From Homer to the Harem. The art of Jean Lecomte du Nouy (1842-1923)
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The first time I encountered a work by Jean Lecomte du Nouÿ was at the Cleveland Museum of Art, where I had the great pleasure of working for several years with Louise d’Argencourt on the collection catalogue of nineteenth-century European paintings. In getting to know the museum’s splendid group of over 200 pictures, Lecomte du Nouÿ’s *The Dream of a Eunuch* (fig. 87) was certainly one of the most intriguing works to discover and investigate. The text I then wrote on this painting ultimately formed the seed for this book. After realizing how little had been published on Lecomte du Nouÿ, I continued to gather information about him with the idea of someday publishing a more extensive article. When I subsequently became a curator at the Dahesh Museum of Art, I there encountered another of the artist’s works, *Judith* (fig. 121), and far beyond an article, the idea of a Lecomte du Nouÿ retrospective was born; my research on this artist continued stronger than ever.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. Dario Gamboni, who, while teaching at Cleveland’s Case Western Reserve University, already encouraged me to develop my research on Lecomte du Nouÿ into a dissertation and, after his transfer to the University of Amsterdam, he enthusiastically agreed to be my advisor. His intelligence, dedication and kindness are inspiring and his guiding comments have greatly improved this book. It is a true pleasure and privilege to know him and his family. I would also like to thank, Prof. Dr. Ernst van de Wetering, Prof. Dr. Evert van Uitert, Prof. Dr. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Prof. Dr. Christine Peltre and Dr. Jenny Reynaerts for agreeing join the dissertation committee. And in this context I must finally salute David Steinberg, who, while a colleague at the Cleveland Museum of Art, gave me much valued advice on how to formulate and develop an argument.

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