

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: HISTORY, COLONIAL CONQUEST AND
EMPIRE: LOUIS-PHILIPPE'S MUSÉE
HISTORIQUE & HORACE VERNET'S
BATTLE PAINTINGS OF THE FRENCH
OCCUPATION OF ALGERIA

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The construction of the *Musée Historique* at Versailles and the colonial conquest of Algeria were two concurrent projects of national concern that spanned the July Monarchy (1830-1848), the period of Louis-Philippe d'Orléans's political administration. Louis-Philippe commissioned the history painter, Horace Vernet, to represent significant battles of the Algerian campaign to decorate three rooms in the Versailles museum, collectively titled the *salles d'Afrique* (African rooms). In this thesis, I argue that Vernet's Algerian battle scenes connect the Versailles historical-museological program with the colonial conquest of Algeria along aesthetic and ideological lines. Vernet's battle scenes functioned as propaganda, articulating the July Monarchy's imperial ambitions. In this respect, they invoked the legacy of Napoleon and the First Empire (1804-1815). Installed in the Versailles museum, they were also complicit in Louis-Philippe's project of writing history visually and inserting the Orléans chapter into the epic of French civic and martial glory embodied in the *Musée Historique*.

HISTORY, COLONIAL CONQUEST AND EMPIRE:
LOUIS-PHILIPPE'S MUSÉE HISTORIQUE & HORACE VERNET'S BATTLE
PAINTINGS OF THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF ALGERIA

By

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2013

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family and friends whose unwavering support has motivated me throughout my graduate career.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my gratitude to a number of individuals whose support and encouragement have been invaluable throughout the thesis research and writing process. Foremost, I thank my parents and close friends for their continued support and interest in my academic endeavors. I am grateful to the Department of Art History & Archaeology for the opportunity and financial assistance to pursue my graduate studies at the University of Maryland; my fellow graduate students and colleagues in the Department, as well as friends at the Phillips Collection, who offered useful advice and moral support that helped shape this project into its current state; the faculty with whom I had the pleasure to work, and whose graduate seminars have had a positive impact on my training as an art historian and aspiring scholar; and staff members, whose kind words and assistance have made my graduate experience enjoyable and a little less stressful. Finally, I am immensely grateful to my advisor and committee members for their valuable feedback, constructive criticism, and words of encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

French military forces landed at Sidi Ferruch beach in the Regency of Algeria on July 14, 1830, deployed by the Bourbon monarch, Charles X (1757-1836).¹ Two weeks following the invasion, the July Revolution (July 28-30, 1830), consisting of a three-day riot in Paris, terminated Charles X's administration as well as the dynastic rule of the Bourbons. During this time of political and civil uncertainty, Louis-Philippe d'Orléans (1773-1850), cousin of Charles X, assumed the throne to quickly restore order and proclaimed himself the "king of the French."² Louis-Philippe's political career thus began at a pivotal moment in French colonial history. During the first years of the July government, Louis-Philippe remained ambivalent about the Algerian mission. However, conscious of the power of public opinion, Louis-Philippe understood that the successful colonization of Algeria promised numerous economic and political benefits for the French nation. These benefits included access to natural resources; land for agricultural activity; and a foothold on the Mediterranean to facilitate mercantilism with the East.³ As a major political undertaking, colonial

¹ Scholars disagree over the precise cause(s) for invasion. Many propose that the apocryphal "fly-whisk incident," in which the Dey of Algiers struck the French Consul with a flywhisk in 1827 over an argument regarding debts owed by the French government, was the catalyst. A more convincing argument is that Charles X became unpopular among the French populace, and the invasion of Algeria was a final attempt to maintain control of the French throne. For a general discussion, see Charles André Julien, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine* (Paris: P.U.F., 1964), 21-63. For a concise discussion, see Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995), 6;17.

² H. A. C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy: A Political History of France 1830-1848* (London & New York: Longman, 1988), 6-22; Michael Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe: Art and Ideology in Orleanist France, 1830-1848* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); and Robert J. Bezucha, "An Introduction to the History," in Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia, *The Art of the July Monarchy France 1830 to 1848* (Columbia & London: University of Press, 1990), 17-48.

³ Collingham, *The July Monarchy* (1988), 240-257; see also Peter Benson Miller, "By the Sword and the Plow: Théodore Chassériau's Cour des Comptes Murals and Algeria," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (December 2004): 690-718; esp. 705-709. Miller convincingly shows that agriculture and

expansion would also legitimate the Orléans dynasty as the rightful heirs to the French throne, thereby securing a place for Louis-Philippe's family in French history and national memory.

Louis-Philippe's government, in comparison with preceding political administrations, was a constitutional monarchy. Its political authority was kept in check by a contract promulgated by two parliamentary bodies, the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber of Peers, and its finances were regulated by a civil list (*liste civile*) of debts the government was obligated to pay.⁴ The monarch was thus not the sole party involved in making administrative and financial decisions. The construction of the *Musée historique* at the Château of Versailles, largely abandoned since the Revolution (1789-1799), was one among many public projects that Louis-Philippe launched during his administration. From the time of its inception in 1833 to its opening in June 1837, the Versailles project was a financially taxing enterprise, totaling several million francs. The military occupation of Algeria, which coincided with the construction of the Versailles museum, was a *colonial* project of significant concern for members of the two Chambers. Funding was a crucial point of parliamentary debate for both projects.⁵

In this Master's thesis, I examine the colonial mission in Algeria and the construction of the Versailles historical museum as two vastly different, yet intimately related projects tied to Louis-Philippe's political administration. Both

industry, two subjects allegorized in Théodore Chassériau's *Cour des Comptes mural* (1847, destroyed), were two driving forces in the Algerian colonial mission. Thomas Robert Bugeaud, who became Governor-General of Algeria (and later the Duc d'Isly) especially supported agricultural activity (pp. 699-702).

⁴ On the July constitution see Collingham, *The July Monarchy* (1988), 70-83; on the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber of Peers see Collingham, *The July Monarchy* (1988), 84-94.

⁵ See Collingham, *The July Monarchy* (1988), 240-257.

projects spanned a large portion of Louis-Philippe's reign, and were continued under succeeding political administrations. While undertaking the colonial mission in Algeria, Louis-Philippe commissioned paintings of various dimensions and genres representing battles, the colonial landscape and indigenous peoples – aspects of the colonizing process – to decorate the historical museum. The images that I explore in this thesis are battle scenes of the Algerian military occupation in the *salles d'Afrique* (African rooms) painted by Horace Vernet (1789-1863) between 1838 and 1845. By recruiting painting as political propaganda, Louis-Philippe gave visual form to colonial expansion in Algeria. Installed in the Versailles historical museum, these paintings were set into a larger context of French martial and civic glory, and broadcasted their message of colonial expansion to the politically stratified French public.

This thesis is divided into three chapters that address various aspects of the *Musée historique*, the colonial mission in Algeria, and Vernet's battle scenes. In the historiographical overview below, I call attention to the most significant topics and texts that have shaped the general context for my thesis.

Chapter One includes a brief historical survey of the Château of Versailles from its original function as Louis XIV's court to its transformation under Louis-Philippe as a public museum. I discuss the layout of Louis-Philippe's historical museum, and describe the battle scenes of the Algerian campaign destined for the *salles d'Afrique*, whose construction remained in-progress throughout Louis-Philippe's reign. Thomas W. Gaetghens's book on the Gallery of Battles is one of the

most comprehensive and useful studies on the *Musée Historique*.⁶ Gaetghens addresses many key aspects of the museum's decorative, pedagogical and historical-museological program. Several shorter-length studies by Claire Constans expand on details of the historical museum's collections and gallery spaces.⁷ Works by previous curators of Versailles, André Pératé and Pierre de Nolhac, have informed the texts by Constans and Gaetghens. The most recent study on the *salles d'Afrique* by Aurélie Cottais is an article based on her Master's Thesis for the École du Louvre. Cottais's focus is the decorative program of the *salles d'Afrique*. She provides a perceptive description of the architectural design, materials, furnishings and layout of the African rooms. She also acknowledges the political connotation of Louis-Philippe's historical museum and rightly notes how the monumental canvases constitute an illustrated version of French history. I expand on these studies by examining the aesthetic and ideological problems of the monumental canvases destined for the African rooms. With the exception of Vernet's *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader at Taguin by the Duc d'Aumale, 13 May 1843*, the battle scenes that adorned the African rooms have not received much scholarly attention.⁸ In my analysis, I have

⁶ Thomas W. Gaetghens, *Versailles: De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, trans. Patrick Poirot (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1984). Gaetghens's book does not discuss the African rooms, which were constructed several years after the museum's opening in June 1837.

⁷ On aspects of Louis-Philippe's *Musée Historique*, see Claire Constans, *Versailles: La Galerie des Batailles* (Beyrouth & Paris: Khayat, 1984); Constans, "Encadrement et muséographie: l'exemple du Versailles de Louis-Philippe," *Revue de l'Art*, No. 76 (1987): 53-56; and Laurent Gervereau and Claire Constans, *Le Musée révélé: l'histoire de la France au Château de Versailles* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2005). For a catalogue raisonné of the Versailles museum's painting collection, see Claire Constans, *Musée national du Château de Versailles: Les Peintures*, 3 vols. (Paris: RNM, 1995). See also Barbara Scott, "Louis-Philippe's Musée historique at the Château of Versailles," *Apollo* (1987): n.p.

⁸ On Vernet's *Capture of the Smalah*, see Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in Kymberly N. Pinder, ed. *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History* (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 81-82; Albert Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1980), 43-44; Hélène Gill, *The Language of French Orientalist Painting* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 17-58; Hélène Gill, "Hegemony and Ambiguity: Discourses, Counter-discourses and Hidden Meanings in French Depictions of the

relied mostly on primary sources such as *livrets* from the Versailles museum; reviews and criticism from the Paris Salons; and historical texts on the battles represented.

In Chapter Two, I examine the style and content of Vernet's paintings to explain how their formal language communicates imperial ambitions that serve the political interests of Louis-Philippe's government. Both the colonial conquest of Algeria and the historical museum project, captured in Vernet's monumental canvases, convey the ethos of Empire, fostered by Napoleon. Michael Marrinan, Hugh Collingham and other scholars in history and art history have studied the extent to which Louis-Philippe consciously, and guardedly, reprised Napoleonic memory in administrative policies as well as artistic commissions.⁹ Bringing into my discussion noteworthy Napoleonic canvases, I examine how Vernet's battle scenes draw visually and rhetorically from examples of Napoleonic propaganda painting. I also point out how they differ by considering realist aesthetics and the so-called *juste milieu* trends

Conquest and Settlement of Algeria," *Modern & Contemporary France*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (May 2006): 159-163; Valérie Bajou, "Le désert a pris place dans le palais de Versailles," Institut du Monde Arabe, ed. *De Delacroix à Renoir: l'Algérie des Peintres*, Exhibition Catalogue (Paris: Hazan, 2003), 73-75; Melanie Vandebrouck, "Myth-making in Versailles: the French 'liberating mission' in Algeria and Horace Vernet's *Prise de Smala d'Abd el Kader*," *Immediations: the Research Journal of the Courtauld Institute of Art*, Vol. 1, Issue 4 (January 2007): 92-109; and Jennifer Olmsted, "The Sultan's Authority: Delacroix, Painting and Politics at the Salon of 1845." *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (March 2009): 96-99. For a discussion of Vernet's other Algerian battle scenes, see Michael Marrinan, "Schauer der Eroberung: Strukturen des Zuschauens und der Simulation in den Nordafrika-Galerien von Versailles," in *Bilder der Macht, Macht den Bildern: Zeitgeschichte in Darstellungen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Stefan Germer and Michael F. Zimmerman (Munich: Klinckschardt and Biermann, 1999), 267-295; and John Zarobell, *Empire of Landscape: Space and Ideology in French Colonial Algeria* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

⁹ Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* (1988), 141-200. See also Natasha S. Naujoks, "Between Memory and History: Political Uses of the Napoleonic Past in France, 1815-1840," (Ph.D., diss: North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2011); and Walter R. Herscher, "Evoking the Eagle: The July Monarchy's Use of Napoleonic Imagery," (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1992). Art historians have shown how Napoleon's imperial government commissioned large-scale propaganda paintings to show at the biennial Salons and display in the prominent places in palaces and museums. For a general survey of Napoleonic imagery, see Albert Boime, *Art in the Age of Bonapartism* (Chicago University Press, 1990), 35-96.

that aligned with the ambitions of the July Monarchy and informed Vernet's aesthetic choices.

As such, my analysis of Vernet's Algerian battle scenes emphasizes the artistic context and sociopolitical conditions that produced them. Much of the scholarship on the art produced in the period bracketed by the Revolution and the Second Empire foregrounds its close relationship to politics and the governments active during these times. Michael Marrinan's *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* is the canonical source on the relationship between art and politics of the July Monarchy, following an important 1914 publication by Léon Rosenthal, *Du Romantisme au réalisme*.¹⁰ The subject of art and politics under the July Monarchy has also been treated in essays by renowned scholars of nineteenth-century art compiled in two anthologies, *The Art of the July Monarchy: France 1830 to 1848* and *The Popularization of Images: Visual Culture under the July Monarchy*.¹¹ In examining Vernet's Algerian battle scenes, I elucidate how colonial and military

¹⁰ Léon Rosenthal, *Du Romantisme au réalisme: La peinture en France de 1830 à 1848*, ed. Michael Marrinan (Paris: Macula, 1987 [originally 1914]). In this text, Rosenthal presents the social history of art during the July Monarchy, covering the range of artists and genres that emerged during this period bracketed by two dominant stylistic modes, Romanticism and Realism.

¹¹ Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia, *The Art of the July Monarchy France 1830 to 1848* (Columbia & London: University of Press, 1990) and Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Gabriel P. Weisberg, eds. *The Popularization of Images: Visual Culture under the July Monarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). In *The Art of the July Monarchy*, see in particular: Robert J. Bezucha, "An Introduction to the History," pp. 17-48; Michael Paul Driskel, "An Introduction to the Art," pp. 49-79; Patricia Condon, "Historical Subjects," 80-100; Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, "At Home and Abroad: Landscape Representation," pp. 116-130. In *The Popularization of Images*, see Michael Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles," pp. 113-143; and Kim Munholland, "Michaud's *History of the Crusades* and the French Crusade in Algeria under Louis-Philippe," pp. 144-163. Other surveys of July Monarchy art include Stephen F. Eisenman, "Realism and Naturalism: The Generation of 1830 and the Crisis in the Public Sphere." In Eisenman, Stephen F. et al. *Nineteenth-Century Art: A Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994), 188-205; and Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, "The Popularization of Art and Visual Culture in France during the July Monarchy (1830-1848)," in *Nineteenth-Century European Art*, Second Edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2006), 225-255.

history fit into this broader context of art in the service of politics during the July Monarchy.

The subject of European colonialism and its larger social, economic, and cultural impact on both the sovereign power and its colonial territories has received a great deal of scholarly attention in history and art history in recent decades.¹² This thesis concerns the earliest phase of French colonial contact with Algeria, 1830 to 1847, marked by military occupation and resistance from indigenous armies commanded by Abd-el-Kader. A useful general history of French colonialism in Algeria is Charles André Julien's *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*. More recent studies on French colonialism in Algeria include works by historians Patricia M. E. Lorcin, Julia Clancy-Smith and Jennifer E. Sessions, and art historians, Frances Terpak, Zeynep Çelik, Peter Benson Miller and John Zarobell. Patricia Lorcin's extensive research on French colonialism in Algeria has been particularly valuable to this thesis. As scholars rightly point out, the colonial mission of 1830 was also a civilizing mission, seeking to Christianize the largely Islamic population of the North African country.¹³ With some qualification, this goal to Christianize Islam, which had

¹² For a general survey of European colonialism, see H. L. Wesseling, *The European Colonial Empires, 1815-1919* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2004). Other works that have discussed aspects of early-nineteenth-century European colonialism include Stuart Woolf, "The Construction of a European World-View in the Revolutionary-Napoleonic Years," *Past & Present*, No. 137 (November 1992): 72-101"; Stuart Woolf, "French Civilization and Ethnicity in the Napoleonic Empire," *Past and Present*, No. 124 (August 1989): 96-120; and Raymond Betts, "The French Colonial Empire and the French World-View," in Ross, Robert ed., *Racism and Colonialism* (The Hague: Leiden University Press, 1982). For discussions of French artistic encounters with Algeria, see Gill, *The Language of French Orientalist Painting* (2003). For short essays discussing French artistic encounters with colonial Algeria from the Restoration through the Third Republic see also Institut du Monde Arabe, ed. *De Delacroix à Renoir: l'Algérie des Peintres*, Exhibition Catalogue. Paris: Hazan, 2003.

