressive, the figure is sketchy; and even more so are those occupying the interior of a Cairene coffee house (Cairo Coffee House)which the artist has rendered with admirable breadth of effect. Sphinx with little definition offers a good example of luminous tone..."
In 'Academy' magazine, referring to the same exhibition in 1882, Cosmo Monkhouse refers to Pilgrim's Prayer as "one of the best figure subjects" (p438), while JM Gray (p144) notes : "in the watercolour room are some very clever Eastern sketches by Arthur Melville, especially one of a seated Arab (Past and Present) with a rendering of white marble Tadema-like in its purity and realism."

experiences of dogmatic East Lothian Presbyterianism or the frenetic pressure of industrialised cities such as Edinburgh or Paris. The stark contrast provided by the East is manifest most visibly in these interior scenes, where national characteristics could be more subtly and closely examined in individual figures than bazaar crowds.

Formally, Melville has charted the perspectival system of this highly-worked mosque interior in pencil as he did in the French interior. The tiled floor of Pilgrim's Prayer is used to formalise a traditional single-point perspective, emphasising a close interest in draughtsmanship which waned as the Eastern journey progressed. The mosque interior is naturally more 'Eastern' than the Parisian steam-room which, with its heavy rich colours is more akin to a Bosboom church. This colouring in the French image is as close as Melville came to fabricating a superficial exoticism, although it does not compare to similar English or French Orientalist interiors in this aspect.

A powerfully economical image, Pilgrim's Prayer is rendered sympathetically and unsensationally in a rather muted colour scheme of ochres. There is no evident light-source, the whole being suffused in a pale warm glow. It is the actual represented scene which the artist wishes to convey the message, without recourse to a series of motifs or exotica. Bright garish colours or light reflections may have defused the situation, differentiating the figures in more detail than was appropriate. The principal figure is placed framed against the murky archway, head bowed in reverence while the group of figures talking and contemplating are marginalised against the side wall and in the shadow.

There are no icons or focuses for the worship here, as attention is directed toward the warm gloom. The figures are the most interesting feature of the picture;

> "The Pilgrim's Prayer, a clever Saracenic interior by Mr. Arthur Melville which is rather spoilt by the poor carnations of the only figure it contains."[50]

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[50] 'Art Journal', 1882, p239. Many of his contemporary reviews concentrated on leaden fleshtones eg Mère Morte, and of the unfinished nature of his sketches. It seems that 'finish' was still the quality which characterised good painting in the eyes of British critics, as the Impressionists were still viewed with extreme suspicion.

This comment not only proves the reviewers took a relatively superficial overview of RA exhibits, but also that the figures themselves were insubstantial enough to escape notice on a cursory glance. These wraith-like figures, fleshtones little discriminated from the marble and shadow, are recessive and intended to blend in with their surroundings. Talking and meditating they are a far cry from a congregation of Western supplicants, as they seek refuge and quiet companionship within the sanctuary of the mosque. These ghostly images have much in common with those in his Karachi street scenes, blurred and insubstantial as though he had over-exposed a photograph. This technique would also become central to his depictions of crowd scenes in bazaars.[51]

While the Paris interior imbues an ecclesiastical setting with a tangibly male 'locker-room' atmosphere, the 'worship' scene is set in a mosque and yet maintains the universally secular mood consistent with its function as a place of refuge and repose. The whole bearing of the figures and restraint of the colour scheme suggest an authentic depiction by the artist, unwilling to contrive too much for an Orientalist effect. The temptation to depict figures prostrate on prayer mats, under dramatic light conditions and in vivid colour combinations[52], would have been strong yet Melville resists the temptation. His insubstantial figures squat humbly in the gloom, making scant allusion to the fanaticism of the Eastern faithful so common in more sensationalist Orientalist images.

This work illustrates Melville reconciling his strict Presbyterian background with Islamic spirituality. Islam, like the Scots faith, required much of its adherents yet there is a natural and informal air to their spirituality encapsulated in the mosque interior. The contrast between an austere, cold Kirk and a crumbling[53] edifice of such serene, accessible beauty would have had a profound effect. The Islamic faithful could utilise their mosques for appropriate recreational purposes such as repose

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[51]It is also possible that this work was retouched after the RA review, possibly for the Glasgow exhibition. He may also have added the extraneous group, as they are less naturalistic than the principal centralised figure. This would echo Awaiting an Audience with the Pasha first shown at the Dudley in 1883 yet dated 1887. There are strong figurative comparisons between this work and the group in Pilgrim's Prayer. The singularity of the title also suggests the possibility of its RA appearance with one figure.

[52]See for example Gérôme's mosque interiors, c1870.

[53]A common state highlighted in Western depictions. With Melville, the bird flying in the foreground could suggest this decaying splendour of an ancient civilization.

in the shade or practice of ancient crafts like basket-weaving, as well as actual prayer. This would have been alien to a pious Scot like Melville accustomed to spartan surroundings and stiff Sabbath attire. Pilgrim's Prayer shows Melville's willingness to empathise and capture indigenous traits which contrasted with his own life experiences.[54]

If Pilgrim's Prayer shows how secular life in Islam is synonymous with spirituality, Arab Interior represents the same congress from a different angle. However this domestic interior displays how natural, innate spirituality in the form of meditation has a relevance to everyday life and that the two are not mutually exclusive. The role of faith in secular life was a central issue in Melville's own upbringing, but it was more of a constricting force intended to ensure adherence to a certain moral code than a natural harmony between mind, body and spirit.[55]

The favourable reception to which Melville was becoming accustomed was equally evident in contemporary reviews of Arab Interior. 'The Scotsman' described it thus, with the familiar accusation of formlessness :

> "A notable study of light and colours is exhibited by Arthur Melville in the interior of an Arab house. We look towards a large window filled in with lattice work of elaborate design; in the painting of which, with the sunshine streaming through its interstices, the artist has acquitted himself to admiration. The subdued tone of the apartment in contrast to the vivid outside light has been truly felt. The opportunities for colour afforded by the Oriental furniture have duly been turned to account : but neither in these accessories nor in the turbaned figure seated behind the lattice has the artist concerned himself with the definite realisation of form."[56]

Interestingly despite the accusations of formlessness, this oil is as naturalistic in execution as Sower. Its inspiration may again be French[57]

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[54]The mosque pictures make an interesting comparison with his series of interiors of Kirkwall's Cathedral of St. Magnus in 1884. Despite the free brushwork and expressiveness, these images are close to the Hague School.

[55]For example, the apocryphal story of Melville's mother burning his drawings as a child : these represented graven images. A Presbyterian upbringing would stress the sacred nature of the Sabbath ie temperance and no working or frivolity. Thrift, diligence and content with one's lot were also central issues.

[56]Feb.24, 1883.

[57]For example Gérôme's Arnaut Smoking has a similar setting and profiled figure smoking. Melville could have seen his work at the Salon, the Expo 1878 or at Goupil, his dealer's. As an *atelier* master, Gérôme's work was well-known. The rich colour, *chiaroscuro* and contemplative atmosphere recall the Hague School and Dutch still-life tradition, particularly in the left and foreground of the image.

but the atmosphere is more genuinely Eastern and alludes to its *in situ* execution.

Melville's uncharacteristic concentration on local detail contributes to the atmosphere of the work, but is detrimental to the perspectival lucidity of the image. For example the dots of light in the screen are not parallel and curve upward at the top, revealing the experimental nature of the design. This is also the case with the foreground table, where he strove successfully for the sumptuous detail on the cylindrical base but confused the perspective. Where a stereoscopic viewpoint can be effective in certain situations, it sits uneasily in this naturalistic image.

Space is created by means other than single-point perspective. In flattening the composition with the lattice and dark foreground, the artist looks to the optical qualities of light and colour to create space. The fulcrum of the design is the pure scarlet blob on the turban acting as a spatial marker. It fixes the figure solidly in the centre and yet draws him forward as a particularly warm hue on a generally warm background, compressing space through colour intensification.[58] A space has been left[59] to lead the eye through an otherwise flat and spatially-restricted composition. By keeping the foreground dark and maintaining a light focus, he created movement within the picture space by means of light and dark bands.[60]

The seated figure is the principal feature of the work. Dignified and handsome, he rests a *hookah* at this feet, the aromatic smoke curling gently upward from the bowl. Although the artist intentionally concealed the eyes one perceives that the Arab is in a meditative trance, gazing into space. The image may be symbolic of the inner eye which transcends the

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[58]Drawn from his own Cabbage Garden, where an expressive blob of pure red at the centre of a sea of green creates a visual tension, mutually intensifying the colours. In such a near-abstract work spatial determination is imperative, and colour theory is an effective method of augmenting design features.

[59]An open window of light. See similar technique In Turkish Bath Paris.

[60]Similar to those used by Whistler, for example, in the Kitchen of 1858, where the figure is *contre jour* in an enclosed space as bands create movement and thus recession.
As Melville's watercolours moved toward highly-coloured abstraction and away from naturalism, form became less delineated . Thus the principles of 'colour temperature' and contrast became mainstays of visual comprehension. He also grasped that one cannot equate tonal extremities with the purest colour hues, which are created most effectively in medium-range tones. This is characterised in Grand Bazaar, Muscat of early 1882.

material world to which most Westerners are inextricably bound. The whole room, with the spatial system emphasized by the lighting, colour and decor, is oppressively warm and almost fragrant. The shallow intrusive space, lattice gauze and smoke introduce a synaesthetic element to Melville's work which ensures that the sympathetic viewer smell the smoke and hear the distant hum of the bazaar and insect buzz. The colours, light and paraphernalia transport the viewer, seducing as Melville himself was captured by aspects of the East.

Western ethnocentricity often sought to portray Eastern males as savages, but here Melville is concentrating on another 'aspect' of the national character. The natural thought process of meditation could thus transform a person. In other circumstances, he might conform to the 'noble warrior' or 'ruthless trader' stereotype, but here the catalyst of the smoke and sanctuary in conducive surroundings calms the figure and transfers him to another plane. Perhaps even when painting the image Melville found himself commuted to another, more ethereal, plane as he became superficially entranced by the fragrant atmosphere.

In these mosques, palaces and places of great beauty the artist came to recognise the fundamental requisites for spiritual harmony. Mental relaxation and meditation had become anathema to Western industrialised society, and Melville's interior scenes celebrate his rediscovery of these primal necessities. With such situations Melville's aversion to urban life and quest for a rural Utopia must have been temporarily realised.

However bazaar and street views far outnumber the more contemplative interior scenes and illustrate the motivational dominance of Western market forces during the Eastern journeys. Melville's serious illness in Cairo may have accentuated the temporal and fiscal constraints of his Eastern residence, compelling him utilize his time more 'usefully' by sketching in the streets. Bazaar scenes, with their dramatic light and colour effects and heightened sense of movement, were more characteristic of the East at this stage and could be sold easily at home. As Eastern themes were uncommon at contemporary Scottish exhibitions, subjects which encapsulated its aesthetic and stylistic qualities were likely to prove more profitable than subtle explorations of religious and secular contemplation.

Bazaars in Cairo

Melville's principal theme in Cairo is his collection of street views, many of which feature bazaars. There are seven extant works which one can attribute to this category[61] of which five have distinct formal similarities. I do not intend to examine all of the works in detail, but will concentrate on the best examples. It has been necessary in certain cases to give working titles derived from provenance or situation, to avoid unnecessary confusion.

The Cairo street scenes must be viewed as Melville's most forthright attempts to date in broaching urban subject matter. In Paris he had executed many views of the working life of the Seine, but in doing so he was carefully concealing the modern identity of Haussmann's city. Thus the finished works had more in common with his provincial views of pre-industrial rural communities such as Grez. In other images Melville localised or deconstructed the city into individual monuments or buildings, again betraying little of the contemporary city.

To a great extent this is true of the Cairo pictures. The sections of the city he chose to depict were at once ancient and yet contemporary, remaining relatively unaltered from mediaeval times. Business in the bazaars continued much as it always had, the atmosphere as colourful and frenetic as ever. As with the mosques and palace interiors, Melville subjectively selected aspects of Cairo which would have proved anachronistic to a Western, industrial urban public. Once again he denied any Occidental presence in the East, eradicating the tourists, expatriates or other artists who comprised a substantial proportion of the crowds by the 1880's. He also rejects Khedive Ismael's modernised, Westernised *quartiers* as unsuitable subjects for his urban themes. Thus, these manipulated views of Cairo represent the counterpoint to his rural Utopia, presenting many of the same timeless values it symbolised yet here within an ostensibly urban context.

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[61]Mackay's catalogue lists six watercolours which seem to have been lost. From the titles, one assumes that they would have been formally consistent with the images discussed below. These were Cairo Café, Cairo Coffee House (see note 48), Cairo Coffee Stall, The Red Portière, and two versions of Cairo Fruitmarket. It is of course possible that one or two of these are actually known now by different titles and have been included in this thesis.

Melville's interior scenes represent an intermediate stage between the familiar rurality of his tourist and figure-type themes, and the street scenes themselves. The interiors allude to the ancient metropolis without making any great claims. The city can be glimpsed and sensed through the lattice in Arab Interior, and implied in the characters of the faithful seeking rest and refuge in the mosque. However to realise Turkish Bazaar, Cairo (Plate 31) and other watercolours Melville plunged into the labyrinthine streets around the main square, braving the crowds of curious locals to sketch to the side of the busy thoroughfares.

Amelia Edwards describes the bazaars at length in the 'aesthetic' language which characterised so much French literature of the Orient.[62] For example :

> '...in order thoroughly to enjoy an overwhelmingly, ineffaceable first impression of Oriental out-of-doors life, one should begin with a day in the native bazaars; neither buying, nor sketching, nor seeking information, but just taking in scene after scene, with its manifold combinations of light and shade, colour and costume, and architectural detail. Every shopfront, every street corner, every turbaned group is a ready-made picture."[63]

It appears that the Cairo bazaars, with the unceasing frenetic activity, noise, bustle and colour were ideal for an artist like Melville. He had begun to attempt swift, economical *plein air* sketching in France and the bazaars provided the perfect location to master it. Armed again with his sketch book and a narrow range of hues[64], the bazaar scenes exploited the greater flexibility and spontaneity afforded by watercolour painting.

The traditional, single-point perspective articulated through linear axes, prominent in Pilgrim's Prayer, was less conspicuous in Turkish Bazaar, Cairo[65]. Altogether more daring, the handling is expressive and broad

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[62]Gautier and Flaubert, for example, revelled in the visual stimuli and wrote accordingly. Thus many comparisons may be drawn between images created from pigments and those conjured from words.

[63]Edwards op cit pp3-11. Detailed description of the range of bazaars, nationalities and street characters on view, and of how accommodating the merchants are.

[64]The brown and cobalt blue blocks described in relation to Fringe of the Desert, as well as white to mix beige tones.

[65]W/c, (21.5x14.5"). Exhibited Dundee FA 1881. This early street scene defines the formula for lesser examples such as Cairo Street Scene, (dated 1883) in the Robertson Coll., which is a rather static image resembling a posed photograph. Interestingly it is depicted from a central point rather than an oblique angle, and thus possibility executed from a

and displays a distinct tendency toward the expressive abstraction of the Muscat bazaar scene executed some few months later. The picture displays a wetter, more 'blottesque'[66] technique, constructed from daubs and blots on washed planes, with very few lines to create a recession although architecture is prominent. Where the mosque and bath interiors boasted traditional linear acuity derived from topographical artists like David Roberts or JF Lewis, the bazaar scene is much more original in conception and possibly refers to the Impressionist work he would have seen in Paris.

In many senses this bazaar scene, clearly dated '1881', marked the end of Melville's pure naturalism and signified a tendency toward an original, dextrous watercolour style. Unlike certain earlier scenes like Pilgrim's Prayer, this image could not be mistaken for a Hague School work due to its expressively spontaneous style. Turkish Bazaar, Cairo signals a swift progression through such broad, expressive interiors with pure colour highlights as Grand bazaar, Muscat to culminate in Gateway of the Kirkuk, Kurdistan. This image has come to represent the pinnacle of Melville's expressive naturalism, a concise essay in daubs of pure colour applied over a black axis executed less than six months after the Cairo bazaar scene.

There is however a pronounced spatial system incorporated in the work as these markets were constructed within narrow thoroughfares to make use of the shade. The scene converges sharply at the arch in the centre, a common device in these images, where the light epicentre is surrounded by a dark band to help create a system of recession by leading the eye through the mass of colour to a light/dark tonal contrast. In the picture, the red bands in the archway and on the fabrics complement the spatial system of coloured washes and compartmentalized passages defined by dark angular strokes.

As with earlier Eastern works, the image is constructed from an economical system of hues, alluding to his working *en plein air*. This

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photographic prompt. The later dating means it may have been realised in the Edinburgh studio. This a curiously precise and naturalistic scene in comparison to earlier examples. Street Scene Cairo, 1882. (Ill in Mackay pl9) : known only from a monochromatic photograph. Formally similar to Turkish Bazaar with even more prominent architecture in the striking twin towers. As compositions became more abstracted, the anchoring power of architecture was exploited fully. In this image, the spiky awnings and fruit tumbling into the foreground comprise a conspicuous abstract element.

[66]Technique, possibly derived from his friend RW Allan in Paris, of dropping colour onto a wet ground of prepared paper.

meant that the artist could block in the ground and sketch in the principal planes quickly, leaving himself free to integrate highlights of pure colour or greater detail at a later date.[67] While the overall colour system is warm and red, the background wash is dark brown and ochre as in the mosque scene. He also leaves bare paper highlights, as with the beam of light which spans the scene diagonally.

It is likely that Melville did not carry the full complement of hues, for speed and convenience while wandering. With a restricted palette, it is also easier to explore the tonal ranges which remained a great interest after his French experience. The Eastern light, as it intruded on narrow winding streets and filtered through tarpaulins slung between buildings for shade, filtered the light and made extremely dramatic tonal contrasts. basing this work, for example, on hues of brown and red facilitated the expression of these transient effects as he experienced them. With the fabrics in the foreground, the stripes of mauve and red, yellow and blue provide warm/cool contrasts in an effective manner, as a counterpoint to the general warmth of the scene with its deep reds.

The figures themselves, moving through the street and stopping to peruse the stalls, are again wraith-like in their unfinished state, making a strong comparison with the mosque's inhabitants. This, of course, introduces an impression of movement to a scene which would have been in a constant state of flux as he observed it[68]. The seated vendors recede into the shadows, insubstantial and dark, equating his representations of both moving and stationary figures. Melville's intentions were evidently consistent as he only wished to communicate an impression of a bazaar scene, without any unnecessary portraiture or ethnographical content. This is a simplified and fleeting image of a bazaar realised in colour and broad brushwork. Detail of any kind is eschewed, save a miniscule passage in the foreground left where he depicts a necklace and vase. These are

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[67]The asymmetry of many of the bazaar scenes suggests that he sat off the main thoroughfare. Many contemporary painters relied on photographic prompts as prints could be taken more centrally as an automated process. Sketching *in situ* was not the norm, as the oppressive nature of bazaar throngs in less saccessible places often made it impossible to sketch. See his letter of March 20, at Aden.

[68]This is taken to its logical exclusion in the small watercolour sketch Arab Night (6.75x9.75"), a virtually formless image revolving around shimmering moving figures executed in a wholly unnaturalistic style.

blotted in to confirm which type of bazaar this was, as particular Cairo markets had distinct produce ranges.

It would be wrong at this stage to attempt to discern a pattern beyond his gradual rejection of pure naturalism in the East. Melville does not follow a 'logical' route of jettisoning oil for watercolour, country for city scenes, dark tones for light or even monochrome for pure colour full palette. Although he does develop extremely quickly in the East over the fourteen months, and is consistent in many respects, he still manages to surprise us with works like Water Seller, Baghdad or Grand Bazaar, Muscat which are very dark interiors with a brown base, while Camel Market, Aden or Pearl Fishers, Linga are *plein air* images depicted in blue and brown. It is obvious that Melville, from the outset, resisted the Orientalist traps of indiscriminately representing only harsh full sunlight and colour in enamel clarity, preferring instead to work in broad expressive watercolour. Unafraid to use dark tones and muted colour where he saw them, he also retained the oil medium for major exhibition pieces. These factors combine in the early Eastern images to suggest the artist's readiness to experiment and avoid any set format for his work.[69]

In examining Melville's *plein air* street or bazaar scenes, Cairo[70] (Plate 36) and Cairo Bazaar[71] represent two of the best examples. The highly-worked Berwick picture is particularly close, as it features the same asymmetrical viewpoint through to the arch with bare paper shining through. Overall, this carpet bazaar is rendered in similar pink tones to the Turkish Bazaar, with bands on the detailed architecture[72] and between the figures. The foreground is grey and empty, although the focal point is extremely bright with yellow awnings through to the rear.

It is impossible to extricate the awning motif from the artist's stylistic development. Moreover I would argue that is fundamentally responsible[73] for the rich primary colour and earthy tones, shadowy

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[69]Something which, inevitably, came post-1885 as he reworked early sketches in a more polished manner.

[70]W/c, (20x14.5"), S&D 1883. Private Coll. Ex Coll. of James Cox, jute baron in Dundee.

[71]W/c, (20x14"). S&D 'Cairo 1882'. Ex-Burrell Coll., Berwick Museum.

[72]Melville's Cairo bazaar scene generally rely on rows of windows, shopfront abstracts, striped textiles and architecture passages to suggest recession. Thus there is less recourse to conventional linear single-point perspective.

[73]Along with choice of medium.

figures and voids within the images. The natural shapes of the awnings moving in the light breeze creates a transient, flickering illumination which is more convincing in Melville's work than the static bleached colours of his contemporaries. The triangles and quadrilaterals cover the scenes and enclose the rich colour and shadow below, maintaining a tension with the light above. A tension would also become apparent between areas of bare and worked paper, and full colour with monochrome.

As with Cairo, the figures in the Berwick work are more naturalistic in depiction[74] than those in the Turkish Bazaar. Cairo comprises the full gamut of motifs featured in the street scene subjects such as the pendant awnings[75], light archway focus, doves in flight and passage of full-colour still life[76]. In many respects it can be viewed as the most interesting example, as it combines mature naturalism with a strong element of abstraction within the design. As such it is Melville's most confident synthesis of his recent advances, utilising expressive light and colour effects to eschew clumsy linear traditions.

Cairo features a full palette and extremely dramatic lighting contrasts laid over the familiar dark brown ground. As with many semi-interiors[77] the upper half is less developed, although the swathes of vibrant violet and ochre lift the composition while receding according to their space-determining properties as cool colours. The use of primary colour in the right fore and mid ground is of expressive purity, applied with gusto while versatile brushwork and rejection of linearity explore the abstract qualities

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[74]Particularly applicable to Cairo Bazaar, w/c, (14.5x20.5"), Kelvingrove, Glasgow. (See Plate 35). This image is essentially a close-up view of traders in a bazaar, incorporating a detailed physiognomical study of the younger Arab who conforms to the stereotype of the noble yet inert Eastern male. Contrastingly, the other equidistant figure is sketchy and undeveloped in the shade of the awnings. The detailed still-life passage of the table and carpet in foreground recall Turkish Bath, Paris and Arab Interior.

[75]The sole motivation behind Arab Bazaar , w/c (19x33"), undated, c1882 (See Plate 53). Placed within a courtyard setting, the principal interest of this watercolour is the abstract geometric forms of the series of awnings. These shapes have been formed from bare paper as well as light washes, making a fascinating balance between form and void, regularity and abstraction. There are no figures to detract from the power of this image which is constructed solely from man-made static forms.

[76]The celebration of the organic forms of the fruit and vegetables is effective. spilling out into the viewer's space. Pure colour and expressive daubs and blots are used, culled from Melville's earliest French watercolour of the Granville market.

[77]By which I mean 'street scenes' where lighting is restricted, such as the Grand Bazaar, Muscat or Water Seller, Baghdad.

of the awnings and ramshackle architecture. The surprisingly naturalistic figures appear mottled in the flickering periphery of the blue/russet shadows of the bazaar and the full dazzling light in the mid-ground. In essence this was Melville's most advanced exploration of light effects to date, bathing the whole mid-ground and archway in a white-heightened pool enveloping the principal figures and reflecting off the flock of doves. This imbues the birds with a vitality hitherto unseen in his exploration of animate forms.[78]

With these works it becomes apparent that Melville's vision of the East was becoming more selective, as he sought subjects which facilitated his new ideas on colour, light and movement. Architecture was retained as a visual 'anchor' for his passages of more abstract expressionism but Melville avoided conventional, linear draughtsmanship. He was compelled to find appropriate ways to filter light entering from different angles[79], with architecture included less for its own ends than its influence on the transient physical aspects of the scene. Thus particular aspects of buildings were employed to various ends, for example the row of windows in Turkish Bazaar Cairo or the pillars in Grand Bazaar, Muscat. The above contribute an illusion of spatial recession and counterbalance the more expressive areas of colour in each image, retaining a solidity and lucidity which might otherwise have been lost.

Line generally connotes some kind of 'restriction' or 'termination' of colour and form and was not considered suitable. Figures in these bazaars are sketchy and insubstantial, fleeting and undefined as crowd components ought to be, focusing less on the individual than on the shape and characteristics of the milling throng. The central horizontal bands of these works emphasise this where figures, stalls and merchandise are no more than blobs, planes and bare paper when scrutinised closely, bold colours describing a scene by semi-abstract means. Detail is peripheral and painstaking reproduction anathema, an extension of the freedom of technique and subjectivity of design which characterised pure 'impressionist' painting. This had not escaped the notice of contemporary critics by the 1883 exhibitions in Scotland.

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[78]See the totally unconvincing 'birds in flight' in Pilgrim's Prayer and Cairo Street Scene in the Robertson Coll., Orkney (not ill.).

[79]In Grand Bazaar, Muscat for example light is visible in fore and rear ground, while it enters from above in street market scenes.

A fastidious naturalistic sensibility had been appropriate for topographical artists in the East[80], but it was essentially a redundant tradition by the 1880's despite a plethora of successful purveyors. Melville's contribution is only really vital when he transcends a desire simply to 'record', instead attempting to infuse a personal expressiveness in his work. His choice of a style conducive to *plein airism* was crucial as was the use of abstracted formal style, pure colour and dramatic light to create movement and vitality on the picture plane.

It is apparent that Melville's Egyptian work comprises a distinct set of themes which are a logical extension of the subject matter he broached in Scotland and France. The rural fixation is predicated in his Scottish background and training and leads directly to iconic images of field labourers such as Egyptian Sower. The 'sketchbook' images of local characteristics, bazaars and indigenous customs reflect his experience in Normandy and Brittany, while his interiors had been anticipated by the more superficial Orientalism of Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris. Scottish market forces demanded that bazaar images be his principal Egyptian theme, as they seemed to encapsulate most forcefully the Western vision of the East as a *mélange* of colour, light and movement.

However Eastern pictures such as Pilgrim's Prayer and Arab Interior display the artist's empathy with the Egyptians, attempting to identify a national mentality. This he does to great effect, depicting the inextricable fusion of their secular and religious lives without recourse to sensationalism. These realisations are made all the more poignant when contrasted with Melville's own Scottish Presbyterian background, which coloured his approach to realist themes. Melville's field toilers were impersonal studies, their averted features betraying no discomfort or discontent as they humbly accepted their lot with a view to the next life. Sower is a relaxed and powerful symbol of enduring rural values depicted by the same formal means he had learned in Scotland.

Melville's journey to Egypt was motivated in part by a quest for a 'rural' identity and mode of life which had remained impervious to the effect of

[80]For example Gérôme, David Roberts and JF Lewis.

the industrialising forces swiftly urbanising the West. Melville, as with other artists from rural backgrounds, experienced difficulties in adjusting to urban life and subjects and the move East took rural naturalism to its logical extreme. However Melville's style and subject matter began to gravitate from the pure naturalism exemplified by Egyptian Sower of 1881, as his watercolour style in particular became more spontaneous and expressive. He began to employ more pure colour applied wet in daubs, and eschewed traditional single-point perspective and linear draughtsmanship in favour of more abstract shapes, textures and hues.

The next chapter traces Melville's six-week circumnavigation of the Arabic peninsula. By this stage he had acclimatised to the East and settled on his favoured themes and approach. Some of his finest work was executed at the colonial outposts of Aden, Karachi and Muscat where he depicted street and market views in an original, expressive style far removed from pure naturalism. The speed of his technical maturity is exemplified in these works, and a discussion of his personal colour theory is offered in relation to the early claims laid in Cabbage Garden. I will also attempt to contextualise Melville's experiences and choice of theme by examining the effects and extent of imperialism in these ports, culminating in his arrival in Baghdad in April 1882.

FROM CAIRO TO CONSTANTINOPLE : THE JOURNEY

Melville left Cairo on February 28, 1882[1], bound for Baghdad, intending to circumnavigate the Arabian peninsula by sea. A principal motivation may have been homesickness, as he planned to terminate the journey in Scotland, but one assumes that he had been ill for so much of his residence in Egypt that he wanted to travel while he had the chance. A doomed love affair in the city[2] also seemed to precipitate his move, but the lure of travel and new subjects would have proved a powerful force. This section attempts to trace Melville's Eastern itinerary as accurately as possible, illustrated where possible with drawings or completed paintings.

The journey also signified Melville's departure from the 'urban civilisation' which Cairo represented. Leaving a city which comfortably accommodated a degree of Westernisation within its Oriental character[3], he headed off to towns and outposts which were much less receptive to tourists. He sought the ancient rural civilisations which constituted an antidote to urban industrialisation, isolated towns and countryside where tourists had never set foot and Imperialist influence counted for very little. This journey's progress through India, the Gulf colonies and onto Baghdad symbolised a gradual evaporation of Occidental control, so that after Baghdad he made the extremely dangerous crossing north through Persia and Turkey to the coast of the Black Sea on horseback. This last section of the journey comprised the ultimate risk of the Eastern experience and although very few works have survived, they represent the zenith of Melville's artistic creativity.

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[1] According to the diary reprinted chronologically in Mackay.

[2] Amanda M. (See Plate A) was wintering in Cairo with her family, a fashion established by the Prince of Wales in 1872. The confines of her privileged upbringing meant that her relationship with the penniless Scottish artist could not develop. Her forbidding father probably extolled many of the colonial attitudes of the day. See the pencil bust portrait of the young woman, Fine Art Society.

[3] Khedive Ismael, who owed much money to imperialist powers, welcomed Western dignitaries with the opening of the Suez Canal in the 1860's. Hotels, opera house, fencing clubs etc were opened to create a resort atmosphere in the city. See Searight p100 for William Russell's description of Cairo in 1869 as accustomed to streams of tourists etc.

Most of the works in this section are discussed in geographical, and consequently chronological, order. The body of work produced between Cairo and Baghdad[4] is essentially itinerant, rendering it more akin to a sketchbook than any other stage of his career. The range of themes is suitably narrow, principally street and market scenes and views of the vessel[5], but there is also a portrait of a sheikh. However I will concentrate on Melville's images of the markets as much to emphasise his swift stylistic evolution as imbue thematic unity. These themes encapsulate most effectively his development from a naturalist style towards a kind of proto-expressionism, incorporating elements of an intuitive abstraction.

His first principal stop en route to Baghdad was Suez, where he recorded that he had "begun a sketch of Suez from the south."[6] His descriptions of the houses in full sunlight against a dull blue sky seems to correspond to a watercolour (provisionally) entitled Arab Encampment[7] (See Plate 37). This is a concise picture where the principal 'working' appears in the central horizontal axis with great swathes of empty wash, rendering it formally similar to Edge of the Great Desert although portraying very different aspects of desert life. The houses are abbreviated by roofs and the occasional wall, with little dotted windows, giving the impression of a low hill settlement. Nomads are again present, camped in the mid-ground as a focus for the picture, clustered around the mouth of the tent in a similar fashion to the bazaar stall-holders in the Cairo pictures. The succinct nature of the picture again suggests *plein air* execution in minimising detail, affording exploration of light and shade and the tension between 'work' and 'void'.

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[4]He left Cairo on February 28, 1882, and arrived in Baghdad on April 16.

[5]There is also a portrait of a Sheikh. The artist's thematic approach over the voyage is particularly subjective, rendering only subjects of specific local interest or beauty.

[6] March 2.

[7] Ill. Victoria Gallery, Dundee, exhib cat. 1912. Inscribed 'Suez', since untraced. This and another Melville watercolour entitled Winnowing were loaned to the exhibition by John Simpson of Viewbank, Tayport. He also loaned Hague School artists like Artz and Blommers.

Around March 10, he passed Jedda and made a sketch of the shoreline vista from the vessel[8] (See Plate B) and on March 14 dated two sketches of subjects in Hodeida, which he described thus :

> "...their boats are curiously constructed, cut away fore and aft with the helm almost in the keel attached by two pieces of cord...when approaching a ship they have a curious way of making fast. One of their number jumps overboard and swims to the ship. The others pull the boat near by this means. Quarantine was declared 'off' here."[9]

He also records "made sketch of cargo boats"[10] which are in the sketchbook, one featuring a vessel at a quay with a figure, and the other of two six-masted ships at sea. The journal reveals a practical interest in the construction of the ships and in his surroundings as one would expect, and emphasise his wonder at the East and its Otherness expressed in his art.

ADEN

The next point of disembarkation was Aden on March 15. It proved a popular stop and he stayed about ten days, describing his mood thus;

> Went ashore with...they took a carriage to town while I followed on foot enjoying the walk very much although it was very hot...Found my friends resting in an Arab café."[11]

and;

> "These mountains seemed to be formed out of lava and scoriae having a peculiar porous appearance...we hired a vehicle and drove to the town of Aden. Passed through a strongly fortified road and gateway, the pass being cut out of the rock to a depth of 200ft."[12]

Melville clearly enjoyed being back on dry land after the confinement of lengthy sea voyages and this relief is expressed in his watercolour Aden[13] (Plate 38), where the subject is not the town but the actual road itself. His most simplified landscape to date it comprised little more than some

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[8] See the drawing illustrated. These drawings, some fifty or so in pencil on small scraps of paper, are in the possession of the Fine Art Society. They augment the journal he kept and allow the extrapolation of most of the itinerary up until Kurdistan.

[9] March 13.

[10] ibid.

[11] March 16.

[12] March 15.

[13] Ill. Christie's, Scotland, Sep. 18, 1986. (10.5x17.5")

dozen individual brushstrokes, perhaps the product of a quick stop *en route* or the lack of shade he mentioned. Strong unfiltered light intruding on one's field of vision invariably alters the perception of a scene, with shapes blurring and colours distorting as they reflect heat. Judging by the clearly defined shadowplay, Melville was looking directly into the strong sun, which may in part account for the design.

The focal point of the work is the figures in the roadway, which in truth are just blots of pigment[14] with shadows even though they appear well-lit in mid-ground. One would normally expect a more naturalistic approach in such light, but the artist is adopting a more expressionistic approach to his figure-work at this stage. In another observation of Aden, he writes;

> "Was much struck by the curious formation of women which probably arises from their carrying heavy loads in a peculiar way when young."[15]

This may explain why the 'shapes' appear to be stooping, in sharp contrast to the erect grace of the Cairo sower in the earlier oil, and it is logical to deduce that the shapes are women coming home from town with their purchases and carrying out the daily domestic toil.[16] As a subject, it is another example of the conversion of a motif of exotic interest into a design which explored his developing theories and interests. The whole simplistic scene, with its light and colour, evokes a sense of calm and relaxation and reveals Melville to be contented at this juncture. The construction of the work as a system of pure shapes commutes a sense of sublime Nature, with the wide sweeping roadway and banking echoing the description in the journal. From a few brief brushstrokes one can perceive road, rocks, laden figures, harbour, sea yachts and a distant town. The eloquence from such economy is impressive and shows how adept he had become in utilising personal mood and physical situation to design works so lucidly, and also indicates the swiftness and dexterity with which

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[14] Unfortunately known only from a monochromatic illustration.

[15] March 15.

[16] Such disparities in posture may in fact reflect aspects of gender roles in Eastern society, where women carry provisions and children while the husbands are 'working' in the fields, bazaars etc. Women, as in Western rural images, seem to do most of the gleaning, a bckbreaking task which would precipitate a hunched stature. Equally all images of cafés are populated by men.

he could capture the desired effect *en plein air*. This picture demonstrates how he had come to view Nature as a series of abstract shapes and planes within an overall design, and is clearly an extension of the exploitation of geometric awnings to expressive ends in street scenes.

Where Aden epitomises the semi-abstract spontaneity which Melville employed when working in certain situations *en plein air*, Camel Market, Aden[17] (Plate 40) and Street Bazaar, Aden[18] (Plate 39) represent his most accomplished watercolours of the period. Aden was one of Melville's favourite ports of call, which along with the length of the next stage of the voyage may explain why he stayed for a week. He recorded;

> "Arrived at Aden (March 15, 1882) was much pleased with the place. Rugged peaked hills in the background quite like a scene on the stage. Clouds were trailing over the highest tops. The whole spectacle was more like Ben Lomond from Loch Lomond than anything tropical."[19]

and;

> "How pleasant it was overlooking the blue sea, the camp of the English below."[20]

These descriptions may in part explain the visual impact of Camel Market, Aden, which he records painting on March 21st. This is a stunning watercolour, where the action again occurs in a horizontal band in the centre of the picture. The foreground is a principally empty expanse of sand, featuring some straw bedding in the foreground right.

The background, on the other hand, illustrates the above observation. The imposing hills and sky loom over the scene, comprising two-thirds of the picture area. The mountains are depicted in the pure cobalt blue he regularly employed as a foil for the beige sand, with the clouds themselves grey and lowering over the scene. He has applied gouache dry over the watercolour wash base on the hills, with bare paper shining through on several of the highest-toned sections. With some washing-out evident in

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[17] Watercolour. S&D 1883. (14x20.5"). Private Coll. Shown RA 1888.

[18] Watercolour. S&D 1883. (14.5x21"). Private Coll. Not shown.

[19] March 15.

[20] March 17.

the clouds, Melville revealed the full range of his mastery of the medium in this work.[21]

The plain whitewashed houses, heightened as bare white paper left untouched, form beautiful geometric patterns across the central axis of the work, against which he placed the principal camels. The camels are depicted seated and resting in various poses, skilfully and sympathetically rendered with an inherent vitality.

The crowd scene, in contrast to the naturalistic depiction of the camels, is an animated mass of abstract daubs and blots of brown, blue and red, a colour scheme consistent with his outdoor crowd scenes. This contrast is most acute to the left of centre in the image. However figures are discernable in relative detail to the foreground right near the straw bedding, which is captured as dots and flicks of lime green and pure red among the yellow straw colouring to raise the tone of the whole. Overall, this is necessary as the colour scheme is remarkably cool for an Eastern scene. Were one to bisect the work above the whitewashed roofs the ominous silvery tones and fresh ocean blue could almost be a Scottish mountain vista, which may in part explain Melville's favourable response to the town itself.

This is also the case in the street scene, which is depicted in a similarly cool series of blue, russet and silver tones. Although the foreground is, as usual, empty the street scene and architecture are explored in some detail. A relevant diary entry provides an interesting insight into his sketching methods and itinerant searches for subjects, the true motivation for the Eastern journey itself;

> "Went sketching to Aden with the doctor. After rambling about and drinking a cup of real good coffee, found a subject. Worked hard all day. Crowds of natives pressing round till I was nearly suffocated. Doctor did good service in keeping them as far away as possible. We could not help admiring their good humour. An English crowd would behave rather differently under the same circumstances. These natives are extremely good looking with the

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[21] Similarly in Street Bazaar, Aden.

> most beautiful teeth which they polish continually with a small piece of wood. Finished sketch it was very successful."[22]

This entry seems to refer to the Street Bazaar, Aden but also reveals an interest in ethnographic details concerning the figures who throng his works, albeit generally in mid-ground. His descriptions reveal just how unaccustomed the natives were to Western visitors and in particular artists, and he recalls being physically assaulted by one while sketching.[23] This Muslim belligerence toward his 'image making' may account for the dearth of images of females in Melville's Eastern work but in general they did not frequent the cafés and were less in evidence in the bazaars than the men.[24] Opportunities to sketch them were less plentiful.

In the entry quoted with the previous work, he comments on the English military presence in the town which had been annexed to British India in 1839 and was the major refuelling station on the India route. All of Melville's ports of call between Cairo and Baghdad had a considerable English presence, ensuring the welcomes he received and facilitating escorted sketching and sightseeing. In general, though, he refers to his colonial 'hosts' indirectly and offers little insight into the conflict or their imperialist purpose in the East. In all he seems willing to accept the novelty of expatriate 'society hospitality' but is altogether unimpressed by it all, viewing their machinations as 'means to an end' as far as his painting was concerned. In fact he seems to have responded most favourably to the numerous Scots figures with whom he sailed;

> "Found Miss Cox was an old friend of Tom Davis. Very curious to meet these people so far away from home. Lady Aitchison was also a Miss Cox. Found she knew many of my friends."[25]

The street bazaar scene is generally naturalistic in execution, but as usual within the throng and the stall itself there is a mosaic of blue, red and green which creates the impression of bustle and animation when viewed from the correct distance. Some cameos in the nearer ground are accurately depicted, such as the brown dog eating in the foreground left,

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[22] March 20.

[23] Letter of March 16. .

[24] Only the Babylonian Girl, a bust portrait, exists.

[25] These, of course, are members of the Cox family, Melville's most loyal patrons who lived at Invertrossach, Callander. James Cox had made his fortune in the jute industry in Dundee.

and the figure behind whose *burnous* is suggested by white paper showing through the wash.

It is interesting to note that the overall tone of these Aden works is somewhat dark and cool, although both images contain strategically placed warm hues such as ochre and scarlet a a counterpoint to the blues and greens. Like any coastal town Aden would be subject to more pronounced and capricious climactic alterations, and where he recorded on March 16;

> "They took the carriage to town while I followed on foot enjoying the walk very much though it was very hot"[26],

and then again on March 21, in reference to the sea,

> "Very rough, had a long pull against wind and tide."[27]

The static elements of the image are rendered faithfully and in relative detail, with the tarpaulins stretched above the shopfronts again revealing an interest in abstract shape for its own sake integral to the design. The street itself is dilapidated, and it is difficult whether one attributes the slightly askew perspective to Melville's error, the problems of sketching *en plein air* [28] or simply the ramshackle buildings.

INDIA

Melville left for India on the steamer 'Goa' on the morning of March 22nd, 1882, arriving in Karachi at noon on March 29th. After Aden, Karachi proved a veritable contrast, as Melville recorded;

> "The coast appeared most uninterestingly low and featureless...Sir Charles (Aitchison) appeared in a new light, officers and civilians waiting on him with invitations from all quarters. He is a most unpretentious man. Lady Aitchison quite motherly...drove up to the town which lies five miles from port. The road passed through what in wet weather must be a swamp. Crossed an arm of the Indus. Found the town straggling over several miles, houses dull and everything intensely uninteresting. Became an honorary member of the club. Played tennis...Played billiards."[29]

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[26] March 16.

[27] March 21.

[28] "Went into the bazaar and had great difficulty in sketching, the natives would crowd round and block up my view, was unable to finish it."

[29] March 29.

His journal records four days spent in India, yet he appears to have shown a work entitled Street Scene in Bombay at the RI in 1884, and two similarly titled pictures at the RA in 1886. Bombay is 2/3 days sail south of Karachi and yet the journal makes no mention of the visit. I would argue that these lost pictures were submitted as Indian subjects, untitled and uninscribed, and thus assumed as views of Bombay.

There are four extant pictures[30] which correspond to Melville's stopover in India, the principal being Kurrachan[31] (Plate 41) as the others are known only as reproductions in sale catalogues. The work is clearly more than a swift sketch and were the colour scheme more diverse one would assume it to be completed later from preparatory notes. The street architecture is rendered to give an impression of painstaking naturalism and linear precision, but the whole is actually based on a series of empty geometrical planes and contrasting passages of pattern. It is mostly successful save the sidestreet area where the two sets of buildings meet, as the perspective of the receding perpendicular becomes confused. The actual architecture is depicted concisely and with very few actual lines ; the loose patterning of the vertical balcony struts, horizontal shutters, dotted tile roofs and cross-hatched woven walls display an interest in utilising the pattern systems of Islam to create space and perspective. The shop blinds and walls are mostly blank areas enclosed by subtle tones, with the blinds in particular are reminiscent of pendant awnings from Cairo bazaars, although more regular. In discussing pattern and areas of void and detail, the trees are notable for the wet application and daubing which displays a diversity of handling to complement the expressive styles he was using at this juncture.

In formal terms this work is a prototype for Awaiting an Audience with the Pasha, with the understated geometrical construction, empty foreground and ghostly hooded figures. The main disparity is in the palette range, and in the Indian picture Melville employed an

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[30]The three lesser works are Kurrachee Street Scene, 1883 (14.5x21.25"), Ill Christie's 29.9.89; Street Scene, Karachi (13.25x20.5"), Ill Christie's 28.4.87; and Karachee (6.7x9.7"), private coll.

[31] Watercolour. (28x49cm) Art Gallery of NSW, Australia.

uncharacteristically high tonality. As was usual with early Eastern works, the mechanics of the composition were swiftly applied in a russet brown, but in this *plein air* picture there is simply less 'working' as there is no shade or obstruction to diffuse the light fall. The only shaded areas are beneath shop awnings and on the balcony, and therefore the principal area is unworked. To emphasise this restraint, the palette is restricted to russet, warm pale pink roof tiles and mauve in the trees and woven textures. Thus in terms of organic form the use of colour could be described as subtly expressionistic.

The work suffers from lack of an arch or gateway device to lead the eye through the composition, thus drawing attention to any spatial inconsistency. The mid-ground determinants - namely a figure, boulder, birds and spindly tree - are effective, if a little staged. The ghostly figures, vast areas of white void and the russet detail give the overall impression of a sepia-toned photograph, over-exposed in the bright light and describing only static forms with definition. The curious reportage of blurred movement became a consistent quality in Melville's art, and was used to suggest processions, thronging crowds, bazaars and bullfights.

This may allude to his use of photographic prompts which would help to explain the contrasts of static and incorporeal movement, monochromatic russet or pure colour expressionism, or simply point to his skills as *plein air* sketcher. Both theories could accommodate monochrome and pure unnatural colour schemes, but the absence of appropriate photographic or sketched evidence suggests that he painted on the spot in one hue and embellished on completion.

What is evident, however, is the lack of naturalistic light effects in these works, an overall dearth of atmosphere in these sepia toned scenes of arrested movement. The uniformity does not betray any real sense of *plein airism* and the expansive foregrounds and architectural precision suggest photographic prompts. This of course would account for the beige modulations and lack of colour effects and light play. It may also explain why the figures seem to have been caught stock-still and none mid-step, turning and stopping to look at the tourist capturing them. There is no

attempt by the artist to conjure a microcosmic 'glimpse of reality' here from a painstaking array of sketches and photographs. This evident photographic posing is apparent in Street in Cairo and Cairo, for example, where crowds of people stare out at the viewer as one would a photographer in their midst. It is unlikely that they would have been so reticent had it been a *plein air* painting : Melville had recorded how difficult it was to sketch outside without adequate protection. These works feature an untypical interest in the linear quality of architecture, a precision more easily afforded through photography.

The next stop on the journey, having turned northward, was Guadar telegraph station on April 4. This station was one of four linking India with Europe, via Turkish lines from Constantinople to Baghdad, the artist visiting a second at Bushire. Melville described the curious natural feature he encountered thus;

> "Guadar is a telegraph station situated on the south side of a beautiful landlocked bay. The rocks take the most curious formations, one grand pile has exactly the form of a beautiful old cathedral with the remains of a spire. There are fluted columns running right up from the sea, terminating in a roof some-what like Notre Dame. We did not go ashore."[32]

A sketch of this rock formation[33] (See Plate A) again displays his willingness to record natural subjects and curiosities of interest as part of his travelogue, for pleasure or in this case to relieve the tedium of being denied shore leave. He sketched this from the ship, and the image contains a pair of sailing sloops framed against the imposing hatched rockface.

Melville arrived in Muscat on April 5 1882, staying for two days. Muscat was, along with Bushire to the North in the Persian Gulf, the headquarters of British operations in the Gulf. Sarah Searight describes the town thus;

> "For the first thirty years of the century the climate, which even Curzon described as an 'exceptional horror', drove the British to direct their interests there from Bushire until the 1870's...The town of Muscat, built round a small bay guarded by two Portuguese forts, 'an ill-built, crowded,not over-clean place', was hemmed in by a

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[32] April 4.

[33] Cathedral Rock, FAS London. See ill. Plate A.

> high wall of mountains from the deserts of the interior of Arabia. British ships from India called there regularly after the first treaty - to prevent the French winning a foothold in the Gulf - was signed with the Sultan of Muscat in 1799, by an 'English gentleman of respectability' - John Malcolm."[34]

Melville, however, gained a different first impression of the scene;

> "Hills of Muscat in sight enveloped in a delicate haze, with here and there light spots of sand. As we approached the harbour the scene became truly bewitching. It was impossible to say where the entrance might be, the land having the appearance of an islet. Suddenly the way opened out and the most fairy-like scene met our gaze...The most curious odd little half ruined turrets peeping out from half a dozen places. The town appeared at the furthest point of the circle, built quite up to the water's edge...We were carried a few steps from the boat to the ladder by which we mounted to the Residency. Muscat soldiers standing about as we entered the most ruinous of Consulates. We found Colonel Ross very pleasant."[35]

Again the artist seems to move from one set of eminent British establishment figures to the next, enjoying colonial hospitality. This was clearly due to his illustrious fellow-passengers as much as his own personality and purpose, but it affords interesting insights into the expatriate community in the East.

He went on;

> "Went out into the bazaars before tiffin, found them wonderfully picturesque, more so than anything I had yet seen. The Arabs with their pistols, spears and swords, dark skins and supple drapery were a feast for the Gods. Nothing could be more striking. Wild sons of the desert they looked. Made a sketch of the bazaar, natives very good natured...Lord Ilchester is very friendly. We make quite a pleasant party it seems, quite a yachting tour. The Sultan of Muscat is at war with a Bedouin tribe, if had time would go and see it."[36]

This extract refers to Grand Bazaar, Muscat (Plate 42), one of the principal works of his Eastern period, but the comments again reiterates his journey as being more akin to a society cruise. Melville was mixing comfortably with the upper echelons of the British community on the ships and in the

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[34] Searight, S. The British in the Middle East. Herts. 1969. p114.

[35] April 5.

[36] ibid.

colonies, availing himself of the privileges to which his travel companions were accustomed.[37]

To date, Melville had executed several asymmetrically-orientated bazaar scenes *en plein air*, and the interior Grand Bazaar, Muscat retains this viewpoint. The perspective leads the viewer through the composition to a horizontal row of windows in the background, a motif which replaces the arch or doorway as spatial determinant. The eye looks straight down a thoroughfare between rows of stalls, and replaces the roadway or alley in the outdoor bazaars. Geometrically, it features parallel rows of wooden columns which recede through the design to a square window focus, effectively creating space within the picture. In essence this interior is a variation on the formal aspects of earlier bazaar scenes. The foremost columns attain both the top and bottom edges of the image, ensuring compositional coherence and immediacy by locating the viewer firmly within the picture space. Such a conspicuous spatial determinant was necessary in his most abstract and fragmentary work to date, ordering a picture which featured more geometry, saturated colour and suggested form than any preceding watercolour.

The work again is heavily populated, with a principal figure in the foreground of the passageway. To the right foreground, a mule and its keeper are clearly visible, although the animal is somewhat inanimate. Numerous less developed figures throng the image beyond the foreground, forming an altogether convincing bazaar atmosphere. It is a more relaxed scene which does not suggest the claustrophobia which an indoor bazaar could induce, perhaps acknowledging the affable nature of the Muscat people mentioned in the extract.

The mechanics of the work were effectively yet easily attained *in situ*, a light-toned beige wash covered the whole picture area save the horizontal band which would comprise the focus. Overall the tone is dark, consistent with the interior setting and preceding Eastern works where brown tonal

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[37] We must assume that his acquaintance with the Cox family for example as wealthy Scottish landowners, would have prepared him for such experiences.

explorations were more evident.[38] These dark washes were applied over the beige ground, particularly in the upper section of the picture while much of the lower section was left prime to reveal broad working and applications of colour highlights. Many of the stalls, columns, burnouses, features and much of the ground remains light where, as in the figures, daubs of dark brown quickly make sense of desired forms through economical means.

Speed and dexterity were vital in working-up on location, and his watercolour technique facilitated this, leaving more scope to add blots of colour to create the design. Thus, after carefully selecting a scene, he could sketch in a spatial system with figures in an interior in a simple arrangement of two washes. Alacrity of execution facilitated a more meticulous addition of complementary hues, which could be contrived *in situ* or at a later date to create the most effective impression.

MELVILLE'S EMERGING COLOUR THEORY

To counteract the dramatic perspective of the columns which draw the viewer through the composition to the background focus, the system of applied colour is virtually confined to an arc spanning the two foreground corners. The arc ensures that the principal areas of colour are located in the foreground areas but to either side, creating a shallow horizontal axis of colour which resists the tonal draw through the work. Primary colour is 'blocked' by the figure standing in the centre of the thoroughfare, meaning colour emphasis is diversified rather than centralised. The question of symmetry is integral to Melville's work but this design shows how the theory could be expanded to include colour and tone, working in harmony and opposition within a formal framework.

Evident here is the irregularity of colour application. Where tone and ground were areas of flat geometrical wash and line, his highlights of pure colour were blots, strokes and local washes applied freely and expressively.

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[38] The tendency with Orientalist painters was to contrive images bathed in harsh bright light, rendering works more linear and the colour crisp and bright. Thus an artificial image of the East was created by such as J-L. Gérôme, L. Deutsch and JF. Lewis.

In this sense Melville differed from Seurat's *pointillism*[39], preferring a free repertoire of brushwork to the constrictions of 'dots' or 'comma shapes' painstakingly and rhythmically encompassing the whole picture surface. The discrepancy of medium is integral to this question, as watercolour is more versatile as its liquidity ensures freer application and spontaneity, while oil equates more with premeditation and permanence. It is clear, I would argue, how Melville's choice of medium ultimately influenced the development of his style.

The application of areas of saturated, or pure, primary colour marks a significant progression in his work. In Grand Bazaar, Muscat Melville retained the basic brown tonality[40] but the positive infusion of colour in localised areas creates a whole new watercolour style. Earlier works like Turkish Bazaar, Cairo featured this dark tonality but the colour applied was more subtle and harmonised, utilising thin pale washes of modulated colour as opposed to the bold kaleidoscopic array visible here. In his use of colour, Melville again avoids unnecessary mixing on the palette by using only a narrow range of primary hues, the most conspicuous of which is the blue featured most prominently in the focal figure.

Timeless established colour theories stated that colourists concerned with 'saturation' restrict themselves to a relatively narrow range of hues, a principal to which Melville always subscribed for practical reasons or otherwise. This blue, however, was a key choice considering the brown tonality. Although predominantly dark, the brown ground of the picture is rich and denotes a 'warm' atmosphere for the whole design. However the turquoise which appears in the heart of the composition, and in the extreme foreground corners, is a particularly 'cool' colour and especially when interspersed with bright green to the right. As such, Melville effectively yet economically creates 'colour tension' by pervading the whole 'warm' brown design with 'cool' colour yet restricting it to only

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[39]Melville could not have known of Seurat's contemporary developments in the field of colour, as he did not exhibit until the Salon of 1883.

[40] Visible in earlier bazaar scenes, Edge of the Desert etc

three areas in the near ground. Strategic positioning of relatively small pockets of pure colour can thus influence an entire design.

