

# COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Jean-Léon Gérôme  
(Vesoul 1824 – 1904 Paris)

*Standing Arnaut with pistol and dagger*

Pencil on paper  
32.3 x 20.3 cm (12 ¾ x 8 in.)

Provenance:

Suzanne and Aimé Morot, the daughter and son-in-law of the artist;

By descent to their son, Aimé-Léon Morot;

By whom sold, Sotheby's, Paris, 27 June 2002, lot 187;

From where acquired by the present owner.



This finely worked drawing depicts an Arnaut, an Albanian mercenary soldier in Ottoman service, instantly recognisable in his pleated fustanella, close-fitting jacket, and turban. The figure holds a long dagger and pistol across his body, his stance relaxed yet composed, evoking the dual qualities of elegance and latent force that Gérôme so admired in these subjects.

Although the exact painting for which this drawing was prepared remains unidentified, Gérôme employed Arnaut figures frequently throughout his career, both as protagonists in independent compositions and as stock characters within larger Orientalist scenes. Works such as *Arnaut Smoking* (fig. 1) and *Arnaut Blowing Smoke at the Nose of his Dog* (fig. 2) demonstrate his enduring fascination with these professional soldiers, who embodied for him a blend of exotic costume, martial presence and studied repose.



Fig. 1, Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Arnaut Smoking*, oil on panel, 33.5 x 25 cm, Private Collection

Fig. 2, Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Arnaut Blowing Smoke at the Nose of his Dog*, 1882, oil on panel, 60 x 73 cm, Private Collection

The drawing demonstrates Gérôme's characteristic precision at the preparatory stage. The fall of the pleated skirt, the folds of the jacket and the angled tilt of the head are all rendered with clarity and economy of line, leaving shading and tonal depth largely aside in favour of compositional definition. Such studies allowed Gérôme to build a repertoire of poses and costumes which he could adapt fluidly across multiple paintings.

Whether intended for a specific painting or serving as part of this broader stock of models, the sheet testifies to Gérôme's sustained interest in the Arnaut as a symbolic figure, a mercenary both familiar within the Ottoman world and alluringly foreign to European audiences of the later 19th century.