

Adolf Sandoz, an Orientalist Painter in Algeria

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Abstract

Adolf Karol Sandoz was a 19th-century Polish artist who spent his life and developed his artistic career in France. In Paris, he studied painting and architecture, and worked as a professional illustrator. He can also be linked with a circle of artist-travellers, who searched for new sources of inspiration in the Orient. In 1879 and 1881, Sandoz travelled in Algeria. He described his impressions from the first journey in vividly written memoirs published by the Krakow journal *Czas*. His travels inspired several genre paintings, including: *Interior of a House in Biskra*, *Dancer from the Uled Nail Tribe*, *Arab Woman by a Cradle*, *Morning in the Sahara*, *Evening in the Sahara*, *Oasis*, *On the Oued Riverbank at El Kantara Oasis*, and *Sheik Mistress of El Kantara*. At present, his works emerge at art auctions, are known from reproductions, or only from descriptions. Sandoz exhibited in Paris, Warsaw, Krakow, and Lviv, where he was appreciated by art critics. The aim of this article is to introduce Sandoz's journey to Algeria, analyse his paintings with exotic subject matter, and locate them within a wider context of orientalist painting. It will also present the history of artistic travel to Algeria undertaken by 19th-century painters, including those from Poland.

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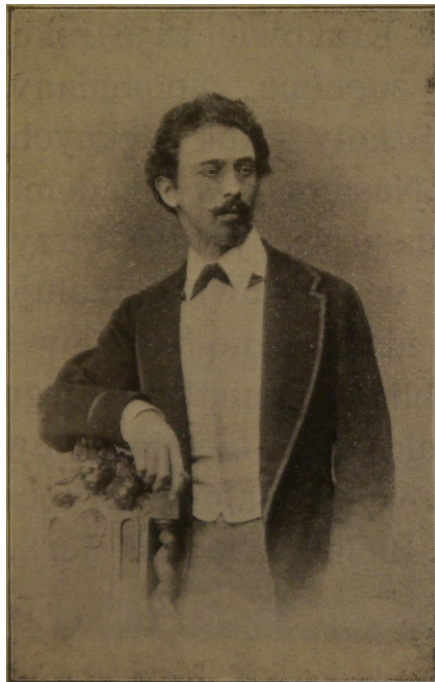
Adolf Sandoz's paintings from Algeria

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Introduction

[1] In the early 1880s, critics visiting exhibitions in Krakow, Lviv, and Warsaw noted with interest works presenting scenes from the life of inhabitants of North Africa. These seemed interesting both for their subject matter, as well as for their form. Curiosity was also raised by their author, Adolf Karol Sandoz (Fig. 1), a

promising young artist, about whom it was said in Poland that he was equally talented as a painter, an architect, and a musician.¹ The paintings exhibited were results of Sandoz's recent travels to Algeria. The painter achieved additional publicity for his works by publishing descriptions of them as well as excerpts of his vividly written travel journals, in which he insisted that his journey to Africa was "a magical journey to the land of sun and colours [...] which outran anything I could have imagined. It seems to me those were the most beautiful days of my life".²



1 Photograph of Adolf Sandoz (b. 1845), 4th quarter of the 19th century (reprod. from: Emmanuel Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, Kraków 1905)

[2] At present, Sandoz's oriental works are in private collections and are known only from reproductions or descriptions, for which reason their author is rarely included in studies on Polish and European orientalist painting. The aim of this text is to present the history of the discovery of Algeria by painters and to introduce Sandoz's journey, to conduct analysis of his paintings with exotic subject matter

¹ Adolf Sandoz (b. 1845) came from Podolia and was educated in Switzerland. Later, he went to Paris, where, since 1866, he studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris. His graduation work involved a project of the building of the Academy of Sciences in Paris. He also studied painting under the supervision of Jules Élie Delaunay and Puvis de Chavannes. He travelled around Germany, Austria, and Italy. Finally, he settled in Paris, where he worked as an illustrator. Cf. "Adolf Karol Sandoz", in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Wrocław, Warszawa and Kraków 1993, vol. 34, n. 142, 462.

² "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

and confront them with works by other orientalist artists, and, finally, to locate Sandoz's works in the wider context of orientalist painting in the second half of the 19th century.

Painters in Algeria in the 19th century

[3] Until 1830, for Europeans Algeria was an overseas land full of mysteries and fairy-tales. It was “discovered” only after the conquest by the king of France, Charles X. This event opened it for painters seeking exotic inspirations. The very first military excursions were accompanied by artists. A team of draughtsmen was commissioned to create records of the conquest, depict the topography of the land, the movements and clashes between the two armies as well as portraits of the commanders. The group of draughtsmen-chroniclers included: Théodore Jung, Gaspard Gobaut, Pierre Julien Gilbert, Jean Antoine Théodore Gudin, Antoine Léon Morel-Fatio, and Eugène Isabey.³ In 1839, the painter Adrien Dauzats followed the army of the Prince Ferdinand-Philippe d'Orleans to Algeria. The goal of this excursion was to pacify the province of Constantine, while its route went from Oran to Algiers. Artistic results of this journey included Dauzats' watercolours of the army's passage through a mountain pass called the Iron Gates. The artist displayed his works from Algeria in 1841 at the Paris Salon. They also illustrated the *Journal de l'expédition des Portes de Fer* by Charles Nodier, who also accompanied the expedition.⁴

[4] Dramatic war events in Algeria became an impulse for presenting contemporary history in a sublime form. The conquest of North Africa became one of the leading propaganda motifs used by King Louis Philippe I. The ruler engaged famous artists to produce a series of battle scenes from French history intended for display at Versailles. Pictures of the struggle in Africa adorned the Room of Constantine. They were made by Horace Vernet, who visited Algeria in 1833, 1837, and also later in the 1850s. An important moment in the campaign in Algeria, which broke resistance, came with the Prince d'Aumale's capture of the French's vehement opponent Abd al-Qadir. This event was depicted by Vernet in a gigantic, over twenty metres large canvas. Battle scenes from the conquest of Algeria also featured in works by French painters of the early 20th century (Denis Auguste Raffet, Hippolyte Bellangé, Henri Félix Emmanuel Philippoteaux, Alphonse Chigot, Jules Monge, Édouard Detaille).⁵

³ Élisabeth Cazenave, *Les artistes de l'Algérie. Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs, 1830-1962*, Paris 2001, 16-20; Marion Vidal-Bué, ed., *Les peintres de l'autre rive. Alger 1830-1930*, ex. cat., Marseille 2003, 8; Marion Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie des peintres. 1830-1960*, Paris 2002, 19.

⁴ Gérard-Georges Lemaire, *The Orient in Western Art*, Paris 2008, 156; Lynne Thornton, *The Orientalists. Painter-Travellers*, Paris 1994, 55; Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie des peintres*, 20.