¹³ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities* (1995); see also Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Algeria and France (1800-2000): Identity, Memory, Nostalgia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006); "Historiographies of Algiers: Critical Reflections," in *The Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City Through Text and Image*, ed. Zeynep Celik, Julia Ann Clancy-Smith and Frances Terpak (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 227-251; and Patricia M.E. Lorcin and Daniel Brewer, eds. *France and its Spaces of*

prompted the Crusades of the medieval period, still informed the 1830 conquest in the post-Enlightenment era.

In art history, recent studies by Peter Benson Miller, John Zarobell and others examine artistic representations of the colonized land and peoples of Algeria by Vernet and his contemporaries. Finally, two recent texts have treated the scope of French colonialism in Algeria from occupation through liberation (1830-1962). *The Walls of Algiers*, published after a conference organized at the Getty Museum (May 2004), features case studies on the art, architectural and social history of the town of Algiers.¹⁴ *Algérie 1830-1962*, an exhibition held at the Musée de l'Armée (May 16-July 29, 2012) brings together a range of artworks, military memorabilia, photographs and films narrating the history of conquest through liberation. The accompanying exhibition catalogue contains numerous brief essays by scholars in a range of humanities and social science disciplines.¹⁵

Finally, in Chapter Three, I discuss how the Versailles museum functions as a historical space and constructs Louis-Philippe's historical narrative in visual format. I

War: Experience, Memory, Image (New York: Palgrave, 2009). Her first publication, *Imperial Identities*, shows how French contact with the indigenous Arab and Kabyle populations during the earliest phase of occupation resulted in stereotypes and prejudices about the native populations. Accordingly, Arabs were regarded as nomadic, fanatical and prone to savagery in contrast to the Kabyles, who were mountain-dwellers and arbiters of agriculture and industry, and more likely to accept the civilizing thrust of the French colonial mission. These stereotypes informed literary and artistic images.

¹⁴ *The Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City Through Text and Image*, ed. Zeynep Celik, Julia Ann Clancy-Smith and Frances Terpak (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009). See in particular, Frances Terpak, "The Promise and Power of New Technologies: Nineteenth-Century Algiers," pp. 87-133; Julia Clancy-Smith, "Exoticism, Erasures, and Absence: The Peopling of Algiers, 1830-1900," pp. 19-61; Zeynep Çelik, "Historic Intersections: The Center of Algiers," pp. 198-226.

¹⁵ Musée de l'Armée, ed. *Algérie, 1830-1962 avec Jacques Ferrandez* (Paris: Casterman, 2012). This exhibition catalogue is composed of short essays by various scholars in history and art history. See in particular, Jean-Louis Riccioli, "Quarante ans de lute implacable," pp. 30-37; Benjamin Stora, "L'émir Abd el-Kader, guerrier et savant," pp. 38-43; Jean-Pierre Bois, "Bugeaud et la conquête 'absolue' de l'Algérie," pp. 44-49; Jacques Frémaux, "Guerre et violence en Algérie: 1830-1870," pp. 54-69; Nicolas Schaub, "La représentation de la conquête," pp. 96-101; and "Catalogue," pp. 222-253.

draw on theories of memory and history to show the process by which history is written in the *Musée historique*, and what role the paintings and gallery spaces play in communicating this history.¹⁶ Noting in particular the Versailles museum's emphasis on French political and military authority, I point out how the galleries added after the museum's opening in 1837 – the Gallery of the Crusades and the African rooms – contribute to the history of French military superiority already narrated by other gallery spaces in the museum. In this way, Chapter Three ties together important threads explored in the previous two chapters.

As my thesis concerns issues of colonial imagery, I must consider how it engages the theoretical concept of Orientalism and the post-colonial methodological framework. Edward W. Said describes Orientalism as a Western hegemonic construct, shaped by discourse, which reveals imagined, inaccurate, or entirely fabricated Western ideas about non-Western cultures, customs and peoples.¹⁷ Linda Nochlin has shown the political relevance of Said's humanistic critique by stressing the potentially subversive content and ideological function of nineteenth-century

¹⁶ On memory and history, see especially Pierre Nora, ed. *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, 3 vols, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998). Nora's initial essay on history and memory has been reproduced elsewhere as: "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations*, No. 26: Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989): 7-24. For a concise overview of Nora's work, see Nancy Wood, "Memory's Remains: Les lieux de mémoire," *History and Memory*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring – Summer, 1994): 123-149.

¹⁷ "The relationship between the Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony..." See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 5. Said argues that Orientalism encompasses the Western study of Non-Western cultures in the humanities and social sciences, but also the Western fabrication of an imaginary Orient in discourse – which includes fictional, artistic and scholarly representations of foreign cultures – as a means of asserting Western political and cultural hegemony. The Orient, as Said describes it, includes the Far East, Near East and North Africa. Said bases his analysis on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary works and stresses that sociopolitical interests undergird *all* manifestations of Orientalist discourse, whether it be a work of art or social scientific study (Said, 1-25)

French Orientalist pictures.¹⁸ Since the publication of these texts, scholars in the humanities and social sciences have considered a broader range of problems to which Orientalism has given birth, such as colonial relations, center and periphery, race, and hybridity.¹⁹ I agree with Nochlin's assertion concerning the political significance of nineteenth-century Orientalist art, and as such, I consider the artworks studied in this thesis as political documents. However, in the interest of making an original argument, I do not specifically explore how iconography and style contribute to Orientalist discourse. Rather, I consider how this Orientalist discourse, which runs across Vernet's battle scenes, helps construct a narrative of military glory that connects Louis-Philippe's colonial mission rhetorically to other watershed moments in French history illustrated in the Versailles museum.

The final, but no less significant, aspect of this study is to shed new light on an artist and a selection of his works, which have been largely ignored or understudied in nineteenth-century art historical scholarship. Horace Vernet, son of Carle Vernet and grandson of Joseph Vernet (both painters), was Louis-Philippe's official painter.²⁰ From 1828 to 1835, Vernet served as the director of the French

¹⁸ Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in *Race-ing Art History*, 69-86; see also Donald A. Rosenthal, *Orientalism: The Near East in French Painting, 1800-1880* (Rochester: Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, 1982). Nochlin responds to Rosenthal, whose objective is to discuss the aesthetic merits of Orientalist painting and not the political problems they invoke. Nochlin contends that art historians should not privilege aesthetic innovations that characterize nineteenth-century Orientalist painting to downplay the social and moral problems encapsulated therein. Furthermore, Nochlin argues that Orientalism as a category for nineteenth-century art is tenuous given the wide range of stylistic trends and artists that fall within its parameters. Nochlin posits that "Battle Painting," citing a work that I shall discuss at length in this thesis – Horace Vernet's *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader at Taguin by the Duc d'Aumale, 13 May 1843* – is an especially fraught genre under the umbrella of Orientalist painting (Nochlin, 81).

¹⁹ See James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988). For various studies that have incorporated and/or complicated Said's theoretical framework as regards Vernet's works, see note 8.

²⁰ For a biography of Vernet, see Amédée Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet: Correspondance et biographies* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1863).

Academy in Rome, and in 1839, was one of the first French artists to travel to areas of the Near East and North Africa on a photographic mission shortly after the daguerreotype was invented. Despite Vernet's tremendous output, he has received moderate scholarly attention in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, lending credence to the prophetic observation of one nineteenth-century critic, Théophile Silvestre, that "the future will be tough"²¹ for the artist. With the exception of one retrospective of the artist's sketches and small drawings in Rome (1980),²² there has yet to be monographic exhibition of Vernet's masterworks. In recent years, scholars have attempted to rescue Vernet's reputation by foregrounding the remarkable ways the artist was "of his time" in his representation of contemporary life, politics, and namely, the "African Question" on the colonization of Algeria, which was hotly debated from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards.²³ In exploring these issues, I hope this thesis contributes to recent scholarship on Vernet, and provides a better understanding of the artist's *œuvre*.

This study thus engages a number of critical issues to show how Vernet's battle scenes connect two projects of national significance that defined the July Monarchy: the construction of the Versailles museum and the colonial conquest of Algeria. Louis-Philippe used the ideological power of Vernet's battle scenes,

²¹ Théophile Silvestre, *Les Artistes Français II: Éclectiques et Réalistes*, 73. Neil McGregor, for one, has boldly stated: "Horace Vernet encapsulates everything one dislikes about the French nineteenth century and has lingered in the European consciousness like the memory of rancid butter at the back of the mouth." MacGregor, "Paris: Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux arts," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 122, No. 931 (October, 1980): 709. MacGregor and other twentieth-century art historians, much like Vernet's nineteenth-century critics, have dismissed the artist's works as journalistic in style, particularly those from the July Monarchy onwards. However, others, such as Robert Rosenblum contend that the peculiar "journalistic" idiom – a mixture of genre, landscape and history painting – is evidence of Vernet's modernism. See Rosenblum, "Introduction," in *Horace Vernet (1789-1863)* (Rome: DeLuca, 1980).

²² *Horace Vernet (1789-1863)* (Rome: DeLuca, 1980).

²³ See in particular Robert Rosenblum's essay in *Horace Vernet* (1980): 18-19.

organized in the repurposed Versailles palace, to promote the Algerian campaign. In discussing both the images of the Algerian colonial mission and the architectural space in which they were installed, I demonstrate how history, colonial conquest and empire were the common denominators that linked the Algerian mission with the Versailles historical museum. Lastly, as significant enterprises of Louis-Philippe's administration, they also served a legitimist function in writing Louis-Philippe and the Orléans dynasty into the grand epic of French history.

CHAPTER 1: LOUIS-PHILIPPE’S *MUSEE HISTORIQUE* AT THE CHÂTEAU OF VERSAILLES (1833-1848)

The Museum of the History of France at the Château of Versailles [Fig. 1] that exists today is somewhat different from the original *Musée Historique* that Louis-Philippe had constructed during his reign. At the turn of the nineteenth century, large sections of the château had been restored to their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century splendor under the direction of Pierre de Nolhac who served as conservator from 1887 to 1920.²⁴ This restoration process required deconstructing and reorganizing much of Louis-Philippe’s historical museum, or in the words of Nolhac, “...destroying, in the ensembles created by Louis-Philippe, all parts of the iconography that were not only out of fashion, but also constituted veritable testimonies of error and lies.”²⁵ Indeed, Versailles has seen numerous transitions and transformations since its construction in the seventeenth century to the present, from royal residence and court to historical museum and national public monument. In this chapter, I provide a brief historical survey of these transformations to highlight the significant rupture in the palace’s history that Louis-Philippe’s administration marked. I conclude this chapter with a description of the *salles d’Afrique* and the Algerian battle scenes by Vernet that I shall examine further in Chapter Two.

²⁴ Pierre de Nolhac, *La Résurrection de Versailles: Souvenirs d’un conservateur 1887-1920* (Paris: Plon, 1937). See also Gaetghens, *Versailles : De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, (1984), 39-40.

²⁵ “Le plan le plus simple était de commencer par détruire, dans les ensembles créés par Louis-Philippe, toutes les parties iconographiques non seulement démodées, mais qui constituaient de véritables témoignages d’erreur et de mensonge.” in Nolhac, *La Résurrection de Versailles* (1937), 35.

FROM ROYAL COURT TO NATIONAL MUSEUM: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *MUSEE HISTORIQUE*

The *Musée Historique* opened on June 10, 1837 with the nuptial ceremony of Louis-Philippe's son, Ferdinand-Philippe Duc d'Orléans (1810-1842), and Duchess Hélène Mecklembourg-Schwerin (1814-1858). *Le Moniteur Universel*, the monarchy's official newspaper, reported on the inaugural ceremony:

10 June 1837

Versailles – Today the King inaugurated the Museum of Versailles. With great solemnity, His Royal Highness convened 1,500 of France's most important statesmen and men of letters, representatives of the Chambre des Pairs and the Chambre des Députés, of the Secretary of State, of the higher and lower courts, the royal court of Paris, the prefects of the Departments of the Seine and of the Department of Seine-et-Oise, marshals of the Army and admirals of the Navy, the National Guard, and the five academies that compose the Institut de France.

The King and the Queen traveled at 3 o'clock from the Petit Trianon to the palace, where they ascended the marble stairs and greeted guests as they toured the newly created galleries. Their Royal Highnesses were accompanied by the King and Queen of Belgium, Monseigneur the Duke and Madame the Duchess of Orléans, Madame the Grand-Duchess of Mecklenbourg, Madame Princess Adélaïde, the Princes and Princesses of the royal family. Their majesties were greeted by the exclamations of enthusiastic devotion from the crowd of well-wishers as they examined, in the Grand Gallery of Battles, pictures of all the heights of French glory throughout the ages, from Tolbiac to Wagram. After the tour, a banquet was convened, followed by performances of Molière's "Misanthrope" and Meyerbeer's "Robert-le-Diable." After greeting ambassadors from all nations who made vivid proclamations of respect for the grandeur of this new symbol of French national honor, Their Majesties retired around 2 o'clock in the morning to the Petit Trianon.²⁶

As the *Moniteur* reports, the opening of the museum was a festive event. The main attraction in the newly constructed museum was the Gallery of Battles. A painting by François Joseph Heim, *Louis-Philippe Inaugurates the Gallery of Battles, 10 June 1837* [Fig. 2], illustrates the grandeur of this occasion. Louis-Philippe appears in the central clearing, surrounded by the French elite and foreign nobility that have come to

²⁶ Cited and translated in Zarobell, *Empire of Landscape* (2010), 34.

witness the nuptial ceremony and the opening of the museum. The citizen-king gestures to the immense canvases that line the walls of the Gallery of Battles, which dwarf the entire royal retinue in their enormity. Jules Janin, critic of the publication *L'Artiste*, described the gallery as a “magnificent military pantheon [shining with] all of the victories that have immortalized our army from Tolbiac to Wagram.”²⁷

The construction of the historical museum transformed what was once a royal (private) palace into a secular (public) landmark, dedicated to “all of the glories of France.”²⁸ A brief survey of the events leading to the construction of the museum illustrates the process by which this transformation occurred.

In the seventeenth century, The Château of Versailles, formerly the hunting lodge of Louis XIII (1601-1643), became the royal residence and seat of political authority for the Bourbon monarch, Louis XIV (1638-1715).²⁹ Expansion on the site began in 1668, directed by the architect Louis Le Vau (1612-1670), the landscape architect André Le Nôtre (1613-1700), and painter Charles Le Brun (1619-1690).³⁰ Le Vau encased the core structure in the central wing with a stone envelope that faced the manicured gardens designed by Le Nôtre.³¹ Le Vau’s additions created ample space for the King’s and the Queen’s apartments on the first floor of the palace, leaving much of Louis XIII’s core structure in tact.³² After Le Vau’s death, Jules

²⁷ Janin, *Fontainebleau, Versailles, Paris* (1837), 151.

²⁸ The epigraph “À TOUTES LES GLOIRES DE LA FRANCE” appears on the frieze of the pavilions that enclose the Royal Courtyard on the north and south transverse wings.