If, though, he had left the picture thus it would have been disproportionately 'cool', as the blue/green is too pure to counterbalance an auxiliary, or mixed, colour like brown. To alleviate this a pure scarlet is added into the picture at certain points, most evidently in the extreme foreground corners, juxtaposing it with the turquoise. To the left, the most intense area of blue is on the margin while toward the centre it is washed and thin, counterbalanced with a daub of intense red. To the right foreground and in the stall, a rainbow cluster of daubs comprise an area of about one-sixth of the picture space, but the effect is dazzling. Cool and warm tones[41] are segregated diagonally by yellow and pale dots of green and orange consistent with the spatial system, leading one into the composition.

Where the area to the left is applied dry, this is wetter and applied in dots, daubs and runs of colour. The tiny dots of red suggest jewellery or fruit, and decoration on the ass's saddle, while the extreme right corner area is unfocussed beyond natural recognition. This is intentional in conveying an impression, rather than a factual description, of a scene where colour is fulfilling pictorial and design purposes rather than a purely descriptive role. Finally, the centre features a deep blue wash on the figure's robes with a rhyming stripe design on the textile in the centre of the space, while to balance there is a pale pink wash on the figures to both sides of the striped fabric. Thus the system of cool and warm colours have been wilfully selected and applied to ensure a symmetry of colour, creating tension from their interaction. The whole is a painstakingly constructed and personal colour theory, facilitating a harmonising of the disparate elements of an unconventional picture.

However colour fulfils other purposes than description and differentiation. The foreground right displays abstract colour used to lift the sludge brown of the original wash. The intense red at the left is

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[41] Green/blue and red/orange, the complementary combination.

reminiscent of the Cabbage Garden, where Melville must have been aware of the primitive colour theory of mutual intensification of complementary hues. Without this knowledge and the 'red blob' as the focal point, the green of the picture would have remained more dully organic than the present vivid wall of intense colour. Thus he had transcended pure naturalism as early as 1877, employing a rudimentary personal expressionism.

By 1882 he was incorporating 'colour temperature'. This held that warm colours, and in particular orange, advance while cool blue/green recedes when placed in the same ground. Since the 17th century successful landscape painting had been organised on the principles of colour recession : brown foreground, green/yellow mid and blue background. This utilised the theory of warm and cool colours to create depth and augment whatever spatial system was employed. As seen in Melville's bazaar scenes, his spatial systems were becoming less conventional, eschewing linear perspective in favour of motifs and distinct tonal gradations such as the arch with dark bordered light focus. It seems natural then that he should explore the properties of colour to these ends. In Grand Bazaar Muscat there is a comparative tonal system whereby the foreground is relatively light, mid-ground dark and the focus clearly defined as the brightest area of the work to lead the eye through the picture and create depth. However by placing blue/green in fore and mid-ground he complements the colour tension to either side by having receding hues in the foreground, and in the centre the blue is an effective link between empty foreground and light focus. The juxtaposition of cool and warm colours in close proximity to both sides of the foreground emphasises this tension and ensures that, as in a real bazaar the eye is unable to rest but travels unceasingly over the riot of colour and action.

As is evident the dazzling passage of colour to the right imbues a sense of movement to the picture, emphasised by the wraith-like figures and undefined forms which crowd the scene, and although this seems like a modern development it was a theory with which Islamic and Renaissance mosaicists were familiar. While this area raised the tone of the work, ensuring a light foreground to lead through the dark mid into the light

background, the colour temperatures also aid the structure of the picture. The warmest area is nearest the right foreground corner and advances, the transitional section of yellow and pale green recedes slightly into the work on a diagonal axis, while the coolest area is blue/green which leads the eye even further into the picture spacetoward the focal point. The section on the donkey and stall reiterate the theory that Melville was aware of the tangential properties of colour in picture design.

A lengthy discussion of colour at this juncture may appear pedantic but Grand Bazaar Muscat exemplifies certain aspects toward which the artist had worked since Cabbage Garden, his first essay with pure colour. He evolved into a pioneering colourist and it is important to examine how he arrived at such a style. It was not by accident but design, an evolution which crystallised under conditions (chronological and geographical) where it would be inaccurate to call him derivative. It is now clear that he was working contemporaneously with colourists such as Pissarro, Monet and Seurat, but each had a distinct approach and took different cues.

The late 1870's and early '80's were a fertile period for ideological links between art and science, and on colour theory. For example Zola's contemporary writings such as Thérèse Raquin and Le Roman Expérimental claimed to explore the bond between writer and scientist. David Rutter's Phénomène de la Vision[42] stated, according to Thomson;

> "science removes all uncertainties and permits complete freedom of movement"[43]

Melville's development displays a logical and meticulous approach to his whole artistic vision, incorporating theories of space, colour and geometry and it is likely that such an ideology would have appealed to him. Seurat read Blanc's Grammaire des Arts du Dessin, with its synopses of the colour theories of Chevreul and Delacroix, in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts[44], and Rood's Modern Chromatics was first published in 1879[45] which

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[42] Serialised in L'Art inearly 1880. Richard Thomson introduces this topic in Seurat, Oxford 1985 p32.

[43] ibid p32

[44] ibid p32.

[45] And translated into French two years later, while Melville was in France.

proves how accessible such works were to the art student. Blanc's summaries and Rood's writings were not complex scientific hypotheses but practical guides, the latter particularly expressed for the practising painter. It described theories of mutual intensification of complementary colours with illustrations such as the 22-colour 'wheel'. Thus, then, whether Melville read or even knew of these publications, he was in France during a fertile period of interest in colour and its scientific applications in the arts. He would undoubtedly have encountered discussion of the above in studios or cafés, or from other artists' work. Some of this contemporary knowledge and innovation would have been transmitted to him, awaiting application in the East.[46]

Considering the brevity of Melville's shore leave in Muscat it is remarkable that he should have produced other finished works from sketches made *in situ*, such as Cock Fight, Muscat [47] (Plate 43). The most notable feature of this version is that the cocks themselves do not appear in the picture, and although Mackay suggests that the work is actually unfinished[48] I would venture that the picture exists much as the artist intended.

Melville does not mention sketching such a subject in his journal and, as he was only in Muscat for one day one must assume that the work was actually 'fabricated' for the Royal Watercolour Society's exhibition in 1900. As such it had limited relevance to this 'illustrated travelogue', but is worth examining.

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[46]Little is known of Melville's training at the School of Art and RSA in Edinburgh. His master JC Noble was not a noted colourist, but major influence JR Reid had travelled in sunnier climes and heightened his palette accordingly. Cabbage Garden proved that as early as 1877, Melville had a rudimentary grasp of the properties of colour via mutual intensification. The application of pure primary colour in daubs may be seen as a natural development in the East, but Melville would have been aware of the stunning colour of Fortuny and the divisionist techniques of the Impressionists, derived from Renoir. Melville's residence in Paris coincided with Renoir's Salon success, and the 1879 Indépendents Exhibition. He may also have been in the city the following May to see the next Exhibition in Rue des Pyramides.

[47] Watercolour. (30.25x22") Sold and Ill Sotheby's Scotland 28.8.79.

[48] See cat entry 85, p130.

The artist apparently washed the fighting fowl out of the picture after its inaugural showing, evidently dissatisfied with them. However the large scale of the picture confirms it as an exhibition piece, although it was not shown again in his lifetime and remained in the family collection. Intriguingly the picture still 'works' as a composition even without the subject focus, testimony to Melville's developing expression of movement. Thus the viewer is free to concentrate on the crowd and arena atmosphere, while the ghostly centre lies empty.

Formally Cock Fight, Muscat is consistent with other contemporary works like Pilgrim's Prayer, with arch and alcove as the compositional basis[49]. The warm russet colouring and weighting of areas of void and detail are also reminiscent of other interior and street-scene pictures. Approximately one third of the picture area remains bare, or minimally treated, paper including most of the foreground where the action occurred. The cocks, in being washed out, have lifted the grey-beige wash from the surface to create a kind of spectral translucence. This faint wash and untreated paper occurs in strategic positions around the image in the same way as passages of pure colour, applied to effect in the columns and figures to the right. It thus describes tunics and turbans to contrast with the dark skins, and the steps from which the hierarchy view the action. The gloom in the shadows recalls Turkish Bath, for example, used to mask features and maintain an impersonal objectivity.

Only through posture and the seating arrangements can one deduce the caste system evident in this Eastern genre scene. A similar situation may be witnessed in Victorian sporting events such as cock or dog-fighting pits with the owners, bookmakers and punters all occupying differentiated territory. Thus the poor gambler who had wagered money he could not afford to lose would appear more animated, crouched ready to spring victorious or slink off beaten, than the pasha-like figures who viewed more impassively from the shade. Facial expressions were unnecessary

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[49]There is another version of Cockfight, Muscat in the New York Met. Museum. W/c, (33x23"). It is slightly larger, but on the whole less finished. The figures are less substantial and fewer in number, although two lightly-sketched and diminutive fowl are included at the foot of the steps.

where apparel and posture fulfil the same purpose, and he represented them simply as brown blobs with black-dotted features. Such simplified colouring is evident on the figure in right mid-ground holding the staff, who is described by a mottled sheet of scarlet, mauve, turquoise, orange and green applied loosely and relatively wet. However as can be seen in other sections of the picture, such as the columns, the texture of the paper is visible displaying the versatility of his handling.

The architecture, particularly in the alcove and upper section of the picture, has the conspicuous pencil guidelines one might see in David Roberts. These however are less in evidence in the rest of the picture, for example in the steps which although linear have actually been described by modulations of wash. The simple nature of the architecture suggests that it was 'worked up' in the studio, although this does not appear to have been the case with the figures who are more naturalistic. The right -hand axis is the most impressive section of the picture differentiating it from other earlier pictures.

The three nearest figures are unusually sharp and focused, reminiscent of the ethnographical tendencies of Egyptian Sower, crisp figurework in restrained medium-wet brushwork. The nearest is a Nubian black figure in a skullcap and white tunic with powerful physique emphasised by acute shadowplay, while the only colouring is orange and mauve on the hat. The second is barely visible but the concise description of black forehead and bare-paper burnous commutes his engrossed bearing. The third figure is extremely Egyptian like the first recalling the sower's profile, and features inky black hair, naked torso and arms, and gold and blue skullcap. These are powerful figures, with an almost stylised and abstracted headshape on the third figure. His form contrasts with the mottled burnous of the figure beyond, whose staff serves as a spatial determinant motif in linking the fore and mid-ground through colour and suggested figure-forms. The flower at the bottom is another such motif[50] designed to bring viewer closer to the subject and lending immediacy to the scene. Such motifs recur throughout the Eastern images, helping to commute

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[50] Recalling the basket in Cabbage Garden, which spills out into the viewer's space.

the vibrancy and oppressive heat and claustrophobia of many Eastern experiences.

The colour theories evident in Cock Fight, Muscat are interesting as they assist in focusing an asymmetrical picture whose fulcrum has been erased, displaying his mastery of design factors. The perimeter of the picture is completed almost completely in cool colours such as green, blue and mauve, while the inner is comprised of warm russet, red and orange as the heart of the composition. Thus it is the central section which advances while the figures which extend to the bottom edge recede to give more balance to the composition against the empty left-hand axis. However the central horizontal section in the recess featuring the seated figures is in cool hues and withdraws beyond the vacuum vacated by the birds. This series of conflicting and complementary hues, voids, passages of action and motif elucidates the complex theories which Melville had stumbled upon, allowing him to flaunt conventional linear perspective systems and finished form.

MELVILLE IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Melville left Muscat on the "Dryad", stopping briefly at the telegraph station of Jask *en route* for Bandar Abbas in the Persian Gulf. He recorded his impressions thus :

> "Reached B'Abbas the most filthy and disgusting village possible to conceive. All the inhabitants seem afflicted with some disease, sores appearing all over their bodies. The stench of rotten fish is quite enough to raise an epidemic. The bazaars are composed chiefly of palm branches stuck in the ground. Went on board had miserable day. Played whist."[51]

General references to the town throughout the centuries agreed on the extreme nature of its climate, the smell, sores and influx of prostitutes in winter. The English and Dutch established factories there, and it was the headquarters of the East India Company before the move to the equally sweltering Bushire.

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[51] Extract April 7, 1882.

This commentary reveals that although he stayed for a similar duration to the stop in Muscat, Melville did not feel compelled to make any kind of sketch in B'Abbas. Even considering the repugnant smell in the town and the diseased inhabitants, it is unusual that he should be so visually unmoved by a place. This selective subjectivity is a consistent feature of Orientalist 'travelogue' painting, identified in Linda Nochlin's essay examining Jean-Léon Gérôme[52].

Nochlin accuses Gérôme of contriving an 'illusion of authenticity', disguising his brushwork to deny his pictures as any kind of art at all. His work made claims to objectivity and yet did not feature any of the dirt and squalor which so many travellers recorded as rife in the East. He also omits any 'Western' presence from his images, but it is this manipulation of the East for occidental male consumption which is of interest. Although he eschews evidence of dirt and disease, though, he painstakingly rendered tiles and architecture crumbling in the background of Snake Charmer to subtly allude to the breakdown of the ancient civilisations. Whether due to the alleged sloth and barbarism of the 'natives', or simply the onslaught of Western industrialisation, the underlying themes are clear reflections of Gérôme's imperialist background and times.

These allegations can also, in part, be applied to Melville. He was attempting to develop a series of Eastern images which would attract new patronage while maintaining the appeal for those who had purchased his Scottish and French rustic naturalism. It is clear that figures like John Tullis[53] or James Cox[54], or Edinburgh New Town lawyers like Mylne, would not have responded favourably to images of squalor and suffering. This also accounts for the dearth of fabricated and exploitative images of race and gender, encapsulated in Gérôme's slave market scenes (Plate 69).

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[52] Nochlin, L. Politics of Vision, London 1991. 'Imaginary Orient', pp33-57.

[53] Glasgow-based proprietor of the world's largest leather-belting manufacturer. Tullis had travelled in India and had international business interests.

[54] Scottish landowner whose family had made their money from jute in Dundee.

The following day the vessel reached Linga, where it appears that Melville painted Pearl Fisheries[55] (Plate 45). He wrote;

> "We called on a pearl merchant, but he had nothing to show us. Did a sketch of the harbour, most picturesque. Did another in bazaar equally so."[56]

which probably refers to this picture. The latter comment may allude to Bazaar at Vringa[57].

The watercolour itself is relatively detailed and the monochromatic palette suggests its *plein air* execution. Most of the work is rendered in dark grey and brown tones, with some russet highlights on the mules' saddles in the foreground. The figures and forms in mid-ground are somewhat fragmentary, indicating his experience of bazaars and crowd scenes, although the liquid mauve foreground shadows are slightly incongruous The strategic insertion of the cobalt blue and scarlet highlights throughout the central axis of the work recall many of his other contemporary works, and may have been applied later aboard ship. This is a typical tourist or travelogue scene, competently and swiftly executed, reflecting his *plein air* experience by this juncture.

Although it is feasible that he did stop at Bahrein, as many ships crossed the Gulf en route to Bushire rather than continuing the three hundred mile voyage direct along the north coast, he does not mention nor allow much time for such a halt. Melville again enjoyed typical colonial hospitality at Bushire, perhaps due in part to the presence of MP Sir

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[55] Watercolour (11x18.5"). S.& inscribed "Gulf of Persia, Pearl Fisheries.". Burrell Coll, Glasgow. Bought by Burrell from Reid and Lefevre in 1926. Although not listed in Mackay, there is a work entitled Pearl Divers of Bahrein, shown at the Dudley in 1883. Melville does not, as with the earlier discussed Bombay pictures, record a stop at Bahrein which is in the Gulf of Persia.

[56] April 8, 1882.

[57] Watercolour (10.5x17.5"). Recently sold by the Fine Art Society, ex family collection. May conceivably have been misread from the original picture title. An image, shaded to the left, of a bazaar and architecture. He recalled;

> "The bazaars were clean, and some parts of the town reminded me forcibly of Cairo."ibid.

Hence the formal similarities in this work with earlier bazaar scenes.

Arthur Stepney and Lord Ilchester with whom he had struck a close friendship. He noted;

> "We were taken off the steamer by the Consul's launch and landed in front of the Governor's Residence where we found a splendid carriage waiting for us, decked out in the most gaudy of trappings and guard of Persian soldiers preceded us to the Residency...We were brought to a standstill by the hind quarters of a donkey, we all sprung out and found the wheel standing on the poor brute. His master regarding us in terror evidently fancying he had been to blame in having a donkey, and that the donkey should be there. It was very disgusting but something which Egypt had in a manner prepared me for. We were welcomed at the Residency by Mr. Lucas, Colonel Ross's locum tenens."[58]

It is unclear whether Melville was repulsed by the drover's treatment of his animal, or in fact his pitiful deference toward British imperialist forces. Either way, it shows Melville formulating ethnographical stereotypes from his experiences in the East. I would argue that he was in fact referring to their treatment of animals, which was generally viewed as harsher and less empathetic than one observed in British rural communities. This tendency to brutality, of course, is consistent with Orientalist references to the supposed sloth and unrefined ignorance of these 'peripheral' cultures as viewed by Westerners.

It is unlikely that Melville should have criticised the imperialist status quo as established by British dominance of these colonies so openly, with their fearsome and subservient native guards protecting the Residency. He was more likely to have been echoing comments made by his 'establishment' travelling companions, condemning the cruelty of the Eastern peoples and their treatment of livestock. It is interesting to note, however, that as he approached Persia the confidence and autonomy of the indigenous population was gradually rising, just as imperialist influence minimised;

> "Those guards dressed in Prussian blue frock-coats and yellow cashmere trousers looked formidable enough and proved their valour by charging every-thing that came in the way."[59]

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[58] April 10, 1882, Melville's 27th birthday.

[59] ibid.

Melville resurrected the theme of indigenous customs and traditions with the striking Pilgrims on the Way to Mecca[60] (Plate 44), depicting seated figures on board a ship. This was a popular Orientalist subject in painting and literature[61], presenting the familiar 'fanatical' image of the Arab faithful to the Western public. If this were a depiction of an actual situation, Melville would have had to have painted it toward Bushire, at the North end of the Gulf, or at Bahrein which was the only possible stop on the Western shore of the Gulf. This is because Mecca is on the Western coast of the Arabic peninsula, which they had to traverse on foot.

Thematically, this is a more conventionally 'Orientalist' picture. Numerous picturesque Arab figures are seated in ornate costumes and headwear, doing appropriate tasks like reading the Koran, smoking and making necklaces. The right foreground of the deck is cluttered with a still-life of exotic paraphernalia such as prayer mats, plates on the deck and walls, and staffs. Slippers are arranged along the foreground as one sees in Melville's Arab Outside a Mosque, in the Robertson collection, or for example Gérôme's Santon at the Door of a Mosque.

It recalls Melville's earlier Eastern images as the picture employs suspended tarpaulins to create more dramatic light effects, large geometrical shapes creating passages of white light to splash onto the deck and cabin wall while bare paper is visible above the rail beyond the ship. It is effective as a wholly self-contained and finished work, where the artist has purposely restricted the picture space within the confines of the deck. He created space more conventionally with the ruled orthogonals of the deck boards and rails, although the suspended lifeboat hull planks are confusing and incorrectly rendered.

The figures in the foreground are naturalistically painted in liquid brushwork, exploring the textures and forms of the figures, their features

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[60] Watercolour, 1882. FAS, ex-Jamieson. Inscribed 'Persian Gulf'. Known only from b/w photograph.

[61] Léon Belly's famous oil Pilgrims on the Way to Mecca of 1861 is the classic depiction of this theme. See also, for example, Chapter 2 (pp. 18) of Edwards op cit, entitled 'Cairo and the Mecca Pilgrimage' which descibes this rich visual spectacle.

and the exotica arranged around them. As the picture recedes, however, Melville's handling becomes more broad and loose, with the figures more akin to the crowd scenes he relished. This is a typical tension within Melville's work of the period, playing passages of naturalism against a freer and more expressive style akin to abstraction. Thus he could paint Aden and Street Market, Aden contemporaneously.

The subject, in conjunction with secular images of street bazaars and entertainment, depicted an aspect of Eastern life with which Westerners would be familiar. Alongside images of mosques and meditation, the pilgrimage was a recognisable facet of Eastern spirituality which evoked the mysticism and romance absent from Scottish Presbyterian society. It appealed to a similar audience as the meditating *nawab* of Arab Interior, and may refer to the faithful in Pilgrim's Prayer as a kind of pendant image. The 'pilgrimage' itself was a popular aspect of the Grand Tour, and many artists such as David Roberts viewed their journeys to the Holy Land as a personal voyages of discovery, with a strong religious motivation. Indeed artists strove for Mecca themselves, as the great forbidden city had great appeal. The dangers of the *hajj* or pilgrimage are well recounted by writers such as Burckhardt or Richard Burton[62], travelling in disguise or, as in Burckhardt's case, as a serious convert to Islam examined on his knowledge by the *Quadi* of Mecca.

For Melville, though, Pilgrims on the way to Mecca was a picturesque scene painted to while away the hours on board, with a view to a certain sale. He refers to some similar travellers, slightly disparagingly, thus;

> "At Foan (telegraph station on the Euphrates) we landed several deck passengers who were unable to pay their fares. They were Persians on a pilgrimage to some tomb."[63]

This extract suggests that he may well have contrived the title of the picture to make it more saleable, after encountering the faithful and seeing them landed without the passage fare. There is no reference to his painting this picture *in situ* nor of any admiration for their dedication.

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[62] See Searight, pp134-138.

[63] April 10.

There are several others pictures made on board ships from this period. The Deck of the Bacchante[64] is a watercolour view of a ship which more closely resembles a yacht than a steamship, with the rigging clearly visible. Other drawings include Deck of a Levanter[65] and Deck of a Yacht[66], while his sketch entitled Whist[67] is an eloquent little study of four card players in an almost Whistlerian manner (Plate A). The woman and men sit on deck chairs, in varying headgear, with the far figure smoking a pipe. This drawing exemplifies the increasing interest in life study during this period, making the transition to society portraiture on his return to Edinburgh an unsurprising metamorphosis.

By April 13 they had left the Persian Gulf for the River Euphrates and Bussorah where, again, he was welcomed by a Major M., who;

> "put a horse at my disposal and sent a 'cavass' to attend me, gorgeously dressed with enormous sword"[68]

to visit the town. He was taught how to *salaam* to the soldiers' presentation of arms, a customary courtesy, visited bazaars and sketched. Interestingly at this juncture the journal juxtaposes two seemingly trivial episodes which all the same encapsulate Melville's bearing. In a post-prandial discussion with Major M. and Sir A., apparently inflamed with alcohol, Melville argued vociferously about the "innocence of women"[69]. Melville seemed to think that "in attacking women they attacked you (Amanda M.,)"[70], demonstrating an idealistic naivete. The artist's attitudes and experience of women at this stage may also in part account for the infrequent images of women in his Eastern output, although the

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64 Watercolour. (14x20"). Inscribed '90. Ill. Sotheby's Belgravia 20.6.72. Melville mentions this ship while at Suez, March 3, 1882 :

> "The 'Bacchante' having gone to Ismalia with the princes."

The original shetches for this picture at least dated from 1882. ibid p32.

65 Now lost. Shown Scottish Exhibition, Glasgow 1911. The Levant is the Eastern Mediterranean, and may have been executed either approaching Alexandria on the way to Cairo, or on the way home from Turkey.

66 Now Lost. This drawing in chalk on brown paper could equally have been executed in Scotland.

67 FAS, sketchbook. Several entries in the journal from this period refer to card games on board ship: eg March 10, 1882 "played whist till midnight."

68 April 12.

69 ibid.

70 ibid.

difficulty in sketching women from life in Muslim countries was well-documented. However it is also of note that he did not paint any of his male friends in Cairo or on board ship in the Gulf, as Western physiognomy was not relevant at this juncture.

Colonial male discussions of this type, on the verandah over brandy and cigars, would have been classic situations for encouraging wildly sexist and racist behaviour among the colonial classes. Melville was clearly inexperienced in these situations and had not absorbed too much imperialist machismo despite his establishment comradeship during the voyages. His final comment that;

> "it would never do to show my feelings"[71]

is more akin to such a male environment. This cameo is, in isolation, relatively meaningless but the following entry gives a further indication as to how the East was affecting him;

> "On our way up the Euphrates, reached the Garden of Eden at mid-day. It consists of palm trees and a few Arab huts. A species of Acacia is pointed out as being the direct descendant of the tree of knowledge...Probably from the fact that it is the only tree of its kind here."[72]

Although he supposedly made a sketch of the tree, the laconic diary entry is almost agnostic in timbre. For a man raised in such a traditionally Scottish religious fervour and travelled with a Bible tucked inside the plaid he wore[73], Melville appears almost scathing about this first tangible contact with Christian history. The Garden of Eden, as Paradise on earth, was where Life began in the Old Testament. The entire Christian doctrine of Creation and Sin was initiated in that locality, and one would have expected a less flippant comment from Melville.

Melville seems to be denying sensitivity to his Western religious beliefs while arguing forcibly on moral issues, perhaps redolent of some minor crisis of faith while travelling in the East. The earlier comment that;

> "They were Persians on a pilgrimage to some tomb"[74]

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[71] ibid.

[72] April 13.

[73] ibid

[74] April 10.

again sounded dismissive, and it appears that he now had little time for organised religion and his own indoctrination. Perhaps seduced by the sensual relaxation of the palace, mosques and landscape of the Orient which represented meditation and spiritual elevation, a feeling of peace and oneness instead of fear and guilt, his motivations were diversifying. There was no suggestion of a conventional Christian pilgrimage as characterised in the work of Wilkie or Roberts, but a feeling of personal empowering and the desire to develop his art. He seemed overcome by the will to commute these wonderful experiences of 'exaltation' through his art, to encapsulate such reverence and spiritual meditation in an intensely secular painting where architectural beauty and peace fulfil the roles hitherto filled by inadequate scriptural personifications. As such, his religion became deinstitutionalised in favour of a personal expression of inner peace, triggered by a colourful and stimulating work of art.

Through his serious illness in Cairo, debilitation and subsequent return to physical strength Melville appeared to have experienced a spiritual catharsis which cast off certain fetters which had been tying him to Calvinistic repressions, and stifling his artistic expression. A glimpse of death in a strange land strengthened his resolve and severed the ties with formative conventions, showing that the world had more to teach than Edinburgh offered. His life had presented new spiritual and artistic gospels which he felt bound to translate, celebrating that freedom through the figures and views of the enduring 'ancient world'.

These fetters, for example, may be traced to his strictly Calvinist mother burning Melville's childhood drawings. Graven images were forbidden according to the teachings of the Kirk, and he only managed to convince her that his vocation was a respectable 'profession' by selling his work regularly and supporting his brother George through medical studies. Melville had painted modest and naturalistic genre and landscape scenes in his early career which would have been considered the least offensive style by the Presbyterian Church, but since the residence in France his outlook had begun to alter.

Melville's contact with Impressionist and Orientalist paintings, the modern continental styles, had emphasised the aesthetic bent and tendency toward the decorative in his art. Works such as French Peasant or Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris celebrate colour, light and texture in a sensuous, almost indulgent manner. These works, and particularly the former, signal explorations beyond pure naturalism which would escalate as he journeyed in the East. Although he continued to employ naturalism in works such as Camel Market, Aden this was balanced against expressive brushwork, colour and spatial systems. Arab Bazaar and Grand Bazaar, Muscat for example take this further by manipulating organic forms towards geometric, decorative ends and tending towards the intuitive abstraction of forms under dazzling light represented by Gateway of the Kirkuk, Kurdistan. Such images would have been castigated as aesthetic hedonism in the eyes of the Kirk and may explain why many of these more radical pieces remained as sketches in his private collection, and were not shown publicly.[75]

Melville's receptiveness to and empathy with Eastern secular life, as characterised in Pilgrim's Prayer and Arab Interior, heralded an increased humanism in his work. He related to the simple, 'undeveloped' nature of Arabic society while marvelling at the contiguity of the religious and secular, and its indigenous mystery. These aspects, combined with their natural philosophy of meditation and relaxation, contradicted the industrialised urban West he knew and the Presbyterian repression he had absorbed since birth. Thus, the lives of *nawab*, snake charmers, dervishes, sheikhs, warring Persian factions and armed palace guards in their finery took on a particular significance, and became his principal theme in Baghdad. These figure types in concise, evocative settings were not intense psychological studies but more akin to ethnographic records, revelling purely in the aesthetic appeal of these unfamiliar peoples. Such

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[75]R.S.A. exhibits from 1882-83 were generally more naturalistic pieces such as Arab Interior or Call to Prayer. Where they may, for example, have featured unusual spatial systems they were immediately accessible to the conservative viewing public in Edinburgh. More radical examples like Aden or Grand Bazaar, Muscat were not shown at exhibition in Melville's lifetime.

an example of 'art for art's sake' openly defied the view of the Kirk in such matters, and signalled a confident liberation on Melville's part.

These types would have been deemed 'low life' by ethnocentric contemporary Westerners to whom they symbolised vulgar street entertainment, chicanery, sloth or backward paganism. Depicted in an unsensational fashion in restrained colour combinations, these figures were evidently sketched swiftly *in situ*. Thus, Melville appeared to be celebrating the Eastern Other as an unfamiliar and anachronistic set of peoples in much the same way as Western rural life had been captured for posterity before industrialisation destroyed their communities and values. His only apparent concession to Romanticism was to deny any Western presence in these images, concentrating simply on the indigenous types and lifestyles as attractive. This aesthetic approach, cataloguing figures in shallow space[76], contrasts with the restrictions of his early Scottish work and paved the way for his move into pure portraiture on the return to Edinburgh. To Melville the East had represented freedom which allowed him to explore human form and psychological concerns in much greater depth than before.[77]

THE TIGRIS AND BAGHDAD

> "Same scenery as yesterday. Painted portrait of Zahaya the sheik of the Subeans, followers of St. John. A grand looking old fellow. They are only 600 strong and have solicited the protection of the British Government. The sheik showed me many letters from Lord Granville, British Museum, etc. and one in which the Queen sent him £100. He is on his way to inaugurate a church midway between Baghdad and Bussorah."[78]

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[76]Sometimes, as in One-Eyed Calender of Baghdad, with no discernable setting.

[77]The Philosopher, a watercolour of 1880 executed in Scotland, had hinted that his work would follow this direction. Although close in style to Hague School watercolours with the dark, monochrome palette, it represents a close psychological study of a family member or patron. It was owned by James MacKinlay the whisky baron, perhaps intended to imbue a philosophical credibility to the works adorning the walls of his new New Town house.

[78] April 14.

Zahaya Sheik of the Subeans[79] (Plate 46), appears to be the first extant full-face bust portrait, excluding the Head of a Copt, now lost, which would have been painted in Egypt. He concentrated on full-length figurative work in the French tradition, particularly in Egypt and Baghdad, or profiles incorporated into interior settings.

As a close-up portrait, the face is more carefully illuminated than usual in order to pick out the distinguishing features of this fascinating subject. Peering genially forth from under his turban, this elderly figure recalls the *nawab* in Arab Interior, representing a type of eastern dignitary well-used to dealing with the requirements of British statespeople even by this stage and in engaging support and protection. As such, he merited the unusually fastidious observation Melville afforded him in this conventional portrait style, recording a curious figure midway between 'ethnic dignitary' and 'expatriate colonial' status. In his studies of Arab life it is illuminating to read his quasi-ethnographic commentaries interspersed throughout the journal;

> "An idiot on deck amuses us very much singing and dancing. The Arabs are very free from insanity, scarcely a case being known, they regard anyone so afflicted as a prophet."[80]

in relation to the figures he portrays. Where he considered the sheik suitable for a portrait, Melville did not sketch the 'idiot' although this would have made an interesting subject. It is clear that these comments are gleaned from fellow-Western travellers, typical of a travelogue entry.

This turbaned and bearded figure fulfils the Western prerequisite that selected subjects appear wildly dignified and intrinsically noble. Melville would have been aware of this Orientalist tradition through French and British painters but such self-fulfilling subjectivity also recalls representations of Scottish life in Victorian painting. The appeal of the clansman and hunter for Landseer and even Scots like Pettie and Faed[81] provided a sentimental, romanticised view of the heroic savage in

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[79] Watercolour. (19x14.5") Ill Sotheby's 23.4.79. This picture could equally be Head of a Copt - SheikhA'Chga, watercolour (20x14"). Now lost.

[80] April 15.

[81] For example Hunted Down or Last of the Clan respectively.

keeping with the rugged landscape and the literature of Scott. The parallel between the two contemporary situations provides an interesting comparison, suggesting in part why Scots artists were so receptive to the plight of the Orient and its inhabitants under colonial rule.

The same logic would also explain why painters like Melville should wish to celebrate aspects of Scottish rural life in the form of genre and rustic naturalism. The 'rural myth' of the provincial communities symbolised values[82] which were being eroded by industrialisation, and artists and writers such as the Kailyard School wished to capture them for posterity. However, the 'noble savage' stereotype was less relevant to Melville's perception of Scottish life than it was to his peers in the wake of the Highland clearances, and images such as Melville's Wounded Covenanter of 1885 are rare in his *oeuvre*[83]. While Melville alludes to Presbyterian values in records of village life like Cabbage Garden, he does not seek to create propagandist icons from these anachronistic types as Millet did in France. However a fascination with Celtic mythology such as the legends of Ossian resurfaced towards the end of the century through artists like John Duncan and George Henry.

Perhaps wishing to commemorate their passage from the river Euphrates on the 'Kahlifah', On the Tigris[84] was painted around April 14. It features a single-masted vessel being drawn sideways into the quay by an oarsman, recalling earlier remarks recorded in the Red Sea about the indigenous peculiarities of ship manoeuvering. The sail is furled and water becalmed, instilling an air of quiet reflectiveness at port, and such subjects had occurred earlier in drawings made at Hodeida, which featured sailing vessels at the quay. The figure crouched by the oar may have swum ashore, as recorded, to tie up the ship. In the distance, the hazy sweep of pale land forms the horizon and recalls the simplified shape of Aden, almost abstract in form and devoid of detail.

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[82]Honesty, modesty, piety, thrift, diligence and content with one's lot. These correspond closely with the ethics of Presbyterianism

[83]Although it may account for his youthful copy of Landseer's After the Hunt, discussed in Chapter4.

[84] Watercolour (17.5x10.75"). Sotheby's Scotland 13.4.76 Ill cat.

The aim of this chapter was to chart Melville's circumnavigation of the Arabic peninsula between Cairo and Baghdad. Essentially empirical in nature, I have attempted to examine the ports of embarkation in the light of the works Melville produced in each, and by contextualising through overviews of social history. Towns such as Aden and Muscat were key imperialist outposts, and Melville would have encountered particular colonial attitudes and atmospheres in these places.

This journey effectively encapsulates Melville's stylistic development in the East, and several of the principal works were produced during the six-weeks of travel. His colour theory has developed to include the employment of 'colour temperature' as a spatial device. For example, Grand Bazaar, Muscat does not feature conventional single-point perspective in the form of orthogonals, and the artist utilises light focuses in rear ground and an arc of primary and secondary hues to create an illusion of depth.

The naturalistic Camel Market, Aden is not so radical and yet the curiously Northern colour system is redolent of a Scottish setting. Thus, while Melville's Scottish training and upbringing are integral to his personal and thematic development in the East, a work such as this could be viewed as a tactile manifestation of its influence. Conversely, his experience of the Eastern lifestyle led him to realise the shortcomings of his own restrictive religion and society, and to pursue more aesthetic studies of the human figure in its natural habitat. The modest empathy which Melville afforded to the Arabic peoples was retained as he refused to sensationalize his experiences or bow to ethnocentricity to ensure sales. Cock Fight, Muscat anticipated his studies of 'common types' and street entertainers in Baghdad which I will examine in the next chapter, while the eradication of the focus of this work stressed the theme of humanism coming to the fore at this juncture.

MELVILLE IN BAGHDAD
Background : Imperialist Outposts

Melville arrived in Baghdad, after a brief excursion to the ancient site of Ctesephon, on April 16, 1882. It had taken him around six weeks to sail from Cairo, including numerous stops *en route* and a week in Aden, to arrive in the city of the 'Arabian Nights'. Cairo had featured a significant network of British expatriates despatched there as British interest in Suez and, subsequently, the whole country escalated in the early 1880's. Baghdad, however, was an authentic Persian city boasting more Turkish influence than Western, but on arrival Melville received the customary invitation from a Colonel Tweedie to stay at 'The Residency' (See Plate B). There he also encountered a Colonel Gurard, with whom he spent time, confirming that the artist's experience of the East was consistently shaped by Western colonial companionship. Some days later he noted;

> "Went out on horseback to see review of Turkish troops by invitation of Commander-in-Chief. Found everyone seated in a small balcony over-looking the ground. The C-in-Chief was sitting smoking a long pipe, giving his commands to an A.D.C. down below, who ran on foot to deliver orders. It was altogether quite a Turkish 'en famille' kind of thing. Colonel T. flattered him to the top of his bent. We retired later to the garden adjoining and were regaled with coffee and music - if a crash, and a shrill piping can be called so."[1]

The whole timbre of the entry alludes to the East, represented by the resident Turkish forces, as a kind of curio or spectacle to be witnessed as entertainment, while the Colonel's flattery suggests a seasoned colonial tact. Melville's diaries consistently present an imperialist impression of the east, as his contact with diplomatic and military English types while travelling on and off-shore afforded him a privileged introduction to a sanitised Orient. As such the palaces, residencies, horses and guides at his disposal presented an artificial Eastern experience in Cairo and on to Baghdad, but this altered significantly as he moved into Persia without the colonial safety-net.

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[1]Diary April 20.

Contextualising Melville's experiences in the East is facilitated by the wealth of contemporary Western source material. Egyptologists such as Amelia Edwards and Wallis Budge[2] espouse many of the stock imperialist attitudes in their discourses, despite being acknowledged authorities on the East. For example, here Edwards describes the crowd gathered to witness the Cairo and Mecca pilgrimage (a subject Melville himself recorded;

> "...and we all had smart open carriages drawn by miserable screws and driven by bare-legged Arabs. These Arabs, by the way, are excellent whips, and the screws get along wonderfully; but it seems odd at first, and not a little humiliating, to be whirled along behind a coachman whose only livery consists of a rag of dirty white turban, a scant tunic just reaching to his knees, and the top-boots with which Nature has provided him...A harmless, unsavoury, good-humoured, inoffensive throng, one glance at which was enough to put flight to all one's preconceived notions about Oriental gravity of demeanour! For the truth is that gravity is by no means an oriental characteristic. Take a Mohammedan at his devotions, and he is a model of religious abstraction; bargain with him for a carpet, and he is as impenetrable as a judge; but see him in his hours of relaxation, or on the occasion of a public holiday, and he is as garrulous and full of laughter as a big child. Like a child, too, he loves noise and movement for the mere sake of noise and movement, and looks upon swings and fireworks as the height of human felicity. Now swings and fireworks are Arabic for bread and circuses, and our pleb's passion for them is insatiable."[3]

These facile generalisations are typical of imperialist travelogues. The relative poverty of the Arab people is dismissed haughtily by a member of the same governing classes who sought to extend their control mechanism over the trade routes to India and beyond. The locals, viewed superficially from a tourist's position, are generally charcterised as simple, indolent fanatics with the ability to drive a hard bargain in street-hawking. In her introduction to this extremely popular publication Edwards deduced;[4]

> " I must, however, add that I brought home with me an impression that things and people are much less changed in Egypt than we of the present day are wont to suppose. I believe that the physique and

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[2]A Thousand Miles Up the Nile, op cit, and By Nile and Tigris, Vol1, London 1920, respectively. These accounts were written in 1877 and 1887 respectively.

[3]op cit p24.

[4]op cit p x. Written from the sanctity of Westbury-on-Trym, Gloucs. in Dec. 1877.

> life of the modern Fellâh is almost identical with the physique and life of that ancient Egyptian labourer whom we know so well in the wall-paintings of the tombs... we see him wearing the same loin-cloth, plying the same shâdûf, ploughing with the same plough, preparing the same food in the same way, and eating it with his fingers from the same bowl as did his forefathers of six thousand years ago."

This is one of the most common imperialist attitudes towards the East. The 19thC Western powers found it extremely convenient to regulate the Orient and view it as a timeless rural utopia untouched by industrialisation, an image which attracted numerous painters (including, perhaps, Melville), writers and archaelogists. To observe the 'uncivilised' Arab still wearing a loincloth and eating with his fingers would have been a source of amusement and comfort to the more 'refined' Westerner.

Wallis Budge's accounts also provide fascinating insights into imperialist colonies in the East. Discussing the advent of steam ships in the Persian Gulf, he comments;

> " The attitude which the Baghdad Government have always taken in respect of these steamers almost suggests that they wanted to restrict and not increase the trade of the city...It was a curious oversight, or want of foresight, on the part of Rawlinson and T.K. Lynch that they did not obtain running powers on the river north of Baghdad...I have heard that there is some truth...that the Pasha who drew up the *faramân* did not know the difference between the Tigris and Euphrates, and was uncertain as to which river Baghdad stood on! Be that as it may, in 1891 the obstruction of the Turks to the renewal of the *faramân* became very serious, and it was reported in the bazârs of Baghdad that Lord Salisbury had told the Porte that if the steamers on the Tigris were stopped, he would have 20,000 Indian troops landed at Baghdad in a fortnight."[5]

This extract encapsulates the aggressive, acquisitive imperialism practised to ensure trade links. Here Lord Salisbury freely offers to pit the troops of one foreign nation against another toward which the British harboured ambitions. The resistance of Persia to British machinations was vehement, maintaining their autonomy to a great degree despite the presence of foreign diplomats. Budge's arrival in Baghdad is described thus, illustrating the social networking which still operated in the Orient;

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[5]Budge op cit pp 214-215.

> "Having found, thanks to Captain Butterworth. most comfortable quarters on his gunboat, the "Comet", I took my sheaf of letters of introduction from Lord Salisbury, Sir Henry Rawlinson, Sir Edward Bradford...and went to the British Residency to wait upon the Consul-General, Colonel (later Major-General), W. Tweedie...(who was) seated at a large table covered with books and Persian and Arabic manuscripts...On his head he wore a sort of turban cap, and he was wrapped in a very handsomely worked cloth cloak...
>
> 'I must warn you that I have no power in Baghdad, either personally or officially. Personally I am a very humble Indian officer whom the Government of India has sent to Baghdad to live for a few years, and to qualify for a pension, and officially I am just a subordinate of Sir William White, dangling at the end of a telegraph wire from Constantinople...The influence of the British has declined greatly in Baghdad since his time (Sir Henry Rawlinson), and if I were to knock together the heads of two recalcitrant members of the Mijlis (ie Town Council), as it is said that he did in 1846, I should find myself made a prisoner in my Residency'."[6]

It seems to have been *de rigeur* for eminent diplomats, scholars, artists, writers and socialites to receive such hospitality in the Gulf Consulates. Wires would be sent ahead from the steamer and letters of introduction furnished to ensure a warm welcome. This extract clearly indicates Britain's waning influence in Baghdad and Persia. Arrogant behaviour like Rawlinson's would have done little to assuage the Town Council or Pasha, and their continued hostility to British intervention and resistance to trade plans is unsurprising. Interest in increased steamer access above Baghdad would have been primarily in British interests, rather than some gerat act of philanthropy to further inland communication and supply in Persia.

Melville's Themes in Baghdad

As with Cairo, his month's residence in Baghdad produced distinct themes, perhaps partly shaped by an unfavourable opening impression;

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[6]ibid pp223-227. It is interesting that Tweedie should invite Melville to stay, while Budge was told that there was no accommodation at the Residency. (pp227)

> "At five o'clock we sighted the minarets of Baghdad. What before had been to us only a name of the 'thousand and one nights'[7] became at once a reality. My feeling was one of disappointment, as I believe it to be with everyone, its golden days are past, nothing remaining of it but the beautiful domes and minarets of the mosques."[8]

To this effect, Melville's eye does not concentrate on the streets or general vistas of the city, but on the figure types and places they inhabit in everyday life. He did not seek to sensationalise but to record the figures he saw on his perambulations through the bazaars and coffee houses, capturing them in conducive and selectively chosen settings which augmented the impression of the exotic and unfamiliar;

> "...bazaars rather uninteresting after Cairo and Muscat. There was the same crowd of Mahomedans (sic) evidently pursuing the same mode of life as in Egypt. I have become too familiar with the Arab to to be reminded of the characters in the Arabian Nights. Besides there is so little of the marvellous about the buildings that one's imagination comes to sudden stop for want of proper surroundings. Mud and dirt abound everywhere. The dome of one of the mosques excited my attention, beautifully designed in blue and gold...The city must have been very much larger at one time. Nothing is left but decay."[9]

It is curious that these observations of the state of the city should prove so categorical, and yet the works produced in Baghdad should manage to exclude the visual evidence in favour of the picturesque. The success of Melville's Eastern odyssey ultimately depended on sales, and it was obvious from the subjective images of Cairo and beyond that he should ignore the squalor and disease. These works were mostly intended for Edinburgh New Town walls, a fact which undoubtedly influenced his approach to the whole Eastern period of work.

It is interesting that he should have developed an 'Arab stereotype' by this juncture. His observations of the character of the peoples in Cairo and on

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[7]This was a hugely popular book, emphasising the mystical, erotic and aggressive aspects of the city's life. It comprised a collection of fairy tales and romances, written in Arabic, collected in Egypt between the 14th and 16th Centuries. These times, if they had ever really existed, were now anachronistic and most visitors seeking these aspects of the picturesque and romantic East were often disappointed.

[8]April 16.

[9]April 17.

the journeys to Baghdad suggested a consistency which removed the romance and novelty of the experience for the artist. This may in part explain the ethnographic element within his work in Baghdad which differentiates it from the Cairo work. The artist may have felt suitably detached from his subjects to begin painting a series of single-figure studies within modest, restrained surroundings. Some of his most notable Baghdad pictures feature everyday characters from street life in the bazaars, such as water sellers, armed guards and snake charmers. This concentration on figurative work may also have been due to his ambivalence toward the local architecture, as he records how plain the buildings were after Cairo and yet he responded so favourably to the minarets, palaces and mosques such as Midan.

Remarkably, most of the principal Baghdad pictures seem to have survived, painted either in the East in 1882 or immediately on return to Edinburgh. These can be subdivided into two principal thematic categories which differ to those aspects of life which inspired him in Cairo. The first of these is the single figure in street or interior setting, such as Water Seller Baghdad and the second being the highly-populated *plein air* scene prominently featuring architecture such as Call to Prayer, Midan Mosque.

FIGURE STUDIES

Although Melville did not arrive in Baghdad until April 1882, Water Seller[10] (Plate 48) is inscribed '1881'. It is however difficult to date the work exactly as it was not shown until 1906, from the collection of Mrs. Knowles. The inscription 'Moya' is a transcription of 'moia', the cry which rang out through the narrow streets and bazaars, and comes from the Arabic word *ma* for 'water'.

This image returned to the cool, restrained palette of browns and blues which dominated earlier Egyptian works such as Arab Interior, perhaps acknowledging it as an interior among the more common *plein air* street

[10]W/c, (21.5x16"). S&d 1881. Burrell Coll., Glasgow.

pictures. This is a key Eastern work as the first extant full-length figure study since the Sower, a Cairo picture which revealed more of the French rustic naturalist influence than any Oriental sensibility. Water Seller, though, eschews the medium and setting which the great French naturalists espoused, creating a flickering and expressive new naturalism in an urban interior setting.

In contrast to the Muscat and Cairo bazaar scenes, the concentration on the single-figure motif radically altered the pictorial space, compressing it into a shallow immediacy to convey the frenetic bustle of the scene. The figure itself is central and dominates the scene, sketched quickly in a beige wash with bare paper conspicuously shining through on his burnous, pitcher and epaulettes. The ubiquitous cobalt blue recurs in tunic and turban, with the latter contriving to envelop his features. The eyes are dark, and the shadows and bushy moustache ensured that this was an impersonal figurative study rather than a portrait by obscuring the character of the features.

What is important in this work is the figurative 'type'. Many of the periodical illustrated series[11] utilised types where the facial features themselves were subordinate to aspects such as stature, posture, costume and accoutrements of trade. The stilted stance in Melville's picture, a gnarled *contrapposto* compensating for the weight of the vessel, was an important indicator of the nature of this particular street type, as were the exaggerated feet and left arm alluding to physical strength. This radically affected the physique and betrays a similarly ethnographic component as witnessed in his studies of the shape and posture of the women in Aden. Within these works Melville is attempting to commute to his Western public the hardships of these pre-industrialised lifestyles, contrasting them subtly with bourgeois business life with its restrained civilization. I would argue that although somewhat sanitised for his patrons' consumption, Melville's descriptions of Eastern urban communities and their inhabitants are more accurate than many major contemporary French

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[11] See, for example, Sketches in Egypt, Magazine of Art 1882, pp15-. Illustrated types such as sherbet and water sellers, shopkeepers etc.

depictions of gleaners and field labourers. I am thinking in this statement of Jules Breton, or Impressionist depictions of rural figures by Pissarro or Seurat who often contrived the picturesque, and weighed the aesthetic above all else in providing a vehicle for technical progress.[12]

A revitalised interest in dynamic form and physical movement is integral in Melville's depictions of Water Seller and other street figures, taking precedence over physiognomical qualities. A rediscovered linear quality explored the undulating curves and ellipses of the water jug and bowl in his belt, and the diagonally-strapped leather bags emphasise his posture and create an interesting formal arrangement without recourse to detail. This figure is successful as an animated watercolour and paper impression, imbued with wraith-like transience to counteract the risk of monumental inertia which often blighted French and British oils of peasant types. Melville thus instilled a dextrous 'presence' to this character type, his expression alluding to the seller's ability to bear his burden through the streets and bazaars with relative ease.

The setting complements the figurative description. Behind the seller, the shadowy brown murk obfuscates all save a few suggested faces and burnouses, insubstantial in the gloom. To emphasise this, he applied dark blue daubs in gouache to lend a rich depth to the shadows and create some sense of recession behind a richy bejewelled table with bright blue cups and saucers.[13] In terms of colour, this cobalt blue (transparent or opaque) is integral to most of the Eastern compositions and sems to have been one of the colours whch he carried for *plein air* sketching. Mixed with the orange which is interspersed through the periphery of the picture[14], it would have produced the base brown with which he mapped the basic compositions. The orange is particularly strong on the torso of the principal background figure, and continues in two vertical lines beneath

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[12]For example Breton's Gleaners, of 1860, (Glasgow), Pissarro's Gleaners, 1887,(Base) and Seurat's Man With a Hoe, 1883 (Mellon Coll.).

[13] A common motif in his contemporary work was the still-life passages in rich detail, perhaps to provide a foil for the alleged 'unfinished sketchiness' of his compositions. For other examples of this table see Arab Interior or Cairo Bazaar.

[14] Used as a highlight over the brown wash, these orange daubs and blots suggested faces and torsos for working-up.

the table in the empty foreground where they serve no purpose, suggesting initial attachment to a full-length figure subsequently painted over. The other featured hue is yellow, used as a highlight on the crystal-ball form tucked into his waistband, and may have been applied as an afterthought. In essence Melville's basic colour scheme for arranging compositions remained close to the primary colours, and the orange and mauve secondaries applied over earthy brown wash.

Having introduced this theme of Baghdad street types in detail through Water Seller, several other contemporaries of this genre can be discussed together.[15] Abdullah the Snake Charmer[16] (Plate 55) is formally the closest to Water Seller, as the artist has attempted to situate or contextualise the figure appropriately while many of the others have bland, neutral backgrounds. The snake charmer is depicted standing at a street corner, framed against a whitewashed wall which forms an effective foil for his finery.[17] His stance is solid, feet firmly planted and hands literally drumming up business for his performance. These Baghdad figures, formally derived from Sower, are the closest Melville comes to portraying figure types. Here he simplified the arrangement to a conducive design but concentrated on the figure itself, while with the One-Eyed Calender (Plate 59) he takes this to a logical conclusion by eschewing any setting.

Striking for its heightened palette and tonality, a major proportion of the paper in Abdullah has been left blank, or with the most subtle grey wash, so that the figure steps out of the page with its blue and orange apparel. Thus Melville is again basing his pictorial constuction on the most effective of complementary colour systems of blue and orange. The Water Seller was based around subtle lower-toned secondary hues derived from blue and orange, namely brown and grey-blue, mauve and pale ochre. The colours here are less adulterated as the figure was gaudily dressed,

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[15]There are five other comparable subjects, with only Cadi lost. A *cadi* was the civil judge in a town.

[16] W/c (20.25x14.25") S&d Baghdad 1883. Now Robertson Coll., Orkney.

[17] The street-corner setting was also explored effectively in Achmet and Arab Outside a Mosque.

and viewed in full sunlight where he performed with the snakes. As such, though, the whole work is constructed from the cobalt blue and burnt umber which he carried. The burnous and swathes of cloak are the brightest blue, while a lower-key bluish-brown permeates the garment, snakes, sky and background. Interestingly the Nubian skin tones described in so much travel literature are not black or brown but blended from blue as they naturally appeared in full light.

The design of this and other doorway or street corner images, such as Achmet and Arab Outside a Mosque (Plate 52) may have been gleaned from memories of Gérôme. His celebrated Santon at the Door of a Mosque[18], with the pose of the figure, white wall framing and glimpse past the corner of the street are echoed in Melville's Arab Outside a Mosque. By placing the snake charmer against a wall at the corner of the street, Melville affords the viewer a brief glimpse through the work and down the street, incorporating a sense of depth and space. In this case that glimpse reveals relatively little, remaining consistent with the void of the wall by lightly sketching in ochre the curves of the buildings and the crowd beyond. Achmet and Arab Outside a Mosque are generally more detailed in approach. Achmet is an armed sentry, depicted in profile in splendid dress. Framed against a whitewashed wall above the waist, the lower half of the wall is a similarly blue-toned marble pattern to that which appears in On Guard[19] (Plate 56). The views past the corner in Achmet and Arab Outside a Mosque are similarly more detailed, the former revealing more armed figures gathering outside another palatial building, while the latter depicting a prostrate worshipper.

More expressively-handled than most of his Baghdad figure studies, the only real concession to detail in Abdullah is the little section of brocade above the figure's head at the corner of the building. Its lack of vivid colour and detail make it an incidental 'shape' rather than a finished object. The snakes are treated in the same restrained fashion and are no more than props for the figure, lacking in any sense of 'menace'. In these

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[18] Melville may have seen this at the Expo 1878. The pile of slippers and street corner in Gérôme's works is more clearly seen in Melvillle's Arab Outside a Mosque , now in Robertson Coll.

[19] w/c S&d 1883. (20.25x14.25"). Sold and Ill Christie's Scot. 18.11.93.

aspects Melville demonstrated his unwillingness to bow to convention in sensationalizing the East.

Comparing Melville's modest vipers to the mammoth coiling pythons and striking cobras with which Gérôme's charmers contended displays a real disparity of attitude toward the Other. It is more likely that the Persian charmers employed small serpents than constrictors but this 'honesty' would not have actually sold works. Melville evidently felt confident enough to wash the cocks from Cock Fight and resist attempts to exaggerate what he actually saw in ethnic quarters. In this sense the notion of a 'Presbyterian Realism' endured under the searching Eastern light.

Melville seems to have been a fairly accurate recorder of the Orient. His images are certainly selective and rarely feature any of the filth and poverty which he obseved in his diary, but his own experience of the cities was being constantly moulded according to his situation and times. He states how;

> "It is rather difficult sketching in the streets, quite impossible without a 'Cavass'. The dust is very annoying."[20]

which may in part account for the brevity and monochromatic appearance of many of his pictures, also ensuring their *plein air* realisation. In 1882, the East[21] was being inundated with English diplomats, military types and experts in the fields of economics, agriculture and irrigation to help rebuild Egypt after the collapse. Cromer was Egyptian High Commissioner and the city itself, along with Alexandria, already had a sizeable European community with a firmly established 'social circle' in which Melville inevitably became enmeshed.