[5] For artists, Algeria became a new territory of exotic exploration, an oriental land filled with mystery and mysticism as well as a repository of irrational wisdom and reconciled contradictions. Such image of the Orient can explain the painters' interest in Islam and Muslim religious rituals – prayers, pilgrimages to Mecca etc. The Orient is also a space located as if beyond the real world, outside moral norms. Hence, on the other hand, the artists' fascination with the vast desert landscape, as well as their frequent depictions of harems, invested with eroticism and violence. The East is also a space for a cognitive journey, an element of cultural education, a stage in an artistic journey – yet another step made by painters after visiting classical Italy. The East is a synonym of internal experience, a space of exploration of unknown aspects of the human psyche and its dark side. Those explorations were facilitated by “eastern poisons” – opium and hashish – offering new sensations and experiences. The East stands also for picturesque decadence, “a sinking world”, for such negative reading can be found in compositions featuring declining ruins of ancient civilisations, scenes of the slave trade or slaughter. Artists presenting battle scenes from the history of oriental countries tended to see the East as a picturesque stage of wars and political struggles, a background for romantic epic.⁶ An encounter with the Orient – opening up a variety of thematic possibilities – pushed artists to take up formal experiments.

[6] In the first half of the 19th century, Algeria was visited by several major Romantic painters – Eugène Delacroix, Théodore Chassériau, and Eugène Fromentin. Their works and memoirs popularised the image of Algeria as a land full of fairy-tale harems, sun-scorched landscapes, and oriental horsemen. In the years to follow, Algeria was visited by a vast number of orientalist painters who represented a variety of tendencies, including the Romantics, Realists, as well as Impressionists. Artists were attracted by the remnants of ancient cultures, picturesque cityscapes, phenomenal desert landscapes, intense light and saturated colours, as well as the inhabitants of Algeria, their clothing, daily life, and customs. French artists dominated this group, to mention such figures as Théodore Frère, Charles de Tournemine, Fabius Brest, Georges Washington, Narcisse Berchère, Charles Landelle, Paul Leroy, Auguste Renoir, and Jean-Léon Gérôme. Travelling to Algeria was made possible by scholarship programmes; this kind of support, received in 1884, brought to Algeria Étienne Dinet, to give one example.⁷ Apart from the French, Algeria was also visited by English artists (William Wyld, Barbara Bodichon, Frederick Leighton, Arthur Melville), Americans

⁵ Cazenave, *Les artistes de l'Algérie*, 20-22, 24; Christine Peltre, *Orientalism in Art*, New York 1998, 55, 58; Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie des peintres*, 22.

⁶ Maria Piwińska, "Orientalizm", in: *Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku*, ed. Józef Bachórz and Alina Kowalczykova, Wrocław 1991, 655-657.

⁷ Cazenave, *Les artistes de l'Algérie*, 34.

(Frederick Arthur Bridgman, Addison Thomas Millar, Edwin Lord Week), often students of the French masters fascinated with travelling and oriental subject matter (Jean-Léon Gérôme, Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant, Gustave Boulanger), as well as Germans, Belgians, Swiss, and Italians.⁸

[7] From a land untouched by Western civilisation Algeria soon changed in many locations into a resort, where winter months could be comfortably passed in a mild climate. Tourists from all around Europe came to the ports in Philippeville (today Skikda), Bougie (today Béjaïa) and Bône (today Annaba) to take horses and then the train to Biskra. There, hotels offered Western standards as well as restaurants, cafes, and even casinos, often erected and decorated in Mauritanian style. The most important tourist attractions were described in guides to Africa and travel journals, for instance Lady Herbert's *L'Algérie contemporaine illustrée* (1881) or Albert S. Gubb's *From Cloud to Sunshine. Notes on Algiers and Algeria as a Winter Resort* (1920s). Many painters coming to Algeria spent their time in luxurious conditions; for instance Charles Landelle and Paul Leroy lived in a villa in Biskra and organised trips to nearby oases.⁹ Algeria saw the rapid emergence of a local art scene. In the 1830s, first painting exhibitions were organised, and in 1881, the first university-level art school was opened.¹⁰

[8] An approach slightly different from that of painters who came as tourists was manifested by Realists, who sought a faithful depiction of the life of the local inhabitants of Algeria and encounters with an authentic culture barely touched by colonisation. For this purpose, they often travelled to the south of the country. This group included painters such as Gustave Guillaumet, Paul Delamain, Adolf Schreyer, Henri Rousseau, Félix Ziem, and Étienne Dinet.¹¹ An important example is Guillaumet who first travelled to Algeria in 1862 to go back for nine or ten more times. In the 1860s, he exhibited in Paris desert landscapes full of colour contrasts and chiaroscuro effects as, e. g., *Evening Prayer in the Sahara* (1863) and *The Desert* (1867). In the 1870s, by travelling to Algeria, Guillaumet attempted to escape Western civilisation – he travelled to the most remote places and was interested in locations such as Bou-Saâda (today Bu Sa'ada), El Kantara or Laghouat (today Al-Aghwat). At the time, he started painting naturalist scenes with women carrying water, horsemen, camels, wild dogs, etc.¹² Guillaumet recorded his memories from Algeria in a series of texts entitled “Tableaux algériens”, published in *La Nouvelle Revue* (1879–1884).¹³

⁸ Vidal-Bué, *Les peintres de l'autre rive*, 12; Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie des peintres*, 14.

⁹ Villebrun, *L'appel du désert*, 48-57.

¹⁰ Vidal-Bué, *Les peintres de l'autre rive*, 11.

¹¹ Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie des peintres*, 12.

¹² Thornton, *The Orientalists. Painter-Travellers*, 108-109.

[9] However, an artist who tied his life most closely to Algeria, its inhabitants, culture and religion, was Étienne Dinet. He visited Algeria for the first time in 1884. Eventually, in 1904, after several travels, he settled permanently in the Bou-Saâda oasis. He had learnt Arabic some time earlier, and in 1913 he became a Muslim. In 1929, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca and received the name of Hadj Nasr Ed Dine Dini. At the same time, he was an active member of the art scene of Paris and Algeria. His paintings reveal his fascination with intense light and Africa's vivid colours. His thorough knowledge of the country helped him capture moments of happiness, sadness and reverie of the inhabitants of Algeria. Dinet published also several books illustrated with his work, including *Antar* (1898), *Mirages* (1906), *El Fiafi Oua el Kifar, ou Le désert* (1911).¹⁴