²⁹ Gaetghens, *Versailles : De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, (1984). See also Gérald Van der Kemp, *Versailles* (Park Lane: New York, 1981). For a longer discussion, see Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture 1500-1700*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1981 [first published in 1953]), 321-358; esp. 332-333.

³⁰ See Blunt, *Art and Architecture 1500-1700*, 333-335.

³¹ Van der Kemp, *Versailles* (1981), 9.

³² Van der Kemp, *Versailles* (1981), 9. See also plans of the château in Van der Kemp, *Versailles* (1981), 12.

Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708) assumed the role of principal architect of the palace. Mansart constructed the Hall of Mirrors on the first floor of the central wing, facing the gardens in the rear, to replace the open terrace that Le Vau had designed.³³ Mansart's later additions included the construction of the north and south transverse wings, which extended the palace façade, and created a second, spacious, Royal Courtyard, that preceded the Marble Courtyard outside of the core structure.³⁴

Under Mansart's direction, the palace as Louis-Philippe had encountered it (the palace as we know it today) had taken form. With much of the architectural renovation finished by May 1682, Louis XIV had officially established his court at the château. The stately stone edifice became the embodiment of absolute monarchy. As Édouard Pommier has argued, the château's design and function as Louis XIV's court conveyed the grandeur of the monarchy: from its symmetrical layout with specific rooms keyed to the four cardinal points; the daily rituals and duties of kingship Louis XIV performed in it; to its unified decorative program comprised of sprawling gardens and fountains, statues, and paintings glorifying the *roi soleil*.³⁵

The palace remained the center of French monarchical power until the Revolution (1789-1799). On October 6, 1789, Louis XVI (1754-1793), his wife, Marie-Antoinette (1755-1793), and the royal family were forcibly relocated to the Palace of Tuileries in Paris, to remain under the watchful eye of the French *peuple*

³³ Blunt, *Art and Architecture 1500-1700*, 334. Barbara Borngässer, "Baroque Architecture in France," in *Baroque: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting*, ed. Rolf Toman (Tandem Verlag GmbH, 2007), 133.

³⁴ Blunt, *Art and Architecture 1500-1700*, 333. Borngässer, "Baroque Architecture in France," 133. The south wing was constructed between 1678 and 1681, before Versailles became the official court. The north wing was constructed thereafter, between 1684 and 1689.

³⁵ Pommier, "Versailles: The Image of the Sovereign," in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, Vol. III, ed. Pierre Nora, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998), 293-323.

until their execution in 1793.³⁶ Between the Revolution and the July Monarchy, the château existed in a state of disrepair. Each succeeding political administration, from the Directory to the Restoration, attempted to revivify the palatial complex and rescue it from demolition. The fate of the palace had been a topic of debate in the Convention shortly after Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette had been relocated to the Tuileries Palace.³⁷ Between 1792 and 1796, the royal collection of sculpture, painting, decorative arts, furniture, books and engravings had been dispersed to other repositories such as the Louvre and the Bibliothèque Nationale or auctioned to interested buyers.³⁸ In 1797, the Directory government created a temporary “*musée spécial de l’École française*” by assembling a collection of paintings from the French school to display at the palace.³⁹ This *musée special* was different from the Louvre, whose collection included much more than French masterworks. Napoleon (1769-1821) and his Bourbon successors, Louis XVIII (1755-1824) and Charles X (1757-1836), attempted to make the château inhabitable and useful as an educational institution. During the Restoration, Laurent Pierre de Jussieu proposed the construction of an historical gallery, which would include a suite of fifty paintings representing historical subjects from Pharamond – the early medieval Frankish king – to the Battle of Fontenoy (11 May 1745).⁴⁰ Jussieu particularly emphasized the didactic value of this gallery to complement the study of historical texts. However,

³⁶ Gaetghens, *Versailles : De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, (1984), 47. Louis XVI was executed on January 21, 1793 and Marie-Antoinette on October 16, 1793.

³⁷ Gaetghens, *Versailles : De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, (1984), 47; Constans, *Versailles: La Galerie des Batailles* (1984), 1.

³⁸ Pierre Lemoine, “Préface” in Gaetghens, *Versailles : De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, (1984), 33.

³⁹ Gaetghens, *Versailles : De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, (1984), 50; Constans, *Versailles: La Galerie des Batailles* (1984), 1.

⁴⁰ Gaetghens, *Versailles : De la résidence royale au Musée Historique*, (1984), 65. As Gaetghens notes, Louis-Philippe assimilated aspects of Jussieu’s program into his Gallery of Battles.

this gallery was never realized due to financial restrictions. Louis-Philippe's predecessors thus restored various indoor and outdoor spaces, and considered options for transforming the palace into an institutional or museum setting, but did not succeed in these endeavors.⁴¹

During the July Monarchy the palace underwent major renovation directed by Frédéric Nepveu (1777-1862), Louis-Philippe's architect. In an official address to the people the day following the opening of the museum, Louis-Philippe stated:

I rejoice that it was left to me to save this great monument from the ruin from which it was threatened as a result of its purported uselessness, and I watch with happiness that public approbation comes to crown my efforts... This is a day of happiness for me as the one who can put France in possession of this grand unity [filled with the] glorious remembrances of its history, which will perpetuate their memory in the eyes of contemporaries and posterity.⁴²

Between 1833 and 1837, vast sections of the palace's interior were demolished to create gallery spaces. During the renovation process, Louis-Philippe made no less than 398 visits, according to Nepveu's reports.⁴³ On its opening day on June 10, 1837, the *Musée Historique* comprised much of the core structure and south transverse wing with relatively few modifications in the north transverse wing [Fig. 3]. The seventeenth-century apartments of the king, queen and members of the nobility as well as Mansart's Hall of Mirrors remained in the core structure of the palace. On the ground floor of the south transverse wing were the galleries dedicated to the Empire and the Consulate. On the first floor of the south wing was the Gallery of Battles, which led to the 1830 room, dedicated to the events leading to Louis-Philippe's reign.

⁴¹ Constans, *Versailles: La Galerie des Batailles* (1984), 1. Napoleon had the Grand Canal, the parts of the façade, several balustrades, and ceilings restored. Louis XVIII commissioned artists to restore parts of the ceilings in the Hall of Mirrors and the Chapel. In 1827, Charles X Louis XVIII's successor and the last Bourbon monarch of the Restoration, installed statues of imperial marshals in the court.

⁴² Janin, *Fontainebleau, Versailles, Paris* (Paris: Ernest Bourdin, 1837), 182.

⁴³ Constans, *Versailles: La Galerie des Batailles* (1984), 3.

The corridor connecting the south transverse wing to the core structure included the 1792 room and Coronation room, comprised of images celebrating the Revolution and Napoleon. Finally, on the first floor of the corridor connecting the core structure to the north transverse wing, there was a series of rooms named after Greco-Roman gods, which were formerly royal apartments. At this point, the ground floor and the first floor of the north wing, which would later house the Gallery of the Crusades and the African rooms respectively, included a royal chapel and theatre.

THE *SALLES D'AFRIQUE* AND VERNET'S BATTLE SCENES OF ALGERIA

The Gallery of the Crusades and the African rooms were constructed gradually between 1837 and 1847 while the French military occupation of Algeria was underway.⁴⁴ The African Rooms [**Fig. 4**] were situated on the first floor of the north wing, along the *Rue des Reservoirs* facing east. The Gallery of the Crusades was constructed on the ground floor of the north wing. During the July Monarchy, the three rooms that comprised the *salles d'Afrique* included the *salle de Constantine*, *salle de la Smalah*, and the *salle du Maroc* (the Constantine, Smalah, and Morocco rooms respectively).⁴⁵ To decorate these African rooms, Louis-Philippe commissioned a series of monumental canvases representing the colonial conquest of Algeria from Horace Vernet.⁴⁶ The decorative programs of these rooms also featured smaller scale paintings above the doorways as well as decorative panels along the

⁴⁴ Cottais, "Les salles d'Afrique: construction et décor sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1848)," 2.

⁴⁵ The *salle du Maroc* was converted into the *salle de Crimée* (gallery of the Crimean War) during the Second Empire.

⁴⁶ These rooms curiously featured paintings representing subjects other than the Algerian campaign. See Constans, *Les Peintures*, Vol. III, 920-922.

ceiling moldings.⁴⁷ Horace Vernet painted the battle scenes destined to be the focal points of each of these rooms.

The *salle de Constantine* – the only room of the three to be completed during Louis-Philippe’s reign – featured three canvases depicting the systematic siege of Constantine, a fortified city east of Algiers. In the first scene, *Siege of Constantine: The Enemy Driven Back from the Hills of Coudiat-Ati, 10 October 1837* [Fig. 5], the Duc de Nemours (1814-1896), son of Louis-Philippe, stands on a rocky mound overlooking the city. He leads an attack against the Kabyles, who attempt to ambush the French army from the rain-slicked ravines below.⁴⁸ The central action occurs in the lower half of the canvas. The *Armée d’Afrique* is shown in the throes of combat, arranged in a sinuous line from the lower left corner of the composition to central peak on which the Duc de Nemours stands gesturing toward the Kabyle assailants. A cloud of smoke encloses the group of armed Frenchmen leading the charge against the Kabyles. Scattered puffs of gunfire emerge beyond the edges of the hill and continue into the distant landscape. The opposing army advances up the hill, red and green flags announcing its approach, as it maneuvers around the gunfire of the French army positioned behind the stone barricade on the lower left. Though overwhelming in number, the French army is not set for a decisive victory. Within its ranks, a number of casualties is visible in scattered vignettes: the fallen general in the lower right corner, surrounded by his military companions; the expiring soldier in the lower

⁴⁷ Aurélie Cottais, “Les salles d’Afrique: construction et décor sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1848),” 1-55. Vernet assigned the artist Éloi-Firmin Féron to complete the decorative program in the *salle du Maroc*.

⁴⁸ Anonymous. *Livret du musée historique de Versailles : description complète du palais et du musée par ordre chronologique de tous les tableaux, portraits, bas-reliefs, statues et bustes, suivi de l’historique... et des deux trianons...*N.D.

left corner, clutching the hand of his ally with his weapon thrown to the side; and most tragically, the dead soldier below center, carried away from the battlefield by his *spahis* allies. Despite such charged military combat, the azure sky dominates the upper half of the canvas, meeting the rolling, lavender-crested mountains in the distance.

In the second scene, *Siege of Constantine: The Assault Columns Position Themselves for Motion, 13 October 1837* [Fig. 6], three days have passed since the *Armée d’Afrique* repulsed the Kabyle ambush, and now the French army prepares to infiltrate the city. In the foreground, the assault columns line up behind the battlements. A number of *zouaves* can be seen in the lower left quadrant of the composition. A commanding officer, positioned strategically in the foreground near the pinnacle of the compositional void in the lower left quadrant, points the way to the city walls. Within the array of soldiers occupying the right two-thirds of the foreground, stationed behind the commanding officer, some semblance of an ordered rank-and-file is discernable. According to the report of the commanding officer of the siege, General Vallé, the first of three columns contained forty sappers, three hundred *zouaves*, and two elite companies from the second light cavalry battalion.⁴⁹ The fortified city is visible in the distance, framed in the background by a mountain range whose steadily rising and falling slopes echo the city’s skyline. A great distance separates the French army from the city walls, the harsh ochre of the desert landscape punctuated by the smoky emissions of canon fire. Suffused, in this way, with an air of

⁴⁹ *Livret du musée historique de Versailles*, 30. “quarante sapeurs, trois cents *zouaves*, et les deux compagnies d’élite du bataillon du 2^e léger

anticipation, the scene prepares the viewer for the climactic breach of the city that is the subject of the third canvas.

The third scene, *Siege of Constantine: The Capture of the City, 13 October 1837* [Fig. 7] shows the culminating moment in the three-part invasion of Constantine. The French army overruns the city, entering from the various points afforded by the damaged city walls. The forward thrust of the invading assault columns is divided along two compositional axes that moves from the lower left edge of the canvas to the middle right, creating a vertex, from which another line of armed Frenchmen penetrate into the center middle-ground, thus, into the city proper. Scattered groups of soldiers join the invading forces, climbing over debris, some armed with ladders in anticipation of obstacles. A commanding officer appears again on the lower edge of the canvas, just off-center, famously pointing the assault columns in the right direction. In roughly the center of the composition, a genuflected soldier waving the tricolor flag is visible in the wake of the advancing assault columns, the omnipresent cloud of smoke hovering over their heads. The city walls, reduced to rubble, frame the scene of invasion on the right edge of the composition. A tall white spire rises in the upper-right corner of the canvas, marking the army's target point in the city center: the palace of the bey.

The second of the African Rooms, the *salle de la Smalah*, was begun in 1845 but remained incomplete by the end of Louis-Philippe's reign. Its main attraction was the eponymous *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader by the Duc d'Aumale at Taguin, 16 May 1843* [Fig. 8]. With its enormous proportions of five by twenty-one meters, this painting eclipses the others in size, panoramic view of the battle, and

profusion of narrative minutiae. In this painting, the Duc d'Aumale (1822-1897), another of Louis-Philippe's sons, commands the attack on the resistance army's itinerant capital (*smalah*). The action appears in the foreground. The French cavalry, having spotted Abd-el-Kader's moving capital, rushes to subdue the nomadic community. The Duc d'Aumale appears on horseback, off-center, on first third of the canvas [Fig. 8a]. Within the chaotic *mêlée*, we see soldiers in the resistance army attempting to defend the civilian populations. An Arab soldier in the left foreground aims his rifle at the Lieutenant Colonel Morris who looms above the corpse of a fallen Arab soldier.⁵⁰ Near the center of the canvas, we see Arab civilians taking shelter in their tents [Fig. 8b], awaiting their inevitable capture. The elderly man in the white kaftan crouching inside the tent is none other than Sidi el-Aradj, the *marabout* who crowned Abd-el-Kader as emir. The battle continues on the right half of the canvas. Livestock scatters in all directions from the sound of gunfire [Fig. 8c]. Further to the right, we see Mohammed-bel-Karoubi, Abd-el-Kader's chancellor, and his family awaiting their inevitable capture. Women fall from the palanquins, others huddle under tents, beyond which we see the hazy, white rectilinear form of the Old Fort of Taguin. On the extreme right, Arab soldiers charge in to join the skirmish. Like Vernet's other battle scenes, the sky encompasses the upper half of the enormous canvas. The low horizon line is punctuated with the silhouette of mountains, and the sun-scorched desert appears to extend for miles to unite the foregrounded action with the alpine backdrop.

⁵⁰ For a diagram with a list of figure identifications, see "Notice sur l'expédition qui s'est terminée par la prise de la *smalah* d'Abd-el-Kader, le 16 mai 1843," INV. 8388.

Also begun during Louis-Philippe's administration, but never completed, was the *salle du Maroc*. The purpose of this room was to showcase the occupation army's victories in Morocco against sultan Abd er-Rahman, who had granted sanctuary to Abd-el-Kader. The citizen-king commissioned Vernet to produce large-scale canvases for this room.⁵¹ The artist managed to complete one, *The Battle of Isly, 14 August 1844* [Fig. 9], before the fall of the July Monarchy.⁵² The *livret* accompanying the Salon of 1846 described Vernet's battle scene tersely: "The capture of the camp of the son of the emperor of Morocco. Colonel Yusuf presents to Marshall Bugeaud the standards and the parasol of command, taken by the spahis and the light cavalrymen during the capture of the camp."⁵³ Vernet had already established a reputation for himself as a battle painter by the time he showed this painting at the Salon. In one glowing review, A.-H. Delaunay remarked: "*Voilà* the painter *par excellence* of our battles [...]; the one who knows the odor of [gun] powder, and how it intoxicates. Each new page from M. H. Vernet is a new masterpiece. The *Battle of Isly* bears witness to this."⁵⁴ This battle marked a significant milestone in the Algerian conquest. The Moroccan army's defeat also secured Abd-el-Kader's surrender and the end of his *jihad* (holy war), which had posed the greatest challenge to the French colonizing mission. In the *Battle of Isly*, the French army attacks the military encampment of the Moroccan army in the mountains of the Djar-el Akhbar near the Isly River.⁵⁵ We find

⁵¹ Cottais, "Les salles d'Afrique: construction et décor sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1848)," 19.