The same was true, to an extent, of the ports at which he disembarked. Muscat, Aden, Bushire and Bandar Abbas were all important vantage points from which to control the Gulf and the passage to India. These figures obviously relished the authoritative and social status which they had assumed, and loved to entertain more patrician or unusual guests

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[20] May 1. (Ref. Baghdad).

[21] Particularly Egypt, but also encompasing the Gulf of Persia.

who were not part of Cook's packages. At this stage visitors were enough of a novelty and his travel companions well-enough connected to ensure five-star treatment in each town. Their capacities as hosts included transport, tours, hospitality and guides, while the quarters in which Melville was able to sketch would have depended largely on what his hosts deemed 'suitable' or safe.

A rare glimpse into the less salubrious side of city life is provided by the One-Eyed Calender of Baghdad, a truly 'low life' theme. It exemplified Melville's objective selection of subjects at this stage, perceiving aesthetic and ethnographic value in an aged mendicant as well as the more usual snake charmers and guards. Accusations of ethnocentricity on Melville's part can, however, be levelled as the existence of the beggar confirmed the absence of an effective welfare system in the city. Images of squalor and deprivation in London were, of course, common in Britian through images of Doré and Luke Fildes in the 1870's and the writings of Dickens, but the subjects featured an innate urban character and symbolised the unfortunate detritus of progress and industrialisation. The *calender* though personifies a more romantic view of poverty, primal and inherently uncivilised, aligning it to fanaticism, savagery and indolence as Eastern characteristics in the Occidental consciousness. This is a modern interpretation, though, and I would suggest that such Orientalist undertones were not intentional on Melville's part.

Indigenous Copts were nationally afflicted with this condition[22], and it seems that this extended to Persia making it less of a novelty than the title suggests. The *calender* [23] is depicted frontally without recourse to setting or vista, in full sunlight, making it the pinnacle of Melville's series of 'figure types' with only a liquid shadow to distract from the beggar himself. As such, it conforms to the types of illustrations for travel pieces common in contemporary periodicals[24], although the medium and

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[22] Recorded by Emilia F.S. Pattison in Sketches in Egypt. Mogazine of Art 1884, p17.

[23] Persian or Turkish mendicant dervish.

[24] See Egyptian Types, MoA 1884, p57. Backgrounds were often not used.

expressive handling is anathema to the linear acuity and forms of the illustrative style.

In terms of handling and expression, On Guard is very similar to the One-Eyed Calender as a frontal depiction of single-figure type. It shows how Melville was inclined to approach different castes with the same observational approach, although the colour schemes are different according to the nature of the apparel. Where the beggar leans on a staff for physical support, clad in loose-fitting and dull clothing, the sentry holds a pike. Both face forward and are thickset and solid, but although the styles are similar the beggar is altogether more painterly and bold, without any suggestion of underdrawing. The sentry, because of the patterned burnous, tiled wall and floor is more geometrical and regular in form. Perhaps in painting such diverse characters Melville purposely chose an expressive style which could emphasise the social standing and appearance of the figures concerned. Thus the beggar is loose, slightly hunched and defensive while the sentry is more confident, substantial and offensive in bearing with feet together and hand on weapon. Where his clothing is more linear and sculpted, accentuating the posture, the beggar's is swaddled and protective like a cocoon. The mendicant's lack of determining locality stresses his lonely rootlessness, while the tiles and geometry help to identify the sentry and his purpose.

Thus within Melville's large-scale figurative work completed in Baghdad, one observes a consistency and direction. He selects appropriate styles, brushwork and setting to augment the colour schemes and form of the figures. These are not portrait studies but an examination of indigenous city types, with the beggars and water sellers incorporating an element of ethnographic study as they concentrate on physical deformity and posture. Only Babylonian Girl[25] (Plate 47), painted in may 1882 on a visit to the ancient city, explores the physiognomy in any detail as he had done with the sheikh on the Euphrates.

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[25] W/c dated 1883. (19x14"). Sold and Il. Sotheby's, Hopetoun House 27.3.84.

Melville's notes do not recall any sketching in Babylon itself, and one must assume that Melville's subject was actually in Baghdad when he painted her. Babylonian Girl is comparable to the sheikh watercolour as a bust portrait on the same scale, although where he was depicted frontally she is shown in profile to accentuate her beauty and headdress. Melville's approach was naturalistic, with a simple clear rendering of the girl's dark features, pleated hair and patterned headwear. The portrait likeness of the features was clearly Melville's intention as the shoulders and bust are only lightly washed in, as was the case with the sheikh portrait.

The importance of these large-scale bust portraits, with their ethnographic content, is that they display the interest which the artist was developing toward portraiture. His sketchbooks reveal several portraits from this period, such as the sympathetic likeness of the beautiful young Western girl who was probably his love interest in Cairo. On his return from the East to Edinburgh, he commenced several society portraits of his patrons' families such as the Sandersons. This attempt to consolidate his reputation, make money and provide a foil for the years of technical advancement and innovation was also evident in major Glasgow School figures such as James Guthrie and John Lavery.

BAGHDAD SCENES

Despite Melville's intitial misgivings about Baghdad, there are a number of extant watercolours which feature aspects or vistas of the city itself. Whereas he spent a year in Cairo, it appears that he spent only a month in the Persian city and this may account for the much narrower range of themes he broached. It may also be true that he was more familiar with the general atmosphere of an Eastern city after his experiences in Cairo, and thus the novelty had worn off. It is logical that his close study of figurative types, some of which had no contextual setting, should have been complemented by a wider examination of the city they inhabited. The character of a city is defined by its history, architecture and populus and Melville's themes reflect a desire to identify Baghdad during his short period of residence. My discussion of this aspect of Melville's Eastern

output has been facilitated by the number of extant examples of these subjects, both figurative and 'urban'.

Melville's first national review and illustrative reproduction were elicited by his watercolour of the Call to Prayer, Midan Mosque[26] (Plate 61). It is essentially a street scene in the same style as the Karachi pictures, with an open foreground and interest in the tonality of architecture under full sunlight. The composition is unusually centralised for the artist and appears relatively contrived as there is a discrepancy between the broadly handled stalls in the foreground, and the background figures as compared to the naturalistic mid-ground figures and architecture;

> " It must be said that as a whole the work lacks brilliancy, and that the execution is not completely expressive. The picture, however, is an impression; and so regarded, it must be commended for its admirable qualities of tone, of colour, of suggestiveness. The sand in the foreground, the domes and minarets of the famous mosque, with their tiles of shimmering purple and blue, are admirable in texture; the figures, if somewhat too sketchy to be entirely satisfactory, have plenty of character and gesture; the colour generally is at once harmonious and varied, the tone well balanced throughout. But, even regarded as an impression pure and simple, Mr. Melville's picture seems a little wanting in the very important quality of light. The call to prayer takes place in the full radiance of noon, and noon at Bagdad is a brilliant hour indeed. The peculiar colour effects produced by the glare of Eastern sunlight are suggested with dexterity and considerable truth; the roofs and awnings, the costumes of the crowd, the sand and the walls and the matting - the whole paraphernalia of an Oriental street scene, with their splendid contrasts and subdued harmonies - are in some measure determined; but the light which transfigures these things, and makes even the shadows luminous, is absent. In failing here, however, it is only fair to add that Mr. Melville fails in excellent company. Older and more experienced painters than he have come hopelessly to grief in attempting Eastern sunshine. At best, success in realising an effect so difficult is limited; but there is every reason why Mr. Melville, who is young and anything but unambitious, should produce something more akin to nature than this."[27]

Although admirably approached, the whole lacks the cohesion or lucidity of the more design-orientated watercolour such as Cairo, or two

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[26] Magazine of Art, 1883, pp346-347. Review of Dudley Gallery exhib.

[27] ibid

contemporary Baghdad pictures which more successfully synthesise the disparate formal elements.

In a sense the Call to Prayer is too elongated, failing to utilise the evident tonal contrasts to full effect within the design. There is too little shade and dark tone to provide a suitable foil for the light which bathes the scene. Midan Mosque[28] (Plate 54) depicts the same subject from the same angle, but in more detail. With the larger scale and upright shape, the foreground and sky areas are minimised to create a more concise and effective design. The greater attention to detail in the architecture includes more dark tone to balance, while the number of figures is reduced significantly to help simplify the whole composition. They are still depicted with broad, liquid brushwork but the firm horizontal spread of the awnings bisect the canvas and frame the figures suitably. The light awings thus separate the figures from the linear, quite detailed architecture to create a harmonious and complementary whole.

It may be that Call to Prayer represents a temporarily tired or jaded *plein air* image. Melville had recorded how little the architecture impressed him and he may have subconsciously resented having to depict the same mosque again. It is possible that the Jamieson picture was earlier, and that its success had spurred him on to an over-ambitious 'sequel'. The absence of the strong tonal counterpoint in Call to Prayer deprives the image of its tension and shimmering movement. Nothing is really happening in this picture, as the *muezzin* is too insignificant and the figure-work too withdrawn to have any real impact.

The final statement of the critique shows that although the writer used words like "impression", he did not fully understand the concept. British critics still required that a work of art accurately transcribe nature with detailed observations of form, tone and colour. However when an artist deviated from the norm[29] it was subject to suspicion. British critics still retained images of the east as described by Roberts, Lewis and Hunt, with

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[28] W/c, ex-Jamieson Coll..

[29] Melville was competing at exhibition with the academics at this stage, and figures such as Hunt and Albert Moore.

harsh clarity of light and bright enamelled colours which only really reflect Eastern nature as it is envisioned by Westeners. The successful Orientalist works in England at the time were artists such as the Academics (Poynter, Long, Leighton etc) and prolific exhibitors such as (W.C.) Horsley, Beavis and Goodall. All proffered imperialist interpretations of Eastern and quasi-eastern subjects in a linear style with supercharged colour and light, making it difficult for critics to accept the work of an unknown Scot with more French than British influences. Through Allan, Fortuny and the Impressionist influence Melville had developed a broad style which incorporated the effects of light and colour untrammelled by line and restrictive detailed form.

A similar subject matter and vista of prominent architecture, expansive foreground and highly-populated mid-ground are featured in Court of a Mosque[30] (Plate 60). Interestingly the architecture corresponds to Domes and Minarets[31], a sketchy and washed-out watercolour strongly suggestive of a *plein air* image. As a source, this would explain why the perspective of the minarets is slightly askew, as he seems to have attempted to infuse more detail in the finished composition than was originally captured in the sketch. The closest minaret, for example, is altogether too curved in relation to the sketch, as he overcompensated to capture the beautiful decorative qualities. Moreover the oversimplified architecture beneath these minarets, not included in the sketch, was most probably fabricated to create a scene. Having witnessed much Islamic architecture, it would have been relatively simple for the artist to invent or transpose some regular pointed arches, fill in a design and leave the rest in shadow.

Compositionally, the deep irregular cast thrown by the minaret corresponds to the darkness beneath the arches but not to the short figure shadows. The foreground is washed in the familiar russet wash which was so effective for immediate swift working, suggesting that the crowd scene was, as usual, captured *en plein air*. Again in the foreground he placed the elliptical pond around which the figures are seated, although

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[30] W/c, 1882. (14.5x20"). Sold & ill. Sotheby's, 29.4.87.

[31] W/c. Ill Mackay Plate 15.

the perspective is slightly irregular which furthers the hypothesis that this work is a conglomeration or hybrid of different elements rather than one scene. The carpets and pure blue blots in the left foreground lift the whole composition, playing off the beautiful opal blue minarets and the decorative frieze arches, thus balancing cool colours against the warm russet and olive crowds. This work, though, is a stunning example of the effective harmonies and equilibrium which can be attained through passages of decorative precision and shimmering wraith-like figures, areas of working and cool and warm hues.[32]

There are again distinct formal similarities between the watercolour Revolt of a Tribe[33] (Plate 49), and the oil Bazaar at Baghdad[34], although the latter is four times the scale. They are most probably derived from sketches made at Colonel Tweedie's residency, where Melville was billetted on arrival in the city. His letters[35] mention the sketches he made of the wonderful balcony and courtyard at the Residency, and it is logical that he should use it for important compositions. While the watercolour displays the problems which he was attempting to reconcile during the Eastern journey such as the degrees of formal finish he should employ, the oil itself is conventionally finished and somewhat more traditional.[36]

The Cox watercolour is one of his finest of its type, exploring the rich architectural designs in the detail which isolated days at the Residency afforded him[37]. Stunning carpets, mosaics above the pillars, tiled and squared roof and floor, brickwork archway and the lattice vents explore fine passages of colour and textural versatility. Although the oil features

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[32] This anticipates some of the stunning yet more mechanical works which he completed throughout the 1880's from the original Eastern sketches. Although the Mackay catalogue dates this picture in 1882, an inscription is not conspicuous on the image. It was not shown until the RSA 1889, and I would argue that it was in fact painted nearer this later date.

[33] S&D 1882. (14.5x20")

[34] S&d 1882. (34x46"). Ex coll Andrew Reid.

[35] April 16 and 19, 1882.

[36] It recalls Pasini, and works such as Berbers on the March or Horseman by an Eastern Gateway.

[37] See the pencil sketch of the courtyard at the Residency, exploring the tonal contrasts within this impressive setting which he used to such great effect in these images.

many of the same motifs they are more modelled and restrained, exemplified in the billowing awnings.

The oil picture is evidently mistitled or post-titled, as the location and purposeful riders have more belligerent connotations. Unless in the shade of a mosque, bazaars were usually held in streets rather than in courtyards like this one, and the whole bearing of the oil is more ponderous and contrived than its watercolour prototype. The large scale and the more conventional, restrained naturalistic handling suggest of course that this work was painted in Scotland at a later date[38].

The figures in Revolt of a Tribe, save the principal figure and horseman, are sketchy and formless and often depicted in the brown, grey and blue 'blot' system he favoured outside. Thus, the animated aspects of the picture provide a suitable counterpoint to the more fastidiously observed architecture as seen in Pilgrim's Prayer, for example. Flags are suggested by vivid red daubs in the midst of the crowd and arch space. The crowd has spilled through the archway, a feature absent in the oil, accentuating the recession in the work and aiding lucidity. This work again contains the mauve liquid shadows in the left foreground which provide balance against the relative void of the foreground section and the archway space, both of which are very light wash. In a curiously detailed and macabre passage along the wall foreground right, rows of dead figures are slumped while a figure lies on his back with feet in stocks[39]. Rows of relinquished arms lie in the foreground bonding light with darker passages. These mottled shapes are treated in an understated fashion reminiscent of the snakes in Abdullah.

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[38] While other large oils such as Sower and Arab Interior were sent home for contemporary exhibitions Bazaar at Bagdad was not shown until 1906, and it is unlikely that he would have carried an oil of 3'x4' home with him. It was originally owned by Col. RJ Bennett, of Savoy Park in Ayr, although 1913 he resided at Wellington Chambers, Ayr, a branch of Bennett Interior Decorators. A member of an interior decorating family would, one suspects, have been able to find room for such a large picture. He also owned the lost Morning Prayer, Cairo watercolour. He had first purchased two small oils from the RSA as early as 1876.

[39] This tendency is expressed in the quotation from April 5, 1882;
"The Sultan of Muscat is at war with a Bedouin Tribe, if had time would go and see it"
The pictures seem to capture just such an incident.

The works from the Cox collection are unique in this respect, in that they confront unchartered subject matter and introduce the element of danger into the Eastern subject matter. Where bazaar works and desert scenes in some respects can anaesthetise the Orient, concentrating on technique while serving only to 'avoid' urban rather than 'explore' non-urban subjects, Melville here pursues a new direction. Cutting of the Kaligue explored indigenous customs in an anecdotal fashion specifically for illustrative purposes, yet none of this subsequent work touched on comparable local 'tensions'. This is somewhat difficult to explain since 1881-82, when Melville was in Egypt, was a period fraught with insurrection and anti-imperialist hostilities, while works and correspondence make only passing references.

Melville's depictions of the East may all be considered 'contemporary', since they were real observed scenes painted *en plein air* . They may also be described as relatively objective given his reluctance to sensationalize his subjects or project flagrant sexual or racial stereotypes within his empathetic Eastern themes. However it is apparent that Melville was typically[40] unwilling to feature any Western presence in his Eastern images, a fact that is particularly conspicuous in Cairo given the huge European influx due to the Suez Canal, imperialist machinations and tourism. Therefore subjects such as Revolt of a Tribe, The Sortie (Plate 50) and Arabs Returning from Burning a Village add an interesting dimension to Melville's themes as they examine manifestations of aggression and conflict in the context of his experience of contemporary Persian life.

In his representations of warring factions, Melville seemed conscious of avoiding inflammatory statements although these Baghdad pictures revert to the timeless Western perception of the Arab as noble warrior. In these titles, the belligerent tribes are not identified or their actual deeds recorded, yet the figures themselves *en masse* comprise fascinating and relevant subjects in their own right. In essence, the relative tedium of Baghdad's bazaars may have compelled him to seek other means of

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[40]For an 'Orientalist' artist.

depicting the crowd scenes he relished at this stage. Melville did not view his role as that of war artist, adhering strictly to types as he had with the single-figure compositions. His motivation was to capture the energy and spectacle of these indigenous shows of strength in the same manner as he would a procession, for its colour and vibrancy. Melville's studies of local warfare may symbolise the tensions which he had experienced during his time in the East, reflecting the rise in nationalist feeling aroused by Arabi Pasha and the overbearing attentions of the Imperialist powers towards Egypt. By June 1882, when Melville was riding across Turkey towards the Black Sea, Westerners were being driven from the cities after a mob killed fifty Europeans in Alexandria.

During his stay in Baghdad in April-May 1882, Egyptian nationalist fervour was escalating toward British bombardment of Alexandria by Sir Garnet Wolseley's forces in July and the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir in September, 1882. It is unsurprising then that Melville's themes should reflect some of this unrest, as his residence in the East coincided with a particularly volatile period in Egyptian history.

One of the main formal elements comprising the Baghdad scenes is the architectural settings which frame the action. As organic, moving forms became less naturalistic and functioned more as studies in light and colour, the importance of a solid visual framework increased. Where the two aforementioned works utilised the courtyard setting, the Sortie[41] and North Gate, Baghdad[42] (Plate 51) feature specific localised views of the city. Interestingly this geographical verisimilitude is in direct contrast to Melville's contemporary desire to record figure types rather than portraits, although it is obviously much easier to capture a simple likeness of an inanimate edifice than a person.

A slightly more withdrawn viewpoint is employed in The Sortie than in Call to Prayer, to depict the Midan Mosque and its surrounding bazaar. It is, though, an altogether more animated and immediate picture, depicting

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[41] S&d 1883. w/c (14.5x20") ex Cox coll.

[42] S&d 1882. w/c (14.5x20"). ex Cox col.

a specific incident of a group of mounted Arab warriors coming up a narrow street from the mosque into the open foreground. North Gate Baghdad[43] is more akin to the mosque scene, though, in that it depicts the langourous gathering of stallholders and customers at the city walls. It is organised in a rather fontal, traditional manner with the figures seated and arranged frieze-like and orderly against the imposing gate wall. Indeed they stare out into the viewer's space as though subjects in a photograph, as with Street in Cairo, and the focus on the foreground is consistent with the use of prompts although there is no evidence to confirm this supposition. Where Sortie is diagonally arranged in a similar fashion to that which he favoured in certain French works, intended to lead the eye through the composition smoothly and logically, the gate motif in North Gate Baghdad performs the same function beyond mid-ground. These, as discussd in earlier works, are the two principal devices Melville used to give an illusion of depth.

These two works share the foreground detail device, a *répoussoir* with objects tilted and spilling out into the viewer's space in the form of highly-coloured fruit, baskets and carpets. Most of the action in Sortie occurs in the shadow which bisects the work, enveloping the bazaar and its figures to imbue the colour with a rich resonance. Spectacular passages of colour and tone are incorporated into carpets, textiles, slatted benches and the figures gazing intently at the riders bearing down upon them. In formal terms, North Gate, Baghdad keeps its detail in peripheral areas between areas of light and shadow, where the systems of tone and colour most intensely varied. Arranged in the shade beneath the geometrical and linear architecture which Melville has taken great care to reproduce, the highly coloured crowd throng and relax in the shade as the riders come up the street, highlighted and captured by the intense sunlight which also bathes the surrounding buildings. Where there is no gate motif in this work to lead the eye into the picture space, the skilfully rendered curve in the street at the apex of the two sets of buildings is emphasised in the light. This creates depth from more traditional, perspectival convergence techniques and adds variety to Melville's arrangements;

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[43] Which also features in several pencil sketches of bridges in and around Baghdad (F.A.S).

> "Rode out with Colonel G. round the city walls, threading our way through narrow lanes with mud walls on either hand. We arrived at what had been the city walls extending far beyond the town. The city must have been very much larger at one time. Nothing is left but decay. Several of the gateways are still standing. Entered town by North gate, passed through bazaars."[44]

The traders and customers in this picture are sheltering in the lee of the wall and gate from the midday sun. Crowds are pouring through the gateway which suggests the scene as taking place within the city walls, but the view through the gateway is of a hazy skyline which may indeed be Baghdad itself.

The frontal nature of this picture and empty foreground suggest it as a more conventional composition. All of the painted action occurs in a horizontal central band in a manner akin to the Paris city watercolour views of the Seine and Charenton and consistent with contemporary photographic theory of focus. This meant that an artist could not have differing grounds within the picture space attaining similar levels of sharp focus. Curiously, compared to Grand Bazaar, Muscat his work is naturalistic in execution of a bazaar scene. Perhaps the penetrative quality of full sunlight, which slowed life to torpor, contrasted with interior scenes and afforded the artist more time to work. In this scene, the figures all cram into the relatively condensed area of shade, creating a more concentrated area of colour and tone contrast more easily rendered in close proximity as they mutually intensify.

The flat areas of wash with minimal detail which comprise the wall and foreground form a suitable counterpoint, where the interest is purely geometrical to balance the passages of coloured detail in mid-ground. Where the Muscat bazaar scene, for example, was purely a brown wash with abstracted primary highlights, the artist uses the open air scene to explore naturalistic riches of organic splendour. Ripe fruits spill from upended baskets in the foreground, bringing the viewer into the composition using the subtle stereoscopic device seen in Cabbage Garden

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[44] April 18, 1882.

and Arab Interior.[45] The inconsistency of their dearth of shadows in comparison to the mid-ground figure suggests even more strongly that they are devices added at a later date to imbue a continuity within the work.

Although these passages of descriptive detail extended to the laden mule and various figure studies such as the old man bent beneath his load of sticks, these figures lack close physiognomical description. The combination of black skin and shadowy headdress contrives to deny even mid-ground substantial figures any features, while the seated figures under the wall peep out as little more than dark blots under coloured apparel. Even in a relatively detailed and finished naturalistic study Melville retains a penchant for the ghostly and deconstructed figure types which make up the crowd scenes. Behind the baskets, he could not resist the abstract blots of pure unmixed blue and scarlet, transcending visual representations of objects to keep an element of 'modernity'. These works from the Cox collection are fascinating examples of the struggle betwen naturalism and abstraction, form and colour in Melville's Eastern work. It was eminently clear that he was manipulating scenes and forms and using devices to create suitable vehicles for his explorations, mixing *plein air* observation with photographic prompts to construct designs.

The reference to photography is speculation as there are no references to the medium in Melville's correspondence, but it is highly probable that he had access to photographic equipment in the East with his contacts among the expatriate diplomatic community. They would have kept visual records of Cairo[46], the pyramids and desert for example and it may account for quirks in Melville's work such as whole crowds of people staring out at the viewer as in Street Scene, Cairo, Karachi Street Scene and

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[45] The most effetcive and common of these foreground devices were baskets or small elliptical tables.

[46] It is unlikely that the picture postcard industry would have had much of a bearing on Melville's work at this juncture. Although examples existed, they did not become popular until nearer the turn of the century. Where there would have been postcards in Cairo due to the tourist influx, these would be less common in Baghdad.

North Gate Baghdad. It is obvious that such a situation could only occur in *plein air* scenes as photographs could not be taken indoors.

There is no doubt that North Gate Baghdad looks posed, and would explain the relative detail of the mid-ground figures while the wall itself is principally a 'shape', and the need for determining motifs in the foreground. In a contemporary photograph of the same subject, nearer objects would have been sharply in focus while the seated figure in rear-ground, for example, would have appeared confused and blurred much as they do in the drawing. The lengthy exposure time would also have created blurring as figures and animals moved slightly, no matter how soporific the atmosphere. The use of photographic prompts in certain works may explain the disparity between the finished nature of inorganic form and the more abstract appearance of organic kinetic forms. It was impossible, for example, to ask a crowd or bazaar to pose still for a photograph and some degree of blurring would have been inevitable.

The Muscat bazaar picture appears to have been observed *in situ* given the swift dextrous handling and restriction of the palette to brown block-in wash and unmixed highlights. On the other hand a finished, detailed and stilted picture like Street in Cairo with its monochromatic russet palette and focused foreground resembles a sepia print with wooden Gérômesque pigeons added. The Cox Cairo , though, features the same quirk that the inhabitants all seem to look at the viewer as though he were photographing them. Melville recorded how difficult it was to work outside without security and photography may have been a necessary evil. It is difficult to imagine him painting in the middle of a busy thoroughfare as these two Cairo pictures suggest, but taking a photograph or working from a prompt is more likely. This may also explain why Turkish Bazaar, Cairo is less frontal, painted in among the stalls rather than in the roadway. The figures are oblivious and the whole is more painterly in design, eschewing detail to create an eloquent immediate scene full of movement and bustle from a relatively narrow spectrum of colours. The use of monochromatic print images would invoke an expressionistic application of colour when forms had been recorded, which may help to explain the exaggerated nature of primary colour in such works as

Awaiting an Audience with the Pasha. The architecture, colour scheme and decor of this work corresponds closely with Revolt of a Tribe. It makes sense that this picture should be based on sketches made at the Baghdad residency than from deepest Kurdistan. Any Pasha who would incarcerate an artist on suspicion of espionage would have been unlikely to allow the recording of his court. It was taboo to record images of the self in Islam until the 19th C, and in many outlying areas, until a much later date.

MISCELLANEOUS BAGHDAD PICTURES

> "We crossed the Tigris, the sun was appearing flooding the river with a soft rosy hue. The bridge was anything but safe, it consisted of planks laid across boats, and ugly holes were plentiful."[47]

The interest in local topography and architecture which inspired the recording of courtyards, mosques and similar features is displayed in Bridge of Boats[48] (plate 63). The shape of the bridge was also conducive to explorations of an abstract nature which interested Melville at the time.

The bridge is described in strong block shapes, most prominently in the foreground left area. The lines of the boats parallels the form of the bridge itself, displaying the interest in geometry which usually incorporated more subtly within compositions. As usual, the foreground is empty and the horse, cart and figures are captured moving across the bridge into this space, while even less substantial figures are depicted between houses and background.

The background itself is interesting, described simply as consistent wash with daubs and vertical strokes reminiscent of Grez and Parisian townscapes to suggest form. The horizon itself is crowned by a strong silhouetted house which commands a view over the whole scene, but generally there is minimal detail in the townscape which itself is simply a shape, with darker *staccato* lines to denote windows and doors, again recalling French antecedents.

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[47] Journal dated May 14, 1882.

[48] W/c Baghdad 1882, (20x30"). Now Lost. Ill Nottingham Castle Exhib. cat, 1907.

Melville created an exhibition piece by expanding the simple street-figure theme explored in Abdullah, incorporating a strong architectural element and audience of enthralled onlookers. The Snake Charmer[49] (Plate 62) is dated '1883' by Mackay in her catalogue, yet was not shown until 1888 at the RWS exhibition. It was described thus in 1896;

> "The Snake Charmer is admirable in its simplicity and effective grouping, the colour is bright but cool, and the drawing bears on the face of it distinctly the impress of being the work of one who had his knowledge at first-hand and was truly in sympathy with the life he was depicting."[50]

This scene has been geometrically arranged along similar lines to such works as Pilgrim's Prayer and Cockfight Muscat.[51] The viewpoint is low and foreground expansive, with an architecural backdrop to counterbalance the figurative arrangement. Yet again, there is a low table visible in the foreground right corner, drawing disparate elements of the work and the viewer together into a lucid whole. Unlike the firm ruling of linear perspective in Pilgrim's Prayer this work features subtle bands of tile decoration in the foreground to frame and balance the design. The architecture itself is carefully depicted to display myriad textures and geometric interplays. Benches and grilles are juxtaposed beneath rounded tiled archways and stained glass and pierced screens similar to those in Arab Interior. In a sense this large-scale exhibition piece is a *tour-de-force* of design and handling techniques, where crisp architecture contrasts with wet-applied daubs of tree foliage.

The figure group is the most naturalistic extant example, resisting the temptation to create a mottled throng alive with tension as in Cockfight Muscat. There is, however, a subtle distinction between the two pictures of 'street entertainment'. Where in the fighting scene the crowd was

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[49] Watercolour (33x27"). Lost, ex-collections Sir James Bell (Provost of Glasgow) see article, and Sir Alexander Walker the whisky mogul. Repro. in Scottish Art Review, 1888, and Magazine of Art, 1896, p330. Only known as monochromatic illustration.

[50] Magazine of Art, 1896, p338.

[51] Melville has reused the doorway from his Pasini pastiche The Sential almost exactly, with a similar lintel, canopy and Arabic inscription. The Sentinel is undated but presumably early (see discussion), and suggests the later Snake Charmer as a composite image.

obviously agitated and animated, depicting a 'sport' with money at stake, the snake-charming is altogether different in atmosphere.

A cultivated air of mysticism pervades the scene as the artist has tried to provide a Western ethnographic insight into the ancient ritual. This of course is reflected in the figure grouping, which is typically comprised of Eastern types with no sign of a Western 'tourist' presence. The artist has again skilfully displayed his range of physiognomic and anatomical expression within the crowd. Some sit incredulous, with heads tilted to one side, while others are hunched chin-in-hands or hands-on-knees.

The group comprises all ages of males with features freely visible, a rarity in Melville's work as he usually manipulated cowls and lighting effects to disguise or obfuscate the feature details. A principal reason for this may again incorporate the question as to whether he employed photographic prompts. This work could, in theory, have been painted at a relatively leisurely speed *in situ*, as the subjects themselves were virtually static to allude to the mesmeric effect of the performance. Where the cockfight crowd is moving and shifting for a better vantage point, the charmer's audience are more orderly and restrained.

The two street performances also understate the actual focal subjects in the images. In the cockfight, as discussed, the cocks have been sponged out of the final version of the design. In Snake Charmers, though, the subject is evident but the snakes are distinctly minimalist in treatment as in Abdullah, Melville's other version of this subject matter. In contrast to Gérôme's sensationalist and exploitative treatment of the same subject which depicts a huge gleaming serpent coiled around a naked boy, Melville's work is restrained and seemingly sympathetic.

These modest arrangements of Eastern customs for Western consumption correspond to the proposed theory that Melville empathised with indigenous cultures and peoples, extolling the notion of a 'Presbyterian Realism'. The fact that these serpents appear no more menacing than the dull slowworms at Abdullah's feet confirms that a sensationalist rendering of the Orient and its exotic aspects was not part of Melville's

ideology. Were this the case then it would have required little artistic licence to create a basket brimming with writhing coiling vipers, constrictors and rearing hooded cobras, instilling a sense of danger to the scene. Instead Melville offers two stocky natives, a brace of asps no larger than adders, and a pipe and tambourine.

One could with justification take this as an impartial and empirical view of an eastern custom since, in a desire to sell pictures to Westerners, it is unlikely that he would consciously understate the scene. Artists have always been renowned for hyperbolic tendencies, particularly in a romantic idiom, but the opposite is less common. However Edward Lane[52] records the *Howah's* performance as a notably different spectacle from that recorded by Melville. In effect it is more akin to that of Gérôme's Snake Charmer[53] (Plate 70);

> "Performers of sleight-of-hand tricks, who are called *Hówah*[54] are numerous in Cairo. They generally perform in public places; collecting a ring of spectators around them...By indecent jests and actions they attract as much applause as they do by other means. He generally has two boys to assist him. From a large leathern bag he takes four or five snakes, of a largish size. One of these he places on the ground, and causes it to erect its head and part of its body ; another he puts round the head of one of the boys, like a turban; and two more he winds over the boy's neck. Several indecent tricks which he performs with the boy I must abstain from describing : some of them are abominably disgusting."[55]

I suggest that artists, including Melville, encountered similar experiences and gained a comparable overall impression of snake charmers in Cairo and Baghdad. Lane's accounts allude that Gérôme's Snake Charmer is a more accurate transcription of the bawdy aspects of a street act than is generally argued by contemporary art historians. Linda Nochlin discusses the evident overtones of sexual and racial exploitation as profferred by a bourgeois male imperialist in his views of the Orient, but fails to mention

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[52] Modern Egyptians, London 1860. See Chapter on 'Serpent Charmers', pp389-397. First Published in 1835.

[53] Featured in Linda Nochlin's Politics of Vision, London 1991. See essay entitled "Imaginary Orient' pp33-57.

[54] Perhaps the inscription cited on Amber Twilight in the Mackay catalogue, 'Nowah', is actually *Howah*.

[55] op cit pp391-392.

that a similar sexual content was exploited by the charmers themselves in touting for business.

The aspect of snake charming commonly depicted in Orientalist art was not the public festival custom but the street theatre, where the charmers obtained from what crowd thay could muster "small voluntary contributions during and after their performances."[56] It was as much a business as the sale of sherbet or water, and the charmers had to utilise the tools of their trade to elicit remuneration. That these tools were serpents, horns and young boys meant that phallic imagery was integral to the act as popular culture, and may explain the almost exclusvely male crowd. It is of course easy to identify a paedophilic and homosexual content in Gérôme's image of the rear view of a naked pre-pubescent draped in a huge glistening serpent, but the French master seems only to have exploited the camp theatrics of the indigenous street theatre performance itself.

Melville's rejection of the presence of young boys and large snakes in his two extant images of snake charmers is unsurprising within the broad spectrum of his *oeuvre*. In Turkish Bath he resisted the temptation to imbue any 'improper' sexual or racial overtones. I would argue that one can identify, and not for the first time, an asexuality within Melville's treatment of certain subjects where gender is a significant aspect, and raises the possibility of his naivete, celibacy or even repression. Images of women are infrequent in Melville's work since Grez, where he painted rather wistful or plain muscular female figures. Babylonian Girl is interesting as a mildly ethographic bust portrait, but it appears that women were even less accessible as subjects in the East than their male counterparts. It was indubitably difficult to procure models given Islamic attitudes toward graven images, and as Melville would have been unlikely to employ prostitutes he would have had to improvise or simply reject female subject matter.

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[56] ibid p391.

For many Westerners the allure of the East was, and still is, the thrill of an exotic Other which applied sexually as in other contexts. Ethnocentric images of the East equated it to feminine and subservient roles, but this could easily be applied to incorporate the latent homosexual and paedophilic 'deviance' identified in Gérôme's Snake Charmer. While Melville's Baghdad subjects display an enduring interest in figure types, ethnic scenes and rituals he continued to shy from subjects with a polemical racial or sexual content. This restrained and selective objectivity is a hallmark of Melville's Presbyterian Realism in the East, as dictated by the requirements of his Edinburgh patrons.

The imperialist attitudes of Budge and Edwards, cited early in this chapter, were chosen to convey particular prejudices of the colonial mindset. However, there can be no doubt that Melville's attitude towards the Orient and its peoples was generally more sympathetic than most contemporary Western writers or artists. Clearly, the city of Baghdad held little aesthetic appeal for the Scot and it is this factor which motivated Melville to extend his thematic scope, encompassing a stronger ethnographic content than was evident in Cairo or the Gulf[57].

His paintings eschew the dirt and decay which blighted the cityscape, once again confirming that Melville's approach was to a degree subjective. Although he continued to deny Western presence, this was less contrived than in Egypt or the Gulf outposts. Imperialist influence was declining as he moved away from the Gulf into Persia, and more of the character of the city had been retained as it had not been subject to the 'civilising' processes demanded by tourism. The ancient, crumbling city of Baghdad was therefore a wholly different proposition to the rather refined resort which Cairo was becoming in the early 1880's, and it is no surprise that Melville's subjects should reflect this.

In Cairo Melville had been naive and unaccustomed to the ways of the East. His tourist bearing and rural bent are borne out in the images which

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[57]This interest in Eastern ethnography may, though, have been predicated by the gnarled bowed shapes of the women described and featured in Aden.

were largely obvious, accessible subjects. However when in Baghdad his approach became more cerebral and considered, focusing on indigenous figure types and characteristic motifs from the remnants of the city's splendid architecture. Babylonian Girl and Zahaya Sheikh of the Subeans indicated an escalating interest in the human form realised in Baghdad, as he completed a series of detached and informative studies of aspects of the local populus. These images range from a sheikh, through an armed guard to a street beggar, encompassing the whole range of the Persian caste system in a manner redolent of the detailed line studies featured in the art journals.

Despite Melville's expressive style, there is a strong ethnographic content inherent in these studies which is emphasised by the concise, understated settings employed. The One Eyed Calender of Baghdad is situated only by a brief shadow, illustrating that Melville's interest here lay only in the picturesque or characteristic features of this rootless 'low-life' beggar. Street entertainers and vendors were most conducive to Melville's machinations, and he resisted the temptation to glamorise or lampoon Abdullah, the Snake Charmer for example by depicting the serpents as innocuous. So too in Snake Charmers, a highly-worked exhibition piece where the expressions of the crowd and the the architectural setting are of more immediate concern to the artist.

Figures such as the guards and mosque figures are evidently posed as for a portrait, revealing that he did not seek an objective spontaneous reportage so much as a careful and illuminating study of a local type. Despite the free style and, in cases, sumptuous colour these are close-up schematic arrangements. In general they are frontal although Achmet is depicted in full profile, emphasising the ethnographic intentions as his physiognomy is particularly characteristic[58].

The architecture too is presented as typical, with recurring features such as the Midan Mosque and domes helping to situate more populated scenes.

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[58]The heavy brows and moustache, hooked nose and jutting jawline are a principal feature of this work, denoting the figure's Arabic nationality.

In general the motifs employed in Baghdad such as Bridge of Boats were selected as characteristic, contrasting with the more refined and elegant aestheticism of Cairo. These are studies of real Persian life, unspoiled or tamed by industrialisation and the tourist industry. Baghdad retained much of its autonomy and was a more dangerous place for a Western European, as imperialist forces held little real power beyond the Gulf. This impression is conveyed through Melville's themes which, although selective, proffer an interpretation of the nature of the city and its people. The ethnographic studies are crucial within Melville's *oeuvre*, completed over a month to confirm his gravitation towards pure portraiture on the return to Edinburgh. While the Eastern subjects were saleable, society portraits would serve to consolidate his reputation in his native city.

BAGHDAD TO CONSTANTINOPLE

Melville left Baghdad on May 29, 1882 heading north on horseback with little affection for the city of the Arabian Nights. At this stage of the journey he was accompanied by gendarmes to keep watch for the Humawas, a tribe who robbed passers-by of their belongings. His first notable stop was at a place called Kara Tuppa on the following day, a refuelling stop, and then on to Kifri on the 31st of May.

Melville had some bureaucratic trouble at this juncture as officials pressed for a travel pass, but his servant defused the situation and the artist was able to pay for the next stage of his journey to ensure an escort. After an armed altercation at the hands of the Humawas which in part created the myth of Melville's Eastern trip as adventure story material, the journal ends and one must rely on the sketchbook[1] to provide a basic itinerary of the journey.

Melville made several sketches inscribed 'June 1' (See Plate B) which feature groups of armed horsemen either riding across the barren country, or resting at a pool. These were presumably executed at Jambur, a town midway between Kifri and Kirkuk, and may depict the six gendarmes whom Melville records escorting him through the dangerous section of country around Kifri and Jambur[2]. These are relatively detailed and careful little sketches which display the open foregrounds and variety of focus characteristic of crowd scenes such as Revolt of aTribe or Sortie. These sketches are of note as so few pencil drawings by the artist have survived, probably because he painted straight onto the paper with minimal underdrawing.

On June 5 1882 he arrived at Kirkuk in Kurdistan, where he painted Gateway of Kirkuk, Kurdistan[3] (Plate 58). This is a thumbnail picture

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[1] Now at the Fine Art Society.

[2] Journal after May 29. This is where he was pursued by armed bandits and laid up in a village, possibly Kirkuk, for five days.

[3] W/c (5.125x8.5"). Owned by the RWS and reproduced in Cundall's History of Watercolour Painting, 1909.

which confirms the hypothesis that *plein air* works were where he explored light and colour at the expense of naturalistic form[4]. This key work returns to the interests explored in Grand Bazaar Muscat, applying that knowledge to a full sunlight exterior scene. The wall of a city, as with North Gate Baghdad has been blocked in rather uniformly in the dark brown wash. However for the first time he uses black as a determiner, defining the Islamic archway and wall decorations and some of the animals and figures in the foreground. So in essence it is similar to the Muscat work as he used principally dark hues to describe the basis of the scene, leaving the foreground expansive and empty with only the faintest of washes.

The crucial aspect of the picture, as with Muscat, lies in the highlights of pure colour used to describe 'form' in pure Eastern sunlight. This is perhaps his most innovative work to date, even when acknowledged as a sketch rather than a 'finished' work. Along the bottom of the city wall are streaks of dark blue while the wall has russet washes superimposed to imbue a warmer feeling to the colour. It is imperative that the viewer step back in order to read this scene successfully, as the artist has employed minimal working and detail to suggest the impression of the scene spilling out of the city gates.

From the vertical streak of pure red by the gateway, pencilled vertical lines and suggestions of equine form one can again deduce that he is again depicting some belligerent faction milling around before embarking on a mission. The main body of the group is comprised of black daubs and wet blobs, while the peripheral additions are in primary colour. Cool blue shadows lie geometrically beneath the principal profiled horses in mid-right, interspersed with russet and brown. There are red streaks at the foot of the wall, and in the nearest mid-ground brown and olive predominate. Three blots of pure yellow in the saddle and among the throng lift the whole composition.

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[4]See also the similarly-scaled watercolour Arab Night (6.75x9.75"), undated. Known only from a b/w photograph. The fluid handling in this work seems to signify a group of figures outside a buildings. They may be moving or dancing by firelight, creating the flickering intangible forms in the picture. This small sketch was undoubtedly executed on the spot.

In terms of economy of expression and unconventional picture design this work is remarkable for its modernity, applying the knowledge Melville had gleaned from shadowy bazaars and interiors to an open air, full light scene. This is a study of light, colour and movement conveying a tense atmosphere of belligerence and hostility. It appears that situations may have dictated Melville's approach, employing a dextrous reportage 'on the scene' to capture a view from afar. The curious elevated viewpoint suggest its realisation on horseback[5], and the threat of discovery would have necessitated the employ of such a rapid style, small scale and withdrawn viewpoint.

This is the last, and most pioneering, Eastern work which was truly rendered *in situ*. In terms of abstract form it requires a sympathetic response from the viewer. Stepping back and half-closing the eyes will suggest the kind of experience Melville intended to convey, but the strangest aspect of the work is how cool the colour system actually is. The preponderence of black, dark blue and olive-brown ensures that this is not a riot of stereotypical 'Eastern' colour as chosen by Western artists, but a cool detached view of a scene describing more than exotic climes. These horsemen, as with the ones in his sketches, are evidently engaged in aggressive behaviour and it only required a few strategic blots of colour to describe this and the uneasy sense of adventure which would have gripped Melville in this situation so far from Western influence. He arrived at Kirkuk soon after the first narrow escape from bandits near Jambur and by this stage would have been fully aware of the potential dangers of his journey.

Although it is possible that Melville executed Gateway of Kirkuk, Kurdistan under difficult circumstances, his drawing of Dervish Singing in a Churchyard, Kirkuk[6] (Plate B) would appear to contradict such a theory. It is a rapid yet reasonably detailed little sketch of an old man sitting singing in the shade, very much in the tradition of 'types' such as

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[5] Recalling Searight's quotations of Burckhardt's sketching of Mecca from beneath a cloak on horse-back. op cit p135

[6] FAS collection, London, Dated June 5.

the Water Seller or Achmet painted in Cairo and Baghdad. A similar sketch inscribed Beggar (Plate B)may also have been executed in the Kirkuk churchyard, as it is dated 'June 6', portraying a huddled elderly figure in a cowl rendered in bold diagonal hatching.

It is also feasible that he had retired to the 'churchyard' for sanctuary, to recover from an arduous section of his journey on horseback and prepare for the next stage. Another drawing inscribed Through the Pass of Zacho[7] (Plate B) was dated June 6 and evidently rendered *en route* for Mosul. It features a bearded Arab figure on horseback riding up the pass toward the viewer. The terrain is rocky and forbidding although some foliage is visible.

Two days after Kirkuk, Melville arrived at Alton Kupree on June 7, 1882. Three excellent drawings exist of Alton Kupree[8] (Plates A & B), depicting salient features of this Southern Kurdistan town. They are townscapes executed on the approach to the town, portraying the Golden Bridge and gateway to the town in relative detail. One is more panoramic encompassing a view of the geometrical buildings of the town in the background and the Lesser Zab river, which the bridge traverses, to the fore. These again are fairly typical travelogue subjects, which he could easily have executed while resting between the stages of the journey. The desert which he rode across was barren and featureless and each town seems to have had a bridge and fortified gate which he could capture, as in Baghdad and Kirkuk. The principal image of the bridge itself in closeup features figures and camels crossing the structure into the city, while a fourth drawing of the Bridge at Alton Kupree, North[9] features the arches and some landscape, while more landscape and foliage appears on the reverse of this sketch.

Melville's next recorded stop on his journey was Mosul, a large town a week's ride north-west of Kirkuk. Mosul was governed mid-century by a

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[7] FAS, London.

[8] Again in the F.A.S. collection, London.

[9] FAS London.

Turkish Pasha who had sought only financial gain from Layard's discovery of the lost Assyrian capital of Nineveh and the palace of Nimrud some twenty miles from the town. Melville arrived there on June 14 and sketched the interior of a palace or courtyard (Plate B), with arches and terrace and tended garden. In formal terms it is similar to the Baghdad Residency sketches and watercolours, hatched lightly in characteristic style. Sketches of this type were evidently useful in the construction of highly-finished and fabricated interiors such as Awaiting an Audience with the Pasha, which for logistical reasons could not have been executed *in situ*.

Melville sent a letter to his brother George from Diarbeker[10], some days north-west of Mosul. Dated June 30, it implies that he rested in the Turkish city for several days as there was a period of two weeks between the drawing at Mosul and the letter from Diarbeker, although the distance was only two hundred miles. It is interesting therefore that no sketches or drawings exist from this particular halt, and only one more in the whole of Turkey. A moonlit landscape with foliage[11] inscribed 'Brussa' refers to the town some fifty miles south of his destination at Constantinople.

AWAITING AN AUDIENCE WITH THE PASHA[12]

In June 1882, Melville was robbed and left for dead in the desert between Diarbeker and Constantinople. The local Pasha detained him on suspicion of espionage;

> "I was robbed and left stark naked in the desert, and then retained by a Pasha for nearly three weeks. They thought I was a Government spy."[13]

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[10] Mackay p58

[11] FAS London. This sketch has a caricature of a spike-haired bearded male figure holding a candle on the reverse side. It may of course have been executed at a later stage on the journey but reveals the enduring interest in figure work anticipating his progression to portraiture on returning home. Mackay records on p59 that he returned to London via Vienna, where he had admired the Velasquez portraits.

[12] Watercolour (67x100cm), Private Col. S&inscribed Shown Dudley 1883, RWS 1888. Probably over-painted.

[13] Letter dated August 1882, written in London.

By its very nature, it is unlikely that Melville painted this work (Plate 57) in Turkey as he was subject to scrutiny. However the work was shown at the Dudley Gallery in London in 1883 and is probably post-dated. Melville had stated in his journal that he had finished his best paper by this stage in his journey.

This is one of his most aesthetically striking pictures, an exquisite geometrical arrangement in the russet wash and bare paper, raised by areas of pure blue and red. As in Grand Bazaar Muscat the composition is constructed around vertical passages of bare paper, enhanced by a punctured screen and counterbalanced by the horizontal stress of the carpet. The whole floor and walls are white paper or slightly tinted with wash, an effective medium for areas of flat bright colour as in the extreme right of the picture, and in the carpet itself.

The figures are depicted in a fashion fusing his two styles of naturalistic depiction and the ghostly reportage of the crowd scenes. For example although they huddle in the shadows, the grouping in mid-ground have visible features beneath their burnouses. They discuss, wait, gesticulate, meditate and express a whole gamut of emotions and actions. The principal figure waits for the Pasha, standing stolid and patient on the rug while others congregate around the doorway through which he will enter. Interestingly, a sumptuously garbed figure sits in extreme foreground right, cut off by the edge of the work, replacing the basket and table motifs which Melville had hitherto employed as spatial definers. The figures and their gestures seem to have been closely observed and it is very likely that Melville had found himself in such a situation during his internment.

In terms of space and light this interior is unusual. As stated, he uses a figure intruding on the viewer's space to draw the composition forward, while the light archway in rear-ground left performs the opposite function. While the top right corner is composed of punctured screens as in Arab Interior, the result is somewhat different. The lighting within the room is contrived for effect, as it is difficult to ascertain the light source for the room as it illuminates the figures so inconsistently. The picture is composed of flat geometric shapes which introduces a decorative element

to the work. Its accentuation of design and textures is visible in the blue and red carpet, tiles in the doorway, the flat red rolled-up doorway, the 'chandelier' and painted panels behind it and the little glass screens. This in a sense contrasts with the handling of certain figures, such as the flattened foreground character with naturalistically-rendered hand and slippers, but it creates an effective dichotomy and tension between Melville's interests.

In all Awaiting an Audience with the Pasha combines a strong sense of 'personal experience' observation and naturalistic detail with a design awareness of geometrics, spatial definers and unmodulated pure colour. This last aspect is interesting as it appears that the colour scheme may have been altered at a later date. There is no doubt that a version of the work was shown at the Dudley Gallery in 1883, and it seems most probable that this is the same picture, but it would not explain a post-dating of 1887. In comparison to the Karachi works, which are based around the russet tones and embellished with mauve or olive green, this work is even more expressionist in its employment of colour. Contemporary reviews concentrated on Call to Prayer rather than the pasha picture, and it may be that the original exhibited work was less stunning and altogether more subtle. It seems plausible that the work originally shown was similar in colouring to the Karachi pictures, but was doctored for the RWS show in 1888 and dated accordingly to look like a 'new' work as his contemporary reworkings of old Eastern sketches had become stale and mannered.

At this juncture Melville could easily have applied the red and blue areas to lift the whole composition and create a greater visual impact. In the upper section the red on the pillars and the wall has been applied flat and unmixed, and connotes an afterthought, while the blue and red on the doorway is unmodulated. Even in the carpet, the blue resembles a retrospective application and does not match the cobalt hue he utilised so freely in the Eastern pictures. Whereas the work may originally have resembled a sepia-toned naturalistic essay, the introduction of primary colour changed the whole complexion of the work and direction of his colour theory.

The blottesque Muscat works interspersed blots of hue into the composition as a rudimentary optical exercise, creating space and depth, but later Oriental works display a move away from abstraction toward a sense of decoration and design sensibility. This work is extremely different from the Gateway of the Kirkuk, Kurdistan which was obviously created *en plein air* , but the nature of the Pasha picture made the use of photographic prompts unlikely. He had, however, plenty of time to capture - or memorise - the decor in the Turkish palace.

Melville's last recorded stop-off was at Diarbeker, mid-way between the Persian Gulf and the Black Sea. This was desolate country and after his misfortunes, the artist could not paint or write any more. His obituary[14] records that Melville rode to the Black Sea and caught a steamer to Constantinople, probably from Batum on the Eastern seaboard.

I wish at this stage to reprise the salient themes of Melville's entire Oriental experience. As a Scottish painter from a rural background, he had experienced some difficulty in reconciling urban subject matter in Scotland and France in the latter half of the 1870's. The subsequent quest for non-urban themes led him to Egypt, a country conceived and presented as a timeless rural Utopia in painting and the contemporary popular press. These issues will be explained and examined in the following chapter 'Melville in Scotland'.

Melville broached a wide range of subject matter in Egypt. Egyptian Sower, however, betrayed his Scottish background and French training as a single-figure composition of a field labourer, recalling the work of his peer John Robertson Reid or Jules Bastien-Lepage. The landscape setting is suitably reminiscent of a flat East Lothian vista. Landscapes such as Fringe of the Desert reveal a sympathetic approach to his new surroundings, the diminutive pyramid and camel motifs signalling an unwillingness to sensationalize the East in the manner of French, or indeed English, academic Orientalism.

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[14] Dictionary of National Biography, (2nd supp. II). Written by the artist's widow and JC Noble.

Since the opening of the Suez canal, Egypt had become accessible through Cook's Tours and its capital had been developed into a fashionable tourist resort. The hospitable atmosphere, vibrancy and colour of the city is captured to great effect in Melville's street bazaar scenes such as Turkish Bazaar, Cairo where he sought to communicate the frenetic activity and bustle of the markets. These watercolours in particular reveal an expressive dexterity, the evolution of a personal style tending away from the pure naturalism which had characterised most of his work to date.

Melville's role as a tourist led him towards the examination of indigenous customs and traditions, such as Cutting of the Kaligue. Although this represented the more fanatical, superstitious native stereotype it is untypical of his Eastern work and may in fact reveal more about the requirements of the publication for which it was intended, 'The Graphic'. Melville's work betrays a genuine empathy for the Eastern lifestyle, which may be derived from the 'Presbyterian Realism' he had developed in Scotland. This mode of realism was consistent with his Scottish peers such as Robert MacGregor and John Robertson Reid, depicting rural labourers as diligent and impoverished yet content with their lot. These artists did not depict suffering, discomfort or even strenuous activity, preferring to capture toilers in moments of quiet repose or reflection. This of course provided a stark contrast to the more propagandist exertions of Courbet, or even Millet's iconic types, rural lifestyles captured for posterity in the face of industrialisation.

Melville's empathy with the Eastern lifestyle culminates in Arab Interior and Pilgrim's Prayer, relatively monumental exhibition-pieces exploring the national psyche. I would argue that Melville was particularly struck by the way the religious zeal of Islam permeates all aspects of secular life, that the two are not mutually exclusive. Thus the cool, serene beauty of the mosque interior is presented as a place of spiritual and physical rejuvenation, not just of formal prayer or worship. The faithful sit in the shadows meditating, talking quietly or seeking respite from the heat. Free also to pursue the ancient crafts. This portrayal of a typical mosque as a therapeutic refuge contrasted directly with Melville's experiences of the Scottish Kirk which was a more forbidding, austere institution. So too the

domestic interior, where the the natural philosophy of meditation is seen to exalt and regenerate mind and body. This ancient method of elevating relaxation was anathema to Western industrialised modes of life, and would have appeared attractive to Melville given his distaste for urban existence.

This newly-discovered humanism in Melville's work finds greater expression in Baghdad, where he focused on figure types to examine national characteristics more fully. Incorporating a conspicuous ethnographical content, he explored natives from the whole caste range, concentrating particularly on street vendors, entertainers and mendicant Dervishes. The empathy which he displayed towards indigenous peoples suggests a reaction to the imperialist ideologies he had experienced in Egypt and the Gulf. Baghdad was not a tourist resort and tolerated little outside interference, retaining its Persian identity despite the colonial nature of its neighbouring states on the trade routes to India. Thus, the climate in Baghdad was more conducive to ethnographical study, and Melville's interest in 'low life' subjects may signal the relief and thrill he felt at extricating himself from imperialist and colonialist constrictions.