Polish painters in Algeria in the 19th and early 20th century

[10] The first Polish artist-travellers came to Algeria as late as the second half of the 19th century. Before that time, echoes of the conquest of Algeria could be found in works by Polish artists such as January Suchodolski (*Poles in the French Foreign Legion in Algiers Reading a Letter from their Homeland*, 1835) and Piotr Michałowski (*Clash between French Infantry and Arab Cavalry – Episode from the War in Algeria*, 1844–1845).¹⁵ Perhaps under the influence of a journey to Algeria, the amateur painter Karol Cybulski made his *Morning in Algeria* and *Evening in Algeria*, exhibited in 1858 at the Krakow Society of Friends of Fine Arts.¹⁶ Another Polish painter-traveller emerges as late as twenty years later. In 1878, Walery Brochocki, who had arrived in Paris a year earlier, went to Algeria, where, commissioned by the Society for Colonisation, he was to paint panoramas.¹⁷ This journey resulted in a painting titled *View from Tipaza in Africa*.¹⁸ Perhaps it is identical with a landscape reproduced in a publication on the climate of Algeria in 1877.¹⁹

¹³ Villebrun, *L'appel du désert*, 42-45; Thornton, *The Orientalists. Painter-Travellers*, 108-109; *De Delacroix à Renoir. L'Algérie des peintres*, ed. Stéphane Guégan, exh. cat., Paris 2003, 181-185.

¹⁴ Denise Brahimi and Koudir Benchikou, *Étienne Dinet*, Paris 1984.

¹⁵ *Orientalizm w malarstwie, rysunku i grafice w Polsce w XIX i 1. połowie XX wieku*, eds. Anna Kozak and Tadeusz Majda, exh. cat., Warsaw 2008, 316, 317, 373.

¹⁶ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, Kraków 1905, 23.

¹⁷ Janusz Derwojed, "Walery Brochocki", in: *Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających*, vol. 2, Wrocław 1975, 236-237.

¹⁸ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, 17.

¹⁹ Edward Landowski, *L'Algérie au point de vue climato-thérapique dans les affections consomptives*, Paris 1877, 69, 70.

[11] A painter from Warsaw, Julian Maszyński, spent the turn of the year 1882 and 1883 in Algeria.²⁰ After his return, he exhibited works with oriental subject matter, such as: *Lion/Marabou*, *Final News*, *Animal Dealer in Algiers*, *Arab Woman*, *Praying Arab*, *Algerian Shoemaker*, and *Street in Algiers*. His *Lion/Marabou* was particularly well received.²¹ For this painting, Maszyński received the second prize in a competition organised by the Society of Friends of Fine Arts. The work was reproduced in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* and accompanied by Maszyński's commentary where he discussed the significance of lions, venerated in Algeria, and marabouts, that is, scholars of Quran capable of taming lions.²²

[12] Around 1890, Algeria was visited by the painter and sculptor Wincenty Trojanowski. This journey resulted in paintings exhibited at the Krakow Society of Friends of Fine Arts in 1891 (*Arab Girl*, *Arab Street in Algiers*) and 1892 (*Inside a Seraglio*, *In the Desert*)²³ and at the Warsaw Society of Friends of Fine Arts in 1891 (*Arab*) and 1892 (*Dervish*).²⁴ Oriental subject matter featured also in Trojanowski's sculptures. In 1895, Trojanowski exhibited in Krakow his *Praying Dervish* and *Oriental Type*, while his bust of a *Dervish* was shown at the Warsaw Zachęta the previous year.²⁵

[13] In 1892, Wacław Pawliszak visited Algeria during his grand oriental tour. Yet his route is not known in details. Few pieces of information in the press suggest that in October that year "Pawliszak, who left for Algiers several weeks ago, is now working there on landscapes of the areas around Oran, Constantine, and Blida".²⁶ A month later he was already in Morocco.²⁷ Algeria has possibly inspired works such as *From Algiers* and *In the Desert*.²⁸

[14] In the early 20th century, Algeria was visited by Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski. Remarks in the press suggest that on February 19, 1903 the painter "left for Africa

²⁰ "Wiadomości bieżące", in: *Kurier Warszawski* 138b (1883), 3.

²¹ Janina Wiercińska, *Katalog prac wystawionych w Towarzystwie Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w latach 1860-1914*, Wrocław 1969, 223-225.

²² Juliusz Maszyński, "Lew Marabut", in: *Wędrowiec* 13 (1885), 149-152.

²³ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, 168, 169.

²⁴ Wiercińska, *Katalog prac wystawionych w Towarzystwie Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w latach 1860-1914*, 385.

²⁵ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, 221; Wiercińska, *Katalog prac wystawionych w Towarzystwie Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w latach 1860-1914*, 385.

²⁶ "Silva Rerum", in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 148 (1892), 287.

²⁷ "Silva Rerum", in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 152 (1892), 351.

²⁸ Joanna Białynicka-Birula, "Wacław Pawliszak", in: *Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających*, vol. 6, Warsaw 1998, 446.

for a long time". Yet his journey did not take long, for on April 11 the *Kurier Warszawski* reported that the painter had come back to Warsaw.²⁹ Only several years after his travels, exhibitions in Munich, Warsaw and Krakow included Kowalski-Wierusz's paintings with oriental subject matter, ex. g. *Street Scene at the El-Wad Oasis in the Sahara* (displayed in 1909 at the Glaspalast in Munich), *By a Well in the Atlas Mountains. Algiers* and *Hunting with Falcons. Algiers* (displayed in 1908 in Warsaw and Krakow).³⁰

[15] Algeria was also extensively explored by the St. Petersburg-based painter and avid traveller Jan Ciągliński. In 1909, he travelled in the Sahara desert and visited Biskra, among other places. His works from this journey are kept in the National Museum in Krakow.³¹ This long, yet incomplete list of Polish travelling artists is closed by Adam Styka, who in 1911, during his studies in Paris, went to Algiers and Tunis. Thanks to this journey, he painted *Orientalist*, a work with which he debuted at the Salon. In the years to follow, Styka specialised in oriental scenes, which he exhibited at the Paris Salons and at exhibitions of the Society of Orientalist Painters in Paris. He received a scholarship that allowed him further travels in North Africa.³²

Adolf Sandoz's travels to Algeria

[16] Detailed information about Adolf Sandoz's first journey to Algeria can be found in excerpts from his letters published in the Krakow-based magazine *Czas*. Most probably, those were memoirs rather than letters, which Sandoz edited into letter form. Sandoz presents his impressions from his travels with much literary talent and expression. For that reason, the Polish artist can be counted among orientalist painters who were also skilled writers. Apart from the already mentioned Fromentin (who published *Un été dans le Sahara*, 1856 and *Une année dans le Sahel*, 1858), Guillaumet and Dinet, this group included also Narcisse Berchère (*Le Désert de Suez*, 1863) and Frederick Arthur Bridgman (*Winters in Algeria*, 1890).³³

²⁹ Eliza Ptaszyńska, *Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski, 1849-1915*, Warsaw 2011, 163, 164.