⁵² A second painting, *The Capture of the Isle of Mogador*, remained incomplete but was hung on the wall opposite of *The Battle of Isly*.

⁵³ Paris Salon de 1846. *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographies des artistes vivants* (Paris: Vinchon, 1846), 200. See also Julien, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*, 623. Julien cites a *Notice* from the Versailles museum, dating to 1860, which states that General Yusuf actually presents the standards and parasol to a governor, and not to Bugeaud.

⁵⁴ A.-H. Delaunay, *Catalogue complet du Salon de 1846*. Paris: Journal des Artistes (1846), 119.

⁵⁵ *Livret du musée historique de Versailles*, 36.

that the French military forces have already invaded the encampment and have subdued the Moroccan army. French soldiers capture Moroccan standards while Moroccan combatants await their fate. An unusual example of a battle scene, this image represents the moments following the military event after which it is named. Vernet emphasizes the uneven topography of the Moroccan dessert with its gentle slopes rolling into the background to meet the remote cliffs in the background.

The three-part *Siege of Constantine*, *The Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader* and *The Battle of Isly* represent significant moments in the earliest phase of French colonial conquest of Algeria in large-scale visual format. For almost the entirety of Louis-Philippe's reign, Algeria remained under French military occupation with the constant threat of rebellion from the indigenous populations taking part in Abd-el-Kader's *jihad*. These paintings thus bracket the phase in the colonizing process during which the French army faced its most challenging opponents, Abd-el-Kader and his resistance army.

CHAPTER 2: IMPERIAL AMBITIONS, ORLÉANIST PROPAGANDA: VERNET'S BATTLE SCENES OF THE ALGERIAN OCCUPATION (1839-1846)

Vernet's paintings of the occupation of Algeria represent a watershed moment in the *Armée d'Afrique's* colonizing mission. Their large format provides ample space to illustrate such aggrandizing accounts of military valor and visual authority to command viewers' attention. In this chapter, I examine the aesthetic and ideological problems that Vernet's Algerian battle scenes encapsulate as history paintings depicting colonial conquest and contemporary warfare. As a point of reference, I discuss how Vernet's canvases draw from a vast corpus of Napoleonic battle paintings in their formal language and propagandistic tenor. I also emphasize how they differ both stylistically and rhetorically to serve the political aims of Louis-Philippe and the shift in taste of the July Monarchy. While Vernet's battle scenes invoke the ethos of Empire, following their Napoleonic precursors, their message of colonial expansion in Algeria is engineered to sway public opinion by emphasizing its benefits for the *nation*.

VERNET'S PAINTINGS OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS IN THE GALLERY OF BATTLES

As Louis-Philippe's official painter, Horace Vernet occupied a prominent position in the historical-museological project, not only in the number of commissions he was awarded, but also in the scale and placement of his works within the historical rooms. By the end of Louis-Philippe's reign, Vernet had contributed no

less than fifty-four paintings to the Versailles museum.⁵⁶ In the Gallery of Battles, Vernet had painted five of the thirty-three canvases. Among them, the *Battle of the Bouvines, 27 July 1214* [Fig. 10] and the *Battle of Fontenoy, 11 May 1745* [Fig. 11], both completed during the Restoration, depict historical scenes dating prior to the Revolution. With the dimensions of 5.10 by 9.58 meters, these two battle scenes were comparatively larger than the other canvases whose dimensions were on average 4.65 by 5.43 meters. In terms of scale, they rivaled only two paintings by François Gérard, the *Battle of Austerlitz, 2 December 1805* [Fig. 12] and the *Entry of Henry IV in Paris, 22 March 1594* [Fig. 13], which respectively acted as pendants to Vernet's canvases given their placement within the gallery [Fig. 14].⁵⁷ The remaining three paintings by Vernet represent Napoleon's military campaigns in Eastern Europe: *The Battle of Jena, 14 October 1806*, *The Battle of Friedland, 14 June 1807*, and *The Battle of Wagram, 6 July 1809*.⁵⁸ All three were shown at the Salon of 1836.⁵⁹

In *The Battle of Jena* [Fig. 15], Napoleon appears on horseback in the center of composition with his back to the viewer. In preparation for the attack against the Prussian army, Napoleon addresses the soldiers of the imperial guard, ordered in proper rank-and-file on the right.⁶⁰ In the twin battles of Jena and Auerstadt (14

⁵⁶ See Constans, *Versailles: Les peintures*, Vol. 3 (1995), 916-927.

⁵⁷ See André Pératé, *La Galerie des Batailles au Musée de Versailles*, Second Edition (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1930), 9-10; Constans, *Versailles: La Galerie des Batailles* (1984), 13; 18; 28; 36; 43; and Gaetghens, *Versailles: De la résidence royale au Musée Historique* (1984). Gaetghens includes a diagram of the layout of the Gallery of Battles, p. 398.

⁵⁸ For a concise history of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, see Michael Glover, *The Napoleonic Wars: an illustrated history 1792-1815* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1978). For an insightful and gripping narrative account see David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston & New York: Mariner Books, 2008), esp. Chapter 7, "Days of Glory" (pp. 223-262).

⁵⁹ Pératé, *Galerie des Batailles* (1930), 11.

⁶⁰ He quips: "Qu'est-ce? dit l'empereur ; ce n'est peut être qu'un jeune homme qui n'a pas de barbe, qui peut vouloir préjuger ce que je dois faire. Qu'il attende qu'il ait commandé trente batailles rangées,

October 1806), Napoleon's *Grande Armée* devastated the Prussian forces, after being provoked to retreat from the Rhineland. According to historical sources, the *Grande Armée* systematically captured Prussian fortresses and pursued Prussian armed forces until it reached Berlin in early November.⁶¹ In Vernet's picture, the foreground is populated almost entirely with members of the French armed forces: foot soldiers, cavalymen, and the emperor himself. An overcast sky fills the upper two-thirds of the canvas, expanding far into the distance given the low horizon line, visible in the space between General Bonaparte and his soldiers on the right. A fleet of armed soldiers is nestled in the valley beyond the peaks upon which the *Grande Armée* appears. However, these soldiers are barely perceptible, occluded as they are, by the prominently positioned General Bonaparte and his cavalry on the left.

The emperor, in *The Battle of Friedland* [Fig. 16], appears in the central foreground astride his horse. He is followed closely by a group of French generals. As the horses move forward, kicking up a cloud of dust, we confront the grim realities of the battle. The bodies of fallen soldiers litter the ground, while captured soldiers await their fate. Beyond the foregrounded equestrian group we see a wide expanse of the battlefield, dotted with legions of armed soldiers. Pointing to some direction outside of the picture plane, the emperor orders General Oudinot to pursue the Russian army, which has retreated from the town after an overwhelming French invasion.⁶² The Battle of Friedland followed the controversial Battle of Eylau, in which both the French and Russians lost thousands of men, a fact that Napoleon had to fabricate in

avant de prétendre me donner des avis..." Reproduced in Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles," (1994), 136.

⁶¹ Bell, *The First Total War* (2008), 238-239.

⁶² Salon of 1836 catalogue, p. 192. Reproduced in Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles" (1994), 136.

the French press to obviate heavy criticism.⁶³ Friedland was a decisive victory for the French army, which substantially outnumbered the Russian army under the command of General Bennigsen. Eleven days after this battle, Napoleon met with Tsar Alexander to negotiate the terms of their armistice on a raft afloat the Niemen River.⁶⁴ The peace negotiations led to the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit between France and Russia on 7 July 1807, and between France and Prussia on 9 July 1807.⁶⁵

For two years, conflicts between France and the Eastern European powers were temporarily alleviated by the Treaty of Tilsit. In the spring of 1809, following the French invasion of Spain and Portugal, Archduke Charles of Austria challenged French authority by invading Bavaria,⁶⁶ land that Napoleon had acquired from the Treaty of Tilsit. Vernet's *Battle of Wagram* [**Fig. 17**] depicts Austria's defeat against the French army along the Danube River. General Bonaparte appears once again in the foreground, surveying the battlefield with a telescope from atop a hill. The left half of the composition affords a view of the battlefield, marked by diminutive cavalymen skirmishing in the middle-ground and clouds of smoke rising in the background. After an initial success at denying the French army passage over the Danube at the Battle of Aspern-Essling (21-22 May 1809), the Austrian army was forced to retreat from Wagram.⁶⁷ Five days following the battle, Emperor Francis of

⁶³ David O'Brien, "Propaganda and the Republic of the Arts in Antoine-Jean Gros's *Napoléon Visiting the Battlefield of Eylau the Morning After the Battle*," *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 2003): 281-314. On Napoleonic press censorship, see Susan Locke Siegfried, "The Politicisation of Art Criticism in the Post-Revolutionary Press," in *Art Criticism and Its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed. M. Orwicz (1993): 9-28.

⁶⁴ Glover, *The Napoleonic Wars* (1978), 120-121.

⁶⁵ Glover, *The Napoleonic Wars* (1978), 122.

⁶⁶ Glover, *The Napoleonic Wars* (1978), 136.

⁶⁷ Glover, *The Napoleonic Wars* (1978), 136-137.

Austria negotiated an armistice with Napoleon, resulting in the Treaty of Schönbrunn, signed in October 1809.

In all three of the works, Napoleon's heroic action is foregrounded both in the literal and metaphorical sense. He is the most prominent, conspicuous and recognizable figure within the composition; he appears as an equestrian hero, positioned securely on some sort of ledge or plateau in the foreground; and furthermore, his vital role in the military episode is emphasized, even though in reality he would not have engaged in combat. The problem of pictorial veracity is a point I shall address later in this discussion. In terms of composition, in all three of Vernet's Napoleonic canvases, the artist uses a low horizon line and provides a glimpse of the larger landscape in which the battles are fought. Though Vernet gives prominence to Napoleon and his group of generals in the foreground, even occluding the view of the battlefield, he deliberately includes details peripheral to the central action in the middle- and background – the dispersed skirmishes between regiments, the salvo of canon and gunfire, and the bodies of deceased and dying soldiers – to show various moments within a larger military event.

Léon Rosenthal and others have attempted to couch Vernet's style in the context of the *juste milieu* ethos, which defined the art and politics of the July Monarchy.⁶⁸ The term *juste milieu*, roughly translated as the “middle of the road” or the “golden mean,” describes the July government's policy in navigating a political

⁶⁸ Léon Rosenthal, *Du romantisme au réalisme: Essai sur l'évolution de la peinture en France de 1830 à 1848*, ed. Michael Marrinan (Paris: Macula, 1987 [originally 1914]: 202-231; see also Driskel, “An Introduction to the Art,” (1990), 49-51. Marrinan problematizes the concept of the *juste milieu* in his discussion of the Versailles museum paintings. See Marrinan, “Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles” (1994), 113-114; and *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* (1988), 206-207.

common ground to appeal to the widely stratified constituencies in France.⁶⁹ In aesthetic terms, *juste milieu* refers to the reconciliation between genres of “high” and “low” art to produce a composite style that appealed to the public at large, and not merely a select group of intellectuals and art critics.⁷⁰

Art historians have shown how this shift in the July government’s aesthetic taste gave rise to the profusion of imagery that stood in contradistinction to what had previously been accepted as “high” art. Marrinan, for instance, makes a strong case in his discussion of images representing the 1830 revolution.⁷¹ Two images in particular, Eugène Delacroix’s *28 July: Liberty Leading the People* [Fig. 18] and Amédée Bourgeois’s *Capture of the Hôtel de Ville: The Pont d’Arcole, 28 July 1830* [Fig. 19], exemplify the two extremes between “high” and “low” art.⁷² Delacroix’s painting emphasizes the pivotal moment in the event. The artist draws attention to the central allegorical figure of Liberty, who leads the people to revolution as the title of the painting informs, through a carefully constructed composition and dynamic brushwork. Bourgeois’s representation, in contrast, draws stylistically on popular art forms to show a wide view of the event, encompassing a variety of peripheral details that de-center the action. To do so, the artist diminishes the scale of figures, noting how each citizen contributes differently to the revolutionary cause; some fire their rifles from across the Seine, while others march across the Arcole Bridge to storm the Hôtel de Ville. Bourgeois’s emphasis on the actions of the people (*le peuple*), and his

⁶⁹ See Collingham, *The July Monarchy* (1988); Bezucha, “An Introduction to the History,” (1990), 17-21.

⁷⁰ Rosenthal and others have also applied the term *juste milieu* to art that reconciled aspects of classicism and Romanticism or traditional and modern tastes.

⁷¹ Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* (1988), 27-76.

⁷² Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* (1988), 35; 67-71.

interest in capturing the wider architectural and urban environment, anticipates aesthetics more often associated with the Realist style. This further sets Bourgeois's image apart from Delacroix's, which encapsulates a Romantic sensibility.

In Vernet's Napoleonic canvases, we already see a shift in style, particularly in the artist's representation of human figures, peripheral actions and the enormity of the landscape. Though enormous in size, these paintings incorporate pictorial elements that align more so with Realist or *juste milieu* aesthetics than standard history painting. These stylistic aspects are even more pronounced in Vernet's Algerian battle scenes, a point to which I return later in this discussion. As regards subject matter, however, Napoleonic battle paintings merit consideration as the formal and ideological models for representing contemporary warfare.

PICTURING CONTEMPORARY WARFARE: NAPOLEONIC BATTLE PAINTING

The presence of Napoleon – the man, military hero and emperor – abounds in the museum's galleries with portraits and history paintings of varying dimensions. Historians and art historians alike have noted the prominence of Napoleonic history and imagery during the July Monarchy. Marrinan has convincingly shown how Louis-Philippe's use of Napoleonic memory (though he does not use this term) was a strategic political move to appeal to bonapartist sympathies, but a limited one to prevent potential bonapartist uprisings that would remove the Orléans monarch from power.⁷³ During the entirety of the Restoration, which heavily censored the memory of Napoleon, Vernet's political affiliation did not waver. As Nina Kallmyer has

⁷³ Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* (1988); see especially Part IV, "Shadowboxing Napoleon's Glory," 141-200.

shown, the artist even used his studio as a meeting place for other artists and intellectuals who shared his bonapartist sympathies.⁷⁴ Both Louis-Philippe and Vernet had a staked interest in Napoleon. For Louis-Philippe, there was a political benefit in organizing the museum with gallery spaces specifically devoted to the Empire and the Coronation, as well as showcasing four canvases celebrating Napoleon's heroic battles in the Gallery of Battles. For Vernet, representing Napoleon's military campaigns was not merely an exercise in hero worship, but also an opportunity to draw from a rich source of imperial imagery and propaganda, and to use these works as points of reference for his own monumental canvases.

During the First Empire, contemporary warfare was a relatively new subject for history painting. However, the number of battle pictures dating to this period affirms that it became an increasingly popular, state-funded enterprise. With few exceptions, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century precedents of this genre of history painting were limited to mythological, biblical or ancient historical battles. The profusion of battle paintings at the turn of the eighteenth century, as Susan L. Siegfried has suggested, coincided with a shift in the political order of post-Revolutionary France, which warranted new "visual rhetorics to express that political change."⁷⁵ However, the representation of current events in the grand manner became a topic of heated debate in the post-Revolutionary period. According to classicists, such paintings violated central tenets of the history painting genre.⁷⁶ They lacked a

⁷⁴ Nina Kallmyer, "Imago Belli: Horace Vernet's *L'Atelier* as an Image of Radical Militarism under the Restoration," *The Art Bulletin*, Volume 68, No. 2 (June 1986): 268-280.

⁷⁵ Susan Locke Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 75 No. 2, (June 1993): 235.