Melville's sympathetic depiction of snake charmers, beggars and armed guards alike confirm his opposition to romantic or idealistic portrayals. Melodrama and sensationalism were employed within the ethnocentric canon of the Orientalists, who sought to sell works in the West by way of sexual and racial exploitation. Their subjects were often based on hyperbole or unfounded misconceptions, preying on the wanton escapism of those bourgeois male patrons who frequented the academies. Unwilling to contrive lascivious subjects for sale purposes, Melville retained the objective restraint which characterised his work to date. It is clear that he considered the demands of his Edinburgh patrons, who were still accustomed to sentimental Scottish genre and continental landscape themes. The typical New Town lawyer or businessman, as pillar of the community and active member of the Kirk, would not have tolerated wanton images which might compromise his reputation and Melville had to design accordingly. There was, after all, no tradition of Orientalism at Scottish exhibitions as there was at the Salon or Royal Academy.

I will argue that a particular Scottish background and training led to the 'Presbyterian Realism' characterised by the work of Melville, Reid, MacGregor and JC Noble in the late 1870's. However, this Scottish conditioning subsequently formulated Melville's attitude towards the other cultures he experienced, leading to a rational and objective portrayal of indigenous national characteristics. The restraint and conventions of his own religion equipped him to perceive the positive aspects of Islam in particular, contrasting it with his own upbringing and depicting it accordingly.

Thus Melville's Eastern body of work, the most significant period in the formulation of an original artistic expression, was predicated by his Scottish rural constitution and formative development within the Kirk. I shall attempt to account for this in the following chapters, returning primarily to Scotland in 1875 to trace his personal and artistic evolution. Key images as Cabbage Garden of 1877 introduced many of the concerns which are fully manifest in the East, while his French experience of 1878-'80 will also be examined in depth as the transitional period encapsulating his aesthetic and thematic maturity.

MELVILLE IN SCOTLAND, 1875-1878

Melville's Eastern work of 1881-'82 encapsulated the principal themes and components of his stylistic maturity. However, this key period in the emergence of a personal means of expression was predicated by his Scottish background and training and this chapter will examine Melville's formative years, charting the influence of a rural Presbyterian upbringing on his painting. It also serves to examine Melville's artistic training and the contribution which contemporary Edinburgh artists such as JR Reid and Robert MacGregor made to 'Presbyterian Realism', a concept consistent with the empathy he came to express for Eastern peoples.

Melville's early Scottish works also anticipated the aversion to industrialised urban settings which generally characterised his French and Eastern periods. These rural themes could be deemed anachronistic in the context of contemporary Impressionist subject matter, but the radical perspective and colour system of Cabbage Garden proclaimed his early ambitions towards an original, expressive style. Thus far I hope to have shown that Melville's Scottish identity and experience was conspicuous in his choice and treatment of themes in the Orient, and in the following pages I shall attempt a closer study of the indigenous conditioning which permeated his art in the East.

For an aspiring painter of Scottish East Coast stock, the cosily familiar genre style of Wilkie, Hugh Cameron or the Faeds would have come as second nature. Competently rendered, such works sold with ease at Scottish exhibitions throughout the 1870's and virtually guaranteed the unambitious artist a comfortable living. East Linton in East Lothian, where Melville's family had settled from Loanhead of Guthrie in Angus, claimed John Pettie and the Nobles as its own while landscape artists of the calibre of WD MacKay and James Paterson visited to sketch. A business acumen gleaned from his apprenticeship as a bookkeeper and an overriding artistic bent assuaged Melville's oppressively Presbyterian mother, as he exchanged provincial shopkeeping for picturemaking in the capital.

It is most likely that Melville's formal artistic instruction only commenced after a career move to Dalkeith, on the southern fringes of Edinburgh,

around 1874.[1] James Campbell Noble became his master at this juncture, and although no evidence of their three-year relationship or of Noble's pedagogical methods is extant it is clear that Melville was influenced by his peer. Noble had specialised in 'figures in landscape settings' such as Packman or Village Meeting[2] before dispensing with figures to adopt a pure landscape style toward the late 1870's, and evidence of both these characteristic Scottish genres are evident in Melville's own work of the period.

Melville first appears on the Royal Scottish Academy's Life Class register on January 6, 1877 and was by this stage resident in Edinburgh's Caledonian Crescent, to the west of the city. Little is known of this period in Melville's artistic development and very few early oils have survived, but sketching around Dalkeith and Lasswade preceded his first exhibit entitled Scotch Lassie. This was a small oil[3] which would seem to correspond to the genre subjects perpetrated by the pupils of Robert Scott Lauder, and is consistent with other Melville titles from subsequent exhibitions.

The Scottish genre themes which Melville seems to have explored in the mid 1870's encompassed rural scenes, "oil pictures of homely incident in cottage or garden or by the wayside, not very unlike what was being done by JR Reid or the Nobles."[4] Titles such as Forbidden Fruit, Cup That Cheers, Thistle Down and Odd Corner encapsulate this type of modest genre picture not unlike William MacTaggart's austere, tight early oils. These works would also have had much in common with the Faeds, Nobles and Robert MacGregor who espoused an overly romantic and sentimental view of a Scottish rural lifestyle which was being swiftly eroded by industrialisation.[5]

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[1]An obituary in Haddingtonshire Advertiser, Sep.2, 1904, records his conversion of the local Corn Exchange into a gymnasium with himself as teacher.

[2]Both c1875. Sold and Ill. Sotheby's Scotland May 1990 and Sotheby's Glasgow 14 Feb., 1995 respectively.

[3]Shown at the RSA in 1875, and purchased by Mr. Hart, an Edinburgh accountant with the National Savings Bank.

[4]Caw, J .Scottish Painting Past and Present, London 1908. p394. Caw was an astute and reliable biographer, having befriended and patronised many of the artists in question. He gifted Melville's Arab Interior to the National Gallery of Scotland.

[5]JC Noble showed works entitled Rambling, Sympathy and Hale and Hearty at the RSA between 1874 and 1876. Robert McGregor showed A Lesson, Hospitality and Three Generations over the same period

With restrained palette and profusion of dark tones in gloomy interiors, these Scottish scenes stand comparison with Dutch painting in the depiction of modest Calvinist ethics of hard work, thrift and honesty. However the Scots were academic in their approach and much less naturalistic than their Dutch forebears, proffering an air of wistful nostalgia and sentimentality which supposedly characterised traditional rural values in a time of widespread urbanisation.

By the late 1870's, William MacTaggart had developed into a mature and powerful artist, painting in a free and innovative style much celebrated and admired by his contemporaries. Caw identified Melville as a "young rebel"[6] who held MacTaggart in the utmost esteem, but at this juncture would have been unaware of the full consequences of the elder's indigenously developed 'impressionistic' style and *plein air* methods. It is significant, however, that MacTaggart had replaced Kenneth Macleay as Life Class Visitor by the end of January 1877, and Melville attended his classes every other day for the next month.

Melville's classmates at this time constituted a particularly fertile cross-section of contemporary Scottish talent, including John Robertson Reid, James Campbell Noble, Robert McGregor, Robert Gemmell Hutchison, William Ewart Lockhart, John Henry Lorimer, John White and James Lawton Wingate. However Melville's attendance outwith MacTaggart's visiting periods was erratic and much of his contact with these artists would have been social[7], and on sketching trips in the Lothian area. Caw recognised the formation of an informal 'school' around Reid, Noble and White at this juncture[8] which, when allied with the influence of MacTaggart, would account for Melville's gravitation to pure landscape from genre, and then on to more figurative compositions in the manner of Reid and McGregor.

This contact seems to have accounted for much of Melville's artistic instruction, as he seems to have undertaken very little academic or formal artistic training. It is surely significant that Reid, MacGregor, Noble and

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[6]ibid p394.

[7]Melville lived at 16, Picardy Place at this stage. JR. Reid, WD. Mackay, J. White and JC. Noble also lived in the same buildings.

[8]op cit p281.

Mackay, who constituted Melville's principal contemporary influences, had all travelled beyond Scotland and absorbed continental aspects within their own painting. Reid had also lived in the South of England for some years although he retained an Edinburgh address, an experience which had sensitised his palette to strong direct light and stressed the value of *plein air* sketching.

THE ROYAL GLASGOW INSTITUTE

> "When a boy, he went to the Schools of the RSA and there picked up what he could. He soon felt there was little hope of progress in his art here. Seeing occasionally works by modern continental masters at the Glasgow Institute and in private collections stimulated him to go to France."[9]

These notes were written in 1889 by Robert MacAulay Stevenson, the landscape painter, who is a valuable source as spokesman for the Glasgow Boys.[10] He describes the role which the two major Scottish exhibitions played in Melville's formative years, while also succinctly encapsulating the wider significance of the Glasgow Institute exhibitions. While it proved a real motivation in bringing a Glasgow 'school' to the forefront of European painting in the late 1880's by introducing them to the latest French developments, the Edinburgh Academy remained annually entrenched in presenting 'traditional' Scottish genres which were by then of little relevance in modern European terms.

Extensive coverage has been devoted to the disparity betwen the RSA's staid, parochial exhibitions[11] and those of the RGI in the 1870's and '80's, but it is important to examine the sources of Melville's original and swift developments beyond the scope of his own countrymen. While the Academy provided a valuable platform for new and established artists from its own Schools and the East of Scotland, it was undoubtedly less receptive to artists from the West of Scotland and elsewhere. Meanwhile the Institute was initiating a minor artistic revolution, milking its vast

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[9]Stevenson, Robert MacAulay. Notes on Arthur Melville. William Hardie Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

[10]Apparently Melville always resided with Stevenson at Robinsfield when in Glasgow. Buchanan, Wm. Glasgow Boys, exhib. cat., Glasgow 1968, p75.

[11]Typical of other large-scale British public shows of the time.

financial resources and newly-acquired patron[12] class to introduce work by modern Continental masters. Since the inception of the Institute in 1861, these attitudes of vision and tolerance were complemented by dealers such as Craibe Angus[13] to create a whole new cultural atmosphere in the city, banishing the ridicule of the feeble genre and landscapes of Loch Lomondside for which its painters had become notorious.

The RGI would have proved extremely attractive for an ambitious young painter stifled by Edinburgh's myopic constrictions. While contact with particular West of Scotland collectors is open to speculation, one can assume that Melville visited the dealers' rooms when in Glasgow to view the Barbizon and Hague School works imported for private sale. Melville's first exhibit at the Glasgow Institute was Bracken Gathering which appeared in 1876, thus confirming his attendance at that exhibition.[14] Opening in February, the RGI exhibitions thus tended to date works to the previous year, and suggests that his contact with the organisation in Glasgow commenced as early as it did with the RSA in 1875.[15]

While Melville's dealings with the RGI commence in 1876, it is also possible that the reputation of Israels's monumental Poor of the Village, Scheveningen may have drawn him to view Artz, Jacob Maris and Mauve at the previous exhibition. Relevant home-based artists also showing in 1875 were RW Allan, WD MacKay, JL Wingate, Wm. MacTaggart and JR Reid, whose modest pictures[16] suggest a similar stature to Melville at this stage. The RGI, therefore, provided the principal means for young unconnected artists to view contemporary advances in Scottish and

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[12]Self-made businessmen (like Wm. Burrell, James Donald and James Reid), who reflected and moulded Glasgow's development as an industrial city of world significance. These capitalists had made fortunes in shipping, trade and heavy industry and sought to patronise the arts with extensive disposable incomes. Liberal and less encumbered by 'conventions of taste' than the traditional landowning aristocracy, they proved receptive to modern European and Scottish advances.

[13]Who opened for business in 1874. See also Alexander Reid.

[14]Although he first showed in 1876, it is likely that he saw at least one previous RGI exhibition.

[15]This contact would have been cemented by the sale of two works from the RSA 1876 to Colonel Robert Bennett, of the celebrated interior decoratng firm of Gordon Street in Glasgow.

[16]Reid's Feeding the Pets and Baiting the Lines, priced at £8-8 and £12 respectively.

Continental[17] painting. Works shown in 1875 by Artz, Blommers, Maris, Frère, Fantin and Lassalle display a dominant interest in rural and coastal figurative scenes, while WY MacGregor, Wingate and Reid showed comparable scenes in the tradition of Chalmers and MacTaggart. Noble's Sunny Hours in Surrey illustrates his mobility at this point, but the principal influence for Melville is the subject matter which interested Scots and their Continental counterparts alike, in contrast to the more uncompromising social realism of Fildes's Casual Ward.[18] Bracken Gathering, although untraced, seems to place Melville firmly within the rural genre or figures in landscape category of Dutch and French painters showing at the RGI. It also, perhaps more significantly for his early work, equates him closely with the scale and theme of picture which Wingate and Reid were showing in the mid-70's, and displays a tangible contact with the Institute itself.

The principal interest of the 1876 show, apart from the village scenes of Artz and Mauve and early canvases by Jules Breton and Fantin, were the French works loaned to the exhibition by Scottish collectors. While John Forbes White seems to have brought the first works by Corot to Scotland, it was J. Duncan of Benmore whose Landscape with Figures by Corot became the first showing of an artist whose influence on Scottish landscape painting was to prove far-reaching.[19]

However by 1876, Scottish painters such as JC Noble, McGregor, RW MacBeth and RM Coventry were showing work emphasising the types of figurative subjects which Melville would tackle at home and in France. RW Allan had previously shown modest Scottish landscapes but by 1876 had sent French Fishing Boat and Figures at Cancale and Village Well, Brittany reinforcing his significance to Melville's painting into the next

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[17]Principally Dutch and French.

[18]Shown RGI 1875.

[19]Melville's early landscape oils of 1877 make strong references to Corot, as discussed below. Other Barbizon landscape painters shown in this period were Charles Jacque's Woodland Flock in 1877; Daubigny's Pond (on sale for a paltry £44) in 1878, and Theodore Rousseau's Landscape loaned again by Duncan of Benmore in 1878. Numbers were not large but the influence of the Barbizon painters was significant on artists and collectors alike they would have been on view in Glasgow dealers'rooms, and gained much attention when exhibited. Glasgow Museums hold works by Jacque, Rousseau, Daubigny, Millet, Dupré and Corot bequeathed by collectors like James Donald the Glasgow chemical manufacturer in 1905, and James Reid of Auchterarder, the locomotive manufacturer, in 1896.

decade, as discussed below. Allan had gone to Paris in 1875 and as a regular contributor to the RGI from home and abroad elicited attention for his free, painterly technique. It is clear, then, that the RGI was the principal forum for Melville and other Scottish artists to absorb the developments of their peers and contemporaries from Scotland, England and the Continent and as such is of considerable significance.

MELVILLE'S EARLIEST SURVIVING WORKS

It is remarkable that none of the seventeen works exhibited by Melville in Scotland before 1880 have survived[20], but seven oils painted before his departure for France early in 1878 give some indication of Melville's progress. The first two I wish to discuss are large-scale finished oils from 1874-'75 and although undoubtedly juvenilia, are extremely enlightening given the dearth of early exhibited material.

After the Hunt[21] is a copy after Edwin Landseer, and the earlier of the two pictures. Landseer's profile was high in the mid-70's following a massive retrospective of his work at the Royal Academy and although this work does not appear to have been shown, Landseer was accessible through public collections and published engravings.

A typical Landseer-style sporting scene, it features two gamekeeper types with dog and pony, bearing the day's game of stag and brace of pheasant. The lowering sky, rugged terrain and rough tartan-clad figures typify period fashion of scenes propagating the myth of 'wild Scotland' for Victorian English consumption, initiated by Queen Victoria's holidays in the North.[22] Motivated perhaps by Landseer's vast tonal range and tight

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[20]Although the significant Cabbage Garden, shown at the RA in 1878 is extant, and Gardener's Daughter from the RSA 1878 is known from a sketch in the RSA Notes. One reason for this loss is that many were purchased by individual patrons such as James Hunter Annandale of Polton Vale Paper Mills, and Col RJ Bennett of the 'Bennett's Interior Decoration' Company in Glasgow. When a private collection is dispersed over generations, then whole collections of significant work can be lost. As many of his early works were cheap, c£10, they went to small private collectors such as Mrs. Bell of Windsor St., Edinburgh, and George Hart of Carlton Terrace in the city. Melville's reputation has since been made as a watercolourist of Eastern scenes, and early uncharacteristic oils would have easily escaped attention.

[21]Fine Art Society. Oil on canvas, unsigned and undated.

[22]Landseer, an Englishman, was her favourite..

formal grouping[23], Melville manages to create an even more brittle and unconvincing still-life than the original. Visibly primitive in handling and technique with features crudely hacked into faces and animals stagily Gothic, the inept nature of this copy is encapsulated by the single vertical dashes of uniform hue intended to depict grass. However Melville has attempted an ambitious composition and created a finished piece which although illustrating his lack of draughtsmanship and technique, has much tonally to recommend it.

The second oil, entitled Dunbar Town Hall[24] (see Plate 1), provides a better insight into Melville's early direction. Dunbar is on the east coast of Scotland, near to the artist's home town of East Linton, reinforcing the early date attributed for stylistic reasons. The work is completed and displays a more competent technique than is visible in the Landseer copy, and was most possibly executed on a visit from Dalkeith or Edinburgh after some rudimentary training in the principles of oil painting. The architecture is linear and precise, with an overall grey muted tone[25] imbuing a certain Dutch air around the scene. An endearing primitiveness again permeates the composition.

Two stilted and awkward little figures converse in the empty expanse of the street, one leaning angular on a pitchfork, suggesting a fabrication as spatial indicators rather than natural characters captured *en plein air*. On the whole, however, it is a well-constructed and simple picture which succeeds within its limitations, concentrating on the draughtsmanship so absent from the copy to the exclusion of almost all else. As such they may be chronologically close, and represent the suggestions of an artist such as Noble to develop distinct aspects of oil technique in sequence.

Where After the Hunt is an exercise in colour, tone and grouping it confirms Melville's unsuitability to such complex figurative interactions. The success of Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter depend on single or carefully differentiated figures with less than tangible contact, thus rejecting the type of ambitious arrangement represented by the copy.

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[23]To say nothing of his success.

[24]Fine Art Society

[25]It may equally have been composed from a photographic prompt, which would explain the dearth of colour. This may also be true of the copy.

However the simplified planar arrangement, empty foregound, spatial markers and interest in street-space of Dunbar Town Hall make it a prototype for many of Melville's most successful French and Eastern compositions such as Geese Crossing a Weir and Street Scene, Karachi which display novel spatial arrangements more akin to Japanese prints. In all, the themes and formal aspects of these examples of juvenilia raise important questions with much bearing on Melville's development, and help to introduce the radical departures and accomplishments of his 1877 pictures.

FOUR LANDSCAPES FROM 1877

Several accomplished and unexhibited landscapes exist which prepared the artist for his major figurative works Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter.[26] In essence they are exploratory pieces, honing his oil technique and representing the fruits of studio labour in Picardy Place, working from sketches made around Duddingston Reeds near Edinburgh and on the East Coast.

The influence of Corot and the Barbizon artists Melville knew from the RGI exhibitions and dealers is conspicuous in these relatively large scale oils. They explore woodland, marsh and coastline vistas in an obvious attempt to cover the full compliment of landscape fundaments, encompassing the myriad of tones, hues and textures inherent in organic life, water, weather fluctuations and sky conditions.

The influence of the Barbizon painters is clearly in evidence in the theme, style and approach of Tragedy of the Morn[27] (Plate. 2) and Early Spring[28], which appear to be roughly contemporary views of a marshy and naturally overgrown area. An obituary describes Melville's landscape sketching methods;

> "He was three years under Mr. (J.C.) Noble, at the same time taking lessons in the RSA Life School. The reeds at Duddingston formed a favourite sketching ground of his, and to enable him to gratify this taste he had to get out at five o'clock in the morning, so much work

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[26]Shown at the RA and RSA of 1878, respectively.

[27]Oil, s&d 1877. (24x36"), Kelvingrove Museum and Gallery, Glasgow.

[28]Oil, sold FAS, (16x22")

did he do during the day."[29]

which is consistent with the appearance of these works. The 'tragedy' of the first title would appear to refer to a dead heron which lies in the foreground, wings akimbo and feathers scattered among the hatched autumnal leaves[30]. Dead fowl would of course have been a familiar sight to one accustomed to dawn excursions, but again it may have been employed spatially in much the same way as Corot used miniscule unmodelled figures within his landscapes. Melville has depicted it in some detail, though, as a little still-life cameo.

This point introduces an aspect which became fundamental even from his formative landscapes. Melville consistently used organic and inert forms to mark space within his images where conventional orthogonals and perspectival techniques have been eschewed for an overall design. Thus even a planar, staggered scene like Tragedy of the Morn never looks spatially inconsistent as one finds in Pre-Raphaelite landscapes, where the overall vision could prove subordinate to localised precision and detail.

I would argue that, although aware of the strength and quality of the Scottish landscape tradition, Melville never attempts to broach it or attempt to propagate the 'myth of Scotland' by employing the standard rugged crag, baying stag or swarthy *ghillie* motifs. Such an approach to landscape would have proved as natural and genuine for Melville as his interpretation of Landseer, and even in his early work was manipulating landscape to his own ends. These landscape pictures are localised and focused sections, individually chosen as microcosms of the particular features of Nature which he wished to practise on a given day. He was aiming for a swiftly-attained and efficient all-round competence, hence the thick undergrowth, reeds and flotilla of ducks on a silvery pool in Early Spring which examine a different feature of Duddingston from the sandy banks and scrub of the Tragedy of the Morn, an altogether less claustrophobic vista[31].

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[29]Haddingtonshire Advertiser, Sep. 2, 1904.

[30] The title may be posthumous, although it is consistent with the anecdotal nature of early lost works.

[31]While the ducks strung out along the foreground may be reminiscent of Daubigny's work which Melville may have seen, the stillness and pathos is more akin to Hague School landscapes. The wispy fronds in fore and feathery trees in the backgrounds are similar to Corot's later work.

Elements of both of these works are apparent in Timber Wagon[32] which is set in a woodland clearing. It is unlikely that it was painted at Duddingston, and may have been painted in East Lothian or on the west coast, perhaps around Loch Lomond which he visited during trips to Glasgow. An open snowy foreground and closely observed passage of brambles to the left foreground contrast with a less defined and Corot-esque forest background. Almost as an afterthought, Melville has inserted tracks in the snow[33] to imbue a lucidity to the composition and bond fore and rear grounds. However the wagon itself is clumsily drawn and the foreshortening irregular, detracting somewhat from the accomplished close observation of the flora. A rather different landscape perspective is offered in Sand Dunes, Seacliff[34], depicting a sandy vista of open moorland. The whole is blasted by a coastal wind which bends the feathery pines in mid ground, laid over the impasted white horizon. The foreground features similar flickering rushes to other early landscapes but this is a very light and airy picture, as befitting the scene it depicts.

The sky is pink and relatively warm in hue, while the deep green rushes and treetops are interspersed with bold red blots and strokes in a fashion which anticipates the central colour scheme of Cabbage Garden. As is the case with Tragedy of the Morn, Melville has paid great attention to brushwork and utilises a variety of handling techniques within the picture. This again hints at a very conspicuous experimental component, with careful tight handling to the middle sections. The sky is swept bold and horizontal, while grey and pink strokes criss-cross around the treetops and the foreground brushwork is sandy and broad. It is clear that Melville utilised landscapes to experiment with a variety of characteristic natural features, styles of expressive brushwork, colour and light effects to prepare him fully for the figurative oils to which he aspired with his exhibition pieces for 1878.

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[32]Oil (20.5x16.25"), sold and Ill Christie's Edinburgh 8.6.95. Possibly The End of its Journey, shown RSA 1878.

[33]This trick would become common in Parisian watercolours, where horses, carts and barges worked the towpaths of the Seine. A spatial marker, the tracks also served to draw the eye fluently into a composition where steep recession is employed.

[34]Oil, s&d 1877. (19x30"). Collection Peter Young. Seacliff is an estate near Dunbar, close to the estate on which Melville's family lived. Another Sand Dunes early work exists, oil (13.5x9.5"), Grimond, who also owns Low Tide oil o/b (14.3x8.5"), of barges moored at low tide. These were probably painted at the same locality.

Melville employs a landscape style which has more in common with Continental models than his Scottish peers. Where fellow countrymen like McCulloch and Peter Graham tended to strive for grand vistas and characteristic panoramas which loudly proclaimed their Scottishness, Melville concentrates his vision on more localised, anonymous sections of countryside. This is a similar approach to Barbizon artists such as Rousseau and Daubigny who focused and honed their vision on specific aspects of the forest and its components in all weathers, seasons, hours and from all viewpoints. Where they could have depicted majestic sweeps of greenery from high vantage points, they preferred to concentrate on individual rock formations and trees, utilising a wholly different language of expression from the Scots.

Where Noble is an obvious influence on his landscape development, it is clear from the range of Melville's handling and boldness of his colour contrasts that the expressive dexterity of William MacTaggart had clearly been recognised and registered. Even at this early stage, however, Melville seems reluctant to proclaim an overt Scottishness within his pictorial language as he draws from the disparate sources at his disposal. To this end he is the first in a modern landscape tradition, recognising that an indigenous expression of Scotland's innate spiritual power was epitomised in MacTaggart himself, then at the peak of his creativity. The logical progression for an aware and ambitious young artist was to look for a new vocabulary beyond Scottish models, assimilating the newly presented Continental themes and techniques to paint from a broader base.

SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR 'CABBAGE GARDEN'; RURAL EAST LOTHIAN IN THE 1870's

Recent historical research has shown that the national models of farming and agricultural economy did not apply to East Lothian in the latter half of the 19th century. Systems of dependence, long family contracts and bondaging existed as unmarried farm servants were recruited from hinds' families, while domestic servants for the farmhouse were culled from the cottar's families preventing the growth of bothies until later in the century. Thus the hind was contracted to provide a worker, usually a woman, at harvest and a bondager throughout the year, accommodating the hired woman even if she was not an immediate relative.

Alastair Orr[35] describes how the system of family labour ensured the high proportion of women in the agricultural labour force. When this supply failed due to increased migration from the land, woman from the Highlands and Ireland were imported and housed in bothies.

> "A survey of twenty-seven arable farms in the Lothians in the 1870's revealed that women (mostly young girls under eighteen) made up 46 percent of the workforce."[36]

Most farming tasks were considered suitable for women, particularly hoeing and weeding green crops, and without the high availibility of female labour from the North, the extensive cultivation of green crops would have been impossible.[37] Even until the war, the bondager uniform of widebrimmed straw hat, blouse and drugget skirt and boots buttoning up the side of the leg survived in East Lothian, and this is clearly visible in Melville's Gardener's Daughter (Plate 4) of 1877. In the period 1861-'91, male farm labour decreased by one third while the mobility of women was even greater, as they streamed off the land and into the factories and mills.

One of the most characteristic features of the farming tradition in East Lothian was the 'boll wage'. Lothian farm servants did not receive most of their wages in money until the 1880's, and even into the new century a quarter of the hind's wage was paid in kind.[38] The rise in cash payments meant that more was spent at markets and stores, and competition was keen among grocers and suppliers to provide carts which visited the farm women.[39] Despite the considerable exodus from the land towards the end of the 19th century, farm labourers in Lowland Scotland remained relatively prosperous, and seem to have been unaffected by the decline in agricutural prices between 1870 and 1900.[40]

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[35]Farm Labour in the Forth Valley and South-East Lothians, an essay from T.M. Devine ed., Farm Servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland, Edinburgh 1984. pp29-53

[36]ibid p34

[37]See particularly paintings by Robert McGregor which feature female 'bondage' labour, such as Gathering Stones, Edinburgh CAC 1877; Clearing the Potato Field 1876 Soth. Glas. 4.2.87; Turnip Field, Hunterian Museum and Gallery, Glasgow.

[38]ibid p36

[39]Melville's own occupation on the census of 1871 at the parish of Prestonkirk, East Lothian, was 'grocer's apprentice'. His younger brother Bill went on to own grocery stores in Dunbar and Leith.

[40]Devine, T.M. Scottish farm Labour in the Era of Agricultural Depression, 1875-1900. From Devine, T. M. ed., Farm servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland.

The 'boll' (a Scottish measure) wage varied slightly according to county, but the basic composition was consistent. In return for his efforts, the hind received oats, barley, beans or peas, the keep of a cow, food at harvest time, a garden, and perhaps the keep of hens or pigs.[41] They rarely paid cash rental for their cottages. For the purposes of this discussion of Melville's work, though, the most interesting component of the boll wage was a plot of land which was usually about one sixteenth of an acre. The hind was free to use it as he wished but generally utilised it to grow flax before the collapse of the domestic linen industry, and thereafter for potatoes. It is clear that the hind's position within the agricultural caste of East Lothian was extremely desirable, with relative self-sufficiency and a degree of autonomy.[42]

The increasing use of horsepower also had an effect on the status of the hinds, particularly in East Lothian which in 1877 contained the largest farms in Scotland at an average of nearly 200 acres per occupier. Ploughing and horse-tending as a year-round occupation required a two year apprenticeship and constituted a specialised skill, where matches offered considerable rewards.[43] These accompanied social aspirations not generally entertained by the farm labouring classes, although the larger farms supposedly made it more difficult to elevate social position in East Lothian.

Melville's family had lived in Loanhead of Guthrie, in rural Angus, before moving to East Lothian in the 1860's. In the 1871 census[44] his father's occupation is given as coachman on the Smeaton estate. There were four other cottages on Sir Thomas Buchan-Hepburn's estate, housing butler, blacksmith, gamekeeper, kitchenmaid and shepherd, a typical cross-section of occupations which would be required on an estate of its size. It may be possible that Melville's father had been a hind in Loanhead of Guthrie, as there does not appear to have been any kind of estate in that locality. Thus he could have gone to East Lothian to better himself, utilising his skills as

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[41]There was also some cash component, usually minimal. Information Orr ibid p35

[42]See Whittington, G. Agriculture and Society in Lowland Scotland, 1750-1870, from Whittington and Whyte, I,D. An Historical Geography of Scotland, London 1983, pp141-163. Whittington notes that outside Southeast Scotland, the ploughman was the most important person on a farm and yet lived in a bothy or the kitchen system, a much less preferable system. p151

[43]See Orr, ibid p38

[44]Prestonkirk parish, East Lothian.

horseman to attain a good position on Sir Thomas's estate[45]. This elevation from the farm labouring class is reflected in Arthur Snr.'s children, as the three sons in turn became artist, businessman with grocery stores and doctor of medicine, having studied in Edinburgh. Melville himself, though, seems to have retained the physique and temperament of a rural working man.

In the decade between 1871 and 1881, numbers of agricultural labourers fell from 274, 000 to 208, 000 as those employed in mining and quarrying, metalworking, transport and communication and shipbuilding grew dramatically.[46] It does not appear that these new occupations paid more than rural labour in East Lothian, but offered much shorter hours, holidays and much greater opportunity for leisure activities. It was becoming acknowledged among young people that rural life was unacceptably backward and offered few incentives for single people.

CABBAGE GARDEN, 1877

It is tempting to try to dismiss Cabbage Garden (Plate 3), one of the original 'Kailyard' oils, as overly derivative of the Continental sources infiltrating Scottish exhibitions and dealers' rooms in the late 1870's.[47] In truth, however, the pictures of Barbizon and Hague School artists cannot be viewed as more than incidental sources for this work. Melville's innovative picture intellectually and formally outstripped anything he had painted thus far, the colour and optical effects and dual perspective system indicating considerable personal creativity. How, though, does one account for the radical form of Cabbage Garden, one of Scottish painting's most enduring images?

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[45]It is perhaps ironic, then, that Melville should marry Ethel, daughter of David Croall who owned the world-renowned Edinburgh coachbuilding business. The Croalls lived at the splendid Southfield estate, near Gilmerton.

[46]Statistics from Devine, ibid p250. Devine goes on to suggest that the fall was due largely to the autonomy of the farm labourers. There was much ease of mobility between country and town and far from being driven to seek work, it left the farm employers short-handed. He states that increasing mechanisation on East Lothian farms was a result of, and not a cause of, rural depopulation.

[47]Elizabeth Bird estimates that by 1877 Glasgow collectors owned at least 12 works by Israels, 4 by Mollinger and 3 by Willem Maris, and numerous Barbizon works. International Glasgow, Connoisseur 183, 1973 pp249-256.

Naturally, Melville's work to date had drawn heavily on Scottish and Continental models. There are aspects within Cabbage Garden which make strong references, such as the steep space and contemplative calm which are reminiscent of Hague School models.[48] The whole design, however, with its use of pure colour and geometry cannot be attributed to Dutch naturalist sources and one must look elsewhere for his inspiration. In discussing Cabbage Garden, one should also note that this was Melville's first submission to the Royal Academy, well-positioned on the line in Room II in 1878. As such, it must be treated individually within his early work as a conscious, highly-finished exhibition piece representing the pinnacle of his achievements thus far.

One of the most striking features is that this is neither a pure landscape nor figurative work, as both components are given equal prominence. The title clearly refers to what is now termed the 'kailyard' tradition in Scottish painting and writing[49], and Cabbage Garden represents the first in a genre which became synonymous with Scottish painting. It does not equate to Hague or Barbizon 'landscape with figures' models such as Corot's Woodcutter, where figures can comprise the title of a picture but actually have little significance in the overall result as they play a subservient role to the landscape setting. Nor is it a depiction of simple rustic figures in a landscape bound to a predetermined drudge and, as such, forming an equivocal subject where neither assumes prominence as in Israels's Sheltering from the Storm or Bastien-Lepage's Saison d'Octobre. Finally, it eludes the category 'figure study' such as Israels's Zandvoort Fisherwoman or Bastien-Lepage's Les Foins, where nature is purely a complementary backdrop for a study from life. This list may appear extraneous but in wishing to introduce an original sub-genre of 'figures in landscape' painting, one must discount other contemporary categories from the equation, as there is a subtle shift in balance within Melville's picture. The duality of motivation encapsulated in this early work is crucial to an understanding of Melville's subsequent machinations in picture design.

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[48]He could have seen Artz, Mauve and Israels at the Glasgow Institute exhibitions, while other Dutch artists were sold through dealers in the major Scottish cities, such as Craibe Angus.

[49]Unlike Guthrie's later Cottar's Garden, which is clearly unpopulated.

The basic form of the work is as follows. Two figures in mid-ground hold some kind of communication in an enclosed area combining cabbage allotment and orchard under a luminous dusk sky. The picture comprises two viewpoints, the upper section of the canvas a conventional eye-contact view while the front sees the sharp tilting of organic form and basket in a more vertical movement. The gardener himself is a solid, bold rendering of a typical figure type which one might see in any common garden or allotment even today, and as such is timeless. His garb is earthily familiar, but the stance upright and relaxed, suggesting perhaps that he is 'winding-down' after an energetic day's toil. However from his dark hair and solid limb-set it may be construed that he is not an 'old retainer', but perhaps a hind tending the plot or garden to which he is entitled as part of the boll wage. Becapped and hirsute, no features are visible beneath the foliage halo which, like spade and vegetables to the knee, bond him to the earth.

The woman, though, is more withdrawn and equally impassive although depicted frontally. Darkly swathed, her age is debatable as Melville uses shadow and inconsistent illumination to obscure her features and mask her face beneath a bonnet. However the head is too large and torso disproportionate to be entirely convincing although this would explain the insubstantial rendering. Her hair may be fair or even red judging by the splash of colour on her shoulder, suggesting the possibility that she was not native of East Lothian but perhaps descended from one of the large proportion of Highland or Irish women employed as bondagers to work on green crops. However her clothes suggest someone altogether wealthier than an outworker or domestic servant, the most likely positions she would have held, but Melville may have romanticised her appearance for pictorial effect.

The demure stance would seem to indicate her youth, a theory strengthened by the vast proportion of female immigrants under eighteen employed on arable Lothian farms in the 1870's. If he is a hind then a courting situation is unlikely as hinds were all married[50], and his age makes it unlikely that he was assisting his father on his plot. The most feasible situation would appear to be that she is an immigrant outworker who may or may not be accommodated by the hind's family to compensate

[50]Consequently, though, he may have been an eligible widower.

for the lack of a daughter or sister. The difference in culture and language, should she have been an immigrant, would have made the girl as reticent toward her employer as she appears in the picture.

The depiction of the girl, hands clasped on her basket in front, is as innocent and devotional as one would find in any Hague School work. The ephemeral nature may be less contrived than the realisation of his own shortcomings in figurative arrangements, as it is unknown whether he had attempted a major figuarative work since Scotch Lassie in 1875. His infrequent appearances at the Life Class may signal a basic lack of draughtsmanship which would limit his figurative explorations for some years.

An artist has more leeway when depicting nature's irregular beauty than human forms. Where Degas and Millet were known for depicting figures from unconventional impersonal viewpoints for theoretical reasons, their abilities of expression were hitherto beyond question. Melville, however, seems to put himself at a disadvantage by his lack of drawing training.[51] However the insubstantial form of the woman is not to the detriment of the picture, enhancing the enigmatic quality within their relationship. Our viewpoint bisects their visual contact but offers no introduction, they are not in the foreground and are oblivious to our intrusion. Postures are private and almost guarded in excluding inquiries but where the gardener is convincing and fully modelled, the woman is at once more laboured and less tangible.

Their contact is sympathetic, but neither is satisfactorily bonded to the earth itself. The left side of the gardener is awkwardly rendered in relation to surrounding forms, and the bright turquoise of the cabbage looks artificial against the earthy brown naturalistic tones of the figure himself representing a kind of conflict of intentions. He is also situated in the middle of a row, when in reality he would have stood between rows in such a densely packed patch. The woman blends well with the orchard background but again the conflict of earthy naturalism is shown with her placed behind an unconvincing diagonal. If the foreground tilted viewpoint works and the rows of cabbages are 'real' as observed, then the right hand receding diagonal would have been much shallower than it is

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[51] Very few drawings, from any stage in Melville's career, have survived.

in the picture. All of which alludes to an artist juxtaposing disparate elements from different sources and sketches, manipulating form, space and colour to create an innovative whole full of structural inner tensions and conflicts. However on close inspection the complex combination of subsections seems to unravel, revealing a painter whose aspirations and vision were quickly overtaking the expressive means at his disposal. Thus, if the work were bisected below the figures, it would function as two individual 'wholes'. However, together a real and powerful visual tension is created which keeps the eye moving and elevates the Cabbage Garden and its creator beyond the level of regional journeyman painter and into a new pioneering circle.

The work does indeed feature inconsistencies but such 'failings' are inevitable in early attempts to paint *en plein air* as atmospheric conditions are capricious. So too the transitions from sketches to studio realisation, and the attempted fusion of individual elements into a lucid entirety. Even at this early stage the bold imprecision of the orchard is akin to Mauve or Daubigny, while the highly-coloured daubings in mid-ground are more reminiscent of MacTaggart and Impressionism. The expressive, detailed and highly-coloured passages on the foreground again reveal the range of his techniques, but the three are not entirely congruous. What it signals is an awareness of landscape traditions and the atmosphere of Continental models, which were common knowledge among practising artists. But what of the figures and subject matter?

The most obvious Continental source would be Millet, who had painted similar subjects of types wielding hoe and spade in field and garden. The reputations of masters like Courbet and Millet had reached Scotland as everywhere alse, but the atmosphere is recognisably different. Where the works of these Frenchmen impart rhetoric and political theory, whatever the motivation which imbued an all-consuming desire to record the passing of rural types and their downtrodden, exploited lots, the work of Scottish equivalents is very different.

By the 1870's, Scottish painters such as Robert McGregor had been travelling Britain and Northern Europe and producing images of provincial, rural toilers. Life for certain sections of the peasantry in 1870's Scotland was just as squalid and back-breakingly futile as one could witness in contemporary France. However the revolutionary history of

the French republic and the threat of national conflict pervaded, rendering it more unstable. The rate of industrialisation sweeping the country and the changes occurring created a more vociferously political and opinionated underclass, characterised by artists from backgrounds such as Courbet and Millet[52]. Thus the production of iconoclastic, melodramatic figurative images of the peasantry which glorified the drudge and celebrated the passing of such arduous existences to industrialisation is logical in French culture.

Contrast, then, with Scotland and its dominant Presbyterian ideology[53] where artists such as McGregor were [54] from artisan or 'higher' class backgrounds. Where conditions in Scotland could be deplorable and inhuman, the austere and self-sacrificial teachings of the all-pervasive religion taught content with one's lot, elevating hard toil and pious sabbatical restraint. The paintings of McGregor[55], such as Gardener or Burning the Weeds[56], do not explore the negative aspects of menial toil, but simply and spartanly present the tasks as everyday routine, turning the latter into a family tableau where children and grandmother work together. Likewise his Knifegrinder and Doing the Provinces[57] capture only aspects of village life which were inoffensive, extolling the virtues of Fife community existence as eloquently as Wilkie. Caw[58] notes the sober "passive" nature of his subject choice which is reflected in the cool even grey light and complementary colours of his scenes, which seem to have less bearing on Melville than the mood and choice of subject matter. Melville's light and colour, as shall be seen, come from a different source.

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[52]Born in provincial France and raised amid the rural labouring classes. Their families were financially stable, enabling the artists to gain an education.

[53]By the 1870's in Scotland there had been a large influx of Irish Catholics to the central belt, working mainly as unskilled labour on railways, canals, dams, land enclosure and farm labour. However their alien culture and language quickly established ghettoes in Edinburgh (such as the Cowgate, which bore James Connolly), Dundee and Glasgow, around Catholic churches. In rural areas, they were housed together in bothies on the lower strata of the rural caste system. Despite weight of numbers, their culture and religion had little impact on the Presbyterian norm by the late 1870's ie pre football culture : Glasgow Celtic formed in 1887 by Brother Walfrid to provide free meals for underprivileged Catholic children in the city, cf also Hibernian in Edinburgh, Dundee Hibernian (now Utd.) etc. Mining villages like Croy and Larkhall, which are still predominantly Catholic and Protestant respectively, retain particularly strong 'identities'.

[54]As with French counterparts like Courbet and Millet

[55]Born in 1847, some eight years older than Melville. He first showed at the RSA in 1873.

[56]Sold and Ill Sotheby's 26.4.88, and 18.4.81 respectively

[57]Dundee and Kelvingrove respectively

[58]Scottish Painting p 284

However on the strength of pioneering works such as Gathering Stones, Breton Garden and Goose Girl McGregor is a prime source of subject matter and Continental outlook, and one may assume that works such as Weeding the Cabbage Patch[59] and Clearing the Potato Field (Plate 66) were the types of work which had a direct influence on Melville's Cabbage Garden. While, however, McGregor is a likely formative influence in the areas defined, another Scottish painter more successfully spans the decade into the 1880's and is a more modern and direct source.

JR Reid[60] seems to have been Melville's principal source for free, broad painterly technique, vivid colour and use of direct sunlight. Reid's Young Artist, Village Maiden and Idle Moments from the period 1875 - 1877 are indicative of his use of full light to pick out figures, usually women, in rustic settings.[61] Reid's Beneath Cherry Blossom[62] (Plate 68) is a remarkable Impressionist-style oil painted in 1877, depicting a similar subject (of gardener and young woman under blossoming tree) with little, if any, reference to indigenous Scottish forms or traditions.[63] Reid and Melville most probably became acquainted through the RSA Life Class which they both attended in 1877, and Reid's works such as Farmer's Daughter (Plate 67) and his Gardener's Daughter (RGI 1876) must surely have had an impact on Melville's own Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter of 1877. Although the Reid pictures are untraced[64], a description of Turnip Field (RSA 1878);

> "sloping up to where an open hedge comes into telling relief against a grey-bright sky"[65]

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[59]Sold Sotheby Nov 1980.

[60]An Edinburgh painter, born 1851, some four years Melville's senior. Exhibiting since 1875.

[61]It would be accurate to say that the single-figure rural compositions of McGregor, Reid and Melville predominantly feature women. While Melville and McGregor tended to concentrate more on women working, Reid depicted more young ladies sketching , dreaming or idling than he did farmers' daughters.

[62]Ill Christie's Nov 22, 1989.

[63]Reid retained his address at 5, Picardy Place until 1880, although he had been to Holland c1876, and France in the late 70's and certainly in 1878. He resided and sketched in Shere, Surrey (where Melville, Noble and Walton also worked) and Ashington in West Sussex over the same period and although he would have been to London, much of his style must have been developed indigenously.

[64]A version of Gardener's Daughter was sold through Vicar's in London in the 1920's, and exists in a photograph in the Witt Library, London

[65]Scotsman, March 7, 1878

is reminiscent of formal aspects of Cabbage Garden.

Melville's work was submitted to the RA from Shere, Surrey, where Reid worked, and this may signal the completion of the work in England as Melville's presence in Scotland is unconfirmed after February 1877 until the following year. The brimmed hat of his gardener is similar to the un-Scottish headwear sported by Reid's Old Gardener[66], and the framing of Reid's frontally-depicted figure against foliage links closely with Melville's Gardener's Daughter. The date and modest scale[67] of Cabbage Garden is close to Reid's picture and seems to confirm, along with consistent location, style and subject matter, a tangible link between Melville and Reid in these formative years.

Where the subjects and form of contemporary works by McGregor and Reid seem to provide the principal sources for Melville's figurative landscapes from 1877-78, there is one other telling aspect suggested above. It is the idea of a kind of 'Presbyterian Realism' peculiar to Scotland, which allows for the representations of figures - in rural settings and engaged in manual tasks - with connotations different to those of French parallels. From similar means and situation, the Scots seem to imbue their scenes and particularly their figures with an attitude which reflects their own social and spiritual standpoint as distinct from their French counterparts. Pictures like Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter betray a contemplative calm, a reflective pause defusing any tension which could be construed. Thus the old bondagers in McGregor's Gathering Stones do not imply a sense of futile female exploitation, but of the necessity for familial effort to ensure survival. The assertive bearing of Melville's Gardener's Daughter resurfaces in Guthrie's Hind's Daughter, figures relaxed and conscious of observation, and are not 'caught' mid-task as in the strenuous physicality of Millet's Sawyers. Such emotive dynamism does not exist in Scottish paintings of this genre, which imbue rural drudge with a quiet dignity eschewing all thoughts of suffering. These are truly selective records, careful never to traverse the boundaries of 'content' which Presbyterianism propagated. Any unnecessary interrogation of one's given lot could be seen to tempt fate and indicate

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[66]Private Coll. Not ill.

[67]Dimensions also indicate the artist's confidence in his ability to assimilate what he had learned. The picture's concise and innovative form clamours for attention on its own terms without resorting to large-scale visual bullying of so many RA exhibits.

restlessness or dissatisfaction anathema to the teachings of the Kirk. This sobriety however was inbred and a subconscious manifestation of the conditioning which Scots such as Melville had undergone in their formative years.[68]

The rejection of the icon as intended image of the spiritual allowed for the celebration of the harvest, a physical thanksgiving where the fruits of labour were placed at the altar in an annual celebration. These images, then, can be considered in such terms, as a kind of modest record of achievement where their way of life is a means and not an end. Underlying messages and themes at this stage have no place in the work of artists such as Noble (Plate 65), McGregor, Reid or Melville.

Pictorial Design and Colour theory in Cabbage Garden

Cabbage Garden is a system of complementary and contrasting tonal values and hues. The eye is led backward through the perspectivally manipulated cabbage rows converging toward the figures, one solid and luminous while the other is ethereal and subdued. The striking band of light on the horizon frames the figures against the dark foliage and is reflected strategically[69] throughout the picture. For example where the scene is evidently lit from the horizon, this explains the band of light on the gardener's face and spadeshaft but not the fact that it illuminates his back and shoulder. This latter luminosity is, however, consistent with the light which creates the turquoise glow on leaves which face the viewer, and thus away from the source. It again displays Melville's intentions and capacity for manipulating lighting effects within his work in combination with space and perspective alterations.

As an optical fulcrum for the picture, the vivid blot of pure red which appears at the epicentre of the patch[70] serves to bind the seemingly disparate planes of the picture. Thus the colours in the sky, orchard, cabbages and figures, with their range of techniques and tones are subservient to the effect of this remarkable red which becomes the visual focus and arrests the fragmentation of the components which comprise

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[68]This bearing of Prebyterian Realism is clearly visible in Egyptian Sower, which is closely derived from these Scottish rural subjects.

[69]Yet inconsistently with a single light source.

[70]Between the principal rows, at the point indicated by the spade and woman's hands.

the design. This initiates in Melville an almost expressionist use of primary unmixed colour which may appear hyperbolic to the viewer unfamiliar with the true range of Northern vernal or autumnal hues freely visible in Nature.

Melville has taken control of certain natural aspects to create his visual entity. The cabbages in the foreground are rendered by expressive colours and brushwork and a system of opposing colours[71] into a design of organic and geometric form taken to almost abstract ends. Meanwhile the dual perspective creates a whorl of tightly-packed daubs and brushstrokes of highlighted colour around the gardener himself, lending a sense of recession outwith the auspices of linear convergence and binding the planes of fore and rear grounds. The creation and accentuation of space through means other than conventional linear single-point perspective became integral to Melville's development of an innovative style.

However the real interest of the work is the juxtaposition of shady, daubed Northern foliage with an impressionist treatment of suggested form[72], signalling the prevalence of light and colour effects over draughtsmanship. With Gardener's Daughter in particular one witnesses Melville moving parallel with Reid toward an interest in full sunlight and the resultant palette alterations.

The real innovation of Melville's early masterpiece lies not just in the assimilation of Scottish and Continental sources, but simply in the garden itself. Looking deep into the work one seems to view from the woman's eye and horizon level, but the dual perspective violently tilts the fore half of the picture in a novel way which may be indicative of early photography. Thus the viewer can simultaneously regard two figures from a distance through spatial devices, but the foreground suggests that the one is amidst the patch itself, standing over the wicker basket and thus within the composition itself. Tension is created here, with the nature of the figures' indeterminate relationship in mid-ground contrasting directly with the immediacy lent to the work by the foreground technique.

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[71]Red and green.

[72]Probably gleaned from Reid's Beneath Cherry Blossom, Young Artist etc rather than French originals. There are valid comparisons of subject matter with Millet's Jardin de Millet showing a woman among vegetables, and the garden scenes of Pissarro and Sisley which have less figurative immediacy and a lighter palette.

The foreground is also a masterly exercise in painting technique and colour, skilfully and wilfully aesthetic and self-sufficient with no theme, moral or rhetoric. The vigorous dexterity of the handling and the range of directional highly-finished brushwork is an extension of his work on the landscapes, while the colours themselves employed to heighten the vitality of the scene are refreshing. These are not humble, tight little vegetables but bold, energetically organic leaves flourishing and catching the light sources. It is not a dull earthiness of McGregor or Bastien-Lepage but a joyous infusion[73] of verdant growth with primary colours, innovative and positively transcending the boundaries of 'rustic naturalism' to incorporate a decorative beauty. It is a statement of achievement and also of intention, a dichotomy of motive ubiquitous in his work of subsequent years.

The seemingly obtrusive device of the cobbled wicker basket spills out of the foreground, sitting atop a cabbage catching untraceable rays, and the striped cloth and green and orange shape forms a still life. Whether considered clumsy or incongruous, it suggests some familiarity with French contemporary work such as Degas, Cézanne or Whistler's interpretations of Japanese prints for such an unconventionally rendered foreground. Where Bastien-Lepage or John Lavery would later use branches or saplings in their work to similar ends[74], Melville here manipulates perspective by using geometric shapes like the oval. This effectively encapsulates the tonal range of the work in a single motif, but also creates the illusion of spatial recession in a similar fashion to Cézanne's use of the ellipses of jugs and bowls in his still-lives. The basket, though, introduces an aspect which became integral to his stylistic development, using geometric motifs[75] throughout to create space and design effects. At this stage, though, these shapes were still modelled by contour and boundary with expressive brushwork a complementary factor, a style which would alter radically on his arrival in France.

GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

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[73]Similar in the celebration of the beauty of organic form to WY MacGregor's Vegetable Stall.

[74]Joan of Arc Listening to the Voices or Mary Queen of Scots after the Battle of Langside respectively.

[75]Basket, bowl, table, dorway, minaret as shall be seen.

> "Rather forced in lighting, but highly promising in its evidences of study and feeling for pictorial effect, is Arthur Melville's Gardener's Daughter where a damsel is poised in vivid sunshine after a fashion which has lately been much in vogue with our younger painters."[76]
>
> "Graceful figure of a young girl, in light costume, plucking rhubarb. Bright and bold in colour, cleverly managed, with much vigour and point."[77]

The above constructive criticism was elicited in a publication usually more disposed to pure description, and as such Gardener's Daughter was considered one of Melville's characteristic works. The use of rustic setting and bright colour clearly display a consistent development from Cabbage Garden incorporating many similar formal interests, but the use of foliage frame and full sunlight equate it closely with JR Reid's contemporary work.[78]

The light outfit, brimmed hat, full sunshine and orchard setting, as distinct from a working allotment, again suggest the possibility of a Surrey situation rather than East Lothian. The whole atmosphere invokes little indigenous Scottish atmosphere, as far as can be gleaned from a sketch and descriptions, but likely parallels within Reid's work[79] emphasise this potentiality. As with Cabbage Garden, Melville seems intent on using a vocabulary with many Scottish reference points, which actually looks beyond the confines of his own rural background and conditioning. Gardener's Daughter, as an extension of the departures made in Cabbage Garden, uses full light and bright colour within a familar rural framework to anticipate the links between Scottish and French painting in the 1880's which would culminate with the Glasgow Boys.

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[76]Scotsman, March 7, 1878.

[77]RSA Notes, 1878. Although untraced, a sketch after this work and the above note were printed in the RSA Notes.

[78]Equally, this work is clearly the principal source for Guthrie's more stolidly rustic Hind's Daughter. This is ironic since Guthrie was from Greenock and lived in London and Glasgow. The frontal depiction of young girl with basket, knife and confrontational stance are clearly linked, with Guthrie completely overhauling and updating Meville's iconography to incorporate squared brushwork reminiscent of French models, to create one of Scottish painting's most characteristic works. The work is also a prototype for Melville's single figure in rustic settings such as Fisherman's Daughter or Normandy Shepherd.

[79]Farmer's Daughter RGI 1877, and Gardener's Daughter RGI 1876

Where an interest in picture design lies at the crux of Melville's developments in his attempt to cast off the shackles of dull and overly academic Scottish genre, it is by no means the sole motivating force. Certain motifs, such as the basket and the rows of cabbages in the garden, explore abstract qualities within organic form and colour which do exceed the boundaries of 'decoration'. It is interesting to note that in discussing aspects of the 'autonomy of art' so crucial in late 19thC art, Melville's two major works to date were painted contemporary with the Whistler v Ruskin trial[80].

The development and exploration of aspects of abstraction and pure decoration, combined with a rudimentary knowledge of colour systems of 'mutual intensification' are clearly evident in these works by Melville. However I would argue that this was not a proclamation of solidarity with Whistler and the autonomy of art, but a natural progression and exploration derived from the themes on which he worked. By the time he painted Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter, Melville had left 'the land' and had been resident in Edinburgh for some time. Indeed he may have resided with Reid in Surrey, and thus his horizons had been suitably expanded to view the rural life of farm labourers, which he knew intimately, with some detachment. In short his urban experience, travel and contact with artists with different perceptions had altered his own visions irrevocably.

A reasonably comfortable rural upbringing combined with a Presbyterian conditioning led him to depict contented and still images of farm life, extolling the virtues alien to urban cultures. Where there is an enigmatic quality inherent in the relationship of the figures in Cabbage Garden, the abstract forms within the vegetables comprises an equal part of the creative process. There is a quasi-spiritual atmosphere derived from Melville's

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[80]The trial which vindicated Whistler's right to paint and charge 'for the knowldge of a lifetime' rather than the short period of time which it took to complete certain works. He was awarded a farthing in damages, defeating the arch-naturalist Ruskin. Works such as the Falling Rocket supposedly represented the artist 'flinging a pot of paint in the public's face'. The fame of both Whistler and Ruskin in the 1870's assured that this episode was well-documented in the press at large, and it is certain that it would have been discussed at length in the art institutions. Melville's attendance at the RSA Life Class and contact with figures such as Reid who had lived and worked in London suggest that he would have been aware of the implications. Melville's broad painterly style and receptiveness to the possibilities of natural light and colour would have aligned him with Whistler, whose Portrait of Carlyle he copied.

own attitudes to his past and governed by complex and indigenous labour relations, work ethics and all-pervasive religious dogma closely aligned to the land and harvest. It is unsurprising that this ambivalence of interests should emerge in Melville's work as he examined such familar subjects with the benefit of hindsight and the new perspectives offered by city life, Reid and travel to Surrey.