³⁰ Ptaszyńska, *Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski*, 165; Wiercińska, *Katalog prac wystawionych w Towarzystwie Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w latach 1860-1914*, 171; *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie z czynności za rok 1908*, Kraków 1909, 13.

³¹ Kozak and Majda, *Orientalizm w malarstwie, rysunku i grafice w Polsce w XIX i 1. połowie XX wieku*, 149, 150.

³² Kozak and Majda, *Orientalizm w malarstwie, rysunku i grafice w Polsce w XIX i 1. połowie XX wieku*, 218.

³³ Villebrun, *L'appel du désert*, 42.

[17] Sandoz departed from Paris in the evening of February 27, 1879, arriving in Marseilles the following day. The same day he boarded a ship destined for Philippeville. His trip was uneventful and lasted only one day and two nights. On March 2, Sandoz put his feet on the African soil. He took a train from Philippeville to Constantine. Next, he took a horse carriage to Balha. This part of the trip took fourteen hours and was particularly tiring. The route took him across hilly terrain, at that time of the year still covered with snow, which the artist recorded with much surprise. Still travelling with the postal carriage, he went from Balha towards El Kantara gorge. Only then he saw the face of Africa that he expected and admired: "shadow-casting palm trees, gigantic cacti, and blooming fig trees". He encountered inhabitants of an oasis, who threw flowers into his carriage, and he noted Arab women, who glanced curiously at the travellers. Sandoz wrote: "I forgot about my fatigue, about four sleepless nights, for my soul was filled with delight at this sight".³⁴

[18] He reached Biskra, his destination, on March 8. He stayed there for two months. Biskra was an oasis particularly often visited by artists. The town had a French regiment, whose officers eagerly hosted painters. The list of painters who worked there includes Fromentin, Gustave Guillaumet, Charles Landelle, Leroy, Maurice Bompard, Henri Matisse, and Maurice Denis. After the construction of train lines in 1889, Biskra became an European-style tourist location, providing a convenient starting point for tourists visiting the Sahara desert. Sandoz spent all his days in Biskra, painting in plain-air. He took with him a young black servant named Ahmed.³⁵ He favoured painting in an old Turkish fort called Old Biskra. This place was also a favourite among other artists (e.g. Frederick Leighton, Gabriel Ferrier).³⁶

[19] Sandoz made a horse trip from Biskra to the oases of Ziban accompanying a caravan. He had a chance to visit the oases of Lichana, Zatscha, Foughala, El Abadia, El Bordj, Sheima and Sidi Okba. Those excursions offered him new experiences. He learnt new customs and experienced living in a tent. On the way back, his caravan was hit by a sand storm, a so-called samum. It made a great impression on the painter, who described his experience as follows:

*Suddenly, it gets dark, the sand makes it impossible to see further than two steps ahead, one is blinded, the eyes are filled with sand [...]. The hair and clothes are filled with sand. One has to lie down on the sand and is unable to find one's companions, the only thing left is to trust your horse will find the way.*³⁷

³⁴ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

³⁵ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

³⁶ Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie du Sud et ses peintres. 1830-1960*, Paris 2002, 67-75; Villebrun, *L'appel du désert*, 57-59.

³⁷ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

Sandoz noted also powerful emotional sensations. He was fascinated with the variety of landscape, clothing, and people's physiognomy. He wrote:

*Each step you take in the wilderness or in an oasis, a new view occurs, always poetic, sometimes even varied: types, people, clothing, animals, tents, buildings – everything is characteristic, everything attracts the painter's brush and calls to his imagination so to speak.*³⁸

The painter admired the intensity of light in Africa. He wrote that "the wonderful daylight in the sky with no single cloud" made him exclaim: "What a country! This is paradise for painters". The artist's attention was captured especially by the Arabs' attires. Men wore white burnous and turbans, while women wore draped fabrics in blue or white-red, fastened with pins. There were belts in bright colours around their waists, while married women would have woollen braids on their heads, in black, red, and blue. The painter was also interested in the clothing, jewellery, and make-up of women from the Zuled tribe. He wrote about it:

*"I have just started several sketches, but how should I describe all those gauds, jewels, embroideries, and those tattooed and red painted faces, hands painted with ochre and nails covered in colourful varnish".*³⁹

[20] Sandoz left Biskra on May 3. On his way, he stopped in Constantine, where he did not paint, but followed his other passion – playing the violin. Because of bad weather, his return voyage across the Mediterranean took a week; the ship had to stop in Sardinia.⁴⁰

[21] After his first journey to Algeria, the painter grew a passion for travelling, and in the first weeks of 1881 he departed for Africa again. He stayed longer at the El Kantara oasis, called the gate to the desert. He was hosted by a local sheik.⁴¹ The precipitous slopes of the gorge where the oasis is located and the picturesque river banks covered with oriental vegetation attracted numerous artists in the 19th century. El Kantara was visited and portrayed by Leroy, Guillaumet, Washington, Karl Girardet, Landelle, Bridgman and others.⁴² Unfortunately, Sandoz did not leave any records of this journey that could provide an interesting commentary on his work.

³⁸ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

³⁹ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

⁴⁰ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

⁴¹ "Kronika", in: *Gazeta Iwowska* 207 (1881), 3.

⁴² Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie du Sud et ses peintres*, 57-64.

Adolf Sandoz's paintings from Algeria

[22] Sandoz presented works featuring Algeria in Poland in 1880. At the Lviv Society of Friends of Fine Arts he presented *Interior of a House in Biskra* (also known as *Interior of a Saharan Hut*; Fig. 4)⁴³ and *Dancer from the Uled Nail Tribe*. The former had already been exhibited at the Paris Salon the same year.⁴⁴ At the Krakow Society of Friends of Fine Arts Sandoz made his debut with these paintings as well as with *Arab Woman by a Cradle* (Fig. 5), *Morning in the Sahara* and *Evening in the Sahara*.⁴⁵ The two latter works were also exhibited a year later at the Warsaw Krywult's Salon.⁴⁶ *Interior of a House in Biskra* (Fig. 4) and *Dancer from the Uled Nail Tribe* were also presented to the Warsaw public in 1880 at Ungier's Salon.⁴⁷ Sandoz displayed artistic results of his second exotic excursion in the following year at the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Lviv and in Krakow. The public could see: *On the Oued Riverbank at El Kantara Oasis* (Fig. 6), *Sheik Mistress of El Kantara* (Fig. 2), *Spinner on a Terrace*, *Highlander Woman from Auris*.⁴⁸ Sandoz came back to Krakow's Society of Friends of Fine Arts in 1883 when he presented *Caravan of Camels in the Sahara* (Fig. 7).⁴⁹ At the Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Lviv in 1913 he showed his work *The Saharan Woman*. This painting was probably *Arab Woman by a Cradle* (Fig. 5).⁵⁰ Apart from the works displayed in Poland, well-known are also other works by Sandoz with Algerian subject matter, such as *Oasis* (1879) and *Arab Woman from El Kantara* (1881; Fig. 3).