⁷⁶ Christopher Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting: Antoine Jean Gros's Bataille d'Eylau* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). Its defenders included François Guizot, future advisor of Louis-Philippe, and opponents included Antoine Quatramère de Quincy.

clear unity of time, place and action; some decentered the pivotal moment within the composition; in others there was an absence of a literary source or moralizing message; and many infringed upon the rule of decorum. More recent studies have shown how Napoleonic war imagery functioned visually and rhetorically as instruments of imperial propaganda. Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby and David O'Brien have analyzed select Napoleonic canvases to reveal their complicity in downplaying, eliding and even fabricating the reality of the military episodes they purportedly represent. Grigsby highlights these problems in paintings of the Egyptian and Syrian campaigns, such as Anne-Louis Girodet's *Revolt of Cairo, 21 October 1798* [Fig. 20] and Antoine-Jean Gros's *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa, 11 March 1799* [Fig. 21].⁷⁷ O'Brien elaborates on how Gros's *Battle of Eylau, 9 February 1807* [Fig. 22] presents a fictitious account of the military event in Poland as prescribed by Vivant-Denon and Napoleon. In a case study on Napoleonic battle paintings, Todd Porterfield surveys a sample of works produced at different points during the Empire to identify an imperialist ideological thread that connects them. According to Porterfield these paintings established conventions of representing war as propaganda, which would serve later nineteenth-century imperialist projects, including the conquest of Algeria.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (Yale University Press, 2002), 65-103; 105-163; David O'Brien, *After the Revolution: Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda Under Napoleon* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006). See also David O'Brien, "Propaganda and the Republic of the Arts in Antoine-Jean Gros's *Napoléon Visiting the Battlefield of Eylau the Morning After the Battle*." *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 2003): 281-314. O'Brien has argued that public opinion was a powerful force in the decades following the Revolution, causing the imperial government to control the press and popular entertainment through which political messages could be communicated. See also Siegfried, "The Politicisation of Art Criticism in the Post-Revolutionary Press," (1993): 9-28.

⁷⁸ Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798-1836* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 43-79.

As these studies suggest, the use of battle painting as propaganda was an essential component of Napoleonic war imagery. Throughout the course of the First Empire, Napoleon commissioned numerous battle paintings, many with meticulously detailed instructions prepared by Dominique Vivant-Denon, director of the imperial museums, to control the type of imagery that was produced. To fulfill the Empire's demand for battle paintings, a wide range of artists received commissions, the most expensive of which were granted to Gros, Gérard and other artists trained by Jacques-Louis David. In short, Napoleon conscripted artists to give visual form to his martial exploits, a phenomenon eloquently captured by the painter (and aspiring poet) Girodet in a letter to his friend, Julie Candaille: "We have all been enlisted, even if we don't wear a uniform – paintbrush to the right, pencil to the left, forward march – and we march."⁷⁹

The war paintings that filled the post-Revolutionary salons had in common their monumental proportions and themes of military victory in foreign lands. However, stylistically these paintings differed tremendously given the range of artists who received commissions and their artistic backgrounds. As a first attempt to classify the style and "new rhetorics" of Napoleonic military imagery, Susan L. Siegfried has identified two modes of battle painting that emerged in the post-Revolutionary era: the affective mode, represented by Gros's *The Battle of Nazareth* [Fig. 23] and the documentary mode, exemplified by Louis-François Lejeune's *The*

⁷⁹ Cited in O'Brien, *After the Revolution: Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda Under Napoleon* (2006), 2. According to O'Brien, Girodet wrote this letter while working on either *Bonaparte Receiving the Keys of Vienna* or a series of portraits for Napoleon.

Battle of Marengo [Fig. 24].⁸⁰ Both pictures were shown at the Salon of 1801, marking a turning point as the first Salon of the nineteenth century. What Siegfried examines as the affective mode in Gros's *Battle of Nazareth* is its emphasis on a central action within the larger narrative and heightening of dramatic effect through color and brushwork. Lejeune's *Battle of Marengo*, in contrast, illustrates the documentary mode by providing a general overview of the military episode, encompassing as much detail of the battlefield and chaos of dispersed combat as possible.⁸¹ Marrinan and others have made similar observations regarding style and composition, though substituting "affective" and "documentary" with "grand manner" and "illustration" respectively.⁸²

In the present scholarship on Napoleonic battle painting, art historians agree that these paintings constructed a new model for picturing warfare, which succeeding administrations would adopt. Gérard's *Battle of Austerlitz, 2 December 1805* [Fig. 12] is a good example of a standard Napoleonic battle painting.⁸³ Gérard's painting represents the moment in the so-named "battle of the three emperors" when General Rapp informs Napoleon that Tsar Alexander's Imperial Guard has been defeated.

⁸⁰ Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," (1993), 236.

⁸¹ Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," (1993), 236-237. Siegfried notes also that Lejeune was a soldier, unlike Gros, which could also account for his interest in documentary minutiae.

⁸² Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles" (1994), 113-143; esp. 129-142. Instead of defining two modes of military painting, Marrinan designates two genres of battle painting: one done in the grand manner of history painting and the other possessing a more illustrative appeal coinciding with forms of popular imagery and visual culture. Marrinan considers Gérard's *Battle of Austerlitz* a grand manner history painting, and Vernet's Napoleonic canvases illustrational history paintings.

⁸³ Scholars of Napoleonic battle painting are in general agreement that Gérard's *Battle of Austerlitz* is a prime example of Napoleonic propaganda. See O'Brien, *After the Revolution: Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda Under Napoleon* (2006), 148. The painting also received largely favorable reviews. See, for example, François Guizot's commentary: "Quelle sagesse de l'ordonnance... rien d'embarrassé, rien de confus, malgré cette prodigieuse quantité de grandes figures, de chevaux, de bagages." Cited in Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting* (1997), 116.

General Rapp appears left of center, riding into the clearing on his bucking horse to communicate this news to the emperor, who is seated astride his white horse right from center, wearing his famous tricorne hat. Gérard emphasizes the pivotal moment of this event, General Rapp reporting to Napoleon, by arranging the most significant figures in the central compositional void, curiously lit by the raking sunlight emanating from the upper left corner of the canvas, the only portion of the sky without heavy cloud cover. The other figures and objects – members of the French and Russian cavalries, dead and dying soldiers, a smattering of weapons and destroyed canons – are arranged to create a hemicycle around the principal figures, General Rapp and Napoleon. Their presence in Gérard’s picture affirms the bellicose conditions and the devastating consequences of war, but the picture’s larger ideological message glorifies the event as a French victory.

Vernet assimilates many of the elements seen in Gérard’s picture into his three Napoleonic battle scenes. For example, *The Battle of Friedland* incorporates the *affective mode*, to use Siegfried’s terminology, in its staging of the scene, particularly its emphasis on the central action of Napoleon and his army. The *documentary mode* is evident in the artist’s inclusion of minutiae: the legion of armed Frenchmen seemingly disappearing into the background, some arranged in an ordered rank-and-file, others lost within a cloud of gunfire and fierce combat; and the expansive landscape that extends deep into the background, punctuated with various objects and points of interest. In this way, the painting reconciles aspects of the grand manner of history painting with aspects of what Marrinan calls “popular” forms of

visual culture.⁸⁴ Compared with Gérard's work of imperial propaganda, Vernet's Napoleonic subjects feature minute details of the landscape and scattered vignettes of military combat, which are noteworthy departures from the prototype. Furthermore, as Marrinan has argued, in all three canvases, Vernet appears to foreground "insignificant" moments within the battles he represents in contrast to Gérard.⁸⁵ The stylistic deviations evident in Vernet's Napoleonic battle scenes reveal tensions in reconciling modes of picturing contemporary warfare. Vernet's aesthetic choices seem to align stylistically and ideologically with the July Monarchy's *juste milieu* policies. The imagery in Vernet's Napoleonic subjects, painted long after the end of the First Empire, is programmed to appeal to *national* as opposed to specifically *bonapartist* sympathies.

For representations of Napoleonic colonial warfare, Vernet had access to a collection of canvases depicting the Egyptian and Syrian campaigns, such as Girodet's *Revolt of Cairo, 21 October 1798*,⁸⁶ displayed in the Empire Galleries. However, the canvas that I believe best illustrates the type of formal and ideological language from which Vernet later draws for his Algerian battle scenes – Antoine-Jean Gros's *Battle of Aboukir, 1 August 1798* [Fig. 25] – was (peculiarly) featured in the Coronation room alongside two colossal pictures by Jacques-Louis David.⁸⁷ The event from which Gros derived his subject was a battle between the Mameluke warriors in Cairo and the French forces stranded in Egypt after a humiliating defeat

⁸⁴ Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles" (1994), 140.

⁸⁵ Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles" (1994), 132.

⁸⁶ Constans, *Les Peintures*, Vol. 1 (1995), 395.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of the pictorial program in the Coronation room, see Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* (1988), 150-158. The two works by David are the *Coronation of Josephine* and the *Distribution of the Eagles*.

against the English naval forces under the command of Admiral Nelson at Aboukir Bay. However, these unfavorable details are omitted in Gros's picture. Gros places General Murat in the center of the composition, surrounded by a confounding disarray of French cavalymen and Mameluke warriors engaging in close combat. Bodies of deceased and expiring Arabs litter the ground in front of Murat, some slashed by sabers, others trampled beneath horses. Gros's painting glorifies General Murat, who remains untouched despite the chaos in his wake. The artist shows French victory over the indigenous armies and eschews any attempt at depicting the consequences of its defeat against Admiral Nelson. In this way, Gros's picture fabricates a more favorable image of French heroism that stands in for an otherwise unsuccessful Egyptian campaign. As a work of Napoleonic propaganda, Gros's *Battle of Aboukir* encapsulates ideological problems of representing colonial warfare with which Vernet grapples in representing his battle paintings of Algeria. These problems, which I discuss below, centered on issues of picturing the North African landscape, the indigenous peoples and the realities of colonial conquest.

MILITARY ACTION & THE COLONIAL LANDSCAPE

According to Vernet's biographer Amédée Durande, "The creation of the Versailles museum and the conquest of Algeria opened for him (Vernet) new horizons, which he was eager to explore."⁸⁸ The three-part *Siege of Constantine*, exhibited at the Salon 1839, incorporates some of the colonial vocabulary present in Gros's *Battle of Aboukir*. However, Vernet destabilizes the centrality of the pivotal

⁸⁸ Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet*, 107.

moment within the narrative action. For instance, in *Siege of Constantine: The Enemy Driven Back from the Hills of Coudiat-Ati, 10 October 1837* [Fig. 5], the composition abounds with soldiers, who are all reduced to diminutive scale and engaged in various stages of combat. Within this chaotic *mêlée*, the putative hero of the siege, the Duc de Nemours, is almost entirely lost in the action. He stands at a compositional apex, yet is engulfed within the swarm of soldiers. As such, Vernet does not single out his hero, the Duc de Nemours, in the same way Gros spotlights General Murat, the “hero” of the Battle of Aboukir. Lastly, bloody carnage is reduced to a minimum. While we see the bodies of the deceased strewn across the ground, we do not witness the particular causes of the soldiers’ deaths, only the consequence of their involvement within the battle. In the two remaining *Siege of Constantine* pictures [Figs. 6-7], the enemy is absent from the composition, indexed only by the city walls and the palace of the bey in *The Assault Columns Position Themselves for Motion* and *The Capture of the City* respectively. Vernet reduces the scale of all figures, military generals included, to show how each figure engages differently in the mission. Many of these details, as I noted earlier, reconcile stylistic modes of history painting already anticipated in Vernet’s Napoleonic battle scenes.

In the more horizontally formatted *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader* or *The Battle of Isly*, both painted in the last years of the July Monarchy, the landscape is even more encompassing than in the three scenes of Constantine. Landscape appears to compete with narrative action as the focus of the paintings. In both canvases, Vernet emphasizes the variety of topographical features – the gentle slopes and hills of the desert terrain, the multiple facets and crags of the distant mountains, desert

fauna, and sand – which are not given such careful attention in Napoleonic battle scenes, as in Gros’s *Battle of Aboukir*. The closest in style, but certainly not in size, would be the canvases by Lejeune.⁸⁹ In Lejeune’s *Battle of the Pyramids, 21 July 1798* [Fig. 26], for example, we witness a totalizing view of the battlefield. To compare Lejeune’s *Battle of the Pyramids* with Vernet’s *Battle of Isly* [Fig. 9], we find compositional similarities in the treatment of the North African sky and terrain. Both artists use a low horizon line to capture the vastness of the desert as it recedes far into the background. The sky encompasses nearly half of the canvases and appears to engulf the battlefield, animated with the dynamic coalescence of smoke, clouds, light and air. The differences lie in the manner in which both artists foreground military action in their respective battle scenes. Vernet’s figures are not nearly as diminutive as Lejeune’s. The angle of view and emphasis on anecdotal details are also different. Lejeune provides an overview of the battlefield, pin-pointing the numerous spaces in which opposing military forces clash. Vernet, in contrast, singles out one episode within a larger military event, which is set in the foreground and framed by the immensity of the picturesque North African landscape.

In Vernet’s largest Algerian battle scene, *The Capture of the Smalah of Abdel-Kader* [Fig. 8], the tremendous width of the canvas destabilizes the narrative legibility of the military action that the painting represents. The vast African sky, allegedly painted in less than a day,⁹⁰ vies with the battle below it. In a paragraph-length invective, Baudelaire censures Vernet’s “African painting” as “colder than a

⁸⁹ Lejeune’s battle scenes were on average no more than 180x258 cm. See Constans, *Les Peintures*, Vol. 2 (1995), 585-586.

⁹⁰ Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet*, 282.

beautiful winter day” and hopeless in its “whiteness and clarity.”⁹¹ Various figures are scattered across the canvas in small vignettes. As Baudelaire observes:

Unity, null; but a crowd of small interesting anecdotes – a vast panorama of cabaret; — in general, these sorts of decorations are divided in compartments or acts, by a tree, a large mountain, a cavern, etc. M. Horace Vernet has followed the same method; thanks to this method of a serial writer (*feuilletoniste*), the memory of the spectator finds its own points of interests (*jalons*): a large camel, some does, a tent, etc... — truly it’s a pain to see a man of spirit wallow (*patauger*) in the horrible. —M. Horace Vernet has thus never seen a Rubens, Veronese, Tintoretto, Jouvenet, *morbleu!*...⁹²

The treatment of the landscape, as Baudelaire rightly notes, is like “a vast panorama.” “Panoramic” is an apt description for Vernet’s image. The manner in which Vernet transcribes the battlefield onto the colossal dimensions of the canvas is characteristic of the popular form of entertainment of the same name.⁹³ We can consider Jean-Charles Langlois’s *Panorama of the Invasion of Algiers* as a model for Vernet’s *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader* in terms of style and content. Though Langlois’s original no longer exists, John Zarobell’s reconstruction [Fig. 27] based on sketches provides a good idea as to how it might have looked. Langlois, who served in the armed invasion of Algiers in 1827, recreated this historical event in a large-scale circular theatrical setting at 40 rue Saint-Martin, and exhibited it between February 1833 and November 1834.⁹⁴ Vernet’s *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*, in contrast, is not circular in form, does not encompass the viewer, and does not employ artificial lighting devices and sounds to re-create the event, as would have

⁹¹ Charles Baudelaire, *Salon de 1845* (Paris: Jules Labitte, 1845), 13.

⁹² Baudelaire, *Salon de 1845*, 13-14.

⁹³ Durand notes the *Capture of the Smalah*’s panoramic qualities. See Durand, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet*, 281: “Cette toile aux proportions gigantesques...est une sorte de panorama qui se déroule devant nous à mesure que nous avançons, et il faudrait prendre une grande reculée pour en embarrasser tous les détails dans un même coup d’œil.” On Langlois’s panorama, see John Zarobell, *Empire of Landscape* (2010), 9-31; see also Frances Terpak, “The Promise and Power of New Technologies: Nineteenth-Century Algiers” (2009), 87-133.