The themes Melville executed between 1875 and 1878, when he left for France, are typical of his Scottish contemporaries. Intended for sale at the Royal Scottish Academy and Glasgow Institute exhibitions, they are unremarkable vehicles for the dramatic stylistic developments characterised by Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter. Employing radical spatial effects in the form of a stereoscopic viewpoint and a complementary colour system utilising the principles of mutual intensification, the former is one of the most original and significant Scottish paintings of the century. Despite his debt to Continental landscapes and the work of Scottish peer JR Reid, this work is primarily the result of a personal vision and experience of life in a particular Scottish farming community during the 1870's.

My interpretation of the narrative in Cabbage Garden is, of course, speculative. However there is little doubt that the image reflects aspects of Melville's own upbringing in rural East Lothian, capturing a quiet moment of reflection as the gardener leans on his spade. It does not feature hard physical labour, poverty or discomfort or have the political or propagandist undertones of French realism. It is a modest image of self-sufficiency, the land verdant with a fine crop due to the honest efforts of the hind. It is an informed, sympathetic and honest image infused with a votive quality to define the essence of Presbyterian Realism. Melville's concerns are wholesome, a commemoration of rural values in dissolution by a provincial artist nurturing national ambitions.

The picture was intended for show at the Royal Academy in 1878, and by this stage Melville would have planned the trip to France. Melville intended to expand his horizons and visit the Exposition Universelle in Paris, the culture capital of Europe, but he also sought to depict French subjects for sale at home which complemented his art to date. He would spend over a year in Grez-sur-Loing, living among the tiny village community and sketching the everyday characters he came to know there.

As with the Arabic types, Melville empathised with the French people and presented their characteristics on a personal level. As in Cabbage Garden his approach in France was sympathetic and unsensational, taking everyday subject matter and manipulating it to his own stylistic ends. He had gone even further with Pilgrim's Prayer and Arab Interior by offering an insight into the inextricable links between secular and religious life, a humanistic element unsurpassed in his *oeuvre*.

France proved a transitional phase for Melville, honing his techniques and design principles and exploring rural subjects in a manner consistent with Presbyterian Realism. However towards the end of his stay in France Melville moved to Paris and began to explore more 'contemporary' subject matter, reflecting the influence of the Impressionists and their circle. Encompassing suburban images and several leisure themes, these represented the artist's first attempts to reconcile his artistic vision with an industrialised urban setting. The French experience culminated with Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris, a contemporary subject revealing the influence of French Orientalists to contrive a superficial exoticism which anticipated the journey East.

MELVILLE IN FRANCE : Motivations and Themes 1878-1880

Melville's thematic and stylistic development in the Orient in 1881-'82 was anticipated during his residence in France 1878-'80. This was his first excursion beyond Scotland and it incorporated sketching trips to the north of the country, study and residence in Paris and a year in the established artists' colony of Grez-sur-Loing.

In his Eastern and French work Melville generally strove to deny or disguise industrialised, urban contexts. Cabbage Garden had proclaimed his rural predilection and the move to France signified the search for more varied subjects in the same vein, concentrating on landscape and field labour in the provinces. As his stay progressed, Melville's vision became more sophisticated and design-orientated, jettisoning pure naturalism for the more aesthetic language epitomised by French Peasant of 1880. However, these stylistic advances were realised through the rather prosaic, traditional subject matter of peasant life which was consistent with his Scottish background[1].

In the widest sense, the relationship between subject matter and style in France echoes that of the Orient where naturalism became subservient to a personal expressionism proclaiming vibrant colour and light effects within radical designs. As I hope to have shown the Oriental technical advances were generally anchored within uncontentious subject matter, and subject to the formalizing constraints of architecture and street vistas to counterbalance the more abstract elements of his vocabulary.

The success of Cabbage Garden was a principal motivation for Melville's departure from Scotland in the spring 1878 in search of new surroundings. His early Scottish work does not comprise a particularly homogenous body of work, but it does exemplify his predilection for exploring rural themes over urban subjects. Why, then, did he choose to study and reside in France for the next eighteen months? He could, after all, have enjoyed a brief sketching trip in Northern Europe and then returned to his Edinburgh studio to 'work up' finished pieces as most of his Scottish contemporaries did.

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[1]Scottish rural genre and figurative work such as Gardener's Daughter, and its equivalent in the East such as Sower, Water Seller and Turkish Bazaar, Cairo.

Melville's acquaintance with JR Reid and time spent in the south of England had sensitised his palette to full sunlight and the benefits of *plein airism*, reason enough to head to France. He appears to have been planning the trip for some time, selling works in considerable numbers from his Edinburgh studio to finance a prolonged sojourn abroad. French painting at the RGI, the 'Gazette des Beaux-Arts' and the weekly 'Letter from Paris' in the Scotsman would have placed France foremost in his consciousness. These sources would also have publicised the impending 'Exposition Universelle' to take place in Paris in 1878, presenting a wealth of contemporary Continental art which enticed many young artists to the French capital that year. In all, Paris was inviting much attention as the cultural centre of Europe and Melville could not have failed to absorb some of the propaganda.

Melville's Scottish peers had also provided inspiration with their sketching trips in the 1870's. GP Chalmers[2], one of Scotland's most influential indigenous painters, had shown his Breton Peasant at the Glasgow Institute as the fruit of a rare trip abroad. Melville's masters Noble and JR Reid both visited the Low Countries in 1876/77 and France the following year, and many contemporaries such as Robert McGregor and WD Mackay had sketched in similar localities. It is clear from exhibited work that coastal genre similar to the work of Israels and the Hague School was popular in Scotland in the 1870's.[3]

However towards the end of the 1870's, more exotic subjects were appearing at Scottish exhibitions which rendered the dull brown genre of their Dutch pastiche somewhat anachronistic. WE Lockhart's Orange Harvest in Majorca had a large price tag and elicited glowing reports on its light effects and vitality on show in 1878[4], while the Moorish subjects of

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[2]Who had died violently in Edinburgh in 1878.

[3] Known from works exhibited : Noble showed Dutch Fisher Girl at the RSA '77, and Canal at Rijswijk and Boy of Zandvoort at the RGI the same year. Reid's Dutch Fisher Girls was sold at Dowell's, Edinburgh on March 5, 1877. Both visited France, specifically Amiens, in 1878 eg Reid's Washing Day , Amiens RSA '79 and Brittany Fisherwoman RGI '80 and seem to have travelled together on several occasions. Robert McGregor had visited Holland and Brittany and shown several works from these trips. WD Mackay showed Windmill Near Dort, Holland at the RSA in 1874, and Sketch Near Dieppe two years later. Such themes were also popular in France, with coastal images of Honfleur and Cancale exhibited in the late 1870's by painters such as Karl Daubigny and John Singer Sargent.

[4]Scotsman, Feb. 1878

Robert Gavin[5] predate the kind of exotica which would captivate Melville himself some few years later. It is apparent that these more sensuous foreign subjects depicted in warm luminous colours reflected the broad handling and effects of full sunlight visible in the indigenous work of Reid, Noble and subsequently Melville.

These tendencies, therefore, operate in tandem to lead Scottish painting away from a traditional, Northern humility[6] toward a new continental idiom which celebrated light, movement and colour effects. Thus, by the mid-1880's, Paris and the French provinces had become the natural choice for young Scottish painters, but Melville's move to the city in 1878 put him firmly in the vanguard of modern British artists to live and work in Paris.

Melville's principal influence in going to Paris in 1878 appears to have been the Scottish painter Robert Weir Allan (see Plate 5), who had bypassed London[7] in favour of France in 1875. He studied at the Beaux-Arts under Cabanel and at Julian's *atelier,* sharing a studio in Montparnasse with another Scot[8]. When in Paris he painted many watercolours on the banks and towpaths of the Seine, depicting the working life of the city's main artery beneath landmarks like Notre Dame.[9] It is highly likely, therefore, that Allan introduced Melville to these situations and led him to depict views which were largely unchanged since Jongkind had painted them.[10]

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[5]His mosques, fountains, negroes and exotic interiors were shown in numbers before his death in 1883.

[6]Referring closely to Holland and Calvinism.

[7]Hitherto the favoured destination for ambitious Scottish artist who wished to consolidate their reputations. Many of Robert Scott Lauder's pupils, such as Orchardson and Pettie, had found fame and notoreity in London. There were few artists of great quality who chose to remain in Scotland, with G.P. Chalmers and MacTaggart the exceptions.

[8]RW Allan, Mrs A. Bell. Studio XXIII No. 102, Sep 1901, p232. This Scot is unnamed but it may have been Melville, given the friendship which the two undoubtedly shared, and the elder's forceful influence on Melville in France. Equally, the scale and medium of Melville's Paris pictures did not necessitate studio space.

[9]His Paris, frontispiece to Bell's article, and View of Notre Dame, Paris have many formal similarities with Melville's works, such as On the Seine.

[10]These, in a sense, are timeless views of the old Paris away from the wide elegant boulevards and slum clearances of Haussmann. Interestingly, these are urban views which encompass similar aspects of the city to those captured by proto-Impressionists such as Lépine and, later, Guillaumin.

Allan sent French Fishing Boat with Figures, Cancale and Village Well in Brittany back to the RGI in 1876, works which elicited much praise in contemporary press.[11] It is clear, therefore, that much of Allan's experience of France in the late 1870's involved watercolour sketching in Normandy and Brittany, capturing coastal and market views to send back for sale in Scotland. It is interesting then that Melville's earliest works painted in France should depict coastal subjects and images of Normandy and Brittany rather than urban Paris. I would argue that Melville met Allan directly on arrival in France, at one of the ports on the northern coast, and that the more experienced painter showed the younger some of his favoured sketching places[12]. The parallels in subject matter, dates and locations suggest definite contact between the artists throughout Melville's stay in France[13].

It is curious that no images of Paris exist which are dated 1878, even although Melville arrived before June. He seems to have spent more than half of that year painting around the northern and coastal provinces, in all probability with Allan, although there are fewer than ten works dated to this year. However the most significant legacy of Melville's relationship with Allan is his adoption of the watercolour medium, which he does not appear to have employed in Scotland[14].

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[11]These works may signify Melville's first experience of Allan, as the latter submitted from his address at St.Vincent St., Glasgow. Another work entitled Ferry at Dournenez, Brittany dates from 1876, while Halsby in Scottish Watercolours cites Market at Brittany from 1879 as a possible source for Melville's watercolour technique. The undated Market Morning, Antibes is a more southern scene, depicted in the Bell article, p230.

[12]Melville's earliest French works include three images of Granville and two of the Mont St. Michel, both in Brittany. He also painted Fisherman's Daughter, Cancale in the same village as Allan painted his fishing boat and figures some two years earlier. Interestingly, this is where Stanhope Forbes painted his classic Street in Brittany in 1881. Melville's Fountain was described as a 'harmoniously coloured study of French life' in the RGI Notes in 1879, and depicts a similar subject to Allan's Village Well of 1876. Both artists painted in Honfleur, Normandy in 1879/80 : Allan's Honfleur Market shown at the RGI in 1880, and Melville's Honfleur Harbour dated the same year (Dundee Gallery).

[13]Allan also owned oils by Melville, untraced since Allan's death in 1942. One was Breton Peasant, and another was Portrait of RW Allan from 1878 which indicates their friendship.

[14]This may also in part be due to the influence of MacTaggart at the Life Class, as much of the master's exhibited work in the late 1870's was in watercolour. A picture in Aberdeen Art Gallery may in fact be Melville's earliest extant watercolour. It resembles Allan, whose portrait Melville painted in 1878, and is in the tight and overly fastidious style one would expect for such an early essay. As such it may be a sketch for the lost oil.

Allan used watercolour in a bold and painterly style, preferring its spontaneity and lucidity for *plein air* work. His style was no doubt indebted to the Impressionists whom he may have met in and around the Beaux-Arts and the *ateliers* of Paris in the mid to late 1870's, and his urban work is reminiscent of Monet and Jongkind. In particular, Allan's use of high tones and full colour applied wet resurfaces in Melville's own watercolours, such as French Market Place, Granville (Plate 6). The street and the vegetable stalls feature runs and blots of full hue used to great effect in suggesting form, and if Granville was Melville's first port of call then the influence of Allan is conspicuous from the outset of his French sojourn.

FRANCE, AND PARIS, IN THE 1870's

By the time of Melville's arrival in Paris, the city had been subjected to Baron Haussmann's reconstructions. This programme of 'urban improvement' implemented the building of parks, bridges and the *grands boulevards* and also the modernisation of the water supply and sewerage system. The motivations for these developments were twofold.

Since the mid-century the population of the city of Paris had increased dramatically with the influx of the provincial classes. The city's facilities had been pushed to breaking point and drastic modernisation was needed to accommodate these rural workers. However the old system whereby 'city' and 'country' identities coexisted was disappearing and being replaced by distinct class divisions within the *quartiers.*[15] The central Ile de la Cité was a poverty-stricken proletarian slum while St.Denis[16], Faubourg St.Antoine, Montmartre and Belleville, for example, were initially a peripheral *mélange* of deprived and criminal elements of society to be consumed in the 1860's by city expansion toward the fortifications. However by the early 1880's the *banlieues* such as Levallois-Perret and St.Denis had become a new and volatile sprawl of industrial wasteland and disease[17] populated by brief rural immigrant generations numbering tens of thousands.

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[15]Clark, T.J. Image of the People, p148

[16]Which had been the *quartier* of the quarriers, the last stronghold of the June insurgents.

[17]op cit p148, Clark

This was the dangerous and fractured Paris which Napoleon III sought to quell through Haussmann, razing the most vitriolic bastions of the *classes dangereuses* beneath the *boulevards* and replacing the slums with faceless *bourgeois* apartment blocks. These same wide streets facilitated the movement of traffic from the main market, newly-constructed at Les Halles, out to the wretched suburbs where he sought to contain the underclass[18] by destroying traditional working-class *quartiers* and raising rents within the city centre. It is important also to remember that unease and discomfort felt by the populus had been magnified by the tragic effects of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 which left the city bombarded and near starvation, and the imposition of martial law which endured until 1874.

During the period of Melville's residence at the end of the 1870's, the subject of population redistribution within the city was much discussed within the popular press[19] and Melville would have been aware of this fixation. Such subjects were also covered by young painters around the turn of the decade with Jean-François Raffaelli epitomising the more politically motivated young realists of the 1870's. He depicted marginalised suburban types, often old and broken men, who sought to glean an existence on the periphery of society and the city. Works such as Ragpicker of 1879, and The Merchant of Garlic and Shallots clearly depict bleak landscapes where rural met urban with distant chimneys belching smoke and yet the artist clearly detaches his subjects from their environment. As such, these images represent modern urban equivalents of the rural gleaners favoured by the naturalists, yet Raffaelli's types are awkward immigrants experiencing grave difficulties adapting to city life.

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[18]Thomson, R. Seurat, Oxford 1985 p 13. See his description of the Blvd. Magenta, built to ease congestion in the eastern section of the city via two railway stations to the Port de Vincennes, and Rue Turbigo finished in 1867 which "completed the destruction of the old hotbed of insurrection around the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers." p13. Thomson also cites (pp52) how, in the period 1876-1881 which covers Melville's period of residence, the city's population grew by one-eighth, c280,000.

[19]ibid p52. Thomson cites Gil Blas and the Revue Des Deux Mondes in the early 1880's. See also such as La Vie Parisienne and Journal Amusant, which lampooned modern urban life and society. These works and their illustrators were prime source material for the Impressionists, influencing particularly their treatment of La Grenouillere and horse racing and the less salubrious face of the modern leisure experience for the bourgeoisie such as prostitution which infiltrated all levels of society. These subjects were covered extensively by Zola in his novels, eg L'Assomoir and Thérèse Raquin which deal with prostitution, disease and death, and also in Maupassant's short stories.

Such figures lived in the huge communes to the north of Paris, the dreadful shanty-towns which sprang up beyond the narrow belt of wasteland which ringed the city fortifications. These were seen as the base of the next revolution and viewed with great fear and suspicion by the *bourgeoisie* and the press. It is interesting to note that by 1880 these suburban themes were becoming well-established in Naturalist circles, through painters such as Raffaelli and Guillemet and writers like Joris-Karl Huysmans and the de Goncourts.[20]

The aesthetic language of these writers is closely reflected by the interests of contemporary suburban painters. Monet and Sisley were primary exponents, having depicted the Seine at Argenteuil and La Grenouillère throughout the preceding decade, while Pissarro had depicted the river at many different locations around the city suburbs. Guillaumin's Seine at Charenton, dated 1879, shows very similar subject matter to a contemporary scene chosen by Melville[21] with river, barges and distant chimneys. It may be argued, though, that the Scot's work is more 'suburban' in the modern sense as it thrusts the geometric warehouse roof and bleak urban wasteground into the foreground, relegating conventional 'aesthetic appeal' to a minimal role.

It is clear in Melville's Parisian period however, that he was more forcefully influenced by the contemporary French passion for the city itself. The influence of Caillebotte, Manet, Monet and Degas, whom he would have known from the Impressionist exhibitions in 1879 and '80, would have elevated the city to new heights. They depicted the *flâneurs*, railway stations, cafés, bridges on the Seine, parks, elegant apartments with wrought iron balconies, wide boulevards and bourgeois leisure activities with great relish and Melville would have known of these developments. It may be, however, that Monet's images of the different aspects of the

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[20]See Thomson p54. Huysmans' Croquis parisiens (Parisian sketches) described the suburbs around Paris and the supposed charm and beauty of the melancholy nature of these ravaged landscapes. The de Goncourts' Germinie Lacerteaux from 1865 featured aspects of suburban life under the guise of social research. Thomson asserts, though, that these writers employed an ostensibly aesthetic vocabulary at this stage although vividly utilising imagery of dirt and sweat.

[21]Evening, Charenton, a watercolour dated 1880. Charenton existed just beyond the periphery of Paris, to the south-east, at the turn of the decade. Melville also painted extensively at Bercy, in the same direction but slightly further upriver towards the city.

Seine painted throughout the 1870's, and in particular its working and leisure roles, interested the young Scot above all else.[22]

It is clear, then, that the multi-faceted Paris of the late 1870's was of paramount importance in shaping Melville's development. Here was the artistic centre of the world, host of the 1878 World's Fair which he would have visited[23], in a phase of rich development which took French art beyond naturalism and into new realms[24]. The city itself had undergone radical changes, expanding to create new and volatile industrial hinterlands and evolving new castes from the 'lower orders' which infiltrated society at every level breeding fear and hypocrisy.

In all it was a particularly fertile and stimulating period to reside in Paris and one which attracted artists from all over the world, and Melville's French experience was of particular significance. The themes which he explored, divided between urban and rural imagery, reflected his own upbringing and the difficulties he faced in leaving East Lothian for 'urban civilisation' and the course which his own artistic development would follow in the East and beyond.

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[22]Monet's Dechargeurs de Charbon, for example, is close in subject to many of Melville's images of the banks and towpaths where horses and carts unloaded the barges. These works by Melville were also due in part to Allan's influence, and to earlier precursors such as Jongkind.

[23]With its international flavour and feast of exhibited material by European artists living and dead. Durand-Ruel also showed 300 Barbizon canvases that year which may have spurred him to move to Grez.

[24]Between 1875 and 1878, the 'old guard' of Millet, Corot, Diaz, Courbet and Daubigny died. Melville arrived in 1878, midway through the Impressionist exhibitions, as radical French artists such as Seurat, Redon and Degas were propagating new theories of colour, optics and perspective.

PROVINCIAL LANDSCAPES 1878-79

There are only nine acknowledged works painted during the latter half of 1878[25], most of which can be firmly situated in the northern regions of Normandy and Brittany. These comprise a selection of rural landscapes, and three lost oils owned by RW Allan.[26] It is clear that Melville's earliest French themes reflect those he chose on arrival in Egypt, eschewing the beauty and cosmopolitan grandeur of Cairo and Paris to withdraw into outlying districts. There, he executed typical tourist images of harbours, markets and indigenous natural features such as the pyramids or the Mont St. Michel. He appears to have been intimidated by these urban contexts, a feeling which he countered in the short term by retreating to rural situations with which he felt more comfortable. Only then could he gradually begin to assimilate aspects of the city into his themes.

Melville's earliest extant French works were executed at his first port of call on the Cherbourg peninsula in Brittany. Two watercolours entitled French Market Place, Granville[27] and Granville[28] are very similar to contemporary coastal scenes executed by Allan and indubitably reflect his influence. The latter in particular is reminiscent of Allan, showing a street scene with market stalls to the right hand side. The spatial recession is deep and the narrow buildings to the rear and shopfronts display a typical interest in capturing indigenous architecture. The handling of the medium, though, is rather scratchy and restrained and Granville may in fact be Melville's first essay in watercolour under Allan's tutelage[29].

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[25]Melville's earliest French work is dated 'June 1878'.

[26]Although lost, the recorded titles and inscriptions are useful. The first is a portrait in oils of Allan, dated 1878 and dedicated 'A mon ami RW Allan', confirming that Melville definitely spent time with Allan on his arrival in France. It was not Melville's habit to execute portraits at this stage although examples do exist, such as the portrait of Annandale which was probably requested by the patron himself. Another work, Breton Peasant, is a lost oil dated 1878 and owned by Allan which shows that Melville was trying to balance his landscapes subjects with figurative work. The third, Home by the Fields, may not be a French work but is consistent with contemporary work eg Return from the Fields, RSA 1880. It seems that Melville's contact with Allan was particularly strong during the early period in France, which is logical as he would have required a guide and 'translator' in more rural areas.

[27]c(12x18") w/c, dated 1878. Burrell Coll., Glasgow

[28](11x17.5") w/c, inscribed 'June 1878'. Ill Soth 27.3.84 A third, lost, Market Day at Granville, was shown at the RSA 1879.

[29]It recalls the style of the Aberdeen portrait.

The Burrell picture is much more interesting as it comprises a close-up of the same street market, eradicating the expanse of cobbled street which comprised the earlier foreground and focussing on the stalls and produce. Melville revels in the pure simple hues of the fruit and vegetables as he had in Cabbage Garden, painting bold fresh green and yellow leaves in the foreground. There appear to be cabbages, carrots, beetroot and parsnips and perhaps rhubarb, a feast of bright colour to contrast with the dull dark grey buildings and inky shadows.

Where the foreground is relatively naturalistic, as he moves into mid ground the rain and recession loosen the handling into bold and expressionistic blots. The tones and colours are applied wetter to evoke rainy cobbles, stalls and customers. Although the woman in the foreground is over-simplified and therefore clumsy and incongruous behind her stall, the old woman in mid-ground is depicted as a brief series of runs and dots as she peruses the stall. The stall itself is a mound of bright yellow and red daubs ringed with green, raising the whole tone of the picture in front of the Café de la Place. The figures running around the streets to the rear of the work are also economically rendered, their Breton caps heightened with white.

This is a fascinating little picture showing how quickly Melville was assimilating the lessons of his peer. Thematically, there are both Scottish and French models[30] for coastal work depicting street scenes and markets but at this stage it is most likely that Allan's guidance and Melville's own instincts were sufficient motivation for this watercolour.

From Granville, the chronology of Melville's itinerary is open to speculation, particularly as many of the works are since lost. He sketched at Cancale and the Mont St. Michel, which is one of the most celebrated tourist sites in France, and both of these places are close to Granville. Unfortunately Fig Tree, Mont St. Michel and Virgin's Gate, Mont St.

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[30]JC Noble had sketched and shown works of harbours at Burntisland and Millport in the late 1870's, while Robert McGregor worked at Largo, WilliamYork MacGregor at St.Andrews and Reid at Kirkcaldy. Allan himself had shown coastal scenes from Stonehaven and Kincardine as well as his Breton and Normandy work. Melville's street markets also bear comparison with the work of Jongkind, Boudin and Monet, who sketched extensively around Le Havre, Honfleur etc.

Michel are lost but they appear to have been typical sketch-book subjects which a newly-landed painter might attempt.

The buildings jostle around the harbour of the picturesque fishing port at the mouth of the Seine in Honfleur Harbour[31] (Plate 15), representing a similarly traditional coastal scene although the date inscribed aligns it to a later sketching trip[32]. Melville's work concentrated on the boats in the quay, their dark sails and masts towering over the brown wash of the town itself. It is immediately apparent how his handling has changed between the trips, as the Normandy port is rendered in broad bold strokes with the brushwork very conspicuous. The water in the foreground especially is suggested by horizontal daubs of brown and cream, with similar white strokes behind the yachts to raise the tone of the dark mid ground.

Where the overall tone is brown, Melville utilises strategic primary colour to bring the whole composition to life. The hull of the boat to the left is rich cobalt blue, complemented effectively by the scarlet buoy in the foreground right. In all, this is a bold and energetic composition where the artist is clearly revelling in the *plein air* atmosphere, using a concise colour scheme of brown, cream and white heightening and highlighting certain forms in pure colour. The result is strongly reminiscent of Monet's own Normandy oils, and Dutch coastal scenes completed at Zandaam.

This system is effectively employed again in Entrance to a Canal[33], where the moored boats are placed in mid-ground blending in with the dark brown tones of the landscape. Pure scarlet is again used in the foreground to raise the dusky tonality as it borders the water reflecting the night sky. It is not recorded whether this work depicts a canal in Normandy or, as is more likely, the Loing canal near Grez but the colour system of dark brown tones with luminous highlighting is once more repeated in Geese Crossing a Weir.[34]

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[31] w/c (19.5x13.5") Dundee. Inscr. 1880.

[32] Cals showed four images of Honfleur at the Impressionist exhibition in 1879, which Melville would probably have seen. Melville's oil Low Tide (14.5x8.5", Grimond Coll.) is a similar theme, with sailboats beached in a harbour. It recalls Sargent's contemporary Low Tide, Cancale which Melville may have seen, and works by Boudin painted in the locality.

[33] oil (8.5x12.5") Robertson Coll, c1880.

[34] To be discussed in the next section.

Terms of Residence - Paris and Grez, an Introduction

The most comprehensive group of pure landscape subjects was executed at Grez-sur-Loing, south of Paris. Melville spent most of 1879 around the tiny village in the Barbizon Forest[35] which had been popular with students from the Paris *ateliers* since the mid-century. Millet and the other Barbizon landscape painters such as Courbet, Corot and Rousseau had made this a place of pilgrimage, and the *ateliers* emptied in the summer months as students flocked out of the city to paint in the locality. The other most common area for summer sketching was the northern coasts of Brittany and Normandy in towns such as Honfleur[36], Dieppe and Le Havre and it is clear from Melville's product that his destinations were consistent with the Paris student norm.

Why, then, did Melville go to France and yet appear to spend so little time in Paris? If we deduce from extant works and titles that he spent the latter half of 1878 sketching around the coast, then 1879 was spent in Grez as there are only four Parisian watercolours specifically dateable to this year. The rest of the titles comprise a body of rural subjects, most of which were executed at Grez.[37]

It may at first seem strange that Melville should leave Edinburgh for France and spend so little time in Paris itself. Although he enrolled at Julian's in 1878 it was the most informal of all the *ateliers*, intended primarily to provide models for life drawing[38] and he does not seem to have been any more receptive to Julian's enlightened methods than those of the RSA. Melville had indeed lived in Edinburgh but most of his subjects were rural, eschewing representations of city life, and to an extent this interest prevails in France. He does depict various views of the

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[35]He had also briefly visited it the previous year.

[36]The St.Simeon Farm above the town was a sketching haven and Barbizon painters such as Courbet, Corot, Troyon, Daubigny and Diaz worked there. In the 1860's Monet, Bazille, Boudin and Jongkind also used the place, demonstrating that there were similar retreats to Grez where artists could live and work together, propagating new ideas. Later, places like Estaque and Collioure were important in the development of Cubism and Fauvism, for example. Parallels existed, of course, in Scotland with Cockburnspath, Rosneath and Brig O'Turk for the Glasgow Boys, many of whom also worked at Grez eg Lavery, Kennedy.

[37]With the exception of Net Mender, which would appear to have been a coastal fishing scene. This was dated 1879.

[38]It had no entrance requirements.

working life of the Seine, the suburbs and several monuments but seems to have responded most favourably to Grez and the provinces.

Morris and Mackay[39] state how;

> "tuition fees and studio expenses were, however, low - generally around twenty francs each month for four hours study every working day...The commercial studios (Julian, Colarossi, Délécluse)were expensive...rents both for lodgings and for studios were much lower than in London; (Stanhope) Forbes only had to pay about eighty francs a month for a studio with a bedroom;"

but, as usual, there were contradictory reports. The social life for students in Paris was reputedly stimulating and enticing, but others would have had the lonely and isolating experience of a stranger in a strange land. Kenyon Cox, the American artist, recalled the severity of the winters and expense of Paris life forcing him to huddle miserably in cafés to save on fuel bills.[40]

It is unlikely that the magnitude of the city, language difficulties or isolation drove Melville out of Paris to the provinces, but a severe pecuniary state may have been a real mitigating factor. Whether or not Melville was the young Scot who appeared to have shared Allan's Montparnasse studio is of little consequence, as Melville did not acquire a Paris address until he sent home to an exhibition in 1880.[41]

Grez was a popular artists' colony;

> "It is a veritable nest of bohemians, English bohemians, who will sweep down on you...you will meet the irresistable Frank O'Meara and my very good friend Arthur Heseltine...there are two inns at Grez, the disreputable and the semi-reputable, the former is called

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[39]Morris, E. and Mackay, A. British Art Students in Paris 1814-1890. Apollo 135. no 360, Feb 1992 pp80-81.

[40]Cox, K. An American Student in Paris, Ohio 1986. p137. (Nov. 1878).

[41]His address remained consistent as 16 Picardy Place, Edinburgh throughout the French years, and he appears to have sent images of Grez, Paris, Normandy and Brittany to the RSA and RGI shows via this address. However the Dundee F.A. Exhibition listings for November 1880 give his address as the 'Hôtel du Saxe' at 12 Rue Jacob in the Latin Quarter, Paris. From here, he sent a representative selection : an oil entitled Return from the Fields probably a Grez piece, and watercolours On the Banks of the Seine, near Bercy, and Notre Dame de Paris, Morning which were undoubtedly painted while resident in the hotel, five minutes walk from Notre Dame itself. The themes and modest prices, c£15, suggest 'potboilers' sent to Dundee as certain sales to pay for his resettlement in Edinburgh. Both O'Meara and Lavery stayed at this hotel.

chez Chevillon, the latter Laurent, or Lambert."[42]

with hospitable inns which offered affordable rates. The painters, usually students, of various nationalities comprised a lively social circle and the surrounding landscape provided several distinct motifs captured by numerous artists. Its close proximity to the forest of Barbizon, the river Loing with the celebrated bridge, swimming and canoeing, and the narrow cobbled streets combined with the ruined castle, distinctive rustic buildings and the rural populus as enticing subject matter.

When Melville first visited Grez in the summer of 1878, the village was extremely crowded with students from Paris. The Irish painter Frank O'Meara was there, as it had been his base since 1875, along with Scottish artist and close friend Middleton Jameson. Robert Louis Stevenson and the Osbournes had returned to Grez at the same time as Melville visited, and he met them there. Melville spent the whole of 1879 at Grez although Cox recalled that;

"this summer, the place is nearly empty"[43],

a fact which may have appealed to the Scot. Melville befriended Jameson during this period and through him would have known O'Meara[44] as it was a small village and a tightly-knit community of artists. Melville's tonality and subject-matter seems to reflect several aspects of the Irishman's Grez work as discussed in the following section[45].

Grez Landscapes

There are three extant watercolours depicting pure landscape scenes of this locality, while two other lost titles confirm certain thematic interests. These remaining works are all contemporary and reveal an artist honing

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[42]Quoted from a letter by John Singer Sargent in 1875 or '76. Reproduced in Frank O'Meara and his Contemporaries, exhib cat. Campbell, J. Dublin 1989. p19.

[43]Cox, diary July 1, 1879.

[44]They were very close friends. O'Meara, R.A.M. Stevenson and Jameson had trekked to Orléans together in 1877. See also Campbell op cit p25 : Swedish artist Carl Larsson had arrived at Grez in 1882, and ill. 14 shows his triple-portrait of O'Meara, Jameson and Kenyon Cox. Larsson's Pumpkins watercolour was accepted for the Salon of 1883; Melville had painted Gathering Pumpkins, a lost Grez oil, in 1879 which was shown at the RGI the following year.

[45]Where the Impressionists were working along the Seine in the late 1870's depicting light effects in bright colours, the Grez painters preferred grey days and muted tones, working in restricted palette ranges of greens and greys to reflect the effects of the forest and river. O'Meara and his contemporaries were, of course, much influenced by the Barbizon landscape painters of the mid-century.

his technique on consistent views of the town and its rural *environs*. Robert Louis Stevenson described the town thus;

> "a pretty and very melancholy village on the plain. A low bridge of many arches choked with sedge; great fields of white and yellow water-lilies; poplars and willows innumerable..."[46]

clearly describing the principal features of the landscape which became motifs in Melville's work.

The characteristics of the landscape around Grez are again featured in contemporary watercolours Kingcup Meadow[47] (Plate 7) and Swans in a Meadow[48]. As subjects they derive from Melville's early routine of sketching in the grey dawn light at Duddingston, depicting the light effects on the foliage and fauna of the locale. Where the early oils were fastidious and clearly experimental, these watercolours display a fluency and zest which celebrates his increased mastery of the medium.

The foregrounds are open and animated, with rushes flicking upward into the picture space. To the background are the pollard willows and poplars which proliferated in the area, flanking the angled white band of bare paper and white heightening which represented the Loing river itself. The whole construction of these works indicates a *plein air* approach as the artist exploited the dexterity of the brush and paint to create a rural atmosphere. It is clear that Melville's fluency is largely due to the wetter application of paint in these works, particularly in the open swathes of field in mid-ground. Here, the colours are liquid and washed horizontally into each other, contrasting with the drier vertical flicking of the vegetation in fore and rear grounds.

The variety of his handling is extended by the inclusion of little flocks of fowl in the mid-ground of each work. These stylised birds are suggested by small patches of bare paper and white heightening which serve to break up the principal passage of pigment within the picture space, while also providing a focus for the images. These eloquent areas of unworked paper stabilise the settings in which they appear while assisting to create spatial recession. The only conventional perspective guides are the lines of the river, and the artist has used bird shapes to provide greater lucidity by

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[46] Letters of R.L. Stevenson, ed. Colvin,S. Vol 1, London 1911, p196. Quoted Campbell p17.

[47] (10.5x17.5"), w/c. Ill Mackay.

[48] As above, but dated 1879. Ill Soth 28.8.79.

linking the fore and rear ground in pictures which lack any geometrical content or orthogonals.

The colour tones are cool and muted, reminiscent of the grey pearly light which Barbizon artists had favoured since the mid-century of Rousseau and Chintreuil. This is also true in Grez[49], dated to the following year but extremely close in style and subject matter to the two aforementioned landscapes. Again this work is executed in a broad and painterly manner displaying a virtuosity in brushwork and handling. He moves from bullrush flicks and light washes for the attentuated poplar forms through to dry scrapes, heightening and bare paper[50].

In Grez the geometric forms of matchstick figures, roofs, a cross and simple conifer shapes are not painted but left as blank paper, a village suggested by foliage and other encroaching organic forms. The allusion to matter and mass by the forms around them became central to Melville's watercolour work, especially in the East, a tendency visible as in these Grez pictures. In this work, staccato daubs and runs of foliage beyond dictate the shapes of roofs and whitewashed walls and create ragged lines which relegate inorganic form[51]. Architecture is subservient to Nature and conventional linear draughtsmanship has little bearing here, as the artist relished sketching similar views through similar means of expression.[52]

Two titles which are unfortunately lost reveal that Melville was not averse to representing the town's most celebrated motifs. Church at Grez[53] and Old Bridge at Grez[54] were local landmarks, the latter structure

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[49](10.5x17"), w/c dated 1880. Note the consistency of the scale of these works.

[50]Apple Blossom, w/c 1879, would have been painted at Grez and represents a study of indigenous foliage. The dark blue, green and pink colour scheme is modest and displays a particular interest in his wet watercolour technique.

[51]These characteristic shapes of the town buildings resurfaced, in what may be deemed more conventional form, in such works as Stott of Oldham's Ferry, O'Meara's Towards the Night and Winter, and Lavery's Bridge at Grez.

[52]This aspect of Nature and inorganic forms, and the tension between the two, resurfaces in Paris with important works such as Evening, Charenton. Here Melville explored the aesthetic and social structure of the notorious Paris suburbs, the sprawling wastelands and shanty towns where the city spread out to meet the countryside.

[53](25.5x16"), oil c1879.

[54]w/c, shown RGI 1880. Described thus in RGI Notes of 1880;
"Above on the right is a curious composition, very French in style - Old Bridge at Grez, France".

described by Stevenson and much depicted by artists throughout the 1880's. The town's principal architectural features such as the castle, church and narrow streets became staple subjects as the popularity of the town increased with student numbers. Frank O'Meara and John Lavery were the principal exponents of the subject, but Lavery did not arrive in Grez until 1883.

However O'Meara's Autumnal Sorrows of 1878 is his only direct reproduction of the bridge. Its execution may have coincided with Melville's first visit and the Scot may have seen it or the artist at work. Either way, his own picture of the bridge was painted within the year and suggests some contact with O'Meara. Equally, R.A.M. Stevenson's Village Church[55] was probably painted at Grez before his departure in 1879, and Melville may have been aware of this work. However, Melville's choice of these subjects in a small village is wholly unsurprising and does not in itself allude to the influence of these figures. I would argue in the absence of empirical evidence that the subjects of these works and the dates of execution make it highly likely that Melville knew and worked with O'Meara and Stevenson in Grez, and that in other contemporary images executed by the Scot the influence of O'Meara is conspicuous.

An interesting comment should Melville's primary motivation have been O'Meara, who showed work at the RGI some four years later.

[55](5.5x8"), oil. Ill Campbell op cit p53

Rural Figures in Landscapes, 1879-80.

There are six images painted in and around Grez, three watercolours and three oils, portraying figures within landscape settings. In terms of his Eastern work there is not an exact equivalent but the numerous bazaar scenes, depicting city dwellers in their natural habitat, are close enough to provide a parallel range of subjects. Distinct subthemes are evident within this generic category, most conspicuously washerwomen at work which Melville depicted in three images. The others are comprised of two farmyard scenes, and one of figures collecting firewood in a woodland scene.

The most conventional rendering of washerwomen is A French Washing[56], a deep rural vista featuring a country path winding into the horizon. Melville's naturalistic and concise forms are rendered in fairly restrained and yet liquid brushstrokes, showing four women huddling around a pool washing clothes and one in the distance walking along the path. A hand pump is visible in the foreground and a dry stone wall provides an effective foil to the left, tree foliage drooping over the top. There is clear grey sky above their white-heightened bonnets and rugged terrain all around, including the wet stony path itself.

This scene is clearly one of female drudge and camaraderie with the water pump and modelled wall making this more of a domestic scene than a pure and untamed landscape of the Barbizon type. The posture of the women is enough to signify their task, and thus they remain relatively diminutive and simply rendered. Melville has no need here for close figure study, relying instead on economy of expression to convey the scene. While this image of domestic toil is not idyllic or romanticised, neither is it a depiction of backbreaking and futile work visible in Courbet or Millet. It is clear from Melville's painting and those of contemporaries such as O'Meara that there is a distinction between the French and 'Celtic' approach to rural genre. By this, I mean that O'Meara's treatment of rural figures is closer to the Presbyterian Realism of the Scots than the political propaganda of the French Realists, although his religious upbringing was Catholic.

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[56](11x17.75"), w/c. Although dated 1886, this was most probably executed in 1880.

This notion is confirmed in Melville's Les Laveuses[57] and Washerwomen Beneath Willows[58]. Where Millet and Courbet, and successors such as Raffaelli and Bastien-Lepage, used brutal naturalism to imbue their downtrodden subjects with the desired immediacy Melville takes a wholly different tack in these works.

His images of washerwomen are not intended to communicate feelings of pathos or despair, or even the hardships of life on the land or in modern suburbs, but as a celebration of Grez and its inhabitants. The artist clearly revelled in the village with its shepherds, washerwomen and relaxed mode of life and he sought to depict these provincial types[59] principally as a component within the aesthetic appeal of their habitat. These were no longer rural insurrectionists driven into the forests to escape revolution and plot the overthrow of the landlords who usurped their rights and land, but the decimated descendents of the woodcutters and artisans who had once thronged the woods.

The historical reasons for the exodus from the forests of Barbizon and Fontainebleau accounted for the becalmed melancholy of Grez and its environs. So too its seasonal population of painters, who congregated to savour the inherent aesthetic attractions and the sense of community and comradeship it instilled. The struggle and belligerence which Millet

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[57](4.5x18") oil on panel. Dated 1880.

[58](11x17.5"). w/c, undated c1880.

[59]An interesting contradiction to earlier socio-historical reputation of the forest's inhabitants. TJ Clark (Absolute Bourgeois, pp76-79) records how the forest had been a retreat from revolution : Théodore Rousseau and Millet had gone there after the June Days in Paris to escape disease, expense and the city itself. He cites how the forests in the mid-century were dangerous places as the landlords strove to deprive the forest and plain-dwellers of their rights . They sought to oust the landlords and reclaim the forest under the aegis of Napoleon. See p 79;

> "They were, as Chevalier puts it, the 'proletariat of the woods' : men without land, who depended for their livelihoods on the faggots their wives could gather from the forest, the pigs or cows they grazed on the commons at the forest -edge, the gleaning rights their women got at harvest-time. Gleaning had declined from custom to concession, most often granted by now to the poorest of the poor...slowly but surely many of these rights came under attack : faggot gathering was forbidden by law, and forest-guards drove off the pigs and cattle. The peasants replied with fire, or blows, or subterfuge. They hung on to existence, until they too left for the quarries and factories of Paris...(Millet's great pictures of the 1850's) are a systematic description...they are a portrait of a class, and a society, in dissolution. But not, for that reason, without a kind of despairing and aggressive class-consciousness of its own."pp79-80.

recognised in the people is absent from these works of the 1870's, the mid-century impetus to defend a mode of life quickly rendered anachronistic by the growth of the suburbs.

Melville's French washerwomen form an interesting comparison with the East Lothian female in Cabbage Garden. They are the core of any rural community, and this brand of strength and resilience peculiar to the female sex has, however, been localised and domesticised within the societies which Melville represented in the 1870's. These women contributed a day's toil to match their male counterparts yet washing, wood collecting and harvesting ultimately came to represent timeless domestic chores. Where Millet's gnarled female gleaners and faggot gatherers emerged from dense forests bowed under the weight of a task vital to family survival, Melville's washerwomen are content and loquacious in groups by the river.

This exemplifies one of the major discrepancies between Scottish and French naturalism. Where Hugh Cameron's Lonely Life or Robert McGregor's At the Garden Gate[60] for example show old women alone in rustic settings, they are above all else comfortable and nostalgic views of rural life. These women do not appear malnourished or ravaged by the physical effects of an arduous life, but as passive crones who espouse timeless rural values for urban patrons. The true role of the female rural gleaner was lost to Scotland, if indeed it had ever existed in pictorial form [61]. There is nothing to compare with the politically-motivated commentaries of Millet, cataloguing social changes and exoduses which could be symbolised in the motif of the female gleaner. Thus, then, when Melville sent Rush Gatherer[62] to the RGI in 1881 it was lampooned,

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[60]Soth Glen 28.8.78. Oil (13.5x9.5")

[61]McGregor, though, populated many images of field labour with women. See Gathering Stones and Clearing the Potato Field of 1876-77(Latter sold Soth 4.2.87. While stark and strenuous images, MacGregor uses a similar 'distancing' device to Millet by carefully averting the workers' faces. This lack of frontality minimises any need to 'personalise' the women or betray any suffering through facial expression. This is exemplified in both works, particularly the latter where the male ganger is the only figure shown frontally. Headscarves and cowls also serve to mask their faces and sentiments true to Presbyterian teachings, espousing modest content over all.

[62]Oil. he had also sent Bracken Gatherer to the RGI in 1876, clearly a Scottish image. Both lost. Former described as;

"rough French peasant woman at her work, painted with great breadth."

This critique appeared in the RGI Notes for 1881.

eliciting little other criticism.[63] The true connotations of females engaged in such a task went totally undetected, despite the woman's obvious expression of distress which was read as "outraged virtue".[64] It was as if this type of rural genre theme had become commonplace and critics no longer looked beyond superficial observations of any 'French' or 'Continental' influence.

This leads to a keynote of these 'figures within landscape' works. The 'characters' are for the most part stylised and simplified, anonymous beings who are subservient to the setting which encloses them. It is as if the forest of Barbizon itself had assumed some greater, almost spiritual, significance for the artist during his period of residence. As such, the above mentioned images eschew much restraint and naturalistic vocabulary in favour of an expressionism which revels in the aesthetic glory of the place. Washerwomen Beneath Willows (Plate 12) features the regular Grez motifs but the handling is much broader and more painterly. The mechanics of the scene were still executed in dull mauve brown and pale yellow, laid on in free light and very wet washes. However the highlights of pure opaque blue, coupled with the bare paper and heightening, make it a significant image in Melville's progress towards a personal, expressive style.

Little of the actual anatomy is actually described save the focal white bonnets and the occasional white forearm as the light glances beneath rolled-up sleeves. These are just shapes, suggested in wash and blending in with the foliage and water encroaching from all sides as an organic mass of muddy brown and olive. Full sunlight does not dance descriptively across the scene as this is a shaded enclave in rather grey weather, but the image is nonetheless full of vitality.

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[63]Quiz, March 18, 1881, p9. The sketch after Melville's picture depicts a grimacing old woman with an imp over one shoulder, and the caption "What Impudence"!"
The description read;

> "The Rush Gatherer. It may be a bundle of rushes, but it looks more like a little imp. Observe the vestal virgin's glare of outraged virtue. The imp doesn't care a rush."

Other painters to attract the cartoonist's humour were John R Reid (Mary, Maid of the Inn), James Paterson, Robert Herdman and John McWhirter.

[64]ibid. It is clearly a misinterpretation. Such subjects would remain in vogue into the next decade particularly with the popularity of Bastien-Lepage. His Père Jacques of 1881 showed a male wood collector.

Although slightly more mannered and laboured by dint of the medium and scale, Les Laveuses (Plate 16) elicited much contemporary criticism when sent to the RSA in 1881[65];

> "Another smaller and very individual picture...At first sight the little oblong strip is suggestive of a Japanese screen picture in its force and variety of colour and its disregard of the subtle refinements of form. We may call it...a piece of decorative art, but in doing so must by no means imply that it is untrue to nature; for all noble decorative art...while it 'makes great refusals' and lets slip certain qualities of nature, does so that it may concentrate itself... In the little picture...no effort is made after grace of line or the minute delicacies of form, but how full it is of Nature's light and colour : in the sharp brilliancy that floods from the white sky over the yellow strip of the middle distance, strikes sharply here and there upon the bending figures, and fluctuates over the surging surface in front and among the shadows and rich green growth of the water plants."[66]

Painted with square brushstrokes, the image is an elongated version of the same subject as Washerwomen Beneath Willows. The women squatting on a jetty were depicted economically through minimal brushstrokes, but the oil medium clearly offered Melville less dexterity and, ultimately, spontaneity[67] than watercolour.

The critic, J.M. Gray, is correct in identifying a strong decorative element within Les Laveuses. He may also be correct in citing Japanese art as a possible formal source. However I would assert that the work represents a logical progression from Washerwomen Beneath Willows, a watercolour with which he would have been satisfied. Thus the decision to work it up in oil as an exhibition piece may have altered the form naturally into the blocks and squares which comprise Les Laveuses.

Two other naturalistic oils[68], more akin to Reid than Continental models, were shown at the R.S.A. show of 1881 entitled Normandy Shepherd and Old Enemies. It may also be more than coincidence that Les Laveuses was

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[65]Along with two other major Melvilles, Normandy Shepherd and Old Enemies. 'The Scotsman' and 'Courant', two Edinburgh newspapers, gave lengthy reviews.

[66]Scotsman, Feb.28, 1881

[67]In certain respects it recalls the elongated panels of Boudin and Daubigny, the French masters who with their broad *plein airism* were a major source of Impressionism. Melville would have known their work. Melville's panel Girl Sketching, Grez was executed on a similar scale.

[68]He also showed Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris, a watercolour in a careful naturalistic vein.

the only picture for sale that year, the other three works being major representations from private collections. In a sense the artist may have been gauging just how far he could deviate from the norm and yet still sell at the RSA. By this juncture Melville would have been heading for Scotland and may have had his next trip - to the East - in mind. It is clear from Melville's early Eastern images that he considered single-figure rural compositions as saleable material, and Egyptian Sower displays a thematic consistency derived from his Scottish training.[69] His other Eastern works display how he reconciled his radical expressive style and technique against popular, unpolemical subjects which were assured of sale in the conservative bourgeois marketplace of Edinburgh.

As with the previous work the *laveuses* are simplified and stylised, with all extraneous detail eradicated. The yellow brush-width jetty on which they squat anchors the whole scene amidst the camouflage tones which characterise the arboretum, while dark shadows ripple out into the foreground on the lapping water. Again, the overall tonality is dark and still strongly suggestive of the sombre grey atmosphere of Grez-sur-Loing.

The shallow picture space and shape of the work align the whole spatial system of Les Laveuses to Japanese prints.[70] However the motif of the blue-grey fronds of foliage encroaching on the left vertical axis is more blatantly culled from Oriental sources. The bent diagonal extremities of these fronds conflict with the strict horizontal-vertical thrusts of the picture, also emphasising the movement of the women's arms. This motif in Les Laveuses serves to link the disparate grounds of the image through unconventional means, without relying on single-point linear perspective and orthogonals. On the right side of the picture, however, the more abstract representation of the water beyond the jetty deconstructs any forms into a pattern of light, shadow and hue. Thus the image is comfortably self-contained above by the rhythmic pattern of undefined light and shade, and below by the horizontal spread of the water itself, and

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[69]By the same logic, single-figure types he executed in Baghdad such as Water Seller have their roots in the subjects he tackled in Scotland, and subsequently France.

[70]The influence of Japanese prints in France was extensive after the 1860's. Their effects were most strongly manifest in the spatial systems and unconventional viewpoints of Whistler and the Impressionists, particularly Monet and Degas. Melville would have been aware of this by the late 1870's, see for example the violent foreshortening in contemporary works such as Geese Crossing a Weir.

at either side by the means suggested. Water only conforms to its surroundings and is thus transient and formless.

Water is also an integral component in Geese Crossing a Weir[71] (Plate 11) which seems to have been painted at Grez. This picture was denigrated at the expense of later, more polished, watercolours by the artist's widow;

> "The pictures you have chosen are all very interesting - 'Geese Crossing a Weir' however is an early oil and not very characteristic."[72]

in what I would suggest is an unfair comment made in relation to Melville's fame as watercolourist.

In actual fact, this is the principal extant example of a sub-genre within Melville's art around 1880. Farm in Normandy, Entrance to a Canal and the lost Old Enemies all correspond, thematically and stylistically, with this large-scale rural scene. Geese Crossing a Weir encapsulates Melville's transitional period at the turn of the decade as he sought to cast off the shackles of rural genre, rooted in his Scottish training, in favour of more exotic subjects.

The well-worn theme of a goose girl in a farmyard belies Melville's bold handling, radically steep foreshortening and rich colour. With the rural subject and broad luminous yellow sky the artist acknowledges past French masters, particularly Daubigny[73], and yet the square brushwork and foreground have more in common with the contemporary advances of Bastien-Lepage. Farm in Normandy is formally very close to this work as concerns setting, flock of geese and diminutive figure of the herd who is blocked in simply and economically as a spatial marker.

However the farmyard scene is most probably a sketch for Geese Crossing a Weir as the handling is even broader, and the work itself seems to have remained in the artist's studio until his death. However the fact that the finished work contains a body of water, the 'weir' of the title, situates this work in Grez and the river Loing. The dark, earthy colouring is

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[71](25.5x38"), oil. 1880. Edinburgh City Arts Centre.

[72]Letter from Ethel Melville to Alfred Wallis, curator of Nottingham Castle Museum, re the most extensive retrospective exhibition. September 1906, coll. Nott Castle.

[73]Whom he would have seen at the Expo 1878, where the French artist was represented by nine pictures.

somewhat surprising in that it recalls Melville's own Scottish genre pieces rather than a French sensibility, but Grez was renowned for the muted tones and rich colour which the weather and tree-cover produced.

The themes in this group of pictures are essentially rural, featuring earthy tones and a preponderance of brown and white hues. Although the skies, lighting from behind the foliage, are bright the foreground is shadowed and gloomy. Entrance to a Canal features a quay and sailing vessels, a suitably timeless reference to country life and trade through the waterways before mechanised volition was commonplace while Geese Crossing a Weir is self explanatory.

An archetypal rustic setting, it revolves around water which so often symbolised the epicentre of village life whether for drinking, washing, fishing, trade, communication or leisure. The steep recession converges beside the young girl attending a bold gaggle of some dozen fowl, bright and animated in relation to the young girl's costume. As with Old Enemies Melville's composition emphasises the birds over the girl, the key to a farming community and its existence being the produce and self-sufficiency. This work in particular extols the traditional order of country life, timeless and physical in its quiet simplicity, and thus the Calvinist ethic of rural Scotland has been transposed to regional France. Slight adjustments to colouring to render it 'warmer' and the obviously square brushstrokes are all which really distinguish this work from the timbre of Cabbage Garden. If anything, the French work makes even less of a statement as human interest is relegated to a 'spatial marker' role and for naturalistic purposes. There is no 'communication' in Geese Crossing a Weir simply a child and livestock grouping which makes this work one of his most simple themes and one which returns to the prototypes of Reid and McGregor.

Evolving from the more aesthetic and technical concerns of Geese Crossing a Weir, Winter Fuel[74] has a stronger social motivation and echoes Melville's earlier essays in rural genre.[75] Where it obviously relates to his other Grez images of female toil, this theme is closer to the

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[74] w/c (10.75x17.25"), 1880. Robertson Coll.

[75] Such as Bracken Gathering, Gathering Sticks and Rush Gatherer. All 1876-1880. The first two are Scottish, while the third is probably a French subject.

French prototypes of Millet which had characterised the desperate drudge of the woodland dispossessed.

In Winter Fuel (Plate 13) Melville presents a stark image of two figures gathering firewood. The landscape is open and spartan while the restrained palette of brown and yellow emphasises the imminent threat of winter, but it is the cool objectivity of the Scot's naturalistic style which captures the scene most effectively. Melville's watercolour technique had matured suitably by this stage to facilitate the use of washes in the picture, a fluid execution which utilised pools of yellow, mauve and green over the brown tones with which he mapped the composition. The series of complementary diagonals in the landscape imbue a continuity which leads the eye into the composition from foreground to horizon, stressed by the scale of the figures.

Melville reflects Millet's trademark of averted features to secure impersonal figure representations, but this in itself was not new to the Scot.[76] However the principal figure of the old woman, whittling the sticks to regular shapes for binding and transportation, does not appear particularly angst-ridden. She leans forward, engaged in her task, but this may be purely a question of practical posture rather than a bowed spine caused by years of backbreaking toil. One might also assert that she looks positively well-fed rather than the haggard or malnourished condition one might expect for the rural poor. Her male companion is even more economically rendered, glancing upward curiously in the artist's direction, but these factors are undoubtedly redolent of Melville's *plein air* methods at this stage rather than any wish to relegate the figures to a supporting status.