⁴³ Property of the Lviv Gallery of Art.

⁴⁴ *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure, et lithographie des artistes vivants*, Paris 1880, 338.

⁴⁵ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, 139; *Gazeta lwowska* 207 (1881), 3.

⁴⁶ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, 139.

⁴⁷ *Treść obrazów Adolfa Sandoza podolanina z podróży artystycznej po Afryce, odbytej w r. 1879. Wystawione w Salonie Szt. Piękn. J. Ungra w Warszawie*, Warsaw 1880.

⁴⁸ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, 139.

⁴⁹ Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie 1854-1904*, 139.

⁵⁰ *Katalog wystawy sztuki współczesnej*, Lwów 1913, 16.



2 Adolf Sandoz, *Sheik Mistress of El Kantara*, 1881 (reprod. from *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 41 [1913], 805)



3 Adolf Sandoz, *Arab Woman from El Kantara*, 1881 (reprod. from *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 41 [1913], 805)



4 Adolf Sandoz, *Interior of a House in Biskra*, 1879 (reprod. from: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 41 [1913], 805)

[23] A closer look at Sandoz's paintings of Algeria reveals that he chose several popular motifs present also in the works of other painter-travellers fascinated with North Africa. He described *Interior of a House in Biskra* (Fig. 4), presented in Paris and later also in Poland, in the following fashion:

The painting shows an interior of a house painted from nature, a room supported by four columns roughly hewn from palm trees, resembling with its structure a Roman atrium. It is a common room that serves as a kitchen, a room for work, as well as for hosting guests. Several low doors lead to other parts of the building. The light falls through an opening in the ceiling [...]. This allows for the smoke to escape, which makes the ceiling black with soot. The room is occupied by an Arab family: the man is idle, slumbering, sits leaning on one of the pillars in a white burnous that covers him completely. Deeper inside, next the chimney three women are seated, one of them spinning wool, another killing flies with a palm, the third idle. Another woman standing in the centre of the painting is also spinning. In the foreground, a small girl is playing with black goats.⁵¹

The interior of an Arab house, apart from being an interesting topic for genre painting, offered a possibility of producing intriguing formal effects. The artist contrasted the shadow-cast interior with flickers of light falling through the opening in the roof. Thus he emphasised colours and details of the Arab clothing. Other orientalist painters also took up the subject matter of Algerian interiors. Bridgman painted an *Interior in Biskra* (1881), while Landalle a *Scene from Arabs' Life - Weavers in Biskra* (1891). However, closest to Sandoz's work, both in terms of form as well as subject matter, are paintings by Guillaumet included in the

⁵¹ Treść obrazów Adolfa Sandoza podolanina z podróży artystycznej po Afryce, 3-4.

collection of the Musée d'Orsay among others, depicting scenes inside a house at Bou Saâda or Biskra. They contain the same amount of realism and intimacy captured by the artist *in situ*.

[24] Sandoz also chose a quiet interior of an Arab home as a scene for his *Arab Woman by a Cradle (Saharan Woman)*. This work is known from a reproduction in an exhibition catalogue from 1913 (Fig. 5).⁵² A young woman is sitting on carpets spread on the floor, dressed in an attire typical for people of the region, one that Sandoz took such liking to – a draped vesture fastened with pins. As a married woman she wears braids made of wool covered with a light veil, while her picturesque clothes are complemented with jewellery. The Arab woman is nursing a child sleeping in a cradle suspended from the ceiling. Sandoz addressed here the always popular subject of motherhood, originating from the iconography of the Virgin Mary, as well as Saint Anne, translated however into Oriental reality. The topic of motherhood was also addressed by orientalist painters such as Chassériau, Jean-Baptiste Huysmans, Leroy and Landelle.⁵³ A figure of a seated Algerian girl in traditional clothing, looking ahead in a melancholy pose, can be found in Louis Ernest Barrias' sculpture adorning Guillaumet's tomb at Montparnasse cemetery.



5 Adolf Sandoz, *Arab Woman by a Cradle*, 1879 (reprod. from: *Katalog wystawy sztuki współczesnej*, Lviv 1913, 16)

⁵² *Katalog wystawy sztuki współczesnej*, Lwów 1913, 16.

⁵³ Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie des peintres*, 47-48.

[25] During his first journey to Algeria Sandoz made a painting titled *Dancer from the Uled Nail tribe*. At present, neither the location nor reproduction of this work are known. Therefore, its form and content need to be deduced from a description in the catalogue of Unger's Salon:

Judging from the dancer, women from that tribe are characterised by richness of costume and beauty. The painting shows one of them dancing on an oriental carpet. Her open arms hold the folds of a white dress with small fingers. A large turban on her head, with a long haik or veil, reaching her feet, gold chains cover the headpiece made of plaits of red and blue wool. Her coral necklace has silver adornments, clasps and earrings are also silver, of significant size. The dancer's face is typically Arabic, white with distinct deep-set eyes and painted eyelashes and brows. In the background, on her left-hand side, there is a group of musicians, on the right, an Arab man smoking tobacco and two women, one of whom is playing with a gazelle, another is daydreaming leaning on a red curtain which covers the room from sunlight that pierces it and gives it the colour of flames [...] The depicted dance is characterised by a distinct movement of the figure who moves barefoot on the carpet as if she was sliding on the floor.⁵⁴

The scene was depicted in the Sidi Okba oasis. Women from the Ouled Nail tribe came from the south of the country and often worked as dancers and prostitutes. While staying in larger cities they lived in specially reserved districts or streets. After making money for a dowry, they returned to their native region, where they enjoyed respect and got married. European artists viewed them as biblical courtesans, embodiment of oriental voluptuous beauty and eastern sensuality. Painters created images of the Ouled Naïl dancers resembling fantastic opera singers (Georges Clairin), they showed them swirling in dance (Rousseau, Jules van Biesbroeck) or dancing during the Feast of the Night, *m'bita* (Etienne Dinet, Maurice Potter), or they painted their portraits emphasising their large, dark eyes and sumptuous jewellery (Landelle, Eugène Deshayes).⁵⁵

[26] Sandoz's paintings *Morning in the Sahara* and *Evening in the Sahara* were described as "two small and modest views of African nature, which nevertheless attracted popular attention".⁵⁶ The press noted that:

In the morning, a group of Arab nomads is making its meal, before they move on with their journey, while the smoke rises vertically upwards, proving complete calmness of the air. The smoke is so light that it seems it would float away any

⁵⁴ *Treść obrazów Adolfa Sandoza podolanina z podróży artystycznej po Afryce*, 6-7.

⁵⁵ Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie des peintres*, 34, 35, 36; Villebrun, *L'appel du désert*, 60, 62; Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie du Sud et ses peintres*, 46-51.

