

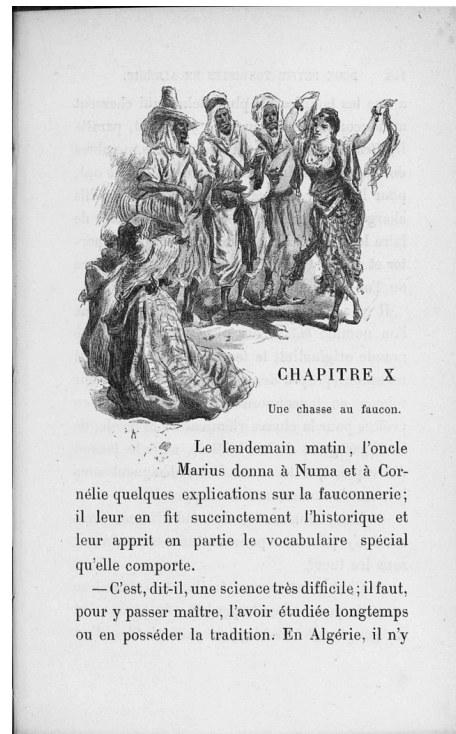
‘DEUX PETITS TOURISTES EN ALGERIE’ (1888) – FICTIONAL TOURISTS AND COLONIAL TOURIST IMAGINARY

The brutal colonization of North Africa by France, during the 19th century, made it possible for the ‘Muslim world’ to be known up close by a significant number of artists, such as Horace Vernet and Jean-Léon Gérôme. Their paintings, known in Art History as Orientalists, motivated European travelers to discover an East full of mysteries and charms, populated by sensual odalisques and fierce tribal chiefs (Eduard Saïd; Linda Nochlin). The hypothesis we defend in our research is that, in this sense, tourist images of colonized territories were no less important, such as sumptuous posters from shipping companies, colorful railway advertisements and illustrated tourist reports on trips to the Maghreb.

Illustrated tourist travel reports are a phenomenon from the end of the 19th century, which is explained by the development and maturation of modern tourism, which witnessed a real explosion in the period, also due to the colonization of previously almost inaccessible territories (Sihem Bella). As strange as it may seem to us today, tourist activity and colonialism are both products of Imperialism. After all, both colonization and tourism take possession of a territory to explore it. The two phenomena are obviously not of the same order. Colonization is a “violent domination that most often begins with a conquest, while tourism is a symbolic appropriation of a country“. But, in both cases, there is a strong desire to “control, even own, a region of the world” (Collet Zytnicki).

In our research, we argue that the Illustrated tourist travel reports, which emerged in the context described above, are one of the many channels through which tourist imaginaries, due to their intangible nature, passed and became visible in the form of verbal and non-verbal images (Maria Gravari-Barbas, Nelson Graburn; Noel Salazar). Such reports, in addition to narrating in the first person the impressions, adventures and misadventures of their European writers, also included elements that instructed potential travelers on what to expect and how to behave in the exotic lands they would visit, thus boosting tourism in the colonies. This is the case of the reports we studied, such as *L’Algérie contemporaine illustrée*, 1881, by Baroness Mary Elizabeth Herbert, and *Un An à Alger, excursions et souvenirs*, 1887, written by M.-J.

Baudel. And even though they have a significant amount of fiction, such illustrated reports were based on first hand experiences of very real people.



BONNEFONT, Gaston : *Deux Petits Touristes en Algérie*, 1888. « En voyant les Arabes au teint bronzé, vêtus de leurs burnous blancs sous les rayons du soleil, les femmes dont la figure disparaissait sous les voiles, une multitude d'oisifs dont le langage était pour eux absolument incompréhensible, nos voyageurs ne purent se défendre de l'étonnement qu'excitent naturellement en nous l'étrange et le nouveau » p.34. Fonte: gallica.fr

Deux Petits Touristes en Algérie, however, deviates from this pattern. Published in Paris in 1888, and written by Gaston Bonnefont, - known journalist, author of plays and travel books -, *Deux Petits Touristes* narrates the discoveries and adventures of two children, approximately 13 years old, in Algeria dominated by the French. In our paper, we will present an analysis of how the two little fictional tourists, Cornélie and Numa, characters invented by Bonnefont, reinforce racist and stereotypical perceptions about Algeria and Algerians, typical of colonial discourse. We will highlight, as an aggravating factor, the fact that the report was aimed at a child and youth audience, who, through the experiences of the two young fictitious tourists, narrated through texts and images, incorporated, from a very early age, a fallacious and exoticizing view of Algeria (François Staszak).