However wholesome Melville's rural toilers may appear, though, they firmly acknowledge Millet's social protest personified in his Barbizon gleaners. Much had changed in the woodlands since Millet's great works of this genre a quarter of a century earlier, particularly the mass exodus to urban areas. Barbizon had fewer families to support and seemed to play host to more visiting artists than scavenging women seeking to maintain their broods for another day. In essence the whole mood of the place had

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[76]See Cabbage Garden, for example.

altered, allowing Melville to render rural subject matter subservient to technique.

The Loing river had become choked with sedge and usurped by the canal as a working waterway. It was by the 1870's used for little more than washing bathing and canoeing, essentially leisure and domestic purposes which lent themselves favourably to artistic representation. It can thus be argued that Millet's social documents had been replaced with aesthetic subjects used to propagate new styles of painting in a fertile artistic period. Country life, although not easy, had stabilised despite the Franco-Prussian war, making Millet's distressed and contorted peasants engaged in life-preserving tasks all but anachronistic.

How different the twisted and violent interactions of Millet's Faggot Gatherers[77] or the chill, bowed misery of Winter, Faggot Gatherers[78] to Melville's restrained, almost contented Winter Fuel. Although this is a scene which he would have witnessed it was ostensibly chosen for aesthetic purposes. Life was still hard for the rural peasantry, exemplified by the gender roles which forced Melville's old women out to collect firewood but his is a timeless acknowledgement of Millet, Courbet and times past. So too in comparison with Millet's Barbizon Washerwomen[79], whose inherent restive spirituality outstrips the gregarious camaraderie of Melville's washerwomen.

Although Melville chose themes which actively mirrored the vehicles for Millet's rhetoric, the result is quite different. Both artists reflected contemporary rural life as they interpreted it and the new decade, the 1880's, saw a period of great industrial and commercial improvement in France. [80] I would argue that Melville's contemporary painting displays an inherent tension typical of the period. Thus his work of 1879-80 acknowledges local and international models of rural naturalism while remaining abreast of modern stylistic and thematic developments in

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[77]West Palm Beach, Florida. 1850-51.

[78]Cardiff. 1868-74.

[79]Boston, 1853.

[80]The new President, Jules Grévy, was middle class and in close sympathy with the peasantry. France began to re-institute imperialist machinations around this time.

France[81], a transitional ambivalence encapsulated in his single figure compositions.

[81]Specifically the techniques of the French Impressionists and modern suburban realists such as Raffaelli. There are also strong links between Melville's art and the Orientalism of Fortuny, Pasini and Gérôme as seen at the Expo 1878. More specifically, distinct parallels may be drawn with such influential figures as O'Meara, Singer Sargent and Bastien-Lepage who exercised modern rural naturalism in provincial France, especially Grez and Normandy.

SINGLE FIGURE COMPOSITIONS

There are six single-figure compositions extant from 1878-80 which, if subdivided into two equal groups, may serve to illustrate the above point. The first includes Fisherman's Daughter, Cancale[82] (Plate 8), Seated Peasant Girl, Grez[83] and Shepherd[84] and features a group of works executed in a particularly naturalistic style. The second group of pictures are Grez subjects entitled French Peasant[85], La Vieille Maraîchère[86] and Girl Sketching[87] and comprise a much more modern, ambitious and perhaps 'continental' body of work. These were obviously used as formal sources for his series of Baghdad figure studies, although in the Eastern images he rendered the settings even more concise. However, thematically the French figurative group explored rural types and members of the village community in which he lived[88], while the Persian pictures are urban types from all caste levels observed *in situ* during his perambulations in the city.

The former group is more 'traditional' in approach and subject matter, as Melville honed his technique on figures in naturalistic settings.[89] Seated Peasant Girl, Grez and Fisherman's Daighter, Cancale are in watercolour, while the Shepherd is an oil displaying Melville's interest in developing his naturalism in both media.[90] The watercolours are similar in treatment, exuding a rustic sensibility. The girls appear relaxed and

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[82]w/c (17x12.75") c1878. Ill Soth 10.4.78.

[83]w/c (56x38cm) 1879.

[84]oil (21.25x17.5"), Sold Ch London 14.5.76 1880.

[85]oil (21x12") Robertson Coll, 1880.

[86]oil (24x15.75"), ill Ch 13.11.91 1880.

[87]oil (17.5x7"). Private Coll. c1879.

[88]Such as the Innkeeper or local artists as in Girl Sketching.

[89]This type of genre work had long found favour at the Salon and other institutions. As such for Melville these themes were suitable vehicles for the technical development which the artist sought. It also reflects the interests of JR Reid and R. McGregor on their sketching trips to France and Holland. The effects of their influence is still conspicuous in Melville's work at this point.

[90]Lost works such as Net Mender of 1879, a small watercolour, and oils such as the RW Allan portrait, Innkeeper, Breton Peasant and Girl of Brittany would probably have been executed in this naturalistic style. These latter oils were relatively large-scale, eg Girl of Brittany at 31x21.5" and Keeper of the Dogs at 30.5x20", and represented early *plein air* efforts which were not entirely successful as they were never shown in the artist's lifetime. This illustrates how Melville was aiming for striking exhibition-piece oils in naturalistic vein as shown by Sargent, for example, at the Salon.

unposed, depicted amidst minimal settings and props emphasising their working status. The averted features help to create an objective, unposed air while negating the need to commute emotion via physiognomy.[91]

While these subjects reflected Salon genres which had been commonplace since Millet and Breton, Melville's naturalistic studies reflect more contemporary developments. John Singer Sargent had spent much of 1877 at Cancale in Brittany, and his subsequent work Oyster Gatherers of Cancale was shown at the Salon of 1878 to favourable reviews. Sargent had also worked in Grez and Melville would have known his work as a successful contemporary, and it is perhaps unsurprising that RW Allan and Melville should go to Cancale in 1878. Melville's fisher girl has formal comparisons with the principal female figures in Sargent's work[92], while the unconventional seated pose of the Grez girl may recall Bastien-Lepage's Les Foins which was also shown at the Salon of 1878.[93]

Both these works feature motifs which hold a dual purpose within Melville's work. Since Cabbage Garden the artist had used ellipses in the form of baskets, jars or bowls to operate jointly as spatial determinant, and to gauge the tonal range of the work.[94] Where the fisher girl holds a jug which catches the light and contrasts with the horizontal and vertical line system, the Grez girl seems to be shelling peas into the bowls behind her. Where the Cancale setting is simplified but none the less regimented, the Grez picture has a more decorative washed-in surrounding which benefits greatly from the geometric regularity of the bowls in the rear ground.

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[91]A technique used by Millet. The Fisherman's Daughter is formally close to Millet's own shepherdesses, young girls situated in rustic settings.

[92]Sargent's Low Tide at Cancale Harbour of 1877-78 concentrates on a similar formal elements to Melville's Low Tide, which is probably a French coastal work from this period. Sargent's grizzled mariner on the pier may also have been reflected in Melville's Net Mender. Sargent's first significant *plein air* work was attempted at Cancale, which explains the numerous broad sketches for the Oyster Gatherers, and Melville may have used it to similar ends. Karl Daubigny showed Oyster Gatherers, Cancale at the Expo '78.

[93]It is virtually certain that Melville would have seen the Salon and Exposition Universelle exhibitions in 1878. The influence of painters such as Bastien-Lepage, Sargent, Fortuny, Gérôme and Pasini, whom he would have seen there, became swiftly evident. It is quite possible that Sargent's curious Fumée d'Ambre Gris, painted in Tangier and shown at the Salon of 1880, may have inspired Melville's transitional Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris.

[94]This is a major motif in Melville's work and is exploited most fully in the more abstract Eastern works, where orthogonals and single-point linear perspective give way to systems of tone and colour.

These are used principally to situate the girl in a context lacking a linear framework.

Where these are working girls they are nonetheless attractive subjects who exude a coarse rustic charm. Melville, the 'Presbyterian Realist', again avoids the contentious subjects such as physical suffering or overt poverty favoured by French social realists. Although this selective restraint is a general canon of Scottish naturalism in the 1870's and 80's, I would argue that Melville's Shepherd alludes to social issues beyond the usual confines.

My interpretation of Cabbage Garden, Melville's principal Scottish picture, asserted that the character relationship refers to social and gender roles on East Lothian farms and the immigration of female labour from the Highlands and Ireland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By the same logic (Normandy) Shepherd (Plate 9), the pinnacle of Melville's 'traditional' rustic naturalism, may also betray wider social implications than are immediately evident on cursory inspection.

Contemporary Scottish newspaper reviews concentrated on the picture's conventional appeal;

> "A Shepherd shows a single brown-cloaked blue-bloused figure standing erect, the grim aspect and countenance curiously repeated in those of the mongrel curs at his side. Behind in the low-toned distance are sheep, and a few sparse trees lift themselves against a grey sky marvellously luminous and clear in tone. So complete and satisfying is the little picture that we are not surprised to notice that it has been acquired by a brother artist, Mr. (Joe) Heseltine, the well-known etcher."[95]
>
> "Of similar merit (to Melville's Old Enemies) as to artistic unity of tone, while recalling in some measures Millet's sombre pathos, is the figure of the Shepherd with dogs at foot, set against a background meadow full of nibbling sheep, and grey but luminous sky."[96]

Where these provide a reasonable visual analysis in a country where indigenous rural genre still held swathe, the following contemporary notes made by the artist Kenyon Cox provide an interesting overview;

> "Grez has suddenly been transformed in a curious way. There has been an inroad of cuirassiers, who are to be engaged in some grand

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[95]Courant, Feb. 28, 1881.

[96]Scotsman, Feb. 24, 1881.

> manoeuvering somewhere near here, and in every house in the village are quartered two or three great troopers loafing about in all stages of undress uniform...At the other hotel...the guests are crowded out of their places by a number of officers...for a painter of animals this would be a splendid chance..."[97]

Written in the autumn of 1879, when Melville may have been painting his picture, these words are interesting contextual material. It is evident that the formal construction of the picture may again be indebted to the *bergères* of Millet and the brutal immediacy reminiscent of Courbet, but thematically there may be a more specific source. Shepherds in France in the last quarter of the nineteenth century would have been a motley collection of characters, but this figure's garb and bearing are more akin to a battle-fatigued old campaigner than a rustic *bergère* of Millet's type.

I would suggest that the model for this image may not have been a professional shepherd but an old soldier. He may have been billeted at Grez while assisting with manoeuvres in some secondary role, but it is more likely that he was one of the many veterans of the horrific Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. The belligerent grimace and the fact that he seems to have lost an arm add some weight to this hypothesis, but it is the heavy old clothing and hat which have military connotations.

Cox's diary refers[98] to the fact that soldiers were often sighted on the train to Grez and in the locality, and although most of these were young conscripts there were many itinerant veterans the length and breadth of the country. France's defeat at the hands of Bismarck in 1871 had been crippling and although, a decade later, commercial recovery had been instituted there were many human casualties. The shepherd looks young enough to have participated in the conflict although his lifestyle and the possible maiming may have prematurely aged him beyond his years. He is not bowed or bent but stands firm and stolid, hand gripping the stick resiliently although his weather-beaten and lined face is drawn inward against the cold.

During Melville's travels in rural France in the 1870's he would have encountered many such men, broken and often rootless veterans, who had returned to the rural areas from which they had been drafted. Their

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[97]Cox, K. American Art Student in Paris, Sep. 5, 1879.

[98]August 17, 1878, for example. ibid p110.

injuries would often have rendered them incapable of the manual labour to which they were accustomed, but shepherding would have been one alternative for a soldier who had lost an arm. These were the true victims of Napoleon III's desperate attempts to regain control via imperialist manoeuvres and a catastrophic war with Prussia.[99]

I would argue that Melville's Shepherd depicts a war veteran whom the artist knew at Grez. This work is a naturalistic, detailed portrait[100] which could only have been completed over several sittings without the aid of a camera. There is no evidence of Melville's use of photographic prompts throughout his career but much evidence of *plein air* sketching, particularly in watercolour. The stiff, rather incongruous grouping of shepherd and dogs suggests an early attempt to paint directly from life. This would explain why the close observation of particular facets of the image, such as the faces of shepherd and dogs, is more successful than the overall lucidity of the picture. The figure and animals are the fundamental motivation for this image, while the more spartan landscape and sketchy flock are slightly incongruous, as though the shepherd himself has been superimposed onto a prepainted background[101].

There is an irony in the fact that this image should in fact represent an old soldier. Normandy Shepherd was the formal source for Melville's Egyptian Sower, the pinnacle of his realist style when in the East. This

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[99]Europe had expected France to win the conflict with their enemy, Prussia. Napoleon's attempts to annexe Belgium and gain allies in Austria-Hungary and Italy against Prussia had failed, eliciting suspicion in Britain and giving Bismarck the initiative to strike first. Confused mobilisation meant that only 200,000 French troops faced 380,000 Prussians, and 82,000 were taken prisoner after Sedan. The fall of the Second Empire and Siege of Paris ensued quickly, as did the failure of the Commune where left-wing forces sought to prolong the war as the guns of the Paris National Guard were seized by Thiers' forces. At least 20,000 died in the Commune alone, leaving a shattered city from which many retreated to the country.

[100]Such direct 'portraiture' has Scottish sources, but Melville revitalised a genre which would resurface in James Guthrie's Old Willie, a Village Worthy for example. These indigenously Scottish works are reminiscent of Melville's oil which was shown and extensively reviewed at the RSA 1881. Guthrie and the Glasgow Boys would have seen it there.

[101]It is, of course, highly unlikely that Melville would sketch a shepherd in the field. His depiction of Innkeeper on a similar scale suggests that the shepherd would be depicted in the more hospitable surroundings of Chevillon's inn as an incentive to pose. Quite how La Mère Morte, (Dead Woman) a contemporary oil shown at the RGI in 188, was executed is not known ;

> "A remarkably broad and effective work, (now lost) giving a life-like study of an old French peasant woman." (RGI Notes, 1881)

but it undoubtedly belonged to the same naturalistic genre.

iconic representation of a field labourer was intended to exemplify the simple intransigence of rural life in the Orient, celebrating values which had been eroded in the industrialised West. Where the sower is intended to personify the nature of his ancient task by displaying a relaxed poise and power, the 'shepherd' is only playing a role and looks awkward given his military past and debilitation in conflict.

A comparison of these two oils provides an insight into Melville's contemporary perceptions of East and West. Each figure alludes to the changing nature of their respective nations and the underlying conflict from nationalist and imperialist forces. The Shepherd had been involved in the Franco-Prussian War while the Sower characterises the futile resistance offered against Egypt's annexation by the English in 1882. However the Shepherd is itinerant yet resisted emigration from the land to an urban life where his role would be peripheral while the Sower has little choice in his pre-industrial nation. Both types performed anachronistic tasks which may provide a modest income but represented little more than a motif to a nostalgic Scottish artist, no matter how sympathetic the representation. Both inhabit regions becoming colonised by tourism and artists[102], trivialising their respective cultures into rather hackneyed images for sale to bourgeois patrons.

[102]Grez as an artists' colony and leisure resort for city dwellers, while the Suez Canal and Cook's Tours had opened up Cairo and the Nile as an exotic holiday destination for Westerners.

'AESTHETIC' RURAL GENRE

The pinnacle of Melville's rural naturalism was realised in Shepherd and the aforementioned watercolours Fisherman's Daughter and Seated Peasant Girl, Grez. However a particular tension appears in Melville's work around 1880 which demonstrates an attempt to cast off the restraints of his Scottish artistic conditioning. Melville's training and influences assured that his French work explored themes which were consistent with Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter, his early successes. By the new decade, though, works like Shepherd signalled that Melville's rural naturalism had run its course.

It is clear in works such as Geese Crossing a Weir and Washerwomen Beneath Willows that the artist was attempting to reconcile what had become staid and traditional themes with increasing levels of technical exploration. The bold and varied handling, novel colour systems and spatial experimentation evident in these pictures illustrate that the artist had begun to look beyond thematic concerns. Thus the RSA exhibitions of 1880 and 1881 featured an incongruous selection of loaned and sale material, works as diverse as the naturalistic Shepherd, Old Enemies and Interior of a Turkish Bath[103] and the more aesthetically motivated French Peasant, On the Seine and Les Laveuses[104].

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[103]All shown RSA 1881. Interestingly, none were for sale. Only Les Laveuses was on sale. It is clear that the artist wished to temper the effect of his new, more radical work by surrounding it with more 'traditional' loaned pieces. The low price of this work and French Peasant, another pioneering work sold by the artist from the RSA show of 1880 for £15, was another incentive as he tried to retain the favour of his Edinburgh patrons. Melville's business acumen is evident early in his career, without which the periods in France, East and beyond would have been impossible.

[104]These more innovative pictures were sold from the RSA in 1880 and 1881 for £15, £15 and £10 respectively. The Dundee FA Exhibitions, held in October-November of 1880 (the RSA and RGI were early in the year), featured the oil Return from the Fields which was unsold after the RSA. Unfortunately this is lost but unsold works were unusual in Melville's career. Perhaps this and Coming Thro' the Rye, also unsold at the RSA of 1880, had been rendered unfashionable by Melville's more pioneering French work which sold to established patrons like Mackinlay. However at Dundee 1880 the oil and two Paris watercolours were offered at £15 each. It was not until the following year, and Eastern subjects, that prices rose beyond the paltry. By 1882 he was more established and charging £150 for a watercolour. It is clear that by 1881, Melville was confident and fashionable enough to use the RSA to advertise rather than sell.

With La Vieille Maraîchère[105] (Plate 17), Girl Sketching[106] and particularly French Peasant[107] (Plate 14) Melville's stylistic and technical advances began to dominate the subject-matter. By this stage his thematic selection processes were overtly subjective, manipulating figure and landscape forms and rendering them principally pictorial vehicles.

It may be illuminating to arrange these three pictures in sequence.[108] La Vieille Maraîchère is allied most closely with works such as Shepherd, but in terms of style and technique it represents a radical departure. The image is an old woman working in a cottage garden in Grez, with tall unkempt weeds in the foreground and the town roofs visible to the rear left. As with the shepherd, she is depicted frontally in a naturalistic style but the handling is altogether more broad and expressive.

The most striking departure from earlier Grez pictures is that the characteristic grey atmosphere has been replaced. The background is earthy, particularly around the large bare tree, but the autumnal tones are interspersed with areas of striking luminosity. The whole palette has been lightened considerably, with light green and golden yellow the principal colour scheme from the horizon through to foreground. The brushwork is rather square and much less fastidious than in Shepherd, making this an altogether more 'contemporary' piece of rural naturalism.[109] It is clear that he has managed to imbue appropriate movement to the figure through the individual shimmering brushstrokes, a quality markedly absent from the aforementioned static oil.

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[105](The Old Gardener Woman), oil, (24x15.75"). 1880. Sold and Ill Ch 13.11.91. Incorrectly titled 'French Peasant'.

[106]Oil o/p. (17.5x7"). c1880. Ex Cox Coll.

[107]Oil, (20.5x12"). 1880, Grez. Sometimes called Paysanne à Grez. Robertson Coll., Orkney.

[108]It may, coincidentally, be chronological but is primarily intended to illustrate Melville's stylistic development away from pure naturalism in a representational context.

[109]Interestingly Melville's employment of square brushwork is contemporary with Bastien-Lepage, with whom it became synonymous. Most of the Frenchman's most celebrated rustic images, such as Le Mendiant or Père Jacques, were shown after 1880 but Melville would have known Bastien-Lepage's Les Foins of Salon 1878, and Saison d'Octobre of the following year. The high horizon so characteristic in Bastien-Lepage's pictures is used by Melville in these figurative compositions, which also radically compress the picture space. The square brushwork was also evident in Melville's Geese Crossing a Weir, although the tonality and colour scheme are much different.

The old woman herself has much in common with that in Winter Fuel. She wears a bright dress and bonnet, her weather-beaten forearms rhythmically working the ground, while appearing quite content and physically comfortable. It is this quality of domestic autonomy which places Melville's Grez women at ease, toiling to suit themselves and the needs of their family rather than the orders of a landowner.[110] While the land is unkempt the stature of the woman and proximity of the houses emphasise the homely feel. As with the high poppy-like plants in the foreground, this vista appears more like cultivated plots gone to seed than rural wilderness being claimed.

Rural naturalism is only a point of departure for French Peasant, with the viewpoint specifically selected as a vehicle conducive to Melville's increasing aesthetic sensibility. It is also a viable, traditional subject but the picture space has been even more dramatically curtailed.[111] Where Melville shared with Millet a desire to pare his images, eschew detail, the Frenchman wanted to create a 'presence' in his figures. These were intended as a kind of visual nemesis for complacent bourgeoisie living off the land and its tenants in a time of accelerated industrialisation. Melville's peasant here is purely chosen, or indeed constructed[112], for aesthetic purposes to commute visual aspects in design form.

The picture depicts a peasant, again female, plucking grapes from a vine at Grez. The whole scene is infused with a bright Continental light, the effect vividly heightened by the whitewashed wall and sky blue shutter backdrop against which the figure and vine are thrust. The yellow dust at her feet also serves to reflect the scorching luminosity, finding points of reference in the autumnal orange and gold on certain leaves. The curious white

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[110]'Maraîchère' connotes a relaxed mode of self-employment, as it means more 'market-gardener' than field labourer. This commercial component, as with Cabbage Garden, points to the cultivator's control over her plot and choosing the crop either for sale or private use. In a sense this is recreational labour, a fact underlined by the age of the woman and her relaxed bearing.

[111]This, of course, contrasts with the dramatic 'Japanese' foreshortening in Geese Crossing a Weir, and Bastien-Lepage's telescopic space.

[112]'She may not even be female. The obscured features and anatomy, huge hands, protruding jaw and posture are more masculine. It may have been worked-up from sketches or garments, or purely reminiscent of Bastien-Lepage's 'primitive' female in Les Foins. Equally it could have been contrived from Fortuny's Moroccan Executioner, with which it has striking formal similarities including stance and hooded features. He may have seen this at the Expo 1878 or at Goupil, Fortuny's Paris dealer.

headdress, which reflects the light, obscures her features and expresses just how hot and bright the scene actually was.[113]

The square, blocked brushwork and bright colours combine with the shallow space to create an extremely decorative design which is quite superior to anything Melville had hitherto attempted. The figure herself has an almost iconic quality, the curious headdress and solid stance combining with her inert poise to create a remarkable image. The only movement within the image is the shimmering brushwork, the individual strokes of pure white, pale blue, yellow and orange sparkling to create a mesmeric haze. The colours of the figure's apparel precisely match those of her surroundings, imbuing the scene with the lucidity demanded in a design of this nature.

The 'aesthetic' quality, the subordination of theme to colour, tone and technique, is clearly the issue here. The grey, almost melancholic atmosphere of Grez had been favoured by painters since the Barbizon group in the mid-century and Melville's naturalistic scenes had been consistent with this. However these aesthetic genre scenes give much greater prominence to light and colour, with French Peasant foremost of the three. It would be wrong, though, to attribute Melville's shift in palette and tonality to any geographical or meteorological alterations.[114] The decorative quality emerges from the static forms and the flatness of the whitewashed wall, shutter and dark window combining with the blocked leaves and striped blouse. It is about simplified forms, brush technique, the extremities of the tonal range[115], the shallow space and use of geometry.

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[113]This curious basket-shaped headdress mirrors the wicker basket she holds. It recalls the motif established in Cabbage Garden where baskets, jugs and bowls act as spatial and tonal markers. The headdress is visibly reminiscent of Millet's female figure in Going to Work of 1850, now in Glasgow Kelvingrove Museum. It was owned by James Donald of Glasgow, but Melville may have seen it at Craibe Angus's rooms, which opened in 1874 in Glasgow. He may also have known it from reproductions, as there is another similar version in Cincinnati.

[114]The Courant and Scotsman, as discussed earlier, had clearly discerned a group of young Scottish painters depicting figures in rustic settings under the effects of full direct sunlight. Revolving around JR Reid, with his experience of Surrey, these artists produced such images in Scotland. Melville's Gardener's Daughter was included in this grouping, according to contemporary critics.

[115]Encapsulated in her head. The white hot light reflecting off her headwear contrasting with the inky black shadows over her eyes and in the window. As a result of this the colours are not typically rich and full, as in most Grez pictures like Old Enemies, but almost

Melville, aware of the successes of Cabbage Garden, seems to have relaxed and responded to personal experience of the meridian sunshine of a French summer. French Peasant, I suggest, initiates a whole new progressive concept of the decorative in Scottish art. Notwithstanding a knowledge of Millet, early Bastien-Lepage and Japanese prints he synthesised their theories to create a more modern concept than the grey pedantry of Bastien-Lepage's peasants. Les Foins and Saison D'Octobre, which he would have known, look *passé* in relation to French Peasant, which has more in common with aspects of pure Impressionism and the exotica of Fortuny and Gérôme. This picture represents Melville's maturity in developing from his Scottish conditioning to produce and then exceed rustic naturalism contemporary with, and not derivative of , Bastien-Lepage.[116]

Undated and uninscribed, the little panel Girl Sketching is a different thematic proposition to the above, and is close to the unusual scale and style of Les Laveuses. The subject is rendered in extremely broad brushstrokes, the whole an animated series of colours and tones representing the flickering atmosphere of the forest itself.

The foreground is relatively undeveloped, a rather unnatural pea-green grass bank, while the upper half is far more abstract kaleidoscope of blues, greens and pinks. Overall, the work is as dark as a typical Grez scene, but a dappled band of light horizontally bisects the image to reveal the woman seated at her easel. She is depicted in profile in a flowing light pink gown and hat, while the parasol flecked with pure drops of sunlight lifts the

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bleached by the direct harsh and searching light. This, of course, anticipates Melville's journeys East.

[116]The influence of Bastien-Lepage's Les Foins, on its showing at the Salon of 1878, was extensive. However most of Melville's French developments occur contemporary with the French master. It may be correct to say that both artists were manipulating rural naturalism to their own, very different, ends between 1878-80. The debt which the Glasgow Boys owed Bastien-Lepage is well-documented and justified but this does not apply more than incidentally to Melville. Works such as Guthrie's Hind's Daughter, Peddlar and Old Willie, Village Worthy owe much to Melville's early exhibits, namely Gardener's Daughter, Old Enemies and Shepherd.. It is difficult to imagine Walton's Berwickshire Fieldworkers Crossing a Bridge without knowledge of Melville's French Peasant, Lavery's Tennis Party recalls Melville's images of Edinburgh social gathering such as Tennis Championship, Corstorphine or Skating, Duddingston Loch from 1880, or Henry's Spring (Audrey and her Goats) as more 'decorative' or aesthetic examples. The Glasgow Boys and, later, the Colourists were to different degrees derivative of their French peers, but tangible evidence of the naturalistic and decorative debt to Melville is evident on inspection.

whole composition. The horizon, light yet *staccato* due to the tree trunks, reveals a glimpse of the town of Grez with characteristic red roofs.

In a sense this is the most interesting of the three 'aesthetic' works. It develops the decorative qualities of earlier works, including passages of real abstract colour elicited from the forest canopy, and incorporates it into a much more contemporary subject. Where La Vieille Maraîchère and French Peasant are themes retained from Millet's time, the idea of a woman painting in a provincial artists' colony is much more consistent with Morisot and the Impressionists.[117] This woman is most assuredly one of Melville's colleagues who resided over the summer, captured *en plein air* by the Scot while working near the town.[118]

For once, Girl Sketching does not deal with rural toil under any guise but actually represents Grez's 'growth industry' in 1880. More than an Impressionist leisure scene, this image presents the burgeoining artistic community in a working colony. This was the summer norm for *atelier* students in Melville's time and the gender of the sketcher, superficially tied to the 'aesthetic' issue for a heterosexual male painter, exemplified the universality of the community itself.[119]

This young women painting in the town of Grez completes the full circle of age and gender roles from Millet's time. For the French master, old women gleaning represented the resilient scavenging for family survival necessitated by contemporary land policy. His were desperate times, and a whole way of rural life was being systematically eroded with rural emigration. Old women toiling encapsulated the full magnitude of his protest. However, during Melville's residence in Grez he captured the mood equally subjectively, showing old women tying sticks, gardening or washing as domestic chores rather than brutal survival means.

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[117]Although the broad handling, colouring and setting are reminiscent of Daubigny.

[118]Lavery would paint very similar subjects at Grez, such as Principal Street at Grez and A Day in Midsummer. Reid, as early as 1875, had painted women sketching in open air in a broad manner as in Young Artist, once again making an indigenous source for Melville's seemingly Impressionist theme eminently possible.

[119]There is no record of any love interest for Melville at Grez, but there were certainly a number of women artists for him to depict. Julian Campbell (op cit p25) cites "There were also a number of Swedish women artists, including Emma Lowstedt and Julia Beck." Models were also plentiful.

Thus, a young woman artist plundering the same woods for aesthetic subjects instead of faggots, wild goats or washing stones exemplifies an effective irony in Melville's art. His art is just as contemporary as Millet's and equally representative of his Barbizon experience. Women artists at Grez do not appear in O'Meara or even Sargent and may have been a relatively recent occurrence, a fact which Melville records subtly in Girl Sketching. While aesthetic in approach, with strong decorative aspects, this work directly reflects Melville's times in a manner reserved for very few works in his *oeuvre*.[120]

[120]Evening, Charenton and Dancers, Moulin Rouge are other examples to be examined in the next section. As discussed, though, Melville's Grez naturalism such as Winter Fuel alludes to social change as a counterpoint to Millet while Cabbage Garden reveals aspects of Scottish farm life and social structure in an indirect manner.

PARIS WATERCOLOURS, 1879 - 1880

Melville appeared on Julian's Paris *atelier* register in 1878.[121] However it is clear from his early French work that the Scot was largely impervious to the aesthetic attractions of the metropolis, and his themes betray an itinerant lifestyle. Extensive sketching in Brittany and Normandy and a year's residence in Grez generally precluded city views from this period, revealing as few as three Parisian subjects dated before 1880.

Although Melville was registered at Julian's his attendance was no more than infrequent, working occasionally from life at the *atelier* but responding most favourably to informal tuition from peers. The role of RW Allan has already been noted in terms of Melville's watercolour style and choice of locations, and this influence is most conspicuous in Melville's Parisian subjects. Allan's *plein air* sketches on the *quais* of Paris such as A View of Notre Dame, Paris[122] reveal striking similarities, both thematic and stylistic, to many of the watercolours examined in this section.

While Melville was clearly in the vanguard of modern Scottish painters studying and residing in Paris, *atelier* registers reveal that he was not the first. It became *de rigeur* for Scots to bypass London for Paris in the 1880's[123], particularly after the example set by the Glasgow Boys, but they were not in general receptive to the Impressionists' 'painting of modern

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[121]Morris, E. and Mackay, A. British Art Students in Paris 1814-1890. *Apollo* 135, Feb. 1992, pp78-84.

[122]Undated. Sold and Ill. Sotheby's Belgravia 22.5.73. Melville exhibited Notre Dame de Paris, Morning at the Dundee F.A. Exhib toward the end of 1880 (since lost).

[123]Scots painters from the previous generation such as WQ Orchardson and John Pettie had decamped to London seeking financial success and critical acclaim. James Guthrie had followed this accepted route early in his career. However RW Allan had moved to Paris and Julian's in 1875 while continuing to send works home to the RGI Exhibitions, and it was such painters who created a new course. Other Scots already in Paris when Melville arrived were the Glasgow painter whom Melville would have known, and Thomas Millie Dow. Both of these worked at Julian's. Archibald Reid, brother of Sir George, arrived at Julian's around the same time as Melville, while James Paterson came to Laurens in 1879. William Kennedy was working with Bastien-Lepage in 1880, while Lavery and Roche arrived the following year. It is clear that Allan was Melville's principal contact in Paris, although the influence of Sargent who had studied at Julian's contemporary with Allan, is indirectly apparent. (Information op cit Morris and Mackay p84.)

life.'[124] Preferring to pursue the rural genre themes which they had practised at home, most Scottish artists gravitated to Grez with only cursory reference to the city of Paris.[125] It is this distinct thematic development during Melville's French residence which I wish to examine here.

Thus far, the chapter has featured the essentially rural preoccupations which stemmed from Melville's own background[126]. Although I consider Melville's debt to Bastien-Lepage to be minimal, his interests as exemplified in Shepherd or La Vieille Maraîchère clearly mirror or even anticipate the Frenchman's contemporary oils. However 1880 signalled a real departure for Melville from themes firmly rooted in his Scottish rural experience to more thoroughly 'modern' subjects.

Possibly executed before the departure for Grez, two images inscribed 1879 introduce the working life of the Seine as a theme which Melville broached in at least ten finished watercolours. Carting on the Paris Quais[127] (Plate 10) and On the Banks of the Seine, Near Bercy are Melville's earliest extant Parisian subjects, anticipating the series of *quais* and revealing much about his attitudes to the city, his peers and patrons.

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[124]This Baudelaire quotation refers to the contemporary urban subjects broached by Manet in particular, commentaries on Paris and its contemporary social structures . It extended, for example, to encompass images of prostitution such as Olympia,, Hausmann's new Paris in the works of Caillebotte, cafés and *bourgeois flâneurs* and leisure pursuits such as those at La Grenouillere. These interests were also reflected in Zola's novels and the short stories of Maupassant.

[125]Bastien-Lepage was the principal model for foreign students in Paris in the early 1880's, a situation well-documented in recent research.

[126]Artistically, the landscape and nostalgic rural genre favoured in Scottish exhibitions. It is also apparent that Melville's domestic background in rural Angus and East Lothian facilitated the expression of such images and, as shall be seen, coloured his whole approach to thematic selection processes.

[127]W/c, (14.5x20"). Dated 1879, uninscribed. The printed lower-case signature is unusual and probably dates this work very early in 1879, before the departure for Grez. My title attribution from catalogue. Known only from a b/w photograph, F.A.S. , it features an unidentified Paris bridge. Another watercolour entitled Early Morning on the Seine, Pont Neuf from 1879 has been lost. It was executed on a similar scale, (13.5x20.75"), Melville's most common watercolour size. He also used dimensions of c11x17" in Paris on several occasions. These scales have been used to date similar lost titles such as River Mist and Unloading, Paris Quais which are both 11x17.5", and Barges on the Seine, Café des Americains and Boulevard des Italiens which were all 14.5x21.5". Interestingly, these latter dimensions were retained for many of the Eastern watercolours.

Melville's previous French images had all been executed in provincial or coastal locations, rural subjects which forcibly acknowledged his Scottish artistic training. However this period of residence in Paris required the artist to tackle an urban context, something which he had largely resisted thus far in his career.[128] While the artist would have been aware of the proto-Impressionist images of the Paris *quais* by artists such as Jongkind and Lépine, the panoramic views of city and riverscapes in early photography or the updated Parisian street and riverviews of Impressionists such as Caillebotte, Monet or Pissarro he largely rejected these grand approaches. His images of the *quais* do recall RW Allan or those of Glasgow-born painter Alexander Mann[129] but as a body of work reveal consistent and personal concerns.

It may be informative to tackle the two 1879 watercolours separately from the other images which were executed a year later. Carting on the Paris Quais and On the Banks of the Seine, near Bercy[130] appear almost predictable in terms of style and subject matter. It is unsurprising that the artist's first attempts to depict Paris should concentrate on a distinct facet of contemporary urban life, rather than a topographical overview or vista of the city itself. The Seine as a working river, a main artery of transportation and commerce in the north of the country, represented a suitable focus for these images and for Melville's own acclimatisation to urban life. He may have been overwhelmed by Paris itself, the bustling cosmopolitan centre of Europe with its culture, language and social structure which were so different from Edinburgh. Thus the narrower subject of the labouring classes who thronged the river banks with horses

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[128]The remarkable and developing city of Edinburgh, where he had resided for two years, had only featured obliquely in Melville's work. A Bit of Old Edinburgh, a lost watercolour curiously dated 1879 when he was supposedly in France, and two undated images of the port of Leith show his reluctance to attempt modern urban' subjects.

[129]See Mann's drawing of Seine, Paris dated Dec. 1878. This view features a hazy Notre Dame in the distance behind the same bridge, a *quai* view which echoes Melville's own. Mann's drawings (see Alexander Mann, Sketches and Drawings with foreword by Martin Hopkinson, F.A.S. 1985) also reveal that he visited Grez in April/May 1879. He drew the old town bridge and the Scottish artist Arthur George Bell sketching, and would almost certainly have encountered Melville there.

[130]W/c, (13.5x21.25".) Dated 1879. This title was exhibited at Dundee F.A. late in 1880. I attribute this title to a picture sold at Christie's Edinburgh on 8.6.95 because of the similarities in subject matter and date. Bercy was on the Eastern periphery of 1870's Paris, by the river and Melville worked there and in the neighbouring industrial suburb of Charenton on several occasions. Outside a Wineshop, Bercy was dated 1880, now lost, while Evening, Charenton is one of his most interesting watercolours of the period.

and carts may have offered an aspect of the city with which he could identify more readily.

Many of the workers who loaded and unloaded the barges, handling the horses and driving the carts along the *quais*, may have been immigrants from rural areas in this period of intense industrialisation. These were in essence the same people with whom he felt a kinship in Grez, and who had precipitated his relocation from Paris to the French countryside. Melville clearly sought consistent 'types' for his rural and urban subjects, the labouring classes who practised the same timeless skills with which he had grown up in rural Angus and East Lothian.[131]

It is also interesting that his images of Paris and Grez should both revolve around bodies of water. In certain respects, the Seine and the Loing encapsulated valid contemporary social and artistic developments. For example the Seine was a working river within the *environs* of the city, used principally for trade and communication. It transported food and provisions from rural areas and beyond into the city, and during the Siege of Paris had been fished to alleviate starvation. However upriver at La Grenouillère and Grande Jatte it was utilised for leisure purposes to accommodate the *bourgeoisie* with open-air bathing and dancing, canoeing and sailing.[132]

In a similar way the Loing south of Paris had been a busy waterway, but its role was assumed by the new Loing Canal which Melville showed complete with moored vessels in Entrance to a Canal. Thus the sedge-choked river became redundant and was mostly used for washing clothes, sketching on customised boats like Daubigny's, or canoeing and bathing[133]. These rivers which so affected Melville served dual purposes

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[131]Such as horsemanship - his father was a coachman. Certain skills translated from rural to urban situations, as suggested by the figures in Evening Charenton, wandering in the bleak urban hinterland. This work reflects Raffaelli's contemporary images of 'urban gleaners', the dispossessed who sought to eke an existence in the suburbs.

[132]These places were featured extensively in the popular press in Paris, which produced cartoons and articles lampooning the characters and types on show. La Vie Parisienne and Journal Amusant are examples of publications which depicted the activities of the new leisure classes or *flâneurs*, utilised to great effect by the Impressionists such as Degas and Manet.

[133]Melville's Geese Crossing a Weir shows the state of sections of the river, while several of Lavery's oils show punting and skulling at the Grez bridge. Many artists recorded bathing from the peaceful garden at Chevillon's inn.

and seem to encapsulate French industrialisation patterns, population shift in the 1870's and the requirements of the urban *bourgeoisie.* This ambivalence is reflected in contemporary painting and as Melville viewed labourers on the central *quais* of the Seine, the Impressionists were moving to the suburbs of Bougival, Asnières and Argenteuil to depict the leisure classes. Even when they remained in the centre of the city, Impressionists such as Caillebotte represented their own privileged classes strolling over the Pont Neuf, on the elegant new Boulevards or looking out onto the squares from their fashionable apartment buildings.

Melville's Paris watercolours had more in common with the more politically orientated river scenes of Pissarro, whose mid-70's images of factories on the Oise caught the transitional mood of the period. Melville appears attuned to this tension between rural and urban, his innate sensitivity to country life facilitating the depiction of essentially rural scenes within a recognisably urban environment. He localises the city into small, manageable sections of river and bank, acknowledging its existence and development and yet tying it irrevocably to the land itself. Nature in the form of labourers and horses, carts and cart-tracks, water and mud is conspicuous in Melville's urban visions.

By swathing the Seine in mist he compresses pictorial space into a small horizontal band between vast empty foreground and lightly suggested skyline. City architecture is usually discernable, perhaps the silhouette of Notre Dame in light mauve, but most often the visible features are barge masts or the ancient stone bridges which spanned the Seine. These are his focal points, much the same as those chosen in images of Grez with its characteristic bridge and verdant banks. His images seem to represent a wilful distancing from the central bustle of the city, moving slightly downriver and onto the banks to peer over the three-span bridge at the city.

The tight, fastidious naturalism of the 1879 watercolours gives way to a freer, broader and more painterly approach the following year. The earlier images represented horses and men working in harmony on undefined tasks, but Fuel of Paris and River Scene, Paris[134] are equally subjective but altogether more immediate. The two images feature characteristic open

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[134]W/c. (10.5x17" and 11x17.5" respectively). Both 1880, ex Cox Collection.

foregrounds, marked by receding cart-tracks to delineate space, while the action occurs in a wedge-shaped section in middle ground. Melville's expressive naturalism reaches new heights in these works, although he maintains a narrow palette of beige washes with orange and blue 'working' and does not attempt much definition beyond mid-ground.

Both feature the same three-span bridge over the Seine in left background and pale lines of distinctive square and dome architecture across the horizon, confirming that the artist worked from consistent vantage-points on the *quais*. Fuel of Paris depicts numerous figures in caps unloading the masted barges, laying out the timber in front of a huge mound of beige organic matter. In the foreground a principal female figure bends forward, white paper highlight on her bonnet, recalling Melville's own rural figure types.[135]

The barges are described more fully in River Scene, Paris (Plate 21), but again the viewer is pitched into the action to gain a greater insight into the working life of the *quais*. The blue caps and braces of the same stevedores bend and toil, the horses immersed in the icy river to unload the vessels. There is little suggestion of industrialised Paris, the artist's subjective selection of viewpoint rendering a city which remained unchanged from mid-century vistas.

In formal terms these images are highly-wrought and finished, the paper all but covered with watercolour washes. Gouache is used the describe the dark hulls of the barges, and to accentuate the bright white cart-tracks in the empty foregrounds. It is curious that he depicts these urban views under the same silvery-grey light which so characterised Grez for the Barbizon painters. This point corresponds to the experience of a year in the rural town, and a consequent attempt to apply similar tonal values and atmosphere to the city of Paris. Melville as 'urban peasant' appears thus to have augmented a thematic rurality with a complementary aesthetic sensibility in his Paris watercolours.

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[135]As in Grez pictures like La Vieille Maraichere or Winter Fuel, where old women perform physical tasks.

Contradictory urban perspectives are represented in On the Seine[136] (Plate 18) and Rain on the Paris Quais[137] which are more technically innovative pieces although seeming to conform to the above hypothesis. While the latter expounds his innovative 'wet' watercolour technique using runs, daubs and washes, the retrogressive theme is firmly rooted in his own sketching trips. The quayside, sails and church silhouette are more akin to a small coastal town in Normandy, as is the weather which creates the image. It truly denies the city's identity, disguising it as a small town to facilitate the artist's comprehension and realisation of this very narrow and subjective *tranche* of Paris.

The former image, however, seems to depict a westward view of the Pont de Sully from the Quai St. Bernard with the Ile de la Cité and Notre Dame in the distance. The most apparent aspect of this foreground is that Melville has jettisoned his strict naturalistic approach, utilising the abstract shapes of the sandbanks, barges, horse and cart and mooring lines. He has retained a brief system of wet beige washes to create a uniform river tonality, while the forms have been suggested in a much broader set of daubs and runs. Still in dark blue and brown, the organic shapes lack focus and any sense of conventional representation. Such loose arrangements are common in the 1870's, indeed since Daubigny and Jongkind, but in the background of compositions beyond the actual focal subject .

Melville has reversed the process, perhaps in accordance with modern photographic techniques, to concentrate more readily on the broad sweep of the bridge and cityscape. The colours are again muted brown and mauve as he describes the majestic riverside architecture beneath the light early evening cloud. This most interesting Paris subject combines expressive treatment of 'organic' properties, such as the dotted line and shadow of the ropes across the foreground, sandbank and the horse, with more scrupulous rendering of architecture.

Although this is Melville's first truly 'urban' view, his unconventional treatment of the irregular shapes in Nature make bold claims. This image with its strong, regular architectural properties is clearly a modern vista of

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[136]W/c, (14.5x21"). 1880. Private Collection.

[137]W/c, (11.5x7.5"). Dated 1883, but probably earlier.

post-Haussmann Paris, and yet the conspicuous sweep of the sand banks encroaching on the low summer river level places the autonomy of Nature very much to the fore. No matter how 'modern' this view in aesthetic or thematic terms, natural forms and shapes vie successfully with the regimented band of man-made constructions across the centre of the picture.

This work encapsulates the resolution of the tension felt by the Scot. The difficulty he had in reconciling his own rural background with post-industrialised city life was mapped through previous aspects of his French experience, such as the numerous sketching trips and year in Grez. The early Paris watercolours shrouded the city in mist and denied its own metamorphosis by focusing on timeless riverside tasks by horsemen and women stevedores. However with On the Seine Melville acknowledges the city's identity and comes to terms with its expansion towards the new century. In tandem with Evening Charenton (Plate 20), this picture symbolises Melville's emergence as a thematically modern painter.

Charenton in 1880 lay to the east of Paris along the Seine, outside the city boundaries.[138] The Impressionists had worked in the suburbs of Paris and its outlying districts, but usually to the west of the city at places like Bougival and Louveciennes. However there were fewer examples of images depicting areas to the east during this period, such as Guillaumin's Seine at Charenton of 1878. Where the north and north-west in particular[139] had become industrialised belts with communes and dormitory towns of remarkable squalor, the south and south east were of a different character as they housed the *bourgeoisie*.

Charenton, as can be seen in the Frenchman's oil, was a relatively picturesque outlying district. It represents a frontier of barges, houseboats and iron bridges where the green of the countryside is clearly visible while the city encroached in the shape of small factory chimneys puffing smoke into the sky. Yachting is evident in the foreground and the red and grey-roofed buildings are still well-spaced. Different indeed from Pissarro's polemical images of large belching *usines* at Pontoise in the early 1870's,

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[138]An introduction to the *banlieues* may be found in the France, and Paris, in the 1870's section.

[139]Particularly St.Denis, Clichy and Asnières.

suggesting a mechanised hinterland detrimental to the traditional values of society.

Melville's Charenton, just two years after Guillaumin's, adheres to the basic French compositional format used for riverbank scenes[140]. However his depiction of this *banlieue* radically altered the atmosphere of the place, depicting a more sparse and ravaged viewpoint. Nature has evidently been challenged by industrialisation, resulting in a rather bleak open foreground disrupted only by a couple of weeds on the scrubland. There are no yachts, or vessels of any kind, sailing on the river in Melville's picture, which is infused with a melancholic calm. Evening witnesses a depopulated backwater, where only two white-bonneted women loiter in mid-ground.

This is no longer the domestic suburb of Guillaumin's image with its red roofs, but an area in the throes of semi-industrialisation. It does not feature Pissarro's huge *usines* but smaller, shed-like *fabriques* in mid-ground. The vegetation suggested by Melville's washes is distinctly weed-like, gripping tenaciously to the bank in the face of adversity and impending pollution. Although he does not portray tall smoking chimneys stacks in the foreground, the slumbering vertical shapes of the horizon have an ominous air. The factories are closed for the night, but as twilight falls the geometrical shapes of industrialisation permeate the scene. Some of the vertical flicks on the horizon are barge-masts but others denote factories and workshops. How different from the sloping rhomboid shapes of his Grez watercolour, where the vibrant vegetation of the rural landscape holds its own against sloping domestic roofs.

The vestiges of Nature in Charenton still attempt to mollify the harsh regularity of the man-made constructions, but it is the horizon which signifies impending defeat. In mid-ground the white shed-roof is created from blank paper, uninterrupted by the surrounding landscape, but the bleak washes and runs paint a rather resigned image. This is, after all, where city meets country and proceeds to consume all traces of organic life. Only the two bewildered figures, rural in bearing and intended also as spatial markers, remain to stem the invasion.

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[140]Utilised by Corot, Jongkind, Daubigny, Monet, Sisley, Pissarro etc

Melville would have been aware of J.F. Raffaelli's suburban images[141], painted in the Asnières district to the north of the city. His depictions of the suburban dispossessed, elderly male ragpickers and shallot-sellers who sought to wring a bare living from the bleak landscapes they wandered, gained much publicity at exhibition. These were the descendants of Millet's gleaners, the poorest of the poor who had come from the country seeking salvation. Greeted only by poverty and squalor in the industrial suburbs, these people comprised one facet of the *classes dangereuses* spawned by the expansion of the city.

Melville's Evening, Charenton is more understated than Raffaelli's work, a subtler exploration of a less volatile suburb, but nonetheless it is a modern theme dealing with contemporary issues. On the Seine and Evening Charenton mark an important achievement in Melville's career as he came to terms with urban life. Just as he had manipulated the views of the *quais* to conceal those elements of urbanisation which had intimidated him, these are subjective images of the city chosen to reconcile his own background with this new Paris experience.

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[141]Shown at the Salon from 1879.

'SOCIAL THEMES' IN PARIS

If more than half of Melville's Parisian subjects were carefully chosen images of the Seine and its *quais*, the remainder of his contemporary work comprises a more eclectic selection. I will attribute the generic term 'social themes' to these works, few of which have actually survived.

The most logical point of departure in this discussion is Marriage Party, Paris[142] and Parisian Park[143]. The watercolour medium used for all of these Paris pictures is logical if Melville was working *en plein air*, given the greater spontaneity and dexterity offered over oils. These two images are executed in a similar style, although the former is more naturalistic and finished.

They represent everyday sights which Melville would have encountered in the city. The marriage party entering the coach in the street is the type of timeless subject which would have appealed to Melville, given his penchant for denying the identity of the city itself. The street as he depicts it is deserted save the party themselves, a broad expanse of road acting as a foil for the bustle of the figures beneath the terraced buildings and yellow foliage.

Where the above colour scheme is restricted to mauve and olive-yellow, the park is darker in tonality. The basis of the scene is mapped in brown and Melville has added bright highlights of blue and green, although again the foreground is almost completely empty. A bustle of figures is suggested in the park scene, in front of a white horse and carriage, but the foreground right has been washed-out thus bisecting and almost obscuring some of the figures. The trees have the distinctive circular wrought-iron grilles introduced by Haussmann[144], and although only lightly rendered they are extremely effective in situating this image. On the whole the dark tonality of the foliage canopy increases the abstract nature of the parkland watercolour, and aligns it with his Grez images.

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[142] W/c 1880. Dimensions unknown. Private Coll., Scotland.

[143] W/c, (14x21.25"). No date, but consistent scale with many other works of the period. Ill FAS catalogue Spring 1994, p23.

[144] Which featured so conspicuously in Caillebotte's city scenes.

The park scene is a contemporary theme which reflects the interests of the Impressionists and their 'painting of modern life'. The white horse and dress hat just discernable in the centre of Melville's picture indicates that this park is in a respectable area, utilised by the *bourgeoisie* for their Sunday stroll or ride. The dandyish, aimless wanderings of the smartly-dressed *flâneurs* was prime material for Degas and Caillebotte, for example, and Melville's depiction confirms that he had been influenced by the Impressionists' choice of theme.

So too in two lost titles, Boulevard des Italiens and Café des Americains[145]. The former was the most famous of all the Grands Boulevards, and featured many theatres and cafés as well as the Hôtel Drouot.[146] This fashionable boulevard was a logical choice for depicting either the architectural splendour of the modern Paris boulevard, or the *bourgeoisie* strolling at their leisure between the cafés and exclusive stores. The Café des Americains, a men's establishment similar to Maxim's, was situated in the Boulevard des Capucines[147]. As with Parisian Park, these titles indicate Melville's sympathy with certain Impressionist themes of the city and the *bourgeoisie* at leisure.

Melville visited the infamous Moulin Rouge in Pigalle, of which four small watercolours of dancing girls survive[148] (Plates 22-25). The diminutive scale and spontaneity of these watercolours virtually confirms their execution 'on the spot', and although they are undated one would assume that they were painted in 1880[149]. Since Toulouse-Lautrec did not begin working in the Moulin Rouge until 1890 Melville would have been influenced by other Impressionists such as Renoir, who painted similar subjects at the Moulin de la Galette dances in the late 1870's.

Melville's images are untypically highly coloured, yet they appear to have been executed for his own pleasure and never worked up into larger

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[145]Undated watercolours. Both works had dimensions of 14.5x21.5"which suggests a contemporary execution c 1880.

[146]Where the State held public auctions such as the Impressionist sale in 1875, which virtually degenerated into a fist-fight.

[147]The Boulevard des Capucines ran directly into the Boulevard des Italiens, intimating that Melville executed his 'social themes' of the *bourgeoisie* in a particular *quartier*.

[148]W/c. Four survive, each c3.5x6". Undated. Sold Christie's Edinburgh 8.6.95

[149]Subsequent visits to Paris in the summer of 1882 on the way home from Turkey or the summer of 1886 with James Guthrie are also possible but, I would suggest, less likely.

compositions. In terms of subject matter they are consistent with his café and boulevard scenes, but stylistically they appear innovative. The two upright watercolours represent girls in ruffled dresses performing high kicks. One is rendered in a rich vibrant blue with white and red highlights, while the second is a warmer combination of orange, yellow and white over brown wash. The sense of movement and excitement is skilfully caught, while the striking colour combinations impart the occasion and atmosphere of the music hall itself.

While these two figurative sketches represent truly contemporary themes as perpetrated by the Impressionists and convey considerable technical proficiency, the other works have different implications. Essentially 'non-representational', these are virtually abstract combinations of vivid colour and tone. The first is an exercise in tonal values, with dextrous runs and wild brushstrokes in brown and white indicating the wild confusion and energy of the dance. The shadow to the left may be the orchestra pit and stage curtains while the jagged white diagonal may be the line of frills of the chorus. In truth, it is difficult to say with certainty what specific objects Melville's tones are intended to convey, which is certainly the case with the second image. This comprises vertical swathes of the red, blue and yellow, applied wet and irregularly and blending into each other at the borders. The light, colour and vitality of the performance are contained in this formless piece where the scene has been pared down into the most basic components of any scene, namely the primary colours.

The fact that these are purely thumbnail sketches which Melville may never have intended to work up into complete exhibition pieces is of some relevance. So too is the dating of these works. But whether they were executed in 1880 or 1890, these represent abstract painting at it most pure. Stripped down to a *mélange* of colour and tone, they are an important milestone in Melville's career as they would seem to anticipate the motivations which drove him East.

These *chic* Grands Boulevards localities contrast somewhat with the other known areas in which Melville sketched. The lost Notre Dame de Paris, Morning[150] is a typical subject for any visiting artist, and little importance should be attached to this choice of theme especially as it was so close to

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[150]Shown Dundee F.A., 1880.

his lodgings in the Latin Quarter. Charenton was the terminus for Paris steamboats and several lines of tramways, situated at the confluence of the Seine and Marne. Despite being very accessible it boasted few notable features save the Bois de Vincennes and the Asylum of St. Maurice. Another lost work entitled Outside a Wineshop, Bercy of 1880 would initially seem a fairly strange choice of subject. The city's principal dock area was at Bercy, as well as the *Magasins Généraux des Vins* which would account for the title. Such areas, though, were relatively lacking in aesthetic stimuli and Melville appears to have been motivated to leave the city centre for less salubrious quayside areas. However these images from the eastern *banlieues* of the city only account for three acknowledged works which could, in truth, have been executed in one day as Bercy and Charenton are neighbours.

A tangible link between the French period and Melville's Eastern odyssey is represented by Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris[151] (Plate 19). The subject matter of this *hammam* scene indicated that Melville's interests were turning from French rural labour and landscape and towards more exotic subject matter. There are several possible motivations for this image which eloquently captured the artist's intentions and future plans.