⁵⁶ "Przegląd sztuk pięknych", in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 304 (1881), 271.

*minute, disperse, and reveal again a distinct shape of the rocks that close the horizon.*⁵⁷

This painting is most probably a work described at a more recent antiquities' auction under the incorrect title *Prayer at Sunset* (1880).⁵⁸ For the pendant of the *Morning in the Sahara*, though, the lost painting entitled *Evening in the Sahara*, researchers must rely exclusively on its description. The *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* wrote:

*In the evening, wild goats are grazing among the green plants of the oasis, with sun-scorched rocks around them, with colours and nature resembling the others. Here and there, the sky stretching above them with no sign of clouds, ruthless, somewhat dim, seemingly panting with heat and bearing distinct characteristics of tropical zones.*⁵⁹

Morning in the Sahara shows more than a camp of Arabs preparing a meal. The group of Muslims in the foreground is occupied with morning prayer. Behind them, there is a tent, with more groups of nomads in the distance, camels, and horses. A mountain landscape is in the background. The painter divided the composition into two contrasting zones. The bottom one is dominated by dim grey and beige juxtaposed with intense blue, pink, and orange of the morning light cast onto the mountains. The topic of Muslim prayers, mystical concentration, and contact with the absolute fascinated the majority of orientalist painters. Among those interested in Algeria it was taken up by Bompard, Dinot and van Biesbroeck, among others. Nineteenth century artists depicted prayers in mosques or on the roofs of houses, yet scenes of prayer in the remote desert brought a more powerful message, for they allowed for a juxtaposition of religious focus with the absolute of nature while playing on the effusion of colours of the sunrise and sunset. Apart from Sandoz, prayers in the desert in Algeria were painted by Guillaumet (*Evening Prayer in the Sahara*, 1863) and Girardet (*Prayer in the Desert*).⁶⁰

[27] Sandoz's impressions from his second stay in Algeria at the El Kantara oasis found their expression in the painting *On the Oued Riverbank at El Kantara Oasis*, known from a reproduction (Fig. 6).

⁵⁷ "Przegląd sztuk pięknych", in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 304 (1881), 271.

⁵⁸ <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/adolfo-karol-sandoz-prayer-at-sunset-outside-4881964-details.aspx?from=searchresults&pos=3&intObjectID=4881964&sid=01745513-cffb-4159-b9f9-28052fccc4dc> (accessed 10 April 2015).

⁵⁹ "Przegląd sztuk pięknych", in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 304 (1881), 271.

⁶⁰ Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie du Sud et ses peintres*, 36-38.



6 Adolf Sandoz, *On the Oued Riverbank at El Kantara Oasis*, 1881 (reprod. from: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 41 [1913], 805)

The painter showed women and girls from the family of the sheik of El Kantara washing clothes on the river bank. Women are wearing traditional clothing and rich abundant jewellery. Sandoz depicted them in various poses – leaning over the water, carrying the washing, talking, hanging the fabrics. Very clear is his fascination with the grace and picturesque quality of the Algerian women's clothing and beauty. The landscape of El Kantara is seen in the background – its rocky banks covered with palm trees. Water, the miracle emerging in the midst of the desert, concentrated all life – this is where people would find their water, bathe, and wash their clothes. Those daily chores, performed by Arab women, attracted the attention of painters travelling to Algeria: Women washing on the river bank were also depicted by Dinet, Jules Taupin and Francisque Noailly.⁶¹

[28] In 19th-century painting, images of caravans amounted to symbols of the desert. In Algeria, they were painted by William Wyld, Jules-Édouard Magy, Fromentin, Victor Pierre Huguet, Gustavo Simoni, Emile Bertrand, Washington, and Ziem, among others.⁶² Perhaps it was during his second stay in Algeria when Sandoz created a watercolour titled *Caravan of Camels in the Sahara* (Fig. 7).

⁶¹ Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie du Sud et ses peintres*, 32-35.

⁶² Vidal-Bué, *L'Algérie du Sud et ses peintres*, 12-19.



7 Adolf Sandoz, *Caravan of Camels in the Sahara*, 1881 (reprod. from: *Kłosy* 917 [1883], 58)

This work was reproduced in *Kłosy* magazine, accompanied by the painter's interesting recollections in which he explained the scene taking place in the desert. Sandoz had an unexpected encounter with a caravan near Biskra. He described this event in the following fashion:

I was coming back from the desert with my companion, carrying my painting equipment; both tired, we plodded along on the sand, repeatedly stopping to look with emotion on this amazing landscape and admire breathtaking views. Suddenly, we heard a thud resounding deep in the mountains, spreading over the desert like thunder from the distance. In this uninhabited land one gets so used to silence that this rising noise filled us with uncontrolled terror. [...] trembling a little, we ran towards the mountains [...]. Quickly, we reached Segia [...]. We saw a caravan emerging from beyond the sandy hills [...]. The caravan consisted of four hundred camels, making it an orchestra of four hundred double basses with occasional high-pitched shrieks of cameleers and thrusts of their sticks. [...] cameleers often sing throughout the entire journey, while the leading camel announces each smallest obstacle with a grim roar, while all the other animals repeat his signal. This horrifying bellow [...] fills one with irresistible terror. The caravan was led by a white camel of the mearis breed, carrying a richly adorned, tightly closed sedan with [...] a wife for the Sheik of Touggourt [...]. It was followed by other camels with packages and sacks laden with the bride's riches.⁶³

The caravan stopped for the night in the vicinity of Biskra. At night, the white camel died. The next day, Sandoz observed the caravan's departure and most probably this was the moment he depicted in his watercolour. Sandoz's work can be compared with other representations of caravans majestically travelling across the sun-scorched vastness of the Algerian desert (e.g. Paul Lazerges, *Caravan near Biskra*, 1892). Yet, Sandoz's work finds its closest artistic counterpart in Léon

⁶³ Adolf Sandoz, "Karawana wielbłądów w Saharze", in: *Kłosy* 917 (1883), 58.

Belly's masterpiece *Pilgrims Going to Mecca* (1861). Perhaps in his placing a dead camel in the foreground, Sandoz was inspired with Guillaumet's *Desert* (1867), a poignant and symbolic image of a dead camel shown on the background of the desert.