⁹⁴ Terpak, “The Promise and Power of New Technologies: Nineteenth-Century Algiers,” 96.

been the case with Langlois's *Panorama of the Invasion of Algiers*. However, Vernet's appropriation of specific visual elements of the panorama – immense proportions; scattered vignettes of military action; sprawling, horizontally formatted canvas – heightens the dramatic impact on the viewer experiencing the image.⁹⁵ The prominent position Vernet's painting occupied in the *salle de la Smalah*, furnished with other paintings dedicated to the capture of Abd-el-Kader's itinerant capital would have the effect of a panorama, though subdued to fit the context of a historical museum as opposed to a panorama theatre.

The colonial landscape in Vernet's images is as much a focal point as the military action that each of his Algerian scenes illustrates.⁹⁶ Without certain topographical markers to connect the spaces represented by Vernet to actual sites in Algeria, the paintings give us a generalized idea of the location where these battles occurred.⁹⁷ John Zarobell has expanded on early nineteenth-century landscape imagery and its complicity in the colonizing process. The meaning of "landscape," as Zarobell defines it, is not limited to a genre of art or a picture of a space, but encapsulates ideological problems that shape the viewer's perception (as opposed to the direct experience) of the space represented. In other words, the picture of the colonial landscape, constructed by the artist, mediates the viewer's experience of the

⁹⁵ On the viewer's experience and relationship with Vernet's canvases, especially the *Siege of Constantine* images and *The Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*, see Marrinan, "Schauer der Eroberung: Strukturen des Zuschauens und der Simulation in den Nordafrika-Galerien von Versailles," (1999): 267-295.

⁹⁶ John Zarobell, *The Empire of Landscape* (2010), 35. In Chapter 2, "Algeria in the Museum of French History," (pp. 35-55) Zarobell examines Vernet's battle scenes of Algeria, which he reclassifies as landscapes of military conquest as opposed to history paintings, alongside Adrien Dauzat's watercolors of the Expedition of the Portes de Fer as two examples of landscape painting representing the colonial mission in Algeria.

⁹⁷ See Petra Chu, "At Home and Abroad: Landscape Representation" (1990), 116-130. This type of landscape painting, which features a nonspecific view of a landscape, became popular during the July Monarchy. It is exemplified by artists of the School of 1830 (pp. 125-130).

actual geographical space. Images of the Algerian landscape, such as those by Vernet, reveal quite conspicuously the “territorial character” of nineteenth-century French colonialism.⁹⁸ The artist captures as much of the terrain and environmental conditions as possible to stage his battles. Vernet’s landscapes-cum-battlefields are pictorial distillations of actual geographical spaces, further qualified by the time marker of the military engagement that occurred there. They attest to the artist’s skill in transcribing real space onto canvas, accenting its most picturesque qualities despite the brutal nature of the military event it encapsulates. Moreover, they also participate in the colonizing effort by providing an image or idea (mediated by the artist’s pictorial interpretation) of the actual space under French military occupation, and the process by which that space is colonized.

GRIM REALITIES OF WAR & THE LIMITS OF REPORTAGE

The military occupation of Algeria was neither a benign nor a decisive undertaking. It was a hotly debated issue in the Chamber of Deputies, which had to determine the funds and military personnel required to continue the colonizing mission. During the span of the July Monarchy, the number of soldiers sent to Algeria increased dramatically from 18,000 to 108,000 by 1846.⁹⁹ To prepare the army for occupation, the Ministry of War distributed pamphlets with maps of the region and basic Arab and Turkish vocabulary to familiarize soldiers with the land and the languages they would encounter.¹⁰⁰ During the occupation, French forces suffered

⁹⁸ Zarobell, *The Empire of Landscape* (2010), 2.

⁹⁹ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities* (1995), 17.

¹⁰⁰ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities* (1995), 19.

from a shortage of basic supplies, harsh climate, cholera and other diseases, in addition to constant attacks by the indigenous armies.¹⁰¹ The occupation army had to adopt some of the most ruthless tactics to maintain possession of the North African land. As historians have shown, these war strategies brought about fears of French savagery that circulated in the press.¹⁰² Even for political figures, such as Alexis de Tocqueville, who condemned slavery on ethical grounds, the military occupation of Algeria was a complicated issue to reconcile with political thought. Tocqueville, who is famous for his writings on democracy, expressed an ambivalent politico-moral position on the colonial conquest of Algeria. He resorted to adopting a “rhetoric of evasion,” as the historian Cheryl Welsch describes it, to promote the colonizing mission for its economic benefits while apologizing for the harsh policies implemented by the occupation army.¹⁰³

Patricia Lorcin, Jennifer E. Sessions and other historians have examined the grim realities of the Algerian campaign. After Thomas Bugeaud became the Governor-General of Algeria in December 1840, the *Armée d’Afrique* implemented a total war strategy, known as *razzia* warfare, taken from the Arabic word for “raid.” As Sessions reports, the *razzia* method involved the deployment of mobile columns to pursue Abd-el-Kader’s resistance armies and subdue the indigenous populations by destroying their economic resources: namely, grain stores, crops and animals that

¹⁰¹ Blanc, *The History of Ten Years*, Vol. 1 (1845), 80.

¹⁰² Jennifer E. Sessions, “‘Unfortunate Necessities’: Violence and Civilization in the Conquest of Algeria,” in Patricia Lorcin and Daniel Brewer, eds. *France and its Spaces of War: Experience, Memory, Image* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 29-44.

¹⁰³ Cheryl B. Welsch, “Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion: Tocqueville on Algeria,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 2003): 235-264; and Alexis de Tocqueville, *Writings on Empire and Slavery*, ed. and trans. Jennifer Pitts (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

could not be used or transported by the French army.¹⁰⁴ Lieutenant-General Lucien de Montagnac describes how this war tactic was used:

Once the tribe's location is known, we each charge, dispersing in all directions. We reach the tents, whose inhabitants, awoken by the soldiers' approach, emerge pell-mell with their animals, wives, and children; all of these people flee in all directions; gunshots ring out from all sides at these miserable, defenseless, surprised people; men, women, children are pursued, quickly surrounded and assembled by soldiers who gather them up. The stampeding cattle, sheep, goats, and horses are soon rounded up... Then we set fire to everything we can't carry away, while the beasts and people are taken to the convoy.¹⁰⁵

What Montagnac describes here does not capture the scope of *razzia*'s destructive and demoralizing capacity. Other accounts by soldiers and generals reveal that the occupation army slaughtered, paraded heads on bayonets, and even committed acts of sexual violence against the indigenous *civilian* populations. Count Vallé, Bugeaud's predecessor as Governor-General, openly censured the total war strategy: "Such punishment of the innocent along with the guilty, these wars of savages, are not in our manners and can only corrupt the French who witness them... Razzias, *pillaging*, fire, these things are nothing but detestable."¹⁰⁶ According to Count Vallé, *razzia* undermined tenets of military decorum, a term that might seem paradoxical, but refers to a code of discipline and combat strategy that eschewed the use of guerilla

¹⁰⁴ Sessions, " 'Unfortunate Necessities': Violence and Civilization in the Conquest of Algeria," (2009), 31-32. For a concise discussion of Bugeaud's policies, see Anthony Thrall Sullivan, *Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, France and Algeria, 1784-1849: Politics, Power, and the Good Society* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1983). As a result of the *razzia* and other military strategies implemented by Bugeaud, conditions improved for expeditionary forces, which no longer needed to carry provisions for expansive distances and could use camels to transport other supplies and clean water. The indigenous populations, in contrast, suffered tremendously as French forces destroyed all remaining resources post-*razzia*.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Sessions, " 'Unfortunate Necessities': Violence and Civilization in the Conquest of Algeria," (2009), 31.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Sessions, " 'Unfortunate Necessities': Violence and Civilization in the Conquest of Algeria," (2009), 32.

tactics.¹⁰⁷ Bugeaud, however, remained resolute on his colonial policies. After the capture of Abd-el-Kader's *smalah* in 1843, General Bugeaud declared that the army would never put down its sword and would continue to brandish it before the Arabs.¹⁰⁸ Some of the same fears of French barbarity in the colonial territory, which plagued Napoleon's soldiers in Syria and Egypt, resurfaced in Algeria several decades later.¹⁰⁹

The historical realities of the Algerian occupation, summarized above, give us a frame of reference for understanding some of the images it inspired. Works by artists, such as Vernet, involved in representing events of the colonizing mission invite us to consider the problem of reportage. Vernet's critics often describe the artist's style as journalistic or documentary. Théophile Silvestre, for instance, remarked that Vernet is "the daguerreotype incarnate, a living factory of popular images."¹¹⁰ Art historians who have studied Vernet's works have generally agreed with such a classification, and have shown how many of the artist's works, including the Algerian battle scenes, fit this category.¹¹¹ Considering the realities of the colonial

¹⁰⁷ Sessions, " 'Unfortunate Necessities': Violence and Civilization in the Conquest of Algeria," (2009), 32; 35. The occupation army employed a second, far more condemnable war tactic, known as the *enfumade* in the 1840's, which caused death by smoke inhalation. Its ignominious use on the Ouled Riah in the Dahra Mountains of west Algiers in the summer of 1845 caused a major scandal in France. Lieutenant-Colonel Aimable Pélissier, while conducting a *razzia* on the indigenous population, trapped 800 tribe members in the Ghar el Frachich caverns and set fire to the entrances, causing a vast majority to perish from asphyxiation. On French military etiquette, see Christy Pichichero, "Moralizing War: Military Enlightenment in Eighteen-Century France," in Patricia Lorcin and Daniel Brewer, eds. *France and its Spaces of War: Experience, Memory, Image* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 13-27.

¹⁰⁸ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities* (1995), 20.

¹⁰⁹ On the use of total war during the Napoleonic era, see Bell, *The First Total War* (2008), 154-185. See also Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (2002), 65-103; esp. 71-73; 89-96.

¹¹⁰ Silvestre, *Les Artistes Français*, Vol. 2, 72. "M. Horace Vernet, c'est le daguerreotype incarné, la vivante usine d'images populaires..."

¹¹¹ See Vandenbrouck, "Myth-making in Versailles: the French 'liberating mission' in Algeria and Horace Vernet's *Prise de Smala d'Abd el Kader*," (2007): 92-109. Vandenbrouck argues that Vernet's *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader* reads like a military bulletin as well as a document on racial typologies.

conquest and the use of battle painting for political purposes, the complexities and limits of Vernet's "journalistic" style merit further elaboration.

Vernet was one of the first artists to use the daguerreotype to record sites in the Near East and North Africa shortly after it was invented.¹¹² After completing the *Siege of Constantine* series, Vernet traveled with his pupil, Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet, to North Africa in 1839 and photographed the sites he visited.¹¹³ Mid-nineteenth-century photographic activity in the Near East and North Africa has been classified as documentary photography.¹¹⁴ The fact that Vernet used this early photographic process lends some credibility to the critics and art historians who have noted journalistic or documentary aspects of the artist's paintings. To further reinforce this idea, Vernet's contemporaries praised him for his photographic eye and memory,¹¹⁵ both valuable traits for a "journalistic" painter. However, as scholars have noted, there are limits to documentary veracity in the photographic medium. In a comprehensive study on early photographic activity in North Africa and the Near East, Nissan Perez astutely notes:

Even if the images were taken *dal vero* (from real life) and their arrangement and composition reflected certain truth and objective reality, in the end they were still false. Either staged or carefully selected from a large array of possibilities, they became living visual documents to prove an imaginary

¹¹² See Nissan Perez, *Focus East: Early Photography in the Near East, 1839-1885* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988). Perez's study is one of the first comprehensive analyses of nineteenth-century photography of the Near East and North Africa.

¹¹³ Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet, *Voyage d'Horace Vernet en Orient* (Paris: Challamel), 1843; Perez, *Focus East*, (1988), 229. None of Vernet's original daguerreotypes survive; however, lithographs after his original plates were published in Lerebours' *Excursion daguerriennes* (1842).

¹¹⁴ See, for instance, Perez, *Focus East* (1988); Juliette Ballerini, "Photography Conscripted: Horace Vernet, Gérard de Nerval and Maxime Du Camp in Egypt." (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1987). Ballerini discusses Vernet's photographic activity in a chapter, "*Camera Incarnata: Horace Vernet*," 76-134.

¹¹⁵ See Ballerini, "Photography Conscripted: Horace Vernet, Gérard de Nerval and Maxime Du Camp in Egypt," 84-85. Ballerini cites Goupil-Fesquet, who stated "It seems that everything engraves itself there [upon his memory] for all eternity with the fidelity of a mirror..." and Charles Blanc, who observed: "Vernet's eye was like the lens of a camera, it had the same astonishing character."

reality. The Orient remained embedded in the private fantasies and imagination of the Westerner. Most photographers could not free themselves from the mental image they brought with them to the Orient; they forced the hard reality into visual fantasy. And if occasionally the photographs themselves were actually accurate and objective, then the accompanying caption would reflect a personal prejudiced vision of the Orient.¹¹⁶

In other words, photographs are shaped by ideology, despite their immediacy and purported objectivity in capturing subjects and reproducing images.

The limits of pictorial veracity are more apparent in the category of documentary painting (or reportage painting) in which Vernet's scenes of the Algerian occupation have been couched. Even more so than photography, painting requires an additional process of pictorial construction: the selection and interpretation of a subject; and the arrangement of composition according to stylistic and/or political choices (or some combination thereof), which compromises its objectivity. As works of imperial propaganda, the Napoleonic battle scenes are a useful point of reference for understanding how paintings fabricate historical events and resist the true meaning of reportage. Siegfried, in her comparative study of Gros's *Battle of Nazareth* [**Fig. 23**] and Lejeune's *Battle of Marengo* [**Fig. 24**], evinces that artists adopted clever pictorial and discursive strategies to authenticate their battle scenes as documentary. For instance, Lejeune included an equestrian portrait of himself [**Fig. 28**] into the image to index his eyewitness experience of the battle.¹¹⁷ Gros attempted to authenticate his image by exhibiting it alongside a written account of the Battle of Nazareth and a map that he reconstructed from General Junot's

¹¹⁶ Perez, *Focus East* (1988), 50.

¹¹⁷ Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," (1993): 239-242.

original [Figs. 29 and 29a].¹¹⁸ O'Brien, in his analysis of Gros's *Battle of Eylau* and Grigsby, in her study of Gros's *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa*, expand on the strategies that the artist (Gros) and patron (Napoleon) used to fabricate truth. O'Brien informs that the *Battle of Eylau* [Fig. 22] admits certain gory details of the battle, including the blood-stained sword, and corpses of fallen men littering the snow-covered mounds, only to the extent that they acknowledge some, but not all, of the tragedies that occurred during the military event. This strategy was a contrived way of diffusing public outcry and absolving the emperor of any residual guilt from his failed military campaigns. The atrocities that occurred in the Syrian campaign, as Grigsby observes, is even more deceptively veiled in *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa* [Fig. 21]. The painting attempts to show Napoleon as the paragon of rationality, dispelling rumors of an "imaginary" plague that afflicted the French colonizing forces in Syria, by touching the wound of a plague victim. This gesture references an iconographical convention, *roi thaumaturge* – the healing touch of the king – which, in this painting, is deployed to alleviate irrational fear, as opposed to curing an actual disease. As Grigsby reveals, the imagery belies all accounts of truth, concealing rumors that Napoleon himself had poisoned his troops, lacking the resources to help them overcome their illness.¹¹⁹ In both cases, the battle scenes that claim to represent recent military events are works of fiction. I cite these examples to stress that battle paintings are *representations* of actual events, whose imagery and narrative have been cleverly crafted by the artist, patron, and other interested parties.

¹¹⁸ Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," (1993): 242-245.

¹¹⁹ Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Rumor, Contagion and Colonization in Gros's *Plague-Stricken of Jaffa* (1804)," *Representations*, No. 51 (Summer 1995): 1-46; Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (2002), 65-103.