The first and most obvious supposition is that the Turkish Bath image is an extension of these 'social themes' which he executed. Reflecting contemporary Impressionist subjects he had depicted the *bourgeoisie* at leisure on the Grands Boulevards and in the cafés, and the Turkish Bath as luxurious male enclave was consistent with such themes. Turn of the century guides to the city list three *hammams* or Turkish Baths[152], and Melville's is depicted as relatively select and undoubtedly opulent with waiter in Turkish garb and sumptuous church-like architecture.

An equally plausible motivation for this work may have been the continued fashion for Orientalist subject matter throughout the 1870's. Melville would have seen celebrated Orientalists Mariano Fortuny,

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[151] W/c, (76x56cm) S&d 1881. Ex-Sanderson Coll., Edinburgh. Exhib RSA 1881, dating it to the previous year ie 1880.

[152] Paris and Its Environs, Baedeker, K. London 1907, p26. The 'Hammam-Monge' is the most likely candidate for this image, still in existence in the Latin Quarter at 63, Rue du Cardinale-Lemoine. The 'Hammam', equally likely for Melville to visit, was at 18 Rue des Mathurins which was just off the Grands Boulevards where he was known to have painted. The 'Balneum' was at Rue Cadet, 16bis.

Alberto Pasini and Jean-Léon Gérôme at the Exposition Universelle in 1878, and also at Goupil's rooms as he dealt for all three artists.[153] The influence of *atelier* masters such as Gérôme and Lefebvre meant that many contemporary artists[154] dabbled in Orientalist subject matter. Eastern subjects, whether experienced or fabricated, had been popular at the Salon since early in the century and this fashion had reached the Royal Academy in London through painters like Leighton and Poynter.

It may also be possible that the formal qualities of the Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris owe something to Hague School church interiors. The rich resonant colour and cavernous architecture particularly recalls Bosboom, whose watercolour renditions of such subjects were popular with Scottish collectors.[155]

Melville's inscription firmly situates this watercolour in Paris, and as such equates it to On the Seine and Evening Charenton where he came to terms with the modern city as a subject. However the title is also revealing in that it offers a detached and rather displaced impression of Parisian social life, transplanting these pale Western males into a languorous Turkish situation. Melville's earlier views of Paris had sought to deny or disguise its indigenous industrialised identity, and in certain respects this image does the same. Form and situation render it timeless and as such Pre-Industrial, propagating similar intentions to Rain on the Paris Quais.

However instead of localising and fracturing the city into manageable, essentially rural components Melville has taken an aspect of Paris's cosmopolitan identity and magnified it. As the cultural centre of Europe, Paris embraced many different nationalities and religions which in turn had moulded the character of the city itself. This is reflected in the image

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[153]The Spaniard Fortuny had died in 1874, but his reputation soared in Paris (see K. Cox op cit p58) with a major retrospective. He was a skilled exponent of the watercolour medium and Melville would have been aware of his work. Pasini was Italian and a most prolific exhibitor at the Salon - Melville's undated Sentinel was inscribed 'After Pasini' and could easily have been painted around this time. Gérôme was one of France's most celebrated artists and *atelier* masters.

[154]For example the social realist Raffaelli, Impressionist Renoir and Singer Sargent all executed 'Orientalist' subjects in the mid-late 1870's, as a kind of transitional phase.

[155] Melville would probably have seen Bosboom's Interior of a Church at Leyden and Carl Haag's In the Cloister at Berchtgaden at the RGI in 1877. Bosboom was collected by John Forbes White, James Reid and later William Burrell.

which juxtaposes contemporary Western males enjoying an ancient Eastern custom, all within an industrialised city setting.

The inherent ironies within this scene appealed to Melville. The fact that he copied Pasini and seems to have studied the major Orientalist painters indicates that he could easily have fabricated an 'Eastern' scene. All of the Paris *ateliers* and many contemporary artists collected Oriental paraphernalia[156] and where *japonaiserie* had been popular with Whistler and Monet in the 1860's[157], it was the Near East which became fashionable in the 1870's. This artistic vogue had undoubtedly been bolstered by French interests in the construction of the Suez Canal, and post-war[158] Imperialist machinations over Egypt and Tunis in the late 1870's.

The most striking aspect of this work in relation to the two 'urban' themes is the naturalistic depiction. Melville's watercolour style is controlled and restrained eschewing irregular forms for a precise, ruled architectural interior. He mapped the composition in brown, as was usual, using light uniform beige washes in the foreground and darker tones in the rear ground. A warm russet is applied over the brown to suggest the atmosphere while figures crouch in the shadows to the rear. In the foreground three pale Westerners[159] await drinks, served on a tray by a dark figure in a loincloth.

There is a rich drapery and teaset in the foreground and Oriental chandeliers and arches in mid-ground, but one feels that these are characteristic of the establishment rather than props placed by the artist himself. The blue vapour which catches the light above the font and the scarlet urn acts as a focus, effective in commuting the warm heady torpor of the place. However these appear to be observations rather than fabrications. The artist seems content to depict the actual Paris *hammam* as he experienced it, rather than concoct some quasi-Oriental *harem* scene a was typical of the period.

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[156]For example Turkish or Persian rugs, ceremonial swords, *hookahs* (pipes) or robes in which to dress local models.

[157]A shop, the 'Porte Chinoise', had been established in the city after the opening if the Trade Routes.

[158]The catastrophic Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

[159]The athletic, moustachoied central figure may be a self-portrait.

Nineteenth-century Orientalist themes encapsulated contemporary prejudices[160] in consistent images of slavemarkets, *harems*, noble warriors, mosques and indolent natives smoking pipes while their underdeveloped nation disintegrated around them. Melville's *hammam* scene, however, is a different proposition as it does not feature the characteristic motifs of flagrantly naked, pale-skinned females juxtaposed with a black servant or master figure. Instead his male figures recline modestly, suggesting more a sports locker-room than an Oriental vapour bath. The dark figure in loincloth proffering tray of course denotes servitude but this may have justified the prices in these establishments.[161] As with Maxim's or the Café des Americains this was strictly a male stronghold, an aspect which would have appealed to the *bourgeois flâneurs* .

In this respect Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris is just another 'social theme' pertaining to male leisure in Paris , reflecting contemporary Impressionist subject matter. However the naturalistic style and restrained acuity of Melville's image is less easily reconciled with the usual western prejudices inherent in such images. His inscription proclaims this as a typical Paris *hammam* full of Western males rather than some fabricated image of the East illustrating the dubious desires of an artist.

In effect, though, it confidently anticipates the Eastern odyssey which Melville undertook within the year. This watercolour was loaned to the RSA in 1881 by Edinburgh whisky magnate Arthur Sanderson,[162] a fact which helped the artist identify a Scottish market for more exotic subjects than Normandy landscape or dull Parisian barges. His contemporary work, vascillating between naturalism and a more expressive *plein air* style, would also have contributed to the decision to head east to discover the light and colour of the Orient.

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[160]As discussed in the Eastern chapters.

[161]A 'warm bath' at the celebrated 'Gymnasium' on the Boulevard des Italiens cost between 80c and 5FF and most other establishments around 1FF, while the *hammams* were generally more expensive at c2-5FF. Women, should they be allowed to visit, had separate entrances and designated hours.

[162]A major patron of the arts, and one of Melville's most vehement supporters.

I hope to have shown in this thesis that Melville's Scottish background and training are fundamental to his reactions to the Orient. Equally, I would argue that Melville's residence in France is something of a 'trial run' for the Eastern experience, a transitional phase during which he consolidates on the ideas expressed in Cabbage Garden.

France afforded Melville the experience of an alien culture, but with fewer risks than an immediate journey East would have engendered. His itinerant lifestyle and sketchbook tourist subjects of Normandy, Brittany and Paris anticipated the early months in Cairo where he executed images of the desert, pyramids, bazaars and harbours. The monumental naturalism of figurative works like Shepherd and La Vieille Maraîchère is echoed in exhibition oils such as Egyptian Sower and Sinbad the Sailor.

In Arab Interior and Pilgrim's Prayer, Melville augmented the humanistic content by attempting to examine the national characteristics and psyche of his hosts. Although this was an innovatory aspect of his Eastern work I would suggest that Interior of a Turkish Bath, Paris represented a significant precursor. While signifying Melville's awareness of academic French Orientalism, it signals a competent rendering of superficial exoticism before the departure East. More importantly, though, it provides an insight into the leisure practices and social mores of the *flaneur* in contemporary Paris, depicting figures relaxing in a male enclave. Despite the timeless connotations of the *hammam*, Melville was employing contemporary subject matter which reflected Impressionist themes of the day and shows his graduation from rustic genre. This irony is enforced in the Orient by his contemporary depictions of Eastern religion and meditation, ancient fundaments of life which remained relevant not only to the indigenous population but to Melville himself.

When in France, Melville struggled to come to terms with the modern city. Most of his views of Paris are extremely localised, reducing the industrialised urban context into a carefully manipulated view of the working life of the Seine. These views were unchanged since the mid-century, extolling the hard physical labour of men and horses working the river barges. In essence, these were rural images denying Haussmann's contemporary Paris but gradually works such as Evening, Charenton or Dancers, Moulin Rouge came to signify aspects of modern city and suburban life in a similar fashion to the humanist studies of figure types

in Baghdad. His French themes were selective and subjective, symbolising the difficulties faced by artists from rural backgrounds in depicting the urban context.

The East, though, demanded a different form of subjectivity. Egypt, and particularly the Persian city of Baghdad, remained pre-industrial and retained an indigenous authenticity which appealed to an artist with rural tendencies. Unlike Paris, Melville did not have to search hard to avoid modern urban features . Cairo, though, was quickly evolving into a tourist resort for Westerners and therefore he was required to deny an Occidental presence in his works. Despite his empathy with the native peoples Melville was required to manipulate the East into aesthetically pleasing, tourist-free vistas to ensure sales. Thus, it is apparent that the French experience was invaluable in his selection of theme in the East, honing his skills in identifying and manipulating appropriate motif into a suitable product.

The demands of his patrons were crucial in determining the French and Eastern themes. Melville had to be careful not to offend the conservative tastes of his bourgeois New Town clientele in Edinburgh. His attempts to present work of stylistic and technical originality had thus to be tempered with innocuous subject matter; a body of work sent home to exhibition which proved too radical could mean financial disaster. Furthermore Melville's own Presbyterian background, which had determined the nature of his realism in Scotland and France and his empathy with the Arabic people, would not entertain the more lascivious or exploitative themes which were the norm in French Orientalism.

Given this it is clear that Melville retained a very subjective approach towards the selection of themes in France and the Orient. His best work has a conspicuous humanistic and even ethnographic content to contextualise the aesthetic appeal, and his tendency was to eschew the sensational or prejudicial. This of course resulted in some stilted, contrived and banal images within his *oeuvre* but in general Melville's depiction of alien cultures is well-intentioned, governed by a just and modest integrity redolent of his Scottish Presbyterian background.

CONCLUSION

It has been the intention of this thesis to offer a new and more comprehensive interpretation of the art of Arthur Melville. I have done this within a Scottish and subsequently a European context, taking full cognisance of the crucial significance of his Eastern journey. Throughout this study it has been my contention that previous studies of the artist have been altogether superficial. This is principally because the works by MacKay, and even the comments by more orthodox historians like Irwin and Macmillan, have failed to contextualise Melville within the religious, social and commercial nexus of his time. Consequently I have set out to conceptualise the key determinants of Melville's unique contribution to Scottish art. I will now encapsulate the nature of my argument and the new concepts I have evolved.

I identify Melville's roots in the Scottish landscape and genre tradition and his early assimilation of the 'Continental naturalism' of John Robertson Reid. This concept was evolved by Reid towards the end of the 1870's and subsequently infused the contemporary work of James Campbell Noble, John White and Melville himself. Stylistically, 'Continental naturalism' utilised a broad, painterly technique and heightened palette to articulate the effects of bright direct sunlight on a scene. This new development within the Scottish artistic canon was precipitated by Reid's travels in France in the late 1870's and, more significantly, his residence in the South of England during this period.

Based in Shere, Surrey[1], Reid practised *plein air* methods to depict rustic figures within landscape settings. 'Continental naturalism' was therefore characterised by similar themes, examined within a Scottish context. Although these subjects were generally consistent with the traditional repertoire of landscape and genre evident in the work of the Scott Lauder group, the treatment was wholly radical and elicited criticism in press reviews where these light effects were viewed as stilted or unconvincing. However for younger Scottish painters it did provide a logical and attractive alternative to the turgid, muddy colours and *chiaroscuro*

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[1]Melville appears to have submitted Cabbage Garden to the Royal Academy in 1878 from an address in the same town, virtually confirming a tangible contact between the artists at this crucial stage in Melville's development.

favoured by their peers in depicting the cottage interiors and genre subjects which were becoming hackneyed by the end of the 1870's.

Differing markedly from the realist palette, the perceived radicalism of 'Continental naturalism' provided a catalyst for artists to travel and experience such light for themselves as the effects were difficult to contrive[2]. As such, Reid's example preempted the exodus of Scottish painters to France in the early 1880's to study and sketch. Increasingly the Continent became a fashionable and viable destination. By the late 1870's the influx of Continental work at the Glasgow Institute exhibitions highlighted the malaise in indigenous painting, and the broad handling and dramatic hues of the Barbizon artists encouraged young Scots to look directly to Europe rather than English naturalism for inspiration.

Although many 'Continental naturalist' images depicted rural labourers in farm situations, Reid also introduced a more contemporary range of subjects. For example Idle Moments, Young Girl Sketching and Village Maiden clearly replaced traditional realism with themes which reflected the changes wrought by increased industrialisation and urbanisation. These handsome young women had more leisure time for distracted play, creative diversion or romantic daydreaming and were not destined for the fate of Robert McGregor's bowed bondagers. Whatever their place in the rural caste system, these figures articulate the changing social structure in the provinces in terms of labour and gender roles. As such, I would argue that Reid's work from this period related more closely to the leisure subjects of the French Impressionists than traditional Scottish rustic realism.

Melville's early landscape work betrays the influence of his master James Campbell Noble and William McTaggart's home-grown *plein airism,* but also of Continental models such as Camille Corot or Theodore Rousseau whom he could have seen in Glasgow. However it appears that Reid's critical success in Edinburgh and wide experience of life and art in England and Europe made his work most influential on the younger painter at this juncture. Melville's Gardener's Daughter of 1878 was a relatively traditional subject yet it was treated in a more 'aesthetic' manner redolent

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[2]Although major Scottish painters such as George Chalmers and William MacTaggart, had undertaken rare sketching trips to Northern Europe. However these artists had developed indigenously and the voyages were principally incidental.

of the elder painter. The palette was lighter, handling bolder and the lighting system more dramatic. The figure is frontal and immediate and overall the work signified that Melville's ambitions extended beyond the confines of the Scottish tradition and paralleled aspects of Impressionism or the work of Jules Bastien-Lepage. This is an early manifestation of the conflict which came to dominate Melville's art, namely the tension between the native tradition and the 'proto-modernism' which the artist was evolving.

Melville's Gardener's Daughter and, perhaps more significantly, his Cabbage Garden indicate his intention to redefine traditional Scottish themes. While the former fused the new stylistic means onto a typical rustic subject, the latter is constructed around innovative technical systems. The violently tilted foreground, stereoscopic viewpoint and use of optical theory[3] in his first Royal Academy exhibit was ambitious and demonstrated how quickly the painter had outgrown his sources and indeed his own country.

Melville's experience in the East is the principal focus for the thesis, and it is here I introduce 'Presbyterian Realism'. Although I utilise Arthur Melville to define the notion itself, there is I believe an inherent duality which allows the concept to be interpreted on two levels.

Primarily, 'Presbyterian Realism' was dictated by the particular combination of social, religious and geographical determinants, absorbed during formative years, which coloured the artist's perceptions of the peoples and contexts which came within his realm of experience. Robert McGregor is the best exemplar of this concept at its basic level. His *oeuvre* reveals a relatively narrow range of traditional Scottish[4] subjects. Homely and nostalgic, they referred closely to the work of Scott Lauder group artists such as George Chalmers or Hugh Cameron.

However from the mid-1870's to the end of his career McGregor executed numerous images of rural toil. At first glance, his depiction of field labourers engaged in the whole gamut of agrarian tasks appears consistent

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[3]The mutual intensification of complementary colours, in this case red and green.

[4]Or, indeed, Northern equivalents such as Dutch or Breton figure subjects. These were consistent with Scottish prototypes.

with the themes selected by the French realists. Yet this is where the true nature of the concept is contained. Millet and Courbet were essentially polemical, borne of troubled times to gauge contemporary social change and unrest. The traditional tasks, crafts and human rights integral to country life were being eroded and Millet's work is politically charged and smacks of revolution. It contrived to depict a dynamic or inert physical pain and suffering, poverty, illness and injustice within a rural context. The message was clearly evoked in the forms of men, women and children as Millet mourned the passing of a way of life. 'Presbyterian Realism', however, pursued a similar situation from a completely different standpoint.

Although contemporary Scotland witnessed comparable hardships, these facts were not proclaimed through popular culture as they were in France where a more propagandist approach was employed. I argue that there were two principal reasons for the tact, or more accurately the restraint, exercised by Scottish artists like McGregor. The most obvious factor was the absence of the indigenous revolutionary fervour which in France actively involved the masses and facilitated a basic nationwide communication network. Rural Scotland was in many senses more parochial, with each county retaining its individuality and little to unite the people beyond trade and market factors.

Allied with this was the social conditioning which prevailed in much of provincial Scotland. Presbyterianism was dominant, with the Kirk regulating secular as well as religious life. It was a strict code which respected the Sabbath and condemned the creation of graven images, extolling the virtues of physical toil, temperance, humility and content with one's lot. Many Scottish artists like Melville were raised under such a creed and this may explain the selection and treatment of particular themes in the artistic canon.

The most striking aspect of Presbyterian Realism in relation to its French equivalent is that it did not depict physical suffering. I argue that the ethic of 'content with one's lot' regulated their images of rural toil, causing the use of certain devices which negated contentious overtones. McGregor for example depicted figures in moments of rest or quiet reflection, often with averted features to retain an impersonal bearing and avoid commuting sentiment. Hard work was seen as a virtue and the rewards of thrift and

honesty, even pain, would be realised not in material terms but in the next life, often symbolised by the iconography of the harvest. McGregor's themes also emphasised the strength of women and the family unit, but the dominant impression in his work is of restraint and modesty. The narrow range of themes employed by McGregor throughout his lengthy career would also seem to confirm that this was not an artistic fashion but an overarching value system which permeated life beyond the easel.

On this level the concept is relatively straightforward. McGregor's style was consistently naturalistic and reminiscent of the Hague School, thus complementing the traditional themes he had chosen with a suitable technique. However in Melville's case, modern aesthetic and technical concerns came into conflict with Presbyterian Realism, introducing a more complex question.

I argue that Presbyterian Realism was not simply a style, nor a particular set of themes, nor even a 'phase' through which certain Scottish artists passed in the latter part of the 19th century. It was rooted in the 'Scottish Tradition' in the widest sense. Intense industrialisation and urbanisation instilled an awareness of the transience of rural existence in Scotland and offered new, more stable options for young people away from the land. Moreover the positive 'values' of the village community were brought sharply into focus on arrival in the city, a situation which proved disconcerting for many country immigrants. These facts were consistent with the fact that the Presbyterian Realists tended to be artists from rural backgrounds who had left the land and although based in a city, visited and depicted the rural at the expense of the urban whenever possible.

Within the concept, the social was inextricably bound to the religious. The ethics of Presbyterianism were largely anathema to the urban context which extolled mechanised capitalism and emphasised international trade and material success. In a sense, the attitudes which shaped the treatment of subject matter in 'Presbyterian Realism' were a contemporary version of genre painting which had presented a nostalgic and sentimental view of country life and values. Highly subjective, it sought to eulogise the rural norm as it was usurped by the urban.

Cabbage Garden and Gardener's Daughter anticipated Melville's achievements in France and the East. In essence, a prerequisite of

'Presbyterian Realism' was that it assumed the inability of the artist to escape his native traditions. These works clearly drew on Melville's rural Presbyterian conditioning, presenting traditional themes of Scottish provincial life in a restrained and rather inert manner. In this sense, Melville's 'Presbyterian Realism' was comparable to McGregor's subjects. However, in aesthetic terms Melville's work is much more radical, revealing a proto-modernism which was at odds with the themes he chose and the way he approached them.

Whether these works were painted in East Lothian or Surrey makes little difference to their significance. These themes were essentially traditional, but Melville's technique and approach reveals a new interaction between artist and subject. The use of radical colour, light and manipulated space within a more familiar framework revealed the tension between the 'modern' and the 'traditional' which infused Melville's work. This is a new aesthetic approach, moving beyond the parameters of naturalism to reinterpret his native environment. This quickly led him to France where his innovations were more easily quantified in the context of Impressionism as a 'modern' movement with a distinct social role and new subject matter.

The optical, spatial and colour concerns articulated in these early works culminated in French Peasant of 1880, which I consider to have been a turning point in Scottish painting. The restricted, shallow picture space, areas of flat bright colour and simplified forms clearly anticipated more 'modern' concerns than his counterparts at home. Although operating on the very periphery of the Parisian art scene in 1879 and 1880, he was clearly applying what he had learned from Scottish peers while simultaneously aligning himself with Continental advances. This 'aestheticism' would be reflected in the work of the Glasgow Boys and subsequently the Scottish Colourists, and both groups acknowledged Melville as a catalyst.

However, the struggle between 'modernity' and 'tradition' was clearly visible in his art in France and the Orient. Despite the aesthetic and decorative explorations of this period and a number of works which reach a near-abstraction, Melville was never able to jettison 'Presbyterian Realism'. His treatment of Grez field workers, Baghdad snake charmers, Parisian stevedores and Cairo market traders alike reveal the restraint and modest humility of his Scottish subjects. The ambitious 'modernity' of

stylistic and technical advances were always tempered by his indigenous conditioning, the overarching value system which endured throughout Melville's travels and career.

The values Melville expressed in his work may also explain why he never expounded the social radicalism of the French Impressionists, despite examining similar themes. These French masters were largely *bourgeois*, educated men who were acutely aware of their native history and their own social status. Paris had been modernized into a highly cosmopolitan, industrialized environment and yet the political repercussions of the Revolutions and migration from the land were still felt intensely in the city. Their art clearly reflects this, exploring diverse aspects of modern city life from the leisure pursuits of the *bourgeoisie* in the suburbs to the high-class prostitutes on the *grands boulevards*. Charged with political overtones, Impressionism as a modern movement reflected the social awareness of its perpetrators.

Melville was very much an 'innocent abroad' in France, a rural Scot who did not possess the socio-political insights of his hosts. Therefore although he depicted contemporary Paris in the Moulin Rouge, the *boulevards* and cafés, a *hammam* and the suburbs of Bercy and Charenton his intentions were different. The Impressionists were part of the city and understood its composition, seeking to provide an element of social criticism within their depictions of railway stations and prostitutes lounging in smart cafés. Melville's works are social subjects insofar as they feature aspects of modern urban life but these themes were alien to him, captured essentially in two dimensions for Scottish consumption. He appears as a detached observer, the images as reflecting the difficulty he had in broaching urban subjects.

These thematic explorations culminated in Arab Interior and Pilgrim's Prayer, his most significant Eastern works. From the relative restraint and impartiality of his Scottish output Melville's experience of other cultures resulted here in a more humanist disposition. He was clearly moved by the harmonious interaction of the secular and religious in Islam, a realisation made all the more poignant by the dominant role of religion in his own life. While the Kirk was regarded by some outsiders as obsessive and forbidding, Islam was viewed in the West as overtly fanatical and extreme and depicted as such in the arts. Melville's unusual receptiveness

to Islamic worship and meditation may have been due to the contrast it made to his own experience, but whatever the reasons for his empathy these works reveal new dimensions in his work.

The East in particular offered a range of figure subjects which in many senses complemeted his own background and upbringing. Rural figures - whether in East Lothian, provincial France or Egypt - were anachronistic in the eyes of the industrial West, symbolising modes of life and social interactions being eroded by 'progress'. Furthermore, occidental imperialism was articulated throughout popular culture whether in the press, literature, photography or at the Academy or Salon. However his 'Presbyterian Realism' appeared in sympathy with the East, reluctant to exploit themes such as slave markets or harems for Western consumption.

It is of course crucial that these same values held sway over Melville's patrons in Edinburgh, who shared similar backgrounds to his own. Thus his interpretations of France and the East were comparable to theirs, as they looked to augment the walls of their New Town houses with images which reflected their new social standing. Although they were professionals[5], they were also only one or two generations removed from the land and conscious of their position in the social and religious community. The New Town was still expanding in the early 1880's, and Melville's patrons like James MacKinlay or Arthur Sanderson would have been acutely aware of their roles in defining its identity.

In stylistic and thematic terms their choice of picture would have been dictated by similar criteria to those employed by the artists themselves. Melville knew that his patrons may not respond favourably to work which strayed too far from naturalism, and thus his more progressive designs described familiar subjects such as bazaars or cityscapes as a kind of compromise. He also would have been aware that they bought his pictures to display socially as fashionable objects, and therefore Eastern themes which contained suspect sexual or racial overtones would have been inappropriate in a family or business context.

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[5]Most of Melville's principal patrons were Edinburgh lawyers or businessmen, whose tastes were controlled as much by what was respectable or tasteful as much as what was in fashion.

Since such tactics were openly employed at the Royal Academy and Salon to sell Eastern images, it is apparent that Melville's Eastern work contrasted dramatically with the Orientalist norm across Europe. However, it is also evident that the Scottish exhibitions featured very little Orientalist work, indicating that it was indeed a different marketplace to London or Paris[6]. Although Scotland was part of the British Empire and party to the machinations of imperialism, I would suggest that the Scottish nation were less conscious of their role in a major colonial power than their London-based or southern counterparts.

News of the Near and Middle East was covered extensively in the Scottish press but with a discernable objectivity. Although Scots occupied prominent diplomatic and administrative positions in the East on Britain's behalf, these decisions were still made from London and the Scots as a nation assumed the bearing of world leaders less actively than their English counterparts. I would suggest then that this was reflected in national popular culture, and consequently in their choice of artistic themes. It may be that Scottish artists and patrons still viewed the Orient as an exotic curiosity rather than a subservient culture and social anachronism to be acquired and exploited as a museum or tourist destination.

I have argued that Melville's treatment of the East in his painting differed crucially from the norm, and that this was due principally to the repercussions of his 'Presbyterian Realism'. Scottish exhibitions featured relatively few Eastern subjects, but Melville's works proved incredibly popular at home. At the very least this indicates that his patrons, and by extension the governing elites in Scottish society, were in sympathy with his approach to these potentially contentious themes. Moreover it highlights the unity of discourse between the social, religious, moral and ethical codes of nineteenth century Scotland, and the developing aesthetic of Melville's highly specialised "proto-modernism". It is this unity of discourse which, I have argued, is the unique and compelling dimension of Melville's art.

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[6]Although isolated examples did exist, such as John Faed's Bedouin Exchanging a Slave for Amour.

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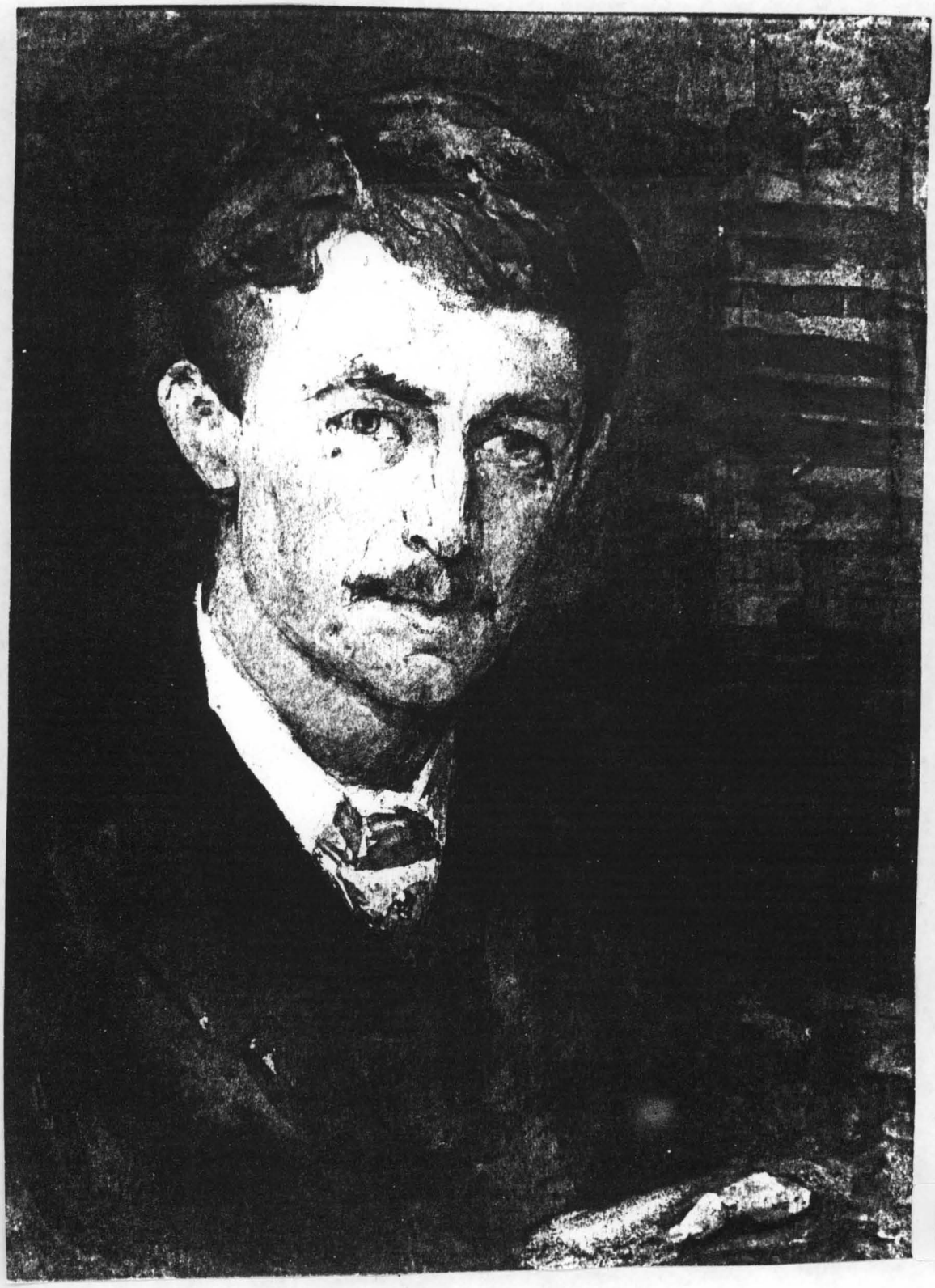

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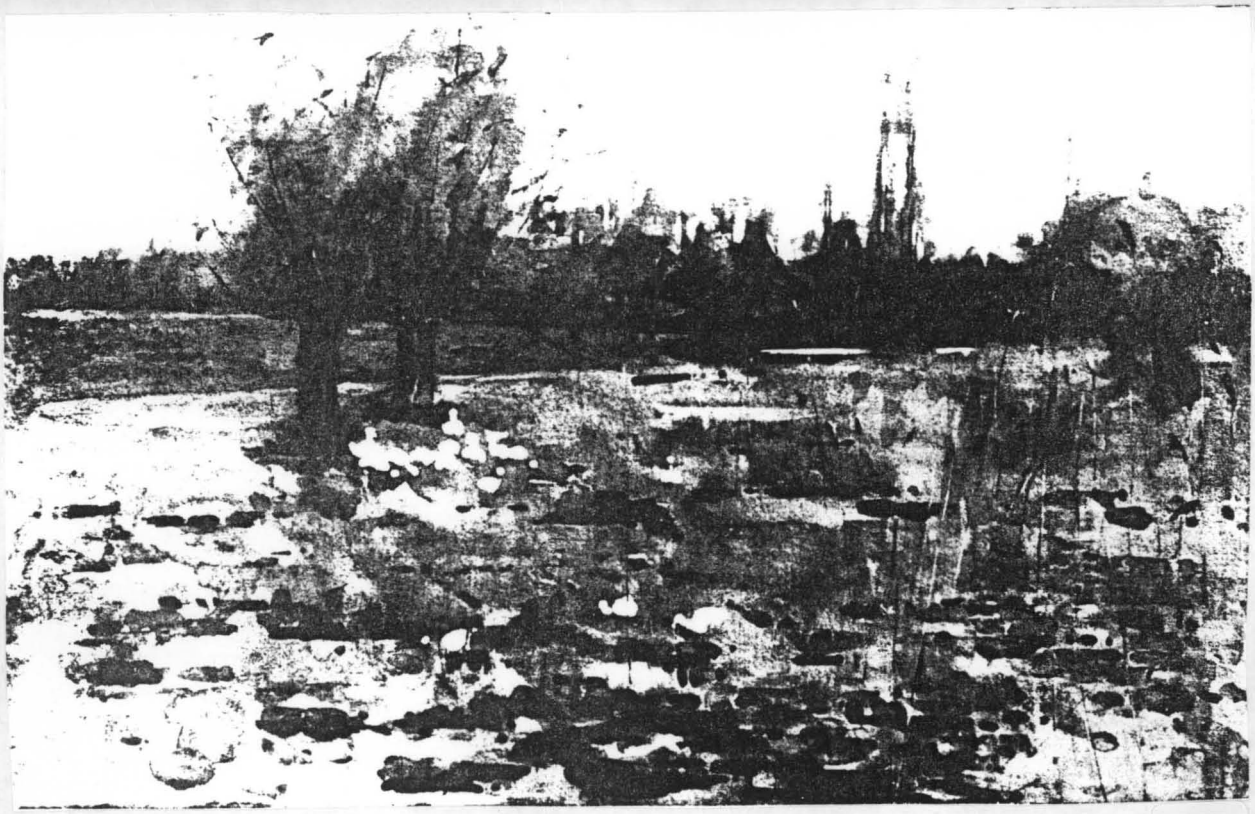

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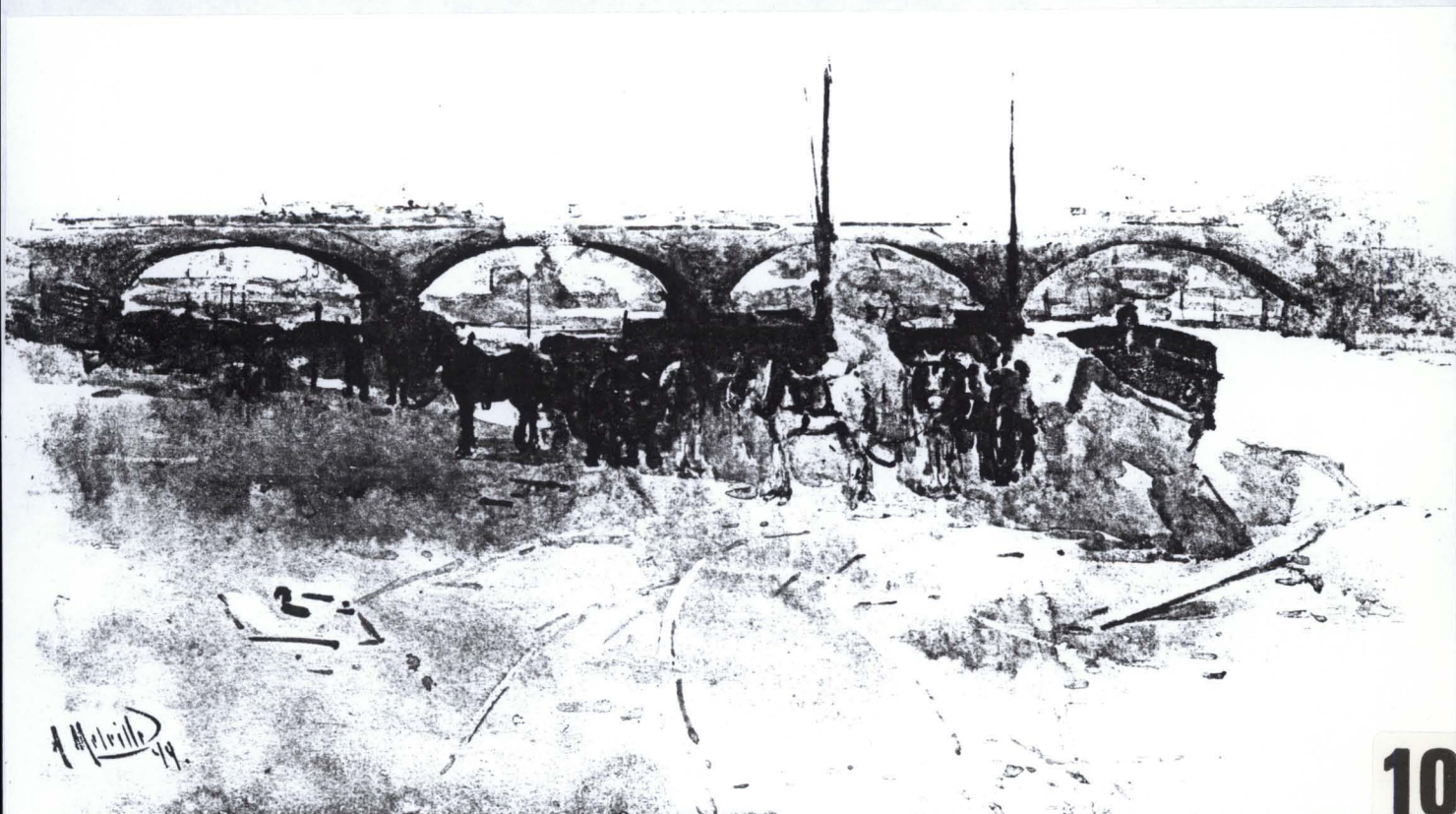

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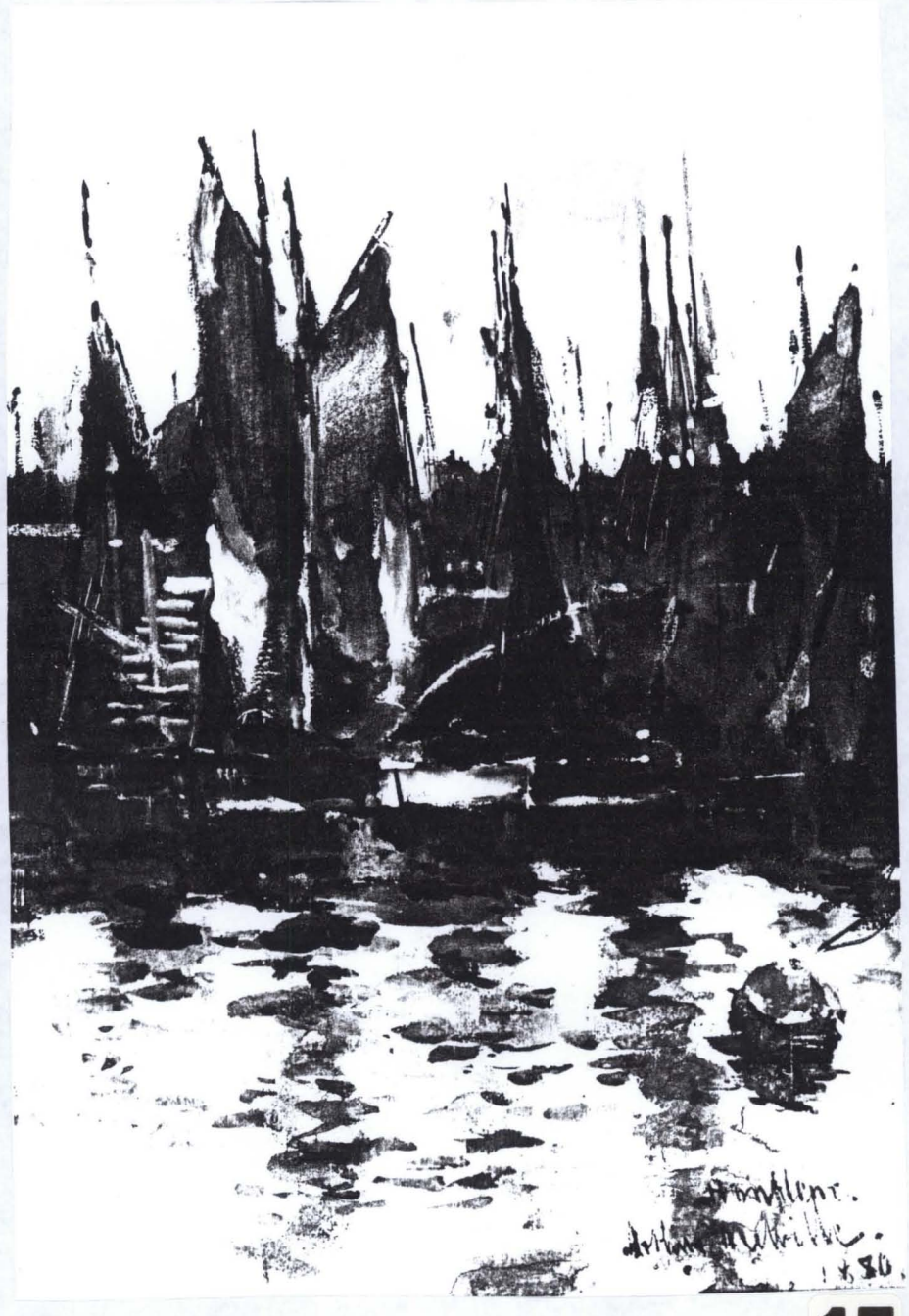

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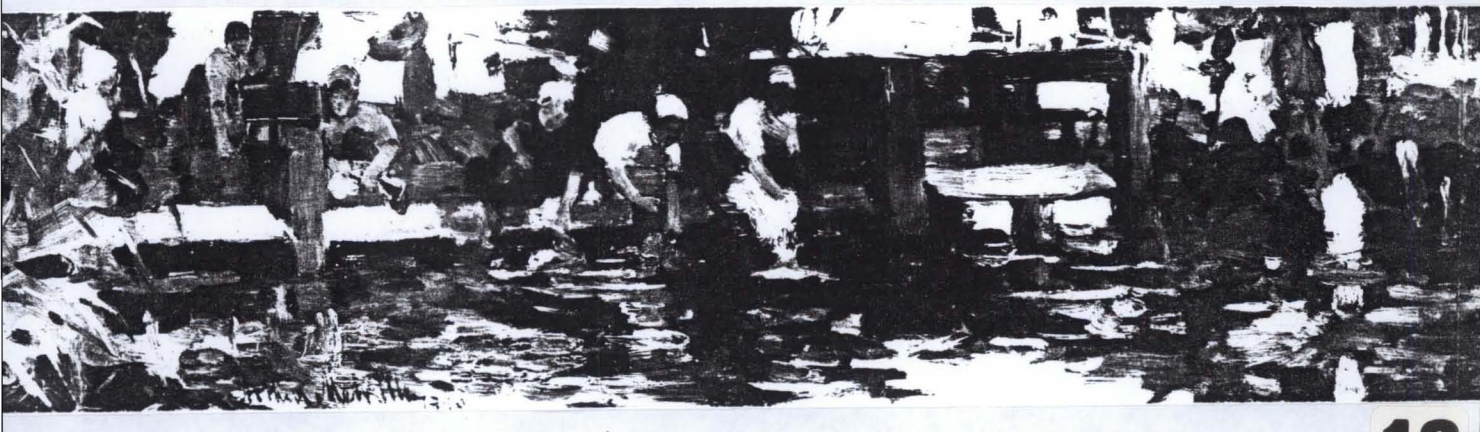

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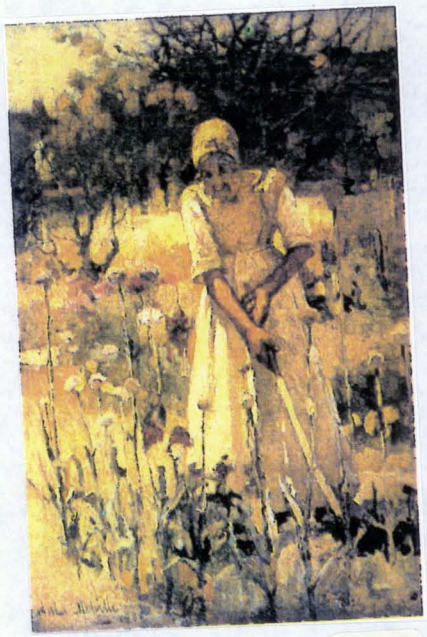

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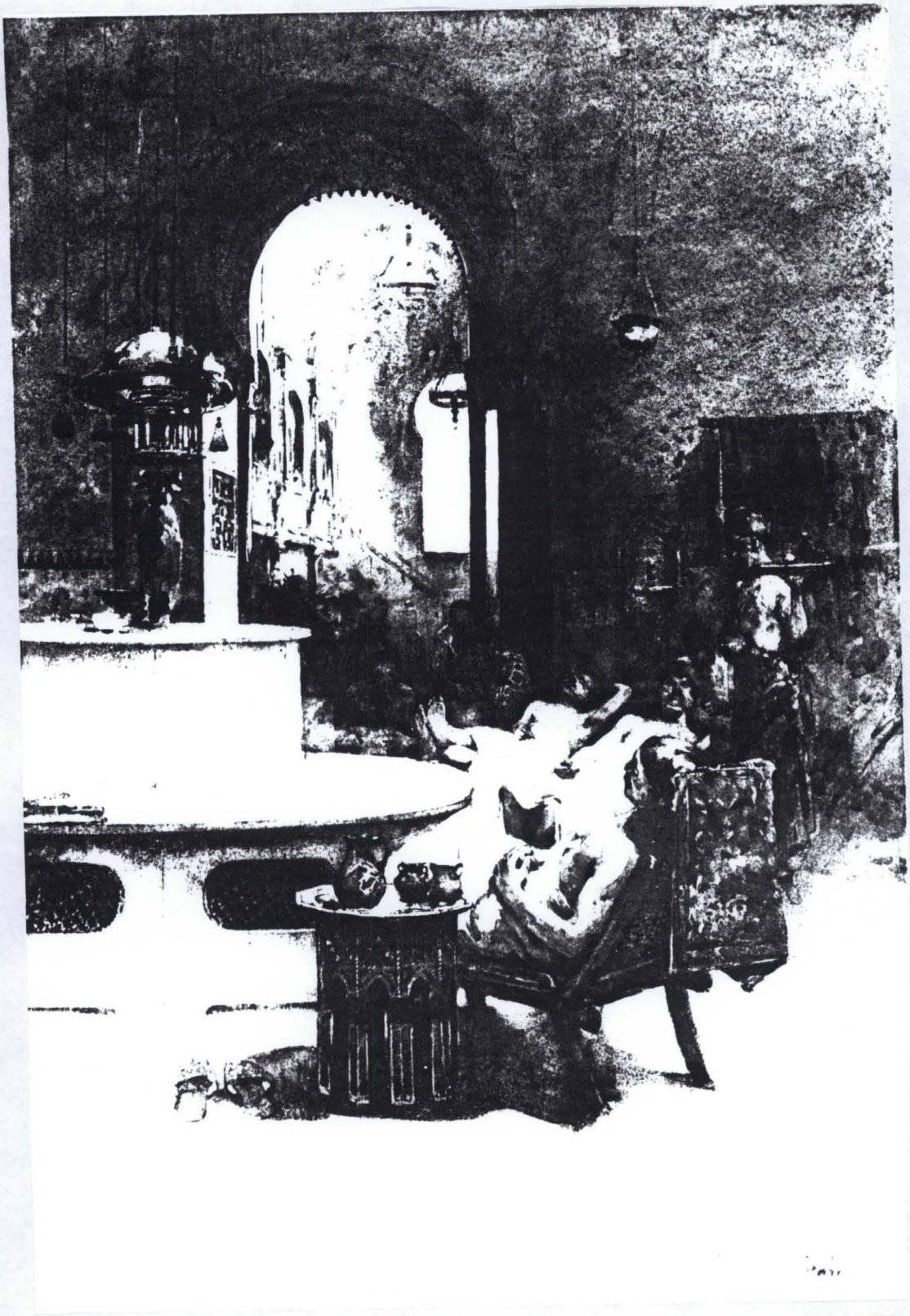

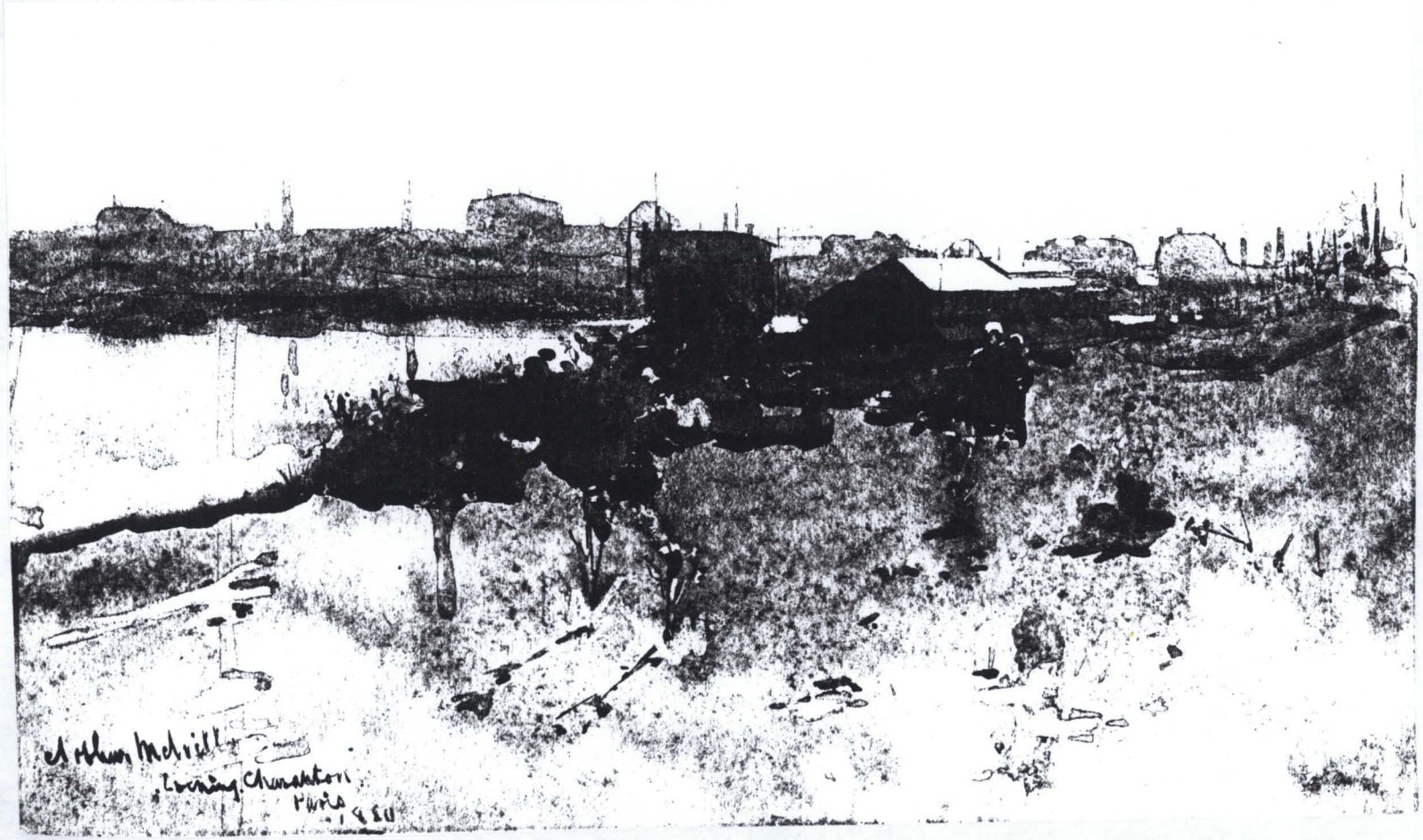

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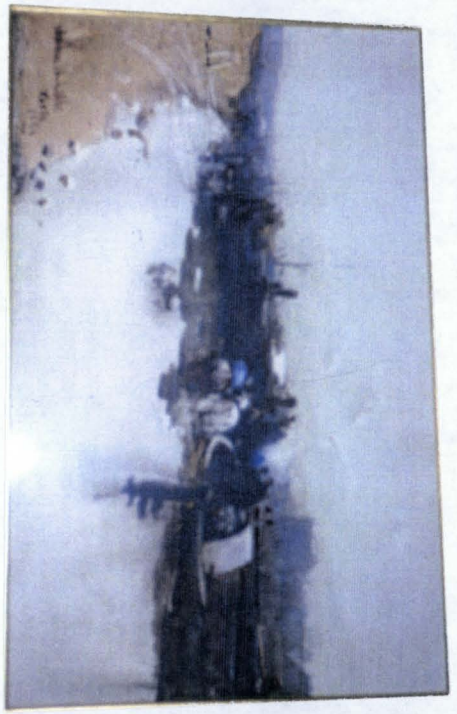

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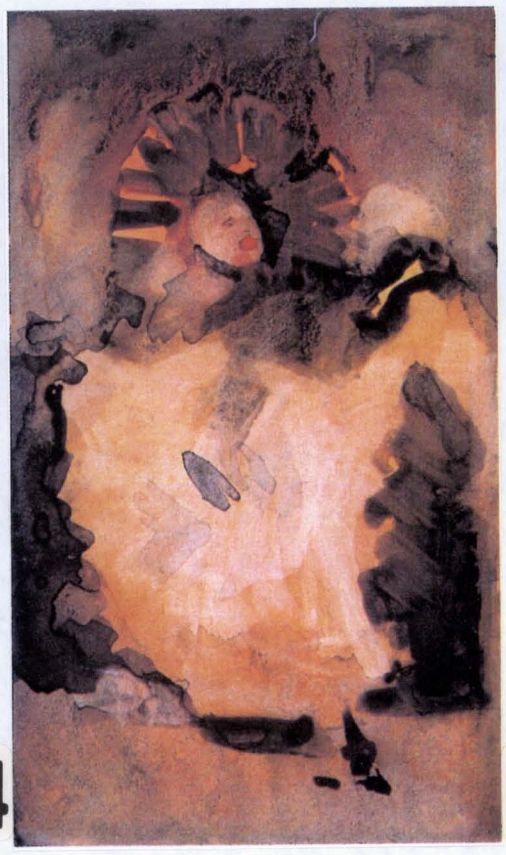