Adolf Sandoz's work from Algeria and orientalist painting of the second half of the 19th century

[29] Contrary to the conventional aesthetic interpretation of orientalist artworks – as exemplified by the exhibition catalogue *Orientalism. The Near East in French Painting, 1800–1880* published in 1982 – Linda Nochlin, in an article in 1983, set a new direction for research on Orientalism in 19th-century painting. The author followed a mode of interpretation set forth by Edward Said and emphasised the need for a critical analysis of such paintings.⁶⁴ According to Nochlin, many painters had adopted the Western view on Oriental lands that vindicated the imperialist expansion of European states to the East and to the South. In this perspective, inhabitants of the Islamic lands were depicted as passive, dormant, idle and promiscuous and their rulers as cruel and not bound by laws, constituting a complete opposite of the Europeans. This theory found its confirmation in the analysis of paintings by Jean-Léon Gérôme – *The Snake Charmer*, *Turkish Bath*, and *The Slave Market*. The new perspective allowed for reading scenes of harems, oriental baths, slaughters, slave markets, and other oriental dramas as expressions of Europeans' repressed erotic fantasies, emanations of perverse stereotypes of the Orient, and attempts at the West's domination over the East.

[30] Nochlin's theses were criticised by John MacKenzie. The latter sought to prove that motivations of artists who took up oriental subject matter were more ambiguous and complex. Citing historical sources, MacKenzie argued that there was no correlation between the development of Orientalism in painting and imperialist policies of England and France. He also concluded that the representation of the inhabitants of the Orient as cruel or promiscuous, far from an attempt to define them through stereotypes, was meant as an escape from the contaminated culture of industrial Europe through embracing primeval ideals and truths.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *Orientalism. The Near East in French Painting, 1800–1880*, ed. Donald A. Rosenthal, exh. cat., Rochester/New York 1982; Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York 1979; Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient", in: *Art in America* 71/5 (1983), 119-131 and 187-191; reprinted in: Linda Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision. Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, New York 1989, 33-59.

⁶⁵ John MacKenzie, *Orientalism. History, Theory and the Arts*, Manchester/New York 1995; see also: Alexander Lyon Macfie, "MacKenzie versus Nochlin", in: Macfie, *Orientalism*, London 2002, 66-72.

[31] How, then, to evaluate the group of truthful depictions of the East in numerous examples of genre painting and landscape to which Sandoz's work belongs? I suggest that his work does not manifest influence of imperialism. Sandoz was one of many painter-travellers who visited oriental lands in search of inspiring motifs, landscapes, colours, and light. The lack of drama, plots, and erotic content in Sandoz's work was noted by contemporary critics who expected such elements. In *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* his scenes from Algeria were accused of lacking a deeper message, and described as follows: "His beautifully finished works would benefit from some idea, if, rather than a faithful photographic record of a quiet moment, they included some human drama, or at least some action that could involve the viewer".⁶⁶

[32] Said's theory proves instructive, however, in the consideration of the meaning of Orient for Sandoz. His statements suggest that in his opinion the people and nature of Algeria retained an element of primeval primitivism that Europe had already lost. Encountering it offered energy and inspiration. The painter noted: "Taken together, all this is dirty and wild, but also very much fit for a painting".⁶⁷ At the same time, as a man of Western culture, Sandoz viewed Algeria and the Muslims through stereotypes. He reproduced clichés about the Arab approach to life. When studying an Arab man, his clothing, gestures and physiognomy, he concluded that the needs of a Muslim man "are so limited that his modest and monotonous life knows no desires, he lives sadly and patiently, awaiting happiness in the other world".⁶⁸ The artist thought that inhabitants of the Orient fell easily into melancholy and displayed a passive approach to life. This way, he shared misconceptions about the people of the Orient that were identified by Said: "Orientals or Arabs are thereafter gullible, 'devoid of energy and initiative' [...], they are 'lethargic and suspicious' and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race."⁶⁹ To conclude, it can be said that Sandoz was to some degree inclined to embrace those stereotypes, yet they did not prevent him from carefully observing the inhabitants of Africa and becoming fascinated with Algeria.

[33] Orientalist painting of the second half of the 19th century was dominated by the realist approach, defined even as ethnographic. Théophile Gautier saw it as a revival of this genre. Artists were rarely satisfied with one journey to the East. Thanks to the development of transport and tourism they travelled to oriental countries on multiple occasions, spending there many months and staying for extended periods of time, which gave them the possibility of gaining deeper

⁶⁶ "Sztuki piękne", in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 266 (1881), 70.

⁶⁷ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

⁶⁸ "Z listów Adolfa Sandoza", in: *Czas* 271 (1880), 1.

⁶⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 38.

knowledge of the Orient and making studies from nature. The realist perspective on the East was made popular also by artists who participated in research excursions and documented views, historical monuments and people. Their works were reproduced in magazines and albums, this way popularising the image of the Orient. Works such as Edward William Lane's *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, published in 1836, allowed many artists to understand the customs of the inhabitants of the Orient. There were also published works that presented racial differences, including the *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1854-1855) by Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, a man who theoretically founded racism. Differences in facial features were also interesting for artists – early studies of psychological types were painted by Charles Gleyre.⁷⁰

[34] Two major tendencies can be distinguished within realist orientalist painting. The first one involved realism with the ambition of a possibly faithful depiction of scenes, landscapes as well as physiognomies of the Orient. The second may be defined as pseudo-realism. Photographically accurate scenes and very precisely depicted details made an impression of truth, yet insightful scholars have pointed out numerous mistakes or perhaps intended alterations made by painters. Among those are Gérôme's canvases with scenes of prayer in the mosque. François Pouillon identified elements incompatible with Muslim religion and customs, such as figures of people praying with their shoes on, half-naked men inside the mosque, and pigeons in the sanctuary. Other painters mixed in one scene objects coming from various epochs or fragments of a number of interiors.⁷¹ This way, they achieved scenes with more interesting compositions including more interesting details; sometimes however they simply made mistakes stemming from a lack of knowledge of Oriental art and customs.

[35] Sandoz's work of Algerian subject matter can be identified with the first of the mentioned orientalist trends of realist painting. Already in the 19th century critics appreciated Sandoz's scenes for their faithful depictions of Oriental life, with *Czas* magazine writing that: "very distinct is his faithful depiction of costumes,

⁷⁰ Peltre, *Orientalism in Art*, 154-167; Peter Benson Miller, "Un orientalisme scientifique? L'ethnographie, l'anthropologie et l'esclavage", in: *L'orientalisme en Europe de Delacroix à Matisse*, ed. Davy Depelchin and Roger Diederer, Paris 2011, 117-130.