Battle painting, perhaps more so other forms of visual propaganda, provides an image of some of the most troubling aspects of colonialism. In the Napoleonic examples above, this is especially true when we consider the extent to which the image of the battle (or its aftermath) stands in for the truth, even though it is riddled with inconsistencies, ambiguities and falsehoods. For Vernet, the bonapartist and “soldier who makes paintings” according to Baudelaire,¹²⁰ the problems of reportage painting are worth noting. The reality of the military occupation of Algeria, and particularly its horrors, which I summarized above, provide a context for examining the limits of truth and fiction in Vernet’s battle scenes.

What Vernet represents in the *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader* [Fig. 8] is an example of the *razzia* tactic in action.¹²¹ In this scene, the French mobile column under Duc d’Aumale’s command attacks Abd-el-Kader’s itinerant capital, which, according to the 1845 Salon *livret*, consisted of “[t]hree hundred sixty-eight *douars* with fifteen to twenty tents each; A population of about twenty thousand people; And five thousand combatants armed with guns, of which five hundred are infantry men and two thousand cavalymen.”¹²² The image gives us a glimpse of *razzia*’s destructive force, but downplays some of its most brutal aspects. The “Notice” accompanying the painting informs that at least three hundred enemy cadavers

¹²⁰ Charles Baudelaire, *Art in Paris, 1845-1862*, 93.

¹²¹ See Hélène Gill, *The Language of French Orientalist Painting*, (2003): 17-58. Gill has examined some of the social and historical factors that shaped the imagery and content in Vernet’s *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*. Gill shows that Vernet is not altogether free from incorporating certain stereotypes in his paintings. In some cases, the enemy appears savage; in other instances, passive; some of these details may just be the problem of representing battles. She also eschews hastily classifying (and then dismissing) Vernet’s picture as an Orientalist image. She extends her analysis of Vernet’s work beyond the parameters of the East-West binary theorized by Edward Said by noting, for example, the degree of respect the French afforded the emir, Abd-el-Kader. Gill argues that the absence of the emir in Vernet’s painting shows that the Duc d’Aumale was responsible in subduing Abd-el-Kader’s *people*, but not the emir himself.

¹²² Paris Salon de 1845, *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographies des artistes vivants*, (1845), 197.

littered the grounds surrounding the Taguin River. The French army suffered fewer casualties: with nine dead and twelve wounded.¹²³ To heighten the dramatic impact of the scene, Vernet selects which figures will appear in the picture, where they will appear and which action they will perform. As François Pouillon has pointed out, Vernet diminishes the significance of Colonel Yusuf, who had played a significant role in the raid. Yusuf's team of *spahis* is relegated to the background [Fig. 30], a dark mass barely perceptible between the tents on the left and the tall spires of the palanquins on the right. Vernet also includes in his painting Mohammed Sidi Embarek, commander of the *smalah*, also barely visible to the left of the palanquins. He was not present during the capture, but his family had been killed in the raid.¹²⁴

Regarding Vernet's three paintings of the siege of Constantine, a reviewer at the Salon of 1839 observed, "The soldiers, sufficiently drawn, are solidly arranged. Troopers, officers, gunners, generals, all are at their post. It is exact and detailed like a report from the Ministry of War, and it has to be true to the locality, like a map of an engineer. In sum, it is a framed bulletin, and *voilà* that is all."¹²⁵ The three paintings represent the French army's second attempt at capturing the fortified city. The first siege occurred in November 1836 under commander-in-chief, General Clauzel,¹²⁶ and resulted in tragedy. During the second attempt, the French army directed by General Damrémont was better prepared for invasion, having learned the peculiar layout of Constantine's environs, marked by a deep ravine, vast plains and

¹²³ "Notice sur l'expédition qui s'est terminée par la prise de la smalah d'Abd-el-Kader, le 16 mai 1843," 15.

¹²⁴ Pouillon, "La Peinture monumentale en Algérie," (1996): 185; see also "Notice sur l'expédition qui s'est terminée par la prise de la smalah d'Abd-el-Kader, le 16 mai 1843," 17.

¹²⁵ Laurent-Jan, *Salon de 1839: Dessins par les premiers artistes* (Paris: Charivari, 1839): 6.

¹²⁶ Blanc, *History of Ten Years*, Vol. 2 (1845), 488-491.

the plateau of the Coudiat-Ati, which had compromised the French army's first attempt. The reviewer at the 1839 Salon reduces the paintings to illustrations of a military bulletin. In so doing, he dismisses Vernet's pictorial inventiveness in capturing the sentimentality and suspenseful atmosphere of the event. Louis Blanc describes the tense moments before the invasion: "Every fresh step towards Constantina [Constantine] awakened some painful recollection, and many a time the soldier's foot struck against the bones which had now no name, yet reminded him of his land."¹²⁷ In the first scene in the siege of Constantine, *The Enemy Driven Back from the Hills of Coudiat-Ati, 10 October 1837* [Fig. 5], we see an initial encounter between the French and Kabyle armies framed in a picturesque landscape. In a letter to his wife, dated "2 December [1837], afternoon," Vernet describes his first impression of the city of Constantine from afar:

[O]ne sees Constantine three leagues away in distance. I swear to you that my heart started beating in seeing the end and goal of my trip. The largest mountains of the great Atlas developed before the spectator. It was two o'clock in the afternoon, the sun shined, nothing was lacking for the splendor of this tableau.¹²⁸

The artist seemingly captures much of this splendor in his first Constantine painting. We also see the grim reminders of the unsuccessful first siege of Constantine in the scattered bones in the foreground. Their presence in the image has an indexical value, reminding the occupation army of its failed first attempt and inspiring them to succeed in the present attempt. Vernet also shows the French army's command of the mountains, which had posed a great challenge in the first invasion, but is careful not to provide a full view of the ravines from which the Kabyles emerged to devastate

¹²⁷ Blanc, *History of Ten Years*, Vol. 2 (1845), 530.

¹²⁸ Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet*, 119.

French forces. In the third painting, *Siege of Constantine: The Capture of the City* [Fig. 7], Vernet is subtler in inscribing his first-hand impressions of the city. In the same letter to his wife noted above, Vernet describes the city proper as follows:

The interior of the streets are very dark and of an abominable stench. The cadavers that are still there, under the debris add to the garbage, the general diarrhea of the army that emanates from the pestilential miasmas... Still our poor soldiers are dropping like flies. From the first step that one makes into the city, one cannot believe it possible to stay here.¹²⁹

Vernet structures his painting to heighten the dynamic action of the capture. He shows the debris and garbage – broken walls, dilapidated structures, and bodies strewn about – but downplays such grim details to express the heroic energy of the military episode. In preparation for this scene, *The Assault Columns Position Themselves for Motion* [Fig. 6] provides a distant view of the city walls about to be breached by the French armed forces. Action is reduced a minimum as the mobile columns await orders. The sequential logic of this scene and *The Capture of the City* lend these pictures a narrative continuity that transcends their frames. The Kabyles are suspiciously absent from both scenes, allowing the French army to overrun the city without resistance.

Shortly after completing the *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*, Vernet traveled to Algeria in March 1845.¹³⁰ In early April, he visited the battlefield of Isly, and wrote to his wife on April 6, aboard the *Lavoisier*, “I have fulfilled, as much as possible, my mission with prudence and I bring back the necessary documents to make the battle of Isly with all of the truth that I have to represent our facts of

¹²⁹ In Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet*, 120.

¹³⁰ Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet*, 284.

war.”¹³¹ Vernet does not record his impressions of Isly. Without this description, we lack an essential point of reference to compare with the image. Vernet insists, however, that he has fulfilled his mission “with prudence,” gathered “necessary documents,” and with all of this truth, will be able to represent the French army’s “facts of war.” In the *Battle of Isly* [Fig. 9], we witness a scene of French triumph. Two figures on the lower left of the canvas review dossiers taken from the tent of Sultan Abd er-Rahman’s son, while in the center we see an officer receiving the standards and parasol captured from the Moroccans.¹³² Vernet carefully organizes the tents and disparate military groups – foot soldiers, cavalymen and indigenous combatants – to recreate the scene. In the foreground, flush with the picture plane, Vernet also acknowledges the unfortunate consequence of battle by showing the wounded French soldier attended to by his comrades. Baudelaire, in his review of the Salon of 1846, where this painting was exhibited, opined: “...M. Horace Vernet is gifted with two outstanding qualities – the one of deficiency, the other of excess; for he lacks all passion, and has a memory like an almanac!”¹³³ Vernet’s carefully constructed picture and interest in minute details might lend credence to Baudelaire’s critique that the artist’s memory is “like an almanac,” or that his paintings are like a “military bulletin,” to paraphrase the reviewer of the 1839 Salon. However, Vernet elides some of the more gruesome details of the battle, namely the disproportionately large number of Moroccan casualties compared to those of the French.¹³⁴ Vernet

¹³¹ Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet*, 285.

¹³² Julien, *Histoire de l’Algérie contemporaine*, 623.

¹³³ Baudelaire, *Art in Paris 1845-1862* (1965), 94.

¹³⁴ Julien, *Histoire de l’Algérie contemporaine*, 198. Julien informs that among the Moroccan casualties, roughly 2,000 men were wounded and 800 died; among the French, 36 were wounded and 4 officers died.

diminishes violence and carnage, and accentuates the scenic mountainous backdrop to stage his battle.

Despite Vernet's careful research and attention to minutiae, his battle scenes are pictorial constructions *based on* actual military episodes. The "facts of war" that Vernet presents evoke the heroic quality of the occupation army's exploits and the picturesque beauty of the colonial lands. Such pictorial fabrications might appear benign, but they fabricate the truth in ways similar to the Napoleonic canvases noted above. The complexities and limits of truth and fiction thus complicate the documentary veracity of Vernet's images. Unlike military bulletins or journalistic reports, his paintings lack the capacity to instantly document and provide factual information on battles as they transpired.

The Algerian battle paintings illustrate military heroism and fruitful colonial conquest. In aesthetic and ideological terms, Vernet's battle scenes assimilate the formal language of Napoleonic propaganda painting to suit the requirements of the historical-museological project at Versailles and Louis-Philippe's taste. However, as regards composition and style, these paintings tend to diminish the scale of those military heroes that would normally occupy the most prominent place within the composition. Furthermore, they destabilize the pivotal moment and tend to emphasize the minutiae of the scene overall, placing a much greater accent on architectural features, landscape vistas, the actions of individuals and other peripheral details. In this way, they reconcile dominant styles of history painting and differ from other

representations of warfare. The Algerian battle scenes are thus constructed in terms of aesthetic taste and political message to serve the imperial aims of the July Monarchy.

CHAPTER 3: THE *SALLES D'AFRIQUE* AND THE WRITING OF HISTORY: THE ORLÉANS CHAPTER IN THE FRENCH HISTORICAL EPIC

“The doors of the palace were opened at 10 A.M., displaying to view an immense series of pictures, portraits, statues; in fact, the history of France written by the arts.”¹³⁵ Louis Blanc expressed these sentiments having witnessed the inaugural ceremony of the Versailles historical museum. He summarizes in this brief statement the essential point of Louis-Philippe’s museological project; that is to write history *visually*. The arts, “pictures, portraits, statues,” become powerful rhetorical tools in writing “the history of France.” The manner in which Louis-Philippe’s historical-museological project presents history has prompted scholars and curators of Versailles to question how the museum functions as a museum. In a survey of the Gallery of Battles, for instance, former curator Claire Constans inquires: “Did Louis-Philippe believe he could offer the public an illustration of the histori[cal] narratives?”¹³⁶ In this chapter, I consider some of the ideological factors that underpin Louis-Philippe’s historical-museological project. Looking at the theoretical scholarship on the writing of history and the complex interrelationship between history and memory, I hope to nuance our understanding of how the Versailles museum functions both aesthetically and socially as a museum, but also as a historical site. I shall attempt to combine two threads of theoretical analysis on historical writing: one inspired by Pierre Nora’s work on the *lieux de mémoire*, which classifies historical writing as a social activity shaped by memories; and another, endorsed by Michel de Certeau, which describes it in practical terms as a discursive process of

¹³⁵ Blanc, *History of Ten Years*, Vol. 2 (1845), 522.

¹³⁶ Constans, *Versailles: La Galerie des Batailles* (1984), 4.

organizing and recording events into a narrative. Informed by both models on historical writing, I argue that the *salles d'Afrique* – adorned with paintings that celebrate the martial and political glories of France as a nation – collectively represent the Orléans military chapter in the grand historical narrative that Louis-Philippe constructed at the Versailles museum.

VERSAILLES: MUSÉE HISTORIQUE AND LIEU DE MÉMOIRE?

During the opening ceremonies of the Versailles museum, Louis-Philippe declared in a public address:

I will profit from this stay to direct the completion of the palace of Versailles, which I continue as much as I can, in order to complete the grand reunion of memories from our history, which attest to what France has done in all of the centuries, and which will show future generations that which the French nation can accomplish and all of her endeavors (*carrières*) when she is guided by leaders worthy of her, and overall profoundly attached to their homeland (*patrie*), as I would like to glorify myself as having done so for all time.¹³⁷

Note the monarch's emphasis on national values and the collective interests of the French nation represented in the Versailles museum, "a grand reunion of memories from our history." Witnessing the opening ceremonies of the historical museum in June 1837, Jules Janin remarked: "Whosoever has the right to a distinguished place in the history of our country also has the right to a place in the château of Versailles."¹³⁸ Janin's observation invites us to consider a correlation between the abstract concept of history and the concrete architectural structure of the Versailles palace. What Janin means by "our history" is a shared *national* legacy of significant events or moments of the past. The newly constructed historical museum at Versailles embodied this

¹³⁷ Cited in Janin, *Fontainebleau, Versailles, Paris* (1837), 185.

¹³⁸ Janin, *Fontainebleau, Versailles, Paris* (1837), 128.

abstract concept of history in its gallery spaces, décor, collection of artworks that honored noteworthy individuals, political moments and battles of the French past. Janin strongly reinforces this idea of history embodied at the Versailles museum: “Imagine that the staircase, the vestibules, the courtyards, the smallest of passages are filled with the memories of our history. Imagine that all of the battles, all of our combats on land and sea, that all of our *châteaux*, all of the citadels of France are represented on these walls.”¹³⁹ Janin’s observations regarding the “memories” preserved at the palace, which invoke moments in “our” French national “history,” invite further theoretical consideration.

“Memory,” according to Pierre Nora, “is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past...”¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, “History, because it is an intellectual and secular production, calls for analysis and criticism...Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects.”¹⁴¹ According to Nora, *Lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) are meaningful objects, spaces, acts and ideas that have become fragmented as a result of the historiographical exercise of writing history.¹⁴² In various case studies, scholars have examined these two abstract concepts as social activities shaped by ideological factors.¹⁴³ I am less concerned with Nora’s definition of memory; however, his

¹³⁹ Janin, *Fontainebleau, Versailles, Paris* (1837), 129-130.

¹⁴⁰ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 8.

¹⁴¹ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 9.

¹⁴² Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 12. Nora places history in opposition to memory by arguing that the latter is a living phenomenon of events, rituals, remembrances and so forth, while the former is a reconstruction or representation of the past. Nora describes the *lieux de mémoire* as the remnants of memorial consciousness, “...a reconstituted object beneath the gaze of critical history” and lists museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, etc. as “sites of memory” that exist today.

¹⁴³ Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 3 vols. (1996-1998). For a recent study on the social and cognitive factors of writing history, see Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003). Zerubavel argues that in historical

evaluation of history and “sites of memory” is useful in explaining how the Versailles museum functions as a museum and historically significant space.