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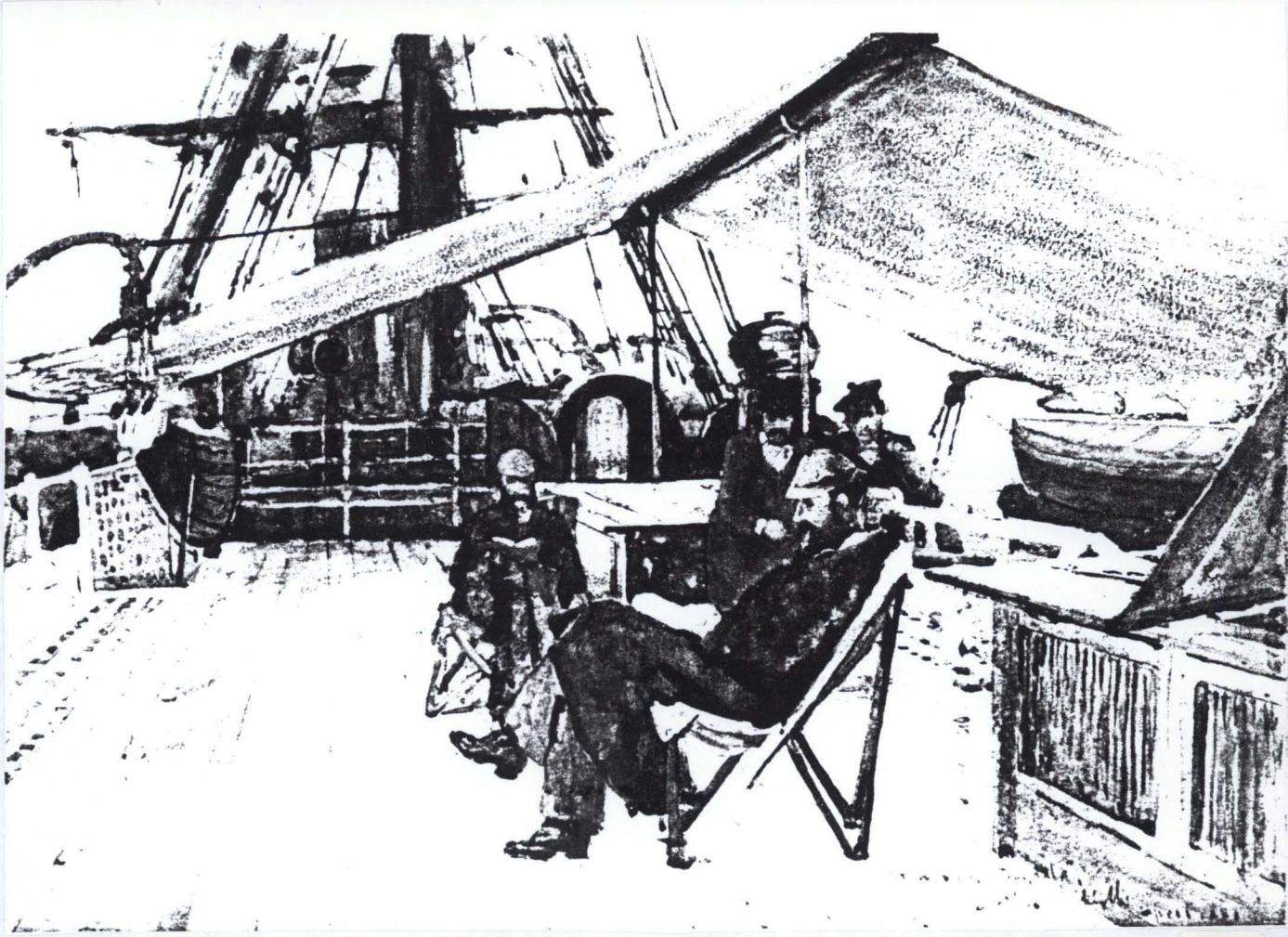

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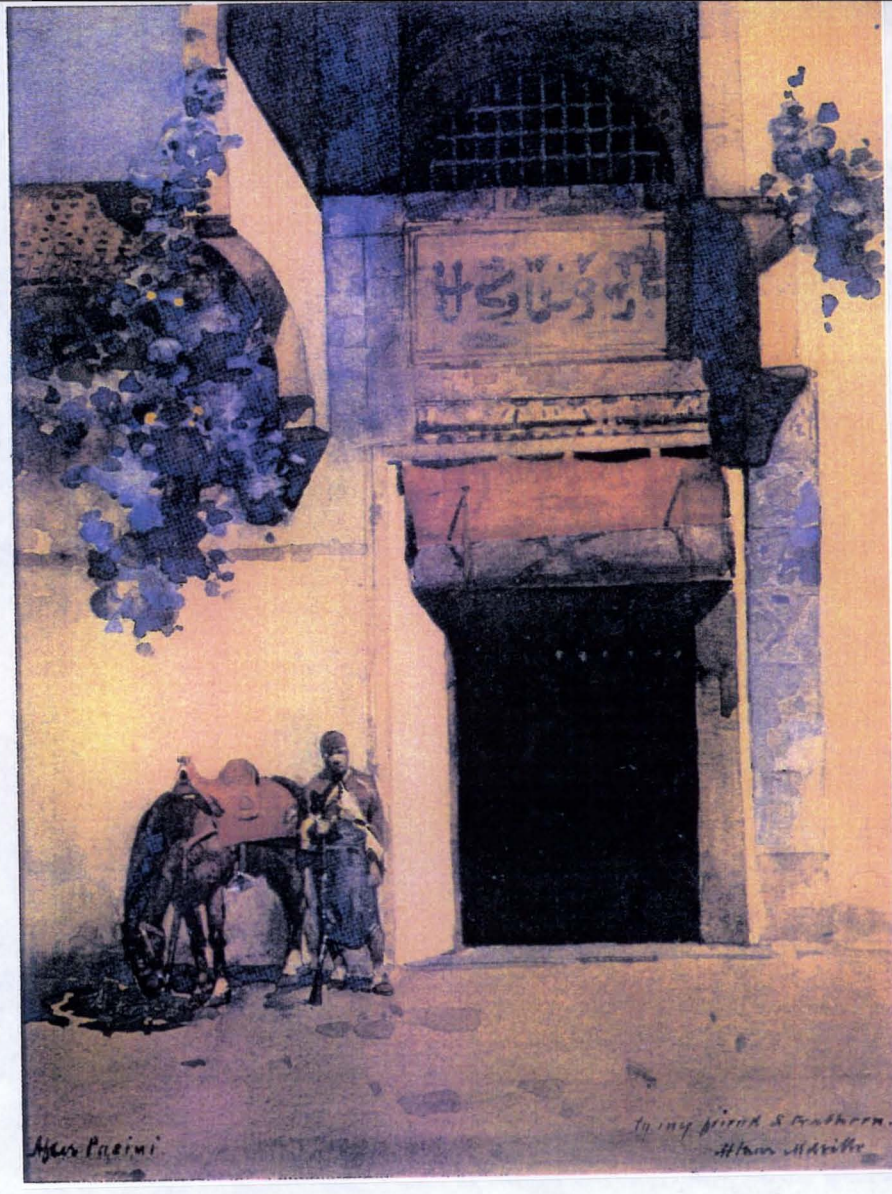

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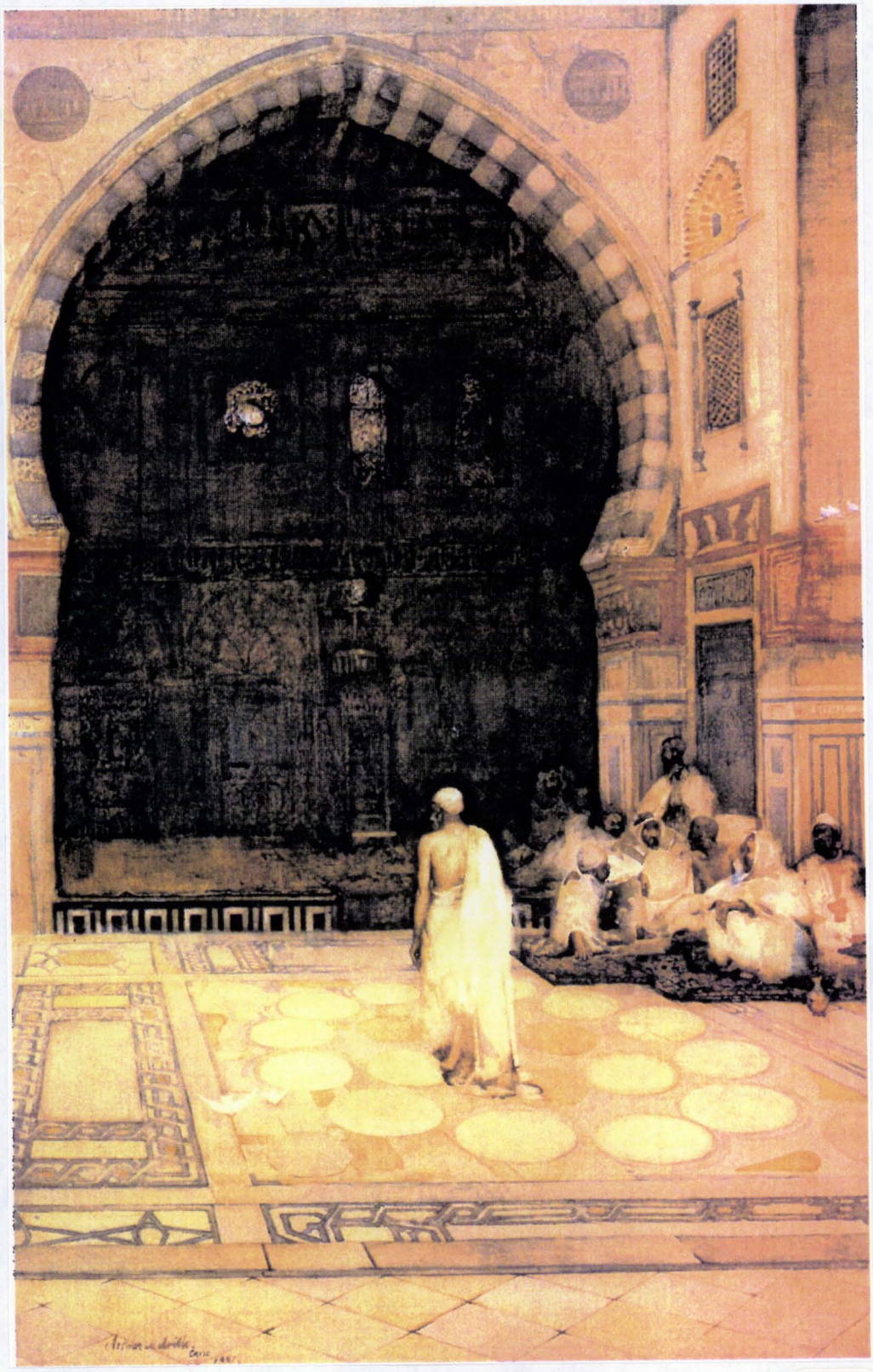

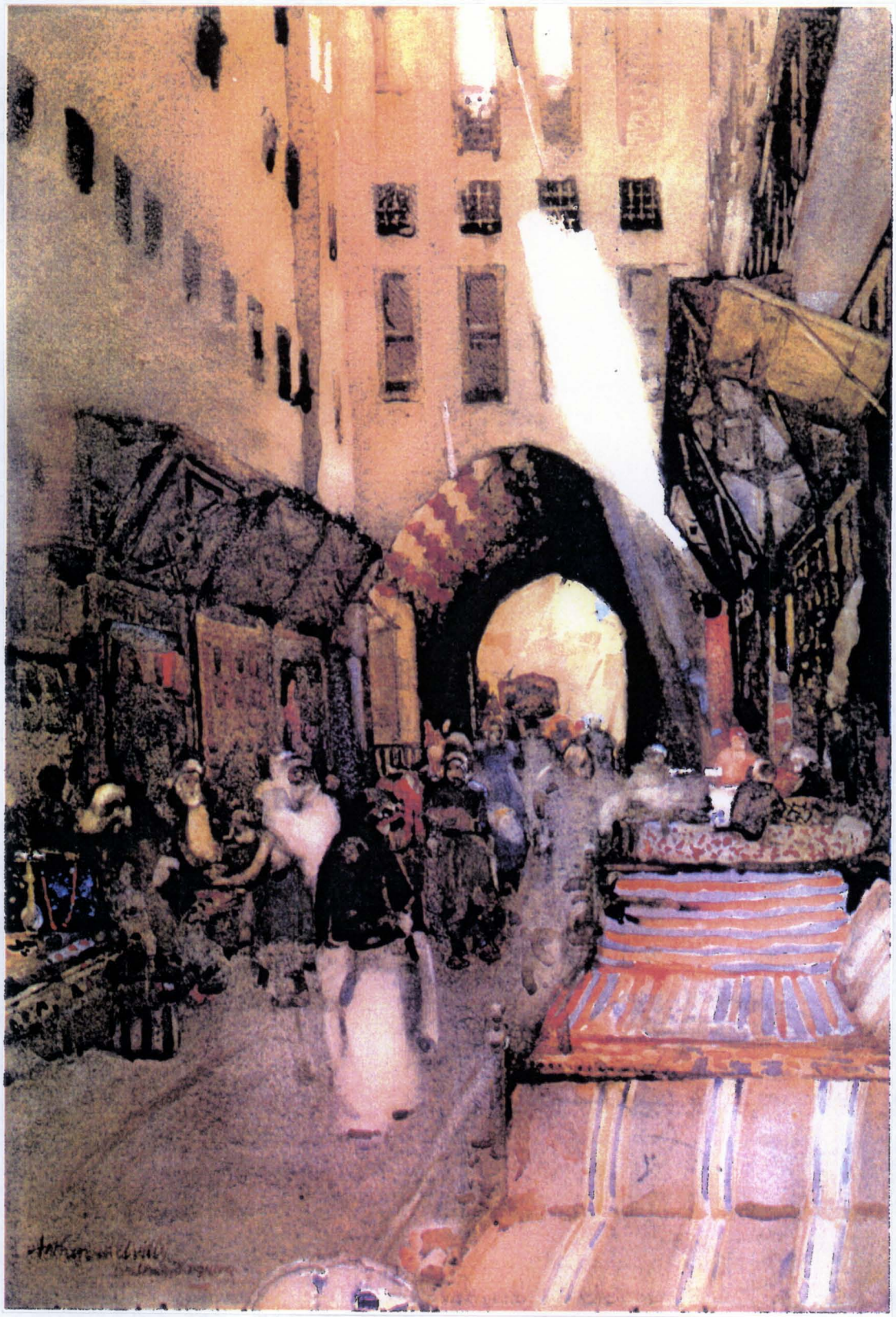

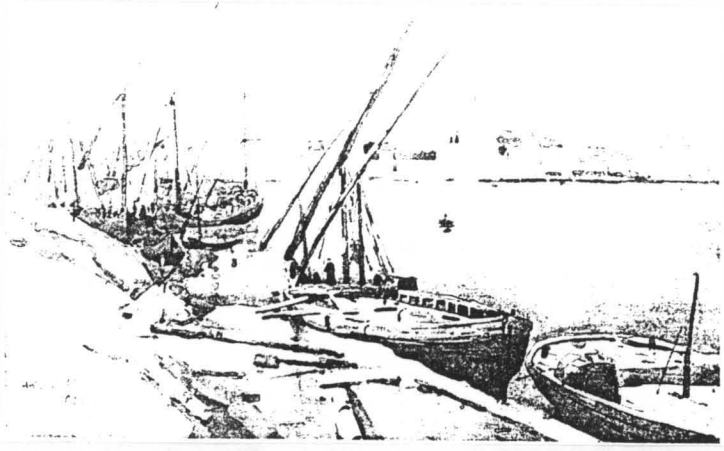

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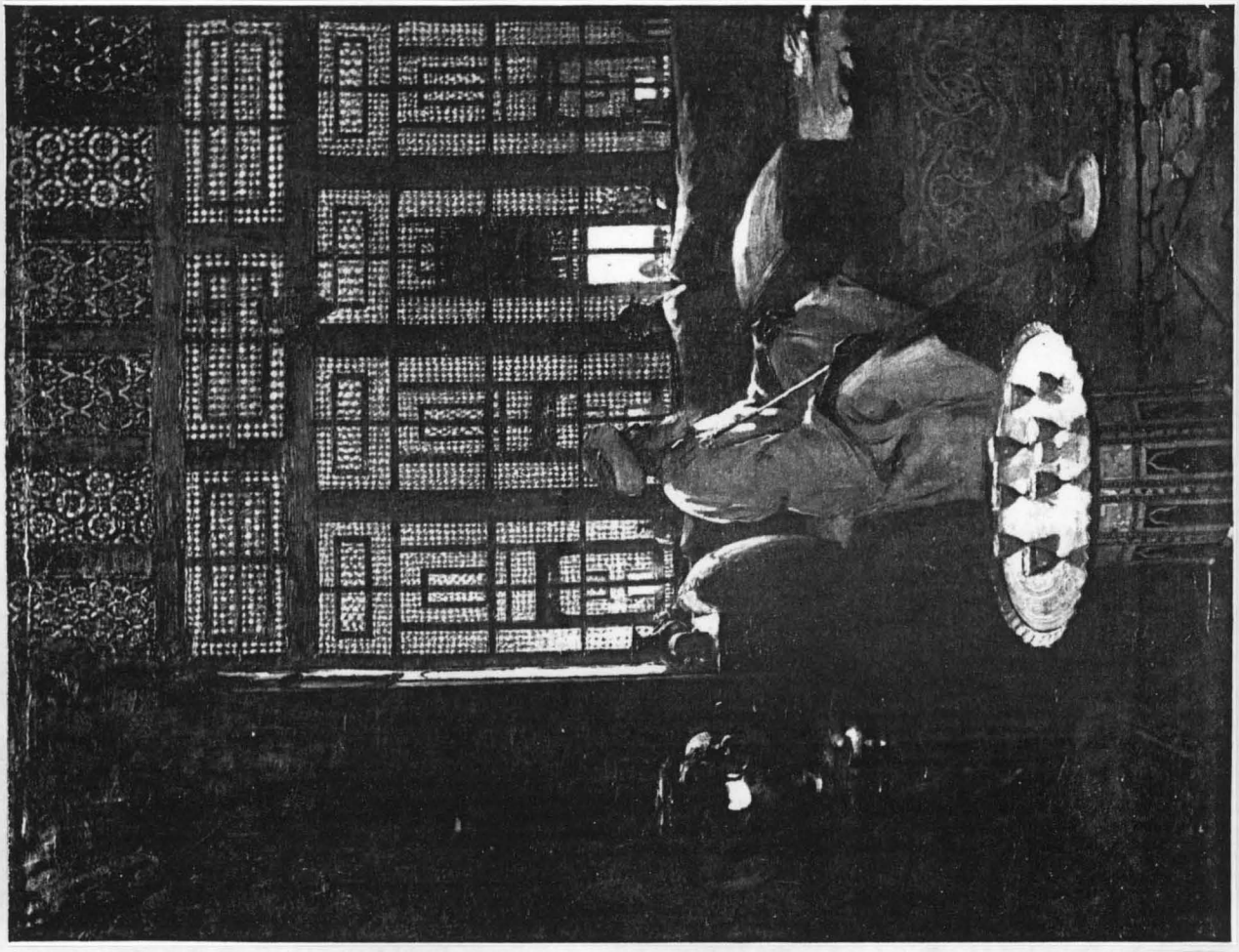

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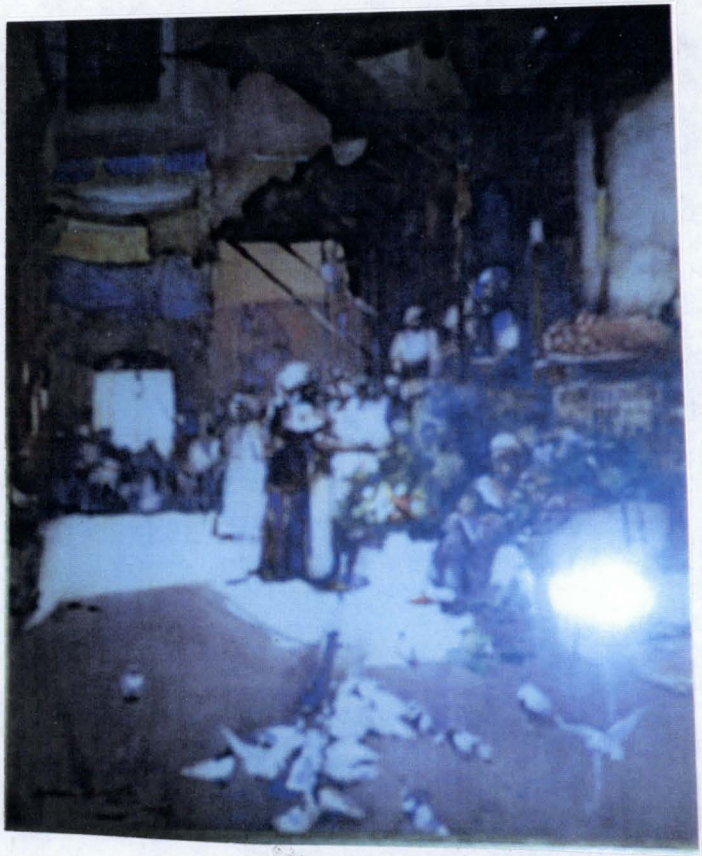

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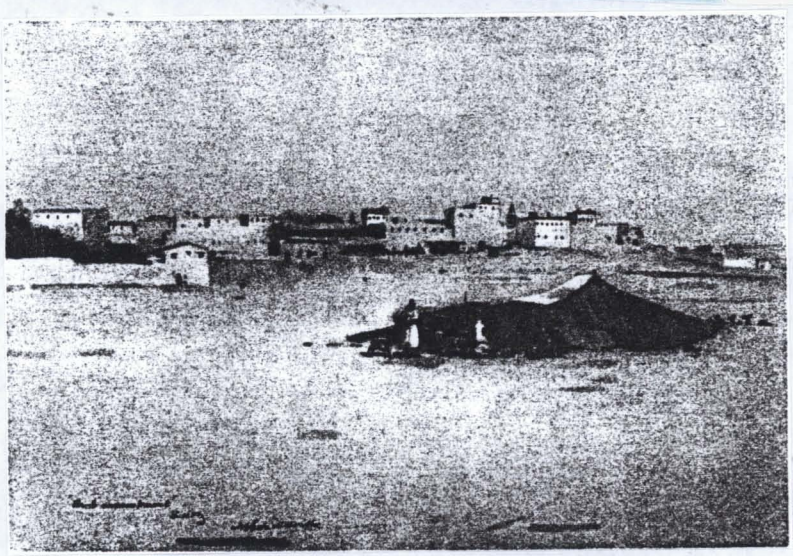

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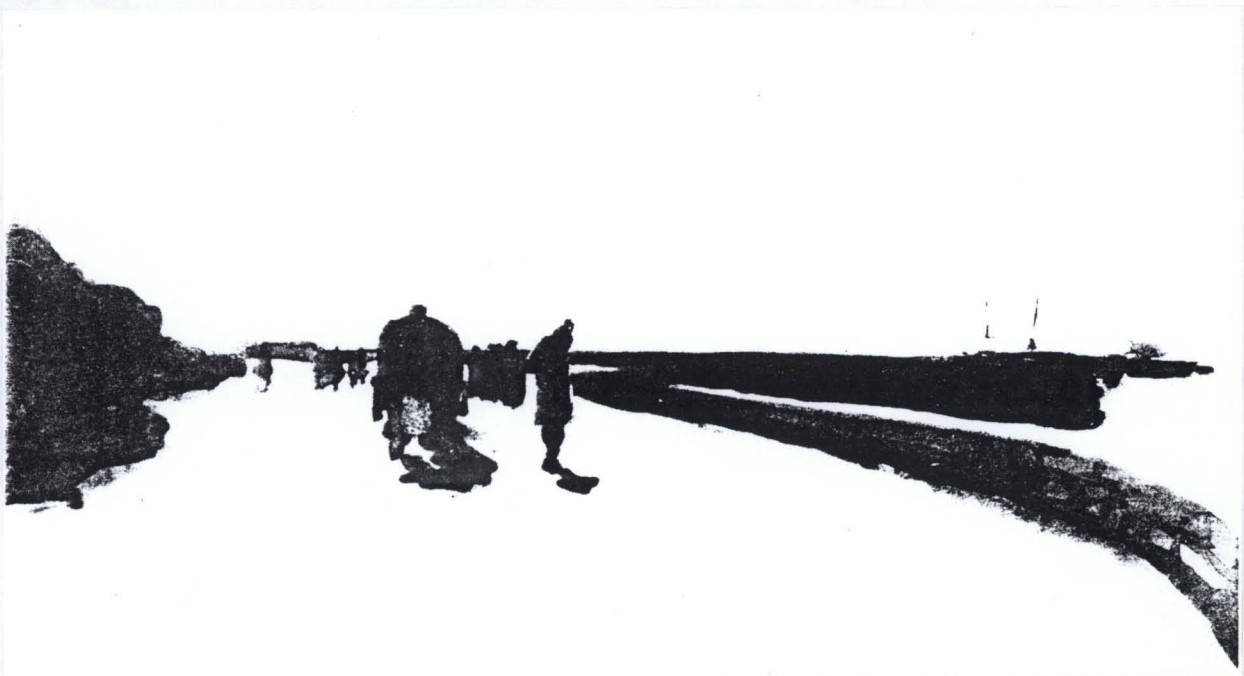

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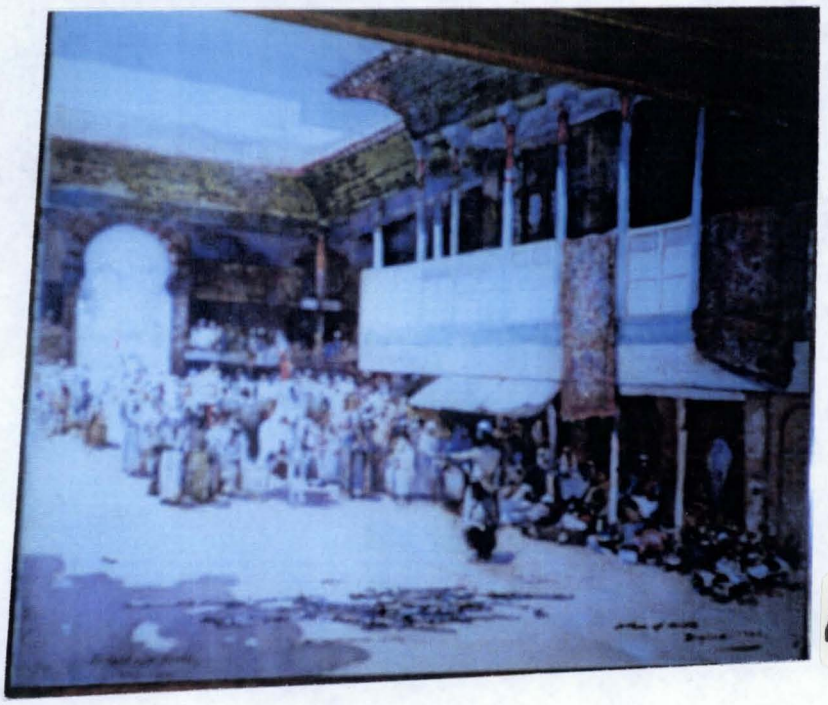

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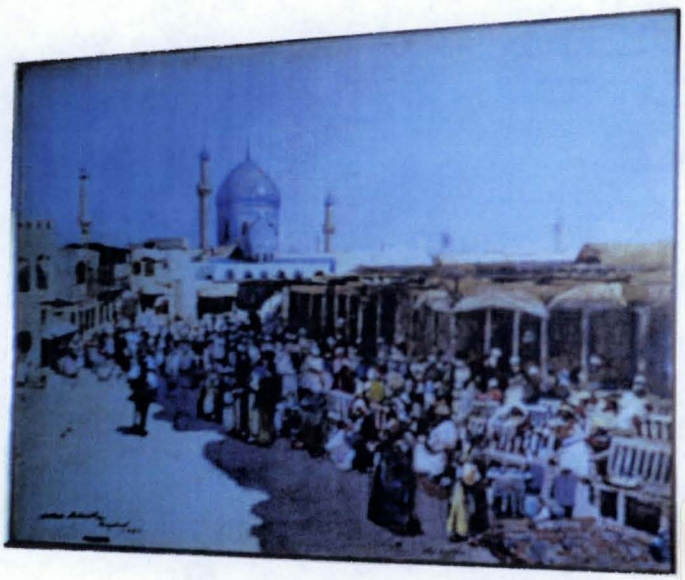

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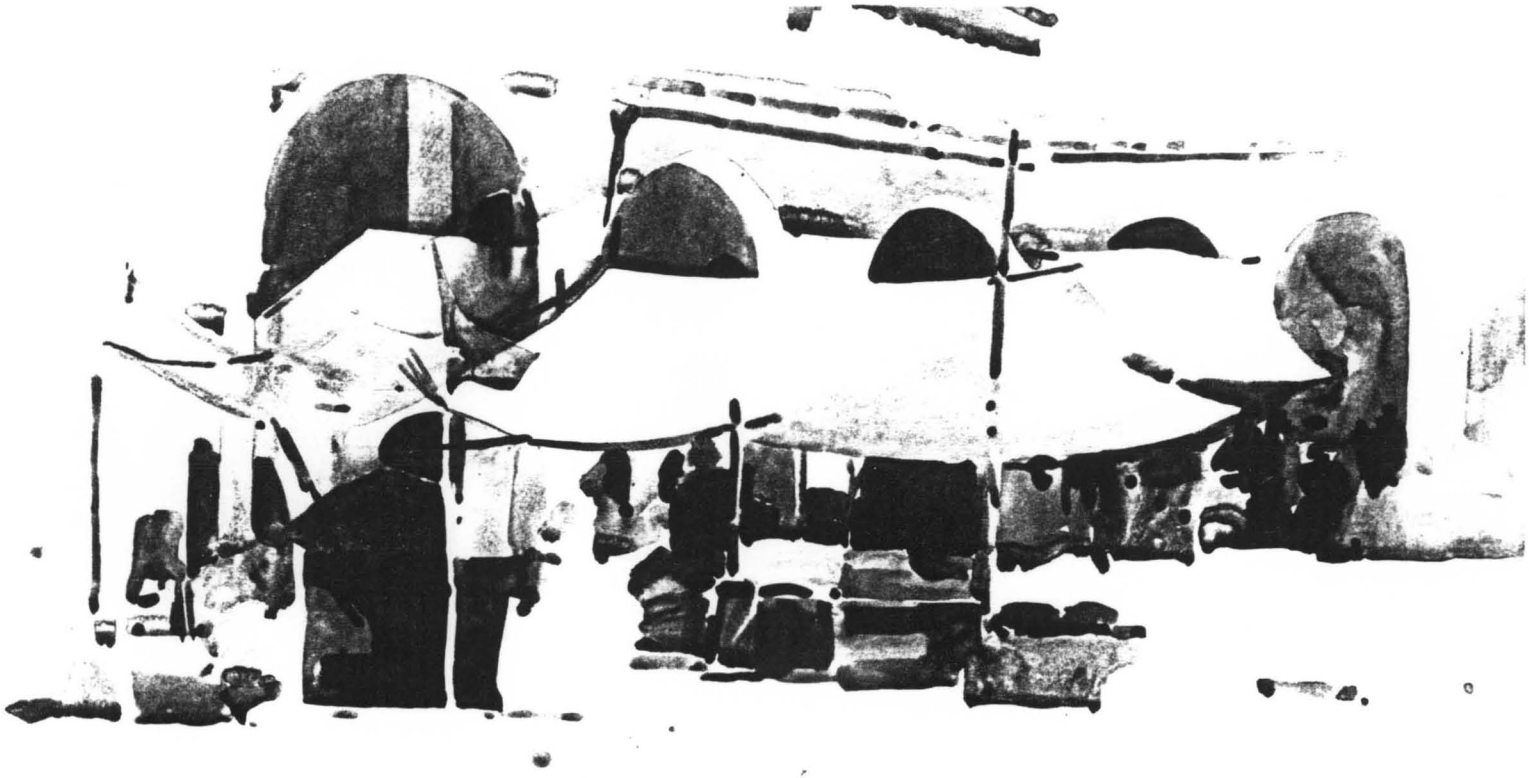

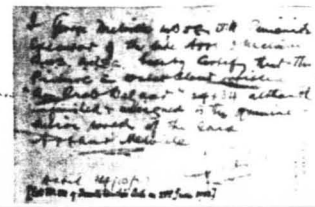

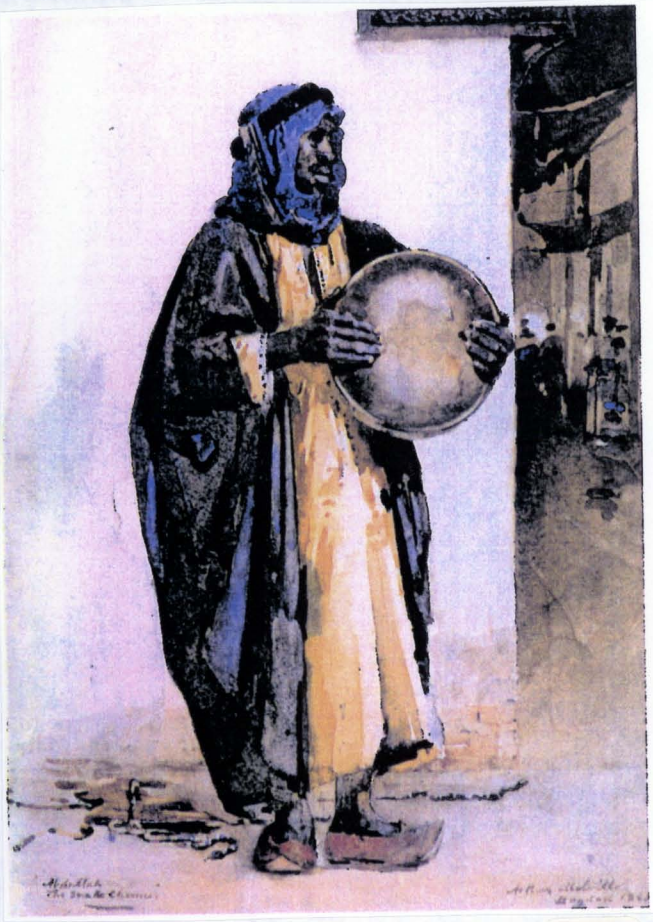

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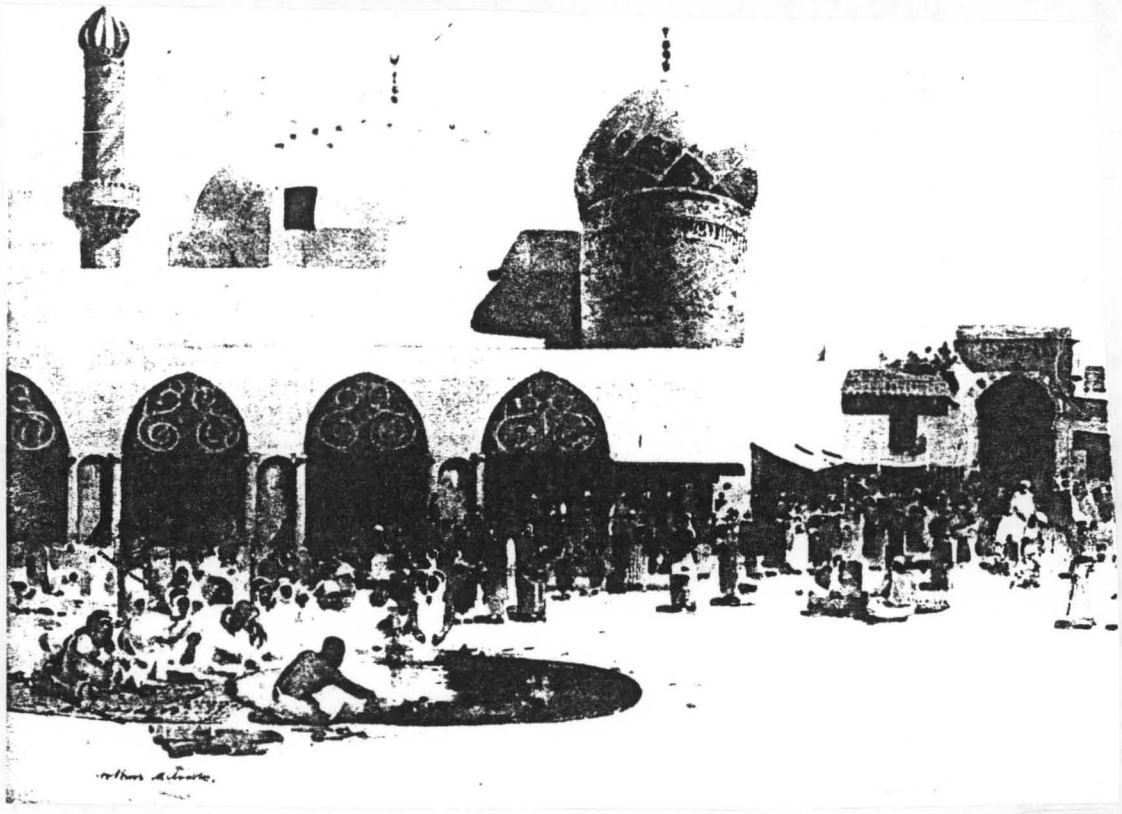

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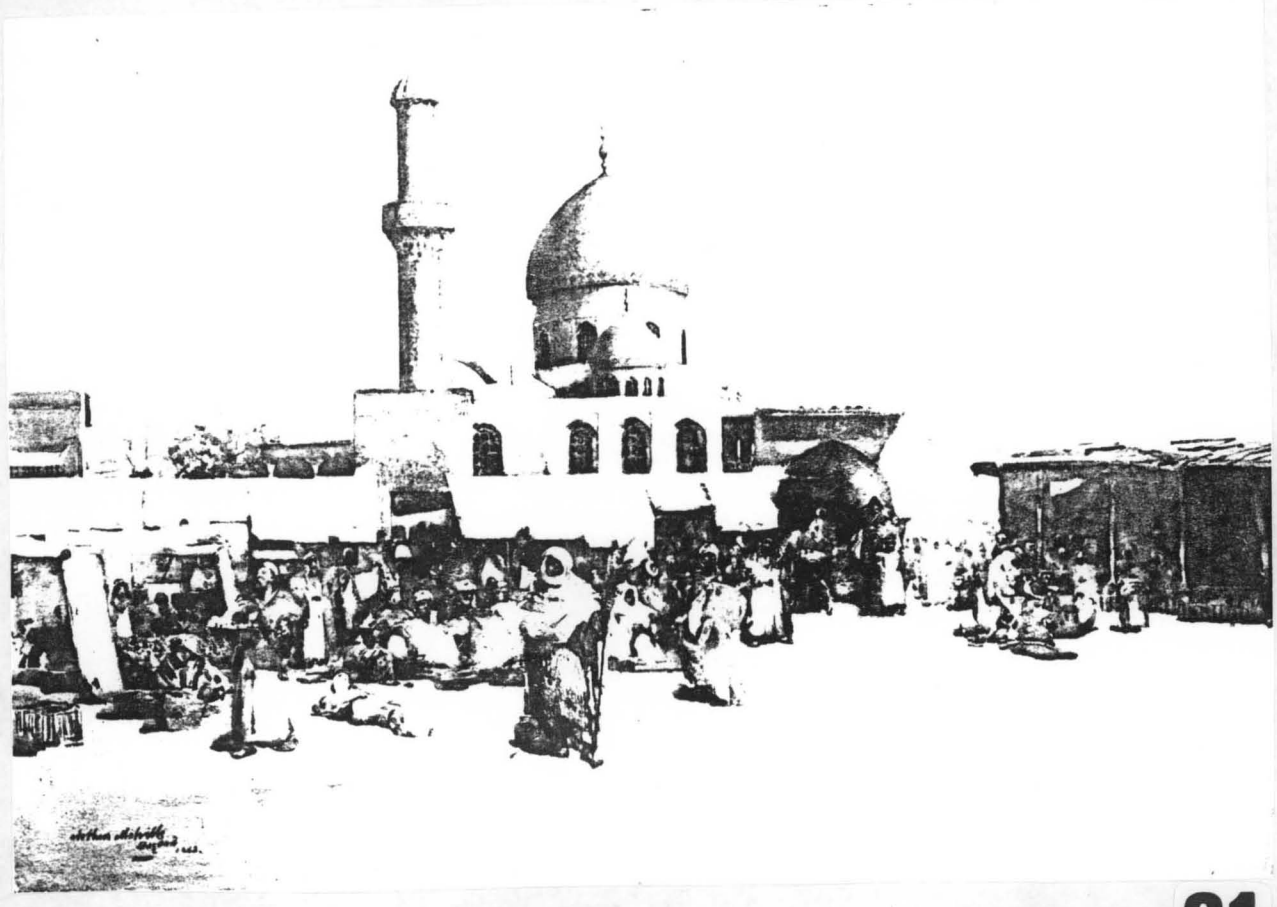

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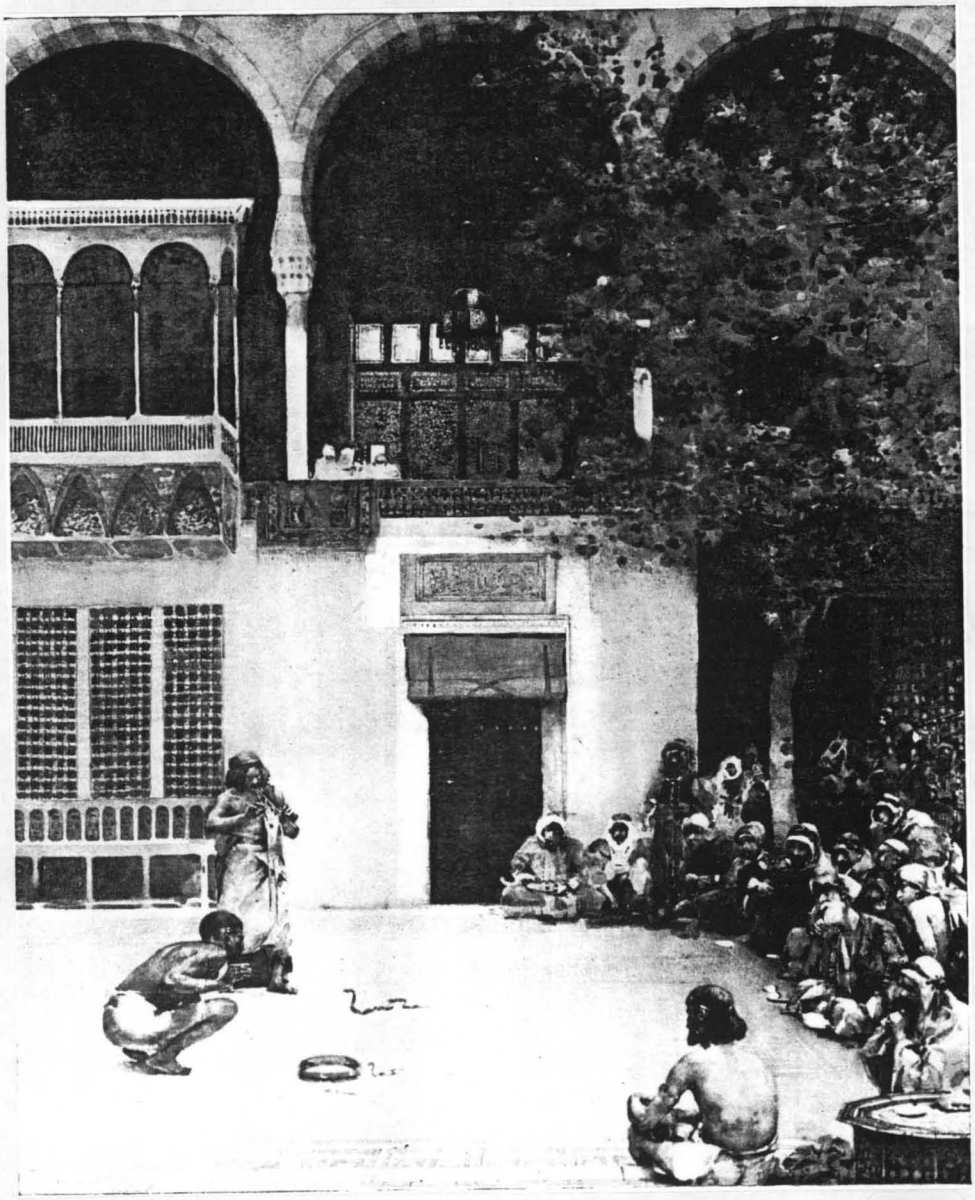

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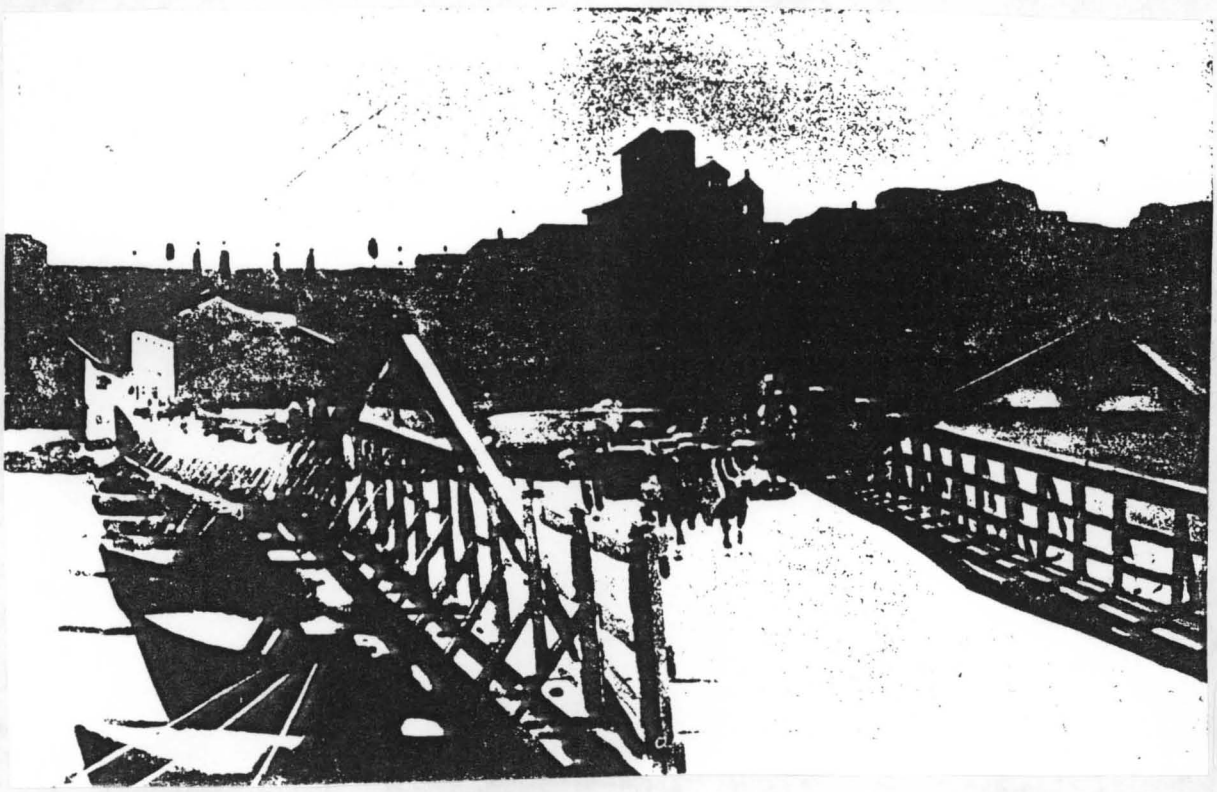

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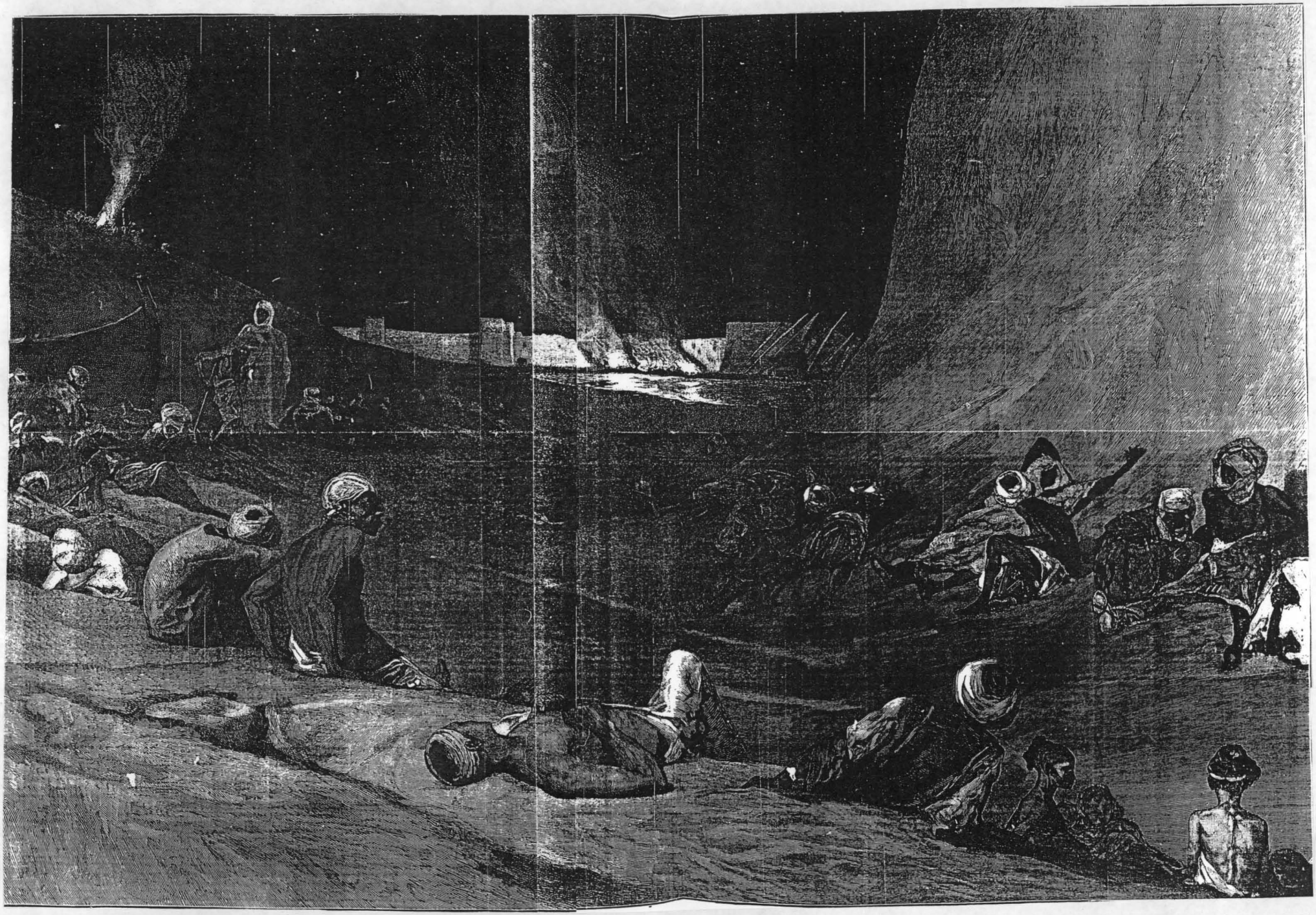

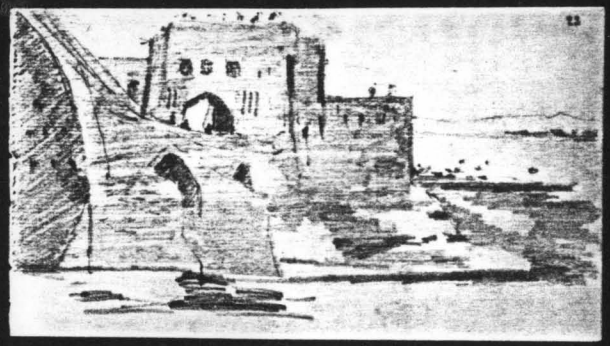

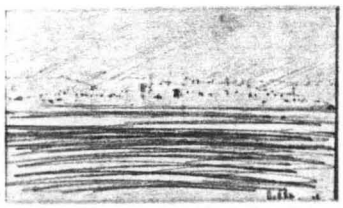

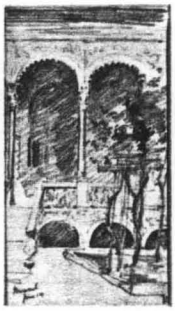

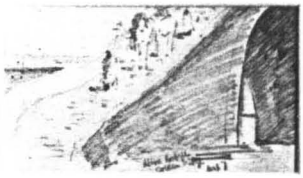

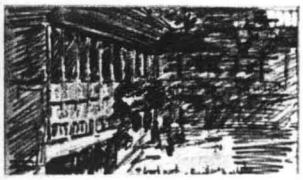

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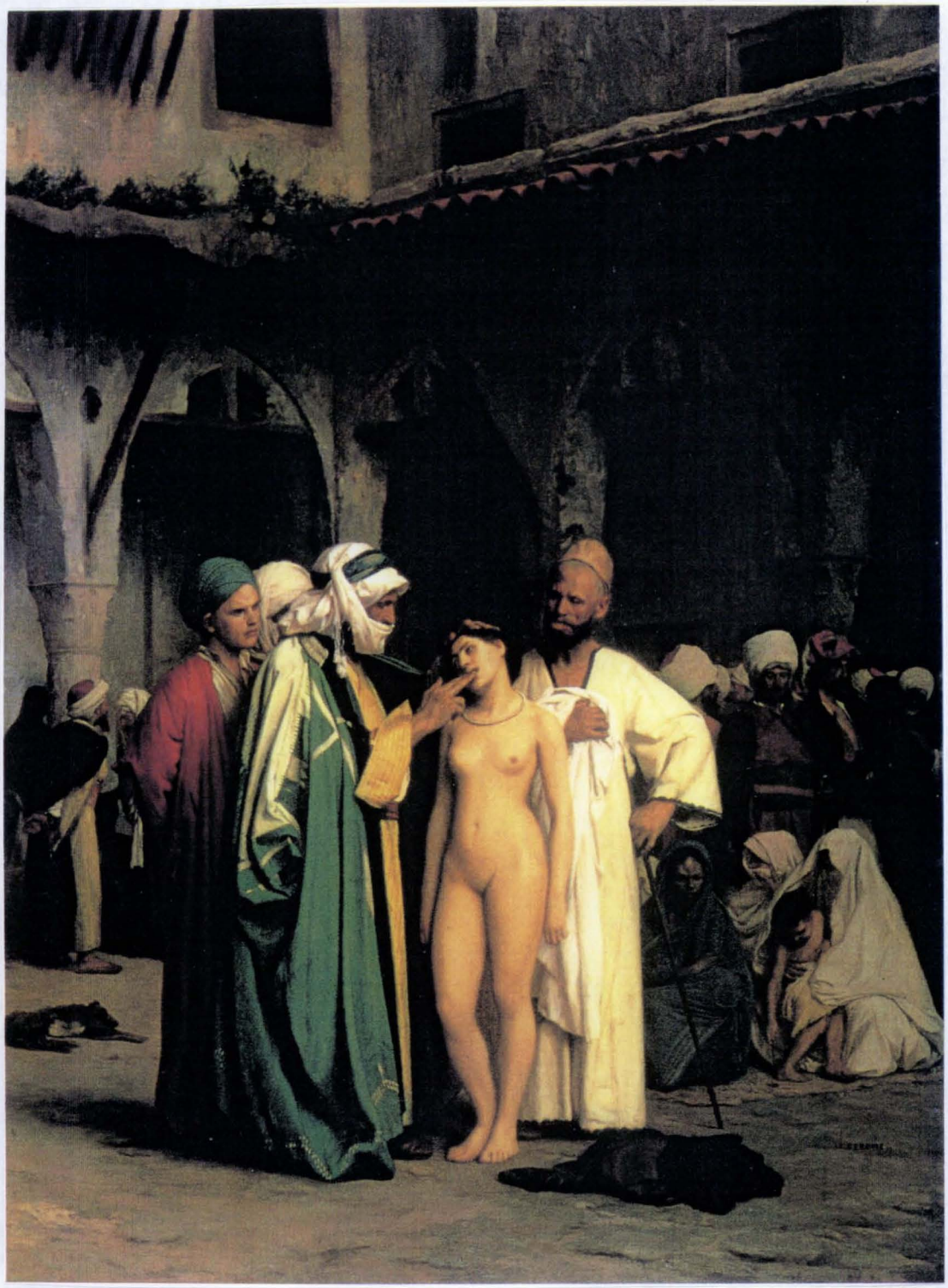

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