⁷¹ François Pouillon, "L'ombre de l'Islam. Les figurations de la pratique religieuse dans la peinture orientaliste du XIX^e siècle", in: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 75 (1988), 24-34. See also Walter B. Denny, "Quotations in and out of Context: Ottoman Turkish Art and European Orientalist Painting", in: *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), 219-230; Sophie Makariou and Charlotte Maury, "The Paradox of Realism: Gérôme in the Orient", in: *The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904)*, ed. Laurence Des Cars, Dominique de Font-Réaulx and Edouard Papet, Paris 2010, 259-265.

accessories, and architecture that gives the painting a particular value".⁷² Critics noted that Sandoz's works allow viewers to get to know remote cultures and landscapes, while the artist reveals "mysteries of the life of a distant, poorly known people and records the details of their life with the meticulousness of exquisite observation".⁷³ The painter proudly emphasised that *Interior of a House in Biskra* was painted:

*in the same room it shows in the picture. I only added some insignificant changes in Paris, so it shows what I saw while painting. [...] it is very difficult to get inside those houses. It was only because of my persistence that I had a chance to work there. When they tried to send me away, I would gesticulate that I don't speak Arabic until they considered me a madman, and since they see madness as God's blessing, I gained a lot of respect.*⁷⁴

[36] Sandoz's work was appreciated especially for its attention to detail. *Dancer from the Uled-Nail Tribe* included details such as "shoes dropped on the floor next to a musician, a fan next to a woman playing with a gazelle, a violin held by one of the musicians [...]. There is a red clay hand print on one of the columns. It belongs to the owner of the house and symbolises his property of the house".⁷⁵ Art critics admired the painter's technical skill. They noted that his paintings "were characterised by an incredible delicacy of the paintbrush and good finish to the details, reaching almost the level of miniatures".⁷⁶ Sandoz's mastery in the depiction of details comes to the fore in his *Oasis* (1879).⁷⁷ With a jeweller's precision he chiselled details of the figures' clothing, the figure of the horse, and the landscape. At the same time, he chose harmonious colours for the entire scene.

[37] In Africa, Sandoz sought to find freshness that Europe had lost. As Gustave Flaubert wrote, the Orient offered "gorgeous colour, in contrast to the greyish tonality of the French provincial landscape. It meant exciting spectacle instead of humdrum routine, the perennially mysterious in place of the all too familiar".⁷⁸ Sandoz hoped that Algeria would provide themes, compositional patterns, and figures that had never been exhibited before. With satisfaction he wrote about

⁷² "Z wystawy obrazów", in: *Czas* 264 (1880), 1.

⁷³ "Adolf Sandoz", in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 41 (1913), 805.

⁷⁴ "Z wystawy obrazów", in: *Czas* 264 (1880), 1.

⁷⁵ *Treść obrazów Adolfa Sandoza podolanina z podróży artystycznej po Afryce*, 6.

⁷⁶ "Z wystawy obrazów", in: *Czas* 264 (1880), 1.

⁷⁷ <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/adolf-karol-sandoz-at-the-oasis-5636660-details.aspx?from=searchresults&pos=3&intObjectID=5636660&sid=01745513-cffb-4159-b9f9-28052fcc4dc&page=1&lid=1> (accessed 10 April 2015).

⁷⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 185.

Interior of a House in Biskra that: "It is an interior of a very common house, yet I don't think anyone has painted anything like that before".⁷⁹ For him, Algeria was a catalogue of motifs to which one could reach out for inspiration. In Africa, Sandoz wanted to refresh his own work, or perhaps even find a new artistic path to follow. He must have certainly recognised that at the turn of the 1870s and 1880s orientalist painting was very popular. Works by orientalist painters were sold for thousands and even tens of thousands of franks, often becoming part of collections of bankers and industrialists from the East Coast of the United States. The leader within the Paris circles was Goupil & Cie, a company dealing in art works and reproductions.⁸⁰ Financial success allowed artists working with this company, such as Gérôme and Stanisław Chlebowski from Poland, to live opulent lives in Paris, collect eastern crafts and undertake more oriental travels. Paintings from Algeria were perhaps to open up a new career path for Sandoz, which would respond to the contemporary Salon trends and demands of the art market. This aspect was recognised by contemporary critics who indicated that due to the unusual, exotic subject matter and high formal qualities, his works became more than realist records of his impressions from Algeria, but also attractive decorations that could find their way to the most opulent Paris boudoirs.⁸¹ Sandoz's apparent pursuit of the fashion for exotica was noted by a reporter from *Kurier warszawski*, who wrote:

*At the time when the public yearns for objects from the most remote parts of the world, when for collectors and travellers China is already too familiar and accessible, while Japan is fully exhausted, a painter who depicts scenes from the life of the nomadic peoples of the Sahara and inhabitants of African oases comes right on time.*⁸²

[38] Nevertheless, at the Paris Salon in 1880, a small-scale work like *Interior of a House in Biskra*, came unnoticed. Most possibly, this was the reason why Sandoz decided to show his Algerian works in Poland, where they did, in fact, gain some publicity. However, in the 1880s, the artist did not follow the path of orientalist painters, but collaborated with the publishing houses Hachette, Quantin, and Delagrave. His illustrations can be found, among others, in books such as *Raphaël* by Alphonse de Lamartine (1884), *Mont Salvage* by Stella Blandy (1885), *Pharos* by Adriana Piazzzi (1886), *Héritiers de Montmercy* (1886) and *Un déshérité* by

⁷⁹ "Z wystawy obrazów", in: *Czas* 264 (1880), 1.

⁸⁰ Hélène Lafont-Couturier, "La maison Goupil ou la notion d'oeuvre originale remise en question", in: *Revue de l'art* 112 (1996), 59-63; Hélène Lafont-Couturier, "Mr Gérôme Works for Goupil", in: *Gérôme & Goupil. Art and Enterprise*, ed. Hélène Lafont-Couturier, Paris 2000, 13-29; DeCourcy E. McIntosh, "Goupil and the American Triumph of Jean-Léon Gérôme", in: *Gérôme & Goupil. Art and Enterprise*, Paris 2000, 31-44.

⁸¹ "Z wystawy obrazów", in: *Czas* 264 (1880), 1.

⁸² "Malarz-turysta", in: *Kurier warszawski* 280 (1880), 2.

Euxodie Dupuis (1887), *Le roman de Christian* by Pierre du Chateau (1887), and *La mission du capitaine* by H. de Charlieu (1887). Sandoz became also a fashion illustrator, making grey-coloured or sepia-toned pen drawings showing the elegant women of Paris in dresses of the newest cut shown on the background of sophisticated interiors, parks, and the sea.

[39] Sandoz can be counted among the orientalist painters who sought a faithful depiction of the life of Arabs, yet remained Westerners who see the Orient as a "colourful picture". He was one of many artists who took up oriental subject matter in an attempt to follow the fashion for Orient in the art market. In France, Sandoz's work disappeared among pictures with similar form and subject matter. Meanwhile, in Poland, he was considered among the more interesting representatives of the orientalist trend. *Kurier warszawski* positioned Sandoz among the most acclaimed Polish painter-travellers and wrote that: "Chlebowski discovers the mysteries of the harems of Constantinople - Tępa made drawings and paintings of numerous views of the Holy Land and scenes from Arabs' lives - Ajdukiewicz brought a bulky file from the East [...] - the remote and mysterious Sahara, on the other hand, has its Sandoz."⁸³

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⁸³ "Malarz-turysta", in: *Kurier warszawski* 280 (1880), 2.