In Chapter One, I discussed the transformation of Versailles from royal court to national public museum. Prior to the Revolution, Versailles was the symbol of dynastic rule. As Édouard Pommier has shown, monarchical memory was present in the royal trappings and art objects that filled the palace, but also in the rituals of rulership that each Bourbon monarch performed.¹⁴⁴ The inauguration of Versailles as a royal court under Louis XIV and the Revolution of 1789 bracket this memory of Bourbon dynastic rule. Louis-Philippe’s *Musée Historique* recalls this memory through paintings, sculptures and furniture organized within its gallery spaces. In other words, Louis-Philippe’s repurposing of the château delimits two periods in the palace’s history: one that existed before Louis-Philippe’s intervention, and one that emerged after. The first preserves the memory of absolute monarchy and the second refers to that memory (and others) through representative objects organized into gallery spaces. This is an act of historical writing in which memories are recorded and then organized into a coherent narrative. The historiographical act initiated by Louis-Philippe causes the château to become a “site of memory,” to use Nora’s term. Accordingly, the objects and spaces that once played a part in the Bourbon ritual of rulership became isolated from their original context, reformulated into gallery

writing, social memories and past events become structural elements in a historical narrative. This narrative requires historians to create a map of time, isolate specific moments, and organize them into plots and subplots that indicate general progress, decline or combination of both. In other ways, narrative models also help describe relationships between memories in time, whether they occur in a linear, multi-linear, or circular pattern.

¹⁴⁴ See Pommier, “Versailles: The Image of the Sovereign,” 293-323.

spaces, and inserted into the wider discursive/architectural framework of the *Musée Historique*.

Michel de Certeau and others have also examined the more practical formula of writing history using a semiotic model. According to Certeau:

The event is that which must *delimit*, if there is to be intelligibility; the historical fact is that which must *fill*, if there is to be a meaningful statement. The former conditions the organization of discourse, while the latter provides the signifiers intended to form a series of significant elements in the mode of narrative. In sum, the former defines, and the latter spells out.¹⁴⁵

Michael Marrinan, using this theoretically informed approach, shows how history is recorded in the paintings in the Gallery of Battles. Designating the Versailles museum as a “historical space designed to shape disparate incidents into the kinds of cognitive unities we call ‘events’ as opposed to an ‘aesthetic space’,” Marrinan asserts that the gallery spaces become the historical narrative, delimited by paintings (events), whose iconographical details stand in for facts.¹⁴⁶ In other words, the gallery spaces comprise both the architectural and discursive framework into which the monumental canvases are installed. In Marrinan’s analysis, the architectural and discursive framework is the Gallery of Battles. The monumental battle scenes in this gallery purportedly illustrate the historical event after which they are titled: for example, Vernet’s painting, *The Battle of Jena, 14 October 1806*, allegedly represents the event in which Napoleon’s army defeated the Prussian forces that challenged the French presence in the Rhineland. The iconographical details in the painting-cum-event are

¹⁴⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 96. Marrinan cites this same passage from the original French text by Certeau.

¹⁴⁶ Marrinan, “Historical Vision,” (1994), 121. Marrinan adapted this argument in an essay on the structure and simulation of paintings in the African rooms. See Marrinan, “Schauer der Eroberung: Strukturen des Zuschauens und der Simulation in den Nordafrika-Galerien von Versailles,” (1999): 267-295. For an illuminating discussion on the semiotic aspects of early-nineteenth-century French iconography, see also Marrinan, “Literal/Literary/‘Lexie’: history, text, and authority in Napoleonic painting,” *Word and Image*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July/September, 1991): 177-200.

facts that support the event. Thus, the presence of military generals, soldiers, cavalymen, canons and other instruments of war, set within the battlefield are the details that comprise the event illustrated by the painting. The arrangement of canvases within the gallery spaces, then, scripts the narrative within the architectural and discursive framework of the gallery space. The ensemble of gallery spaces within the Versailles museum constructs the great epic of French History, written by Louis-Philippe.

I agree with Marrinan's estimation of the Versailles museum functioning as an historical space in which the history of France is written visually. To quote Victor Hugo, who described Louis-Philippe's *Musée Historique* as follows: "...it is to have made a national monument from a monarchical monument...in a word, it is to have given to this magnificent book that one calls the history of France this magnificent binding that one calls Versailles."¹⁴⁷ The "magnificent book" of French history that Hugo describes comes to life with the "chronicles written by the paintbrush"¹⁴⁸ as observed by Janin. The statements by Victor Hugo, Louis Blanc and Jules Janin noted in this chapter confirm that the purpose of Louis-Philippe's historical-museological project was not lost on his contemporaries.

THE SALLES D'AFRIQUE: WRITING THE CONQUEST OF ALGERIA INTO FRENCH HISTORY

Within the historical-museological program, the Hall of Mirrors, the bedchambers of the King and the Queen, the Marble Court and other spaces within

¹⁴⁷ Cited in Cottais, "Les salles d'Afrique: construction et décor sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1848)," 4.

¹⁴⁸ Janin, *Fontainebleau, Versailles, Paris* (1837), 151.

and around the core structure represent the period of absolute monarchy. They “narrate” the history of this period by evoking its memories through their décor and collection of representative objects. It follows then, that the Empire galleries in the south transverse wing, and the Coronation room in the corridor connecting the central and south wings represent Napoleon and the First Empire. The Estates General and the 1792 rooms show significant moments in the Revolution. Finally the 1830 room, located near the Gallery of Battles in the south wing, marks the beginning of the July Monarchy. The Gallery of Battles is filled with images depicting moments in French military history assembled in one expansive gallery space. As noted in Chapter One, Gaetghens, Constans and other scholars have examined these gallery spaces and many of the artworks displayed therein.

The question that remains is: how do the post-1837 renovations in the north transverse wing connect with the architectural and discursive framework of Louis-Philippe’s historical museum? The gallery spaces in the north transverse wing were constructed gradually throughout Louis-Philippe’s reign. They included the Gallery of the Crusades, located on the ground level, and the African rooms, on the floor above. Architectonically, the north and south transverse wings appear symmetrically identical. In a rhetorical sense, there is an interesting cross-dialogue that occurs within and among the gallery spaces that occupy the two transverse wings. The Gallery of the Crusades and the African rooms continue the discourse of French military valor celebrated in the Gallery of Battles and Empire in the south transverse wing.

The pictorial program in the *salles d'Afrique* in its ensemble narrates the history of Algeria's colonization through military occupation. Aurélie Cottais notes in her study of the *salle d'Afrique* that the Gallery of the Crusades and the African rooms are related spatially but also ideologically in that the triumph of Christianity over Islam remained a component of colonial conquest.¹⁴⁹ As Patricia Lorcin has argued, the colonial conquest of Algeria was justified as a civilizing mission, insofar as the triumph of French civilization (read Christianity) would end Arab tyranny and despotism (read Islam).¹⁵⁰ Kim Munholland has shown how the popularization of historical writing on the Crusades at the turn of the eighteenth century informed the pictorial program in the Gallery of the Crusades.¹⁵¹ She convincingly argues that the French publics would have understood the greater contemporary significance of the Crusades, from the historical narratives and imagery, for its agency in Christianizing Europe and subduing the imposing threat of a Muslim invasion. Louis-Philippe's conquest of Algeria would have been regarded as a contemporary "crusade" into a Muslim-dominated land, though for primarily political and economic reasons. Framed in this way, Vernet's battle scenes gain another layer of meaning, drawing rhetorically from the Crusades pictures located in the galleries below. Vernet's paintings not only represent the systematic colonization of Algeria through military occupation, but also the French army's continued effort in civilizing/Christianizing their purportedly uncultured Islamic foes in North Africa. Thus, there is a parallel

¹⁴⁹ Cottais, "Les salles d'Afrique: construction et décor sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1848)," 5.

¹⁵⁰ See Lorcin, *Imperial Identities* (1995), 20. See also Said, *Orientalism*, 58-9. Said asserts that in the medieval period, Islam appeared to be a foreign, and fraudulent, religious practice that posed a threat to Western, Christian civilization.

¹⁵¹ Kim Munholland, "Michaud's *History of the Crusades* and the French Crusade in Algeria under Louis-Philippe," (1994), 144-165 According to Munholland, Michaud's *Histoire des croisades*, written during the Restoration and compiled in several volumes, was responsible for popularizing Crusades history among the literate French populace.

dialogue between the history of Islamic subjugation in the medieval period narrated by the images in the Gallery of Crusades and those in the African rooms that depict the systematic colonization of Algeria in the nineteenth century.

In the *Musée Historique*'s project of writing history visually, Vernet's style appears to be amenable to the historiographical process (not to be mistaken with reportage). As I have shown in Chapter Two, Vernet's Algerian battle scenes encompass more than the central military action that gives each painting its title. He incorporates a variety of actions and peripheral details that comprise the military episode and couches them within a larger view of the landscape-cum-battlefield. The three images that comprise the *Siege of Constantine* provide a moment-by-moment recapitulation of the French army's infiltration of Constantine's city walls. The *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader* shows the *razzia* strategy in action, noting its impact on disparate groups of the emir's itinerant capital. In this respect, the Algerian battle scenes are complicit in the process of recording the colonization process into French history.¹⁵²

Finally, and most significantly, Vernet's battle scenes assert that the colonial mission in Algeria is a July Monarchy achievement. In this way, they bear a legitimist function. In the *salle de Constantine* and the *salle de la Smalah*, Louis-Philippe's sons stand out as heroes in at least two of the Algerian battle scenes: the Duc de Nemours in the *Siege of Constantine: The Enemy Driven Back from the Hills of Coudiat-Ati, 10 October 1837* and the Duc d'Aumale in the *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*. They mark the Orléans presence in the colonizing effort. The Prince de

¹⁵² The *Battle of Isly* is somewhat of a strange case, as the only battle scene from the French army's military engagements in Morocco that Vernet managed to complete.

Joinville, another of Louis-Philippe's sons, was to be featured as a hero in *salle du Maroc*. While Bugeaud successfully diminished Abd-el-Kader's power by terminating his alliance with Morocco in the Battle of Isly, the Prince de Joinville led successful coups in Tangiers and Mogador.¹⁵³ Vernet had received commissions to represent these heroic events to decorate the *salle du Maroc*. However, those battle scenes remained incomplete by the time the July Monarchy had ended. The absence of the Prince de Joinville's military engagements aside, the African rooms as Louis-Philippe had envisioned them, would have recounted the martial exploits of his sons, future heirs to the French throne.

The later addition of the *salles d'Afrique* marks a break in the historical narrative constructed by the gallery spaces and objects originally assembled for the museum's inauguration in June 1837. As I have argued above, however, their gradual construction during the final years of the July Monarchy also signifies a continuation of the existing historical narrative. In the organization of the Versailles museum, the African rooms are related spatially and ideologically with the Gallery of Crusades as regards the conquest and civilizing of Islamic lands. In a similar vein, these later additions connect with the galleries in the south transverse wing vis-à-vis French military strength and imperial ambitions.

Through a series of rooms and galleries, the Versailles museum narrated the grand epic of French history programmed by Louis-Philippe. Within this historical scheme, the *salles d'Afrique* represented the Orléans chapter of French military valor through battle scenes that featured Louis-Philippe's sons as heroes in the colonial

¹⁵³ Cottais, "Les salles d'Afrique: construction et décor sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1848)," 19.

mission. In this way, the African rooms not only engaged rhetorically with the discourse of French military superiority embodied in the galleries of the south transverse wing, but also legitimated the Orléans dynasty as a French ruling family.

CONCLUSION

The July Monarchy witnessed two parallel projects that had national significance: the colonial conquest of Algeria and the construction of the historical museum at Versailles. During the period of military occupation, Vernet was one among many French artists who traveled to Algeria, and represented various aspects of the North African landscape, indigenous populations and landmarks. In the paintings examined in this thesis – the three-part *Siege of Constantine* (1839), *The Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader* (1845), and *The Battle of Isly* (1846) – Vernet gave visual form to the *Armée d’Afrique*’s martial exploits. Military occupation was an essential condition of nineteenth-century colonial activity, and battle paintings provided the visual rhetoric to promote these enterprises. Both the colonial mission and the battle paintings that resulted from them evoke imperial ambitions. While previous scholarship on art of the July Monarchy has emphasized its interrelationship with politics, few studies have specifically addressed how military history and battle paintings fit into this paradigm. I have thus engaged scholarship on Napoleonic war imagery to show how Vernet’s battle scenes and the colonial conquest of Algeria also conveyed the spirit of imperialism.

Installed in the *Musée Historique*, in gallery spaces constructed especially for their display, the Algerian battle scenes were situated in a public space, which allowed their message of colonial expansion to be broadcasted to the French people at large. In this respect, they contributed to the grand epic of French history constructed by Louis-Philippe at the Versailles museum, particularly in emphasizing French military strength. They also served a legitimist purpose by showcasing the role played

by Louis-Philippe's sons in the colonization process. Within the architectural and discursive framework of the museum, the three rooms that comprised the *salles d'Afrique* functioned rhetorically as an Orléans chapter in French military history, exemplified by Gallery of Battles, Empire and Crusades. They further anchored the Orléans presence in the north transverse wing of the Versailles historical museum to complement the 1830 room, situated in the south wing, next to the Gallery of Battles.

Vernet's battle paintings of the French occupation of Algeria draw an ideological line that connects the historical-museological project at Versailles with the colonial conquest of Algeria. Three overarching themes define the scope of this project: history, colonial conquest and empire. Louis-Philippe's *Musée Historique*, the colonial mission in Algeria, and Vernet's battle scenes express these themes in their rhetorical codependence and interrelationship.

THESIS IMAGES

Fig. 1: Château of Versailles, general view.

Fig. 2: François-Joseph Heim, *Louis-Philippe Inaugurates the Gallery of Battles*, 10 June 1837, 33.5x46.5 cm (1837, Versailles, Musée National)

Fig. 3: Plan of Versailles, ground floor. From gallica.bnf.fr.

Fig. 4: Plan of the first floor of the north wing, Service des Archives du château de Versailles, n.d. (numeration from Second Empire). Reproduced from “Les salles d’Afrique: construction et décor sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1848).” Bulletin du centre de recherche du château de Versailles. Online publication accessed July 30, 2012.: p. 3. <<http://crcv.revues.org/10498>>

Fig. 5: Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine: The Enemy Driven Back from the Hills of Coudiat-Ati, 10 October 1837*, 512x518 cm (1838, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 6: Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine: The Assault Columns Position Themselves for Motion, 13 October 1837* 512x1039 cm (1839, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 7: Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine: The Capture of the City, 13 October 1837* 512x513 cm (1838, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 8: Horace Vernet, *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader by the Duc d'Aumale at Taguin, 16 May 1843*, 489x2139 cm (1844, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 8a: Horace Vernet, *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*, detail with Duc d'Aumale and Arab soldier aiming a rifle at Lieutenant Colonel Morris.

Fig. 8b: Horace Vernet, *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*, detail with marabout Sidi el-Aradj.

Fig. 8c: Horace Vernet, *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*, detail with Mohammed-bel-Karoubi and family.

Fig. 9: Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Isly, 14 August 1844* 514x1038 cm (1846, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 10: Horace Vernet, *Battle of the Bouvines, 27 July 1214*, 510x958 cm (1828, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 11: Horace Vernet, *Battle of Fontenoy, 11 May 1745*, 510x958 cm (1828, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 12: François Gérard, *Battle of Austerlitz, 2 December 1805*, 510x958 cm (1810, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 13: François Gérard, *Entry of Henry IV in Paris, 22 March 1594*, 510x958 cm (1816, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 14: Diagram of the Gallery of Battles. Reproduced from Thomas W. Gaetghens, *Versailles: De la résidence royale au Musée Historique* (1984), p. 398.

Fig. 15: Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Jena, 14 October 1806*, 465x543 cm (1835, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 16: Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Friedland, 14 June 1807*, 465x543 cm (1835, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 17: Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Wagram, 6 July 1809*, 465x543 cm (1835, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 18: Eugène Delacroix, *28 July: Liberty Leading the People*, 260x325 cm (1831, Musée du Louvre)

Fig. 19: Amédée Bourgeois, *Capture of the Hôtel de Ville: The Pont d'Arcole, 28 July 1830*, 145x195 cm (1830, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 20: Anne-Louis Girodet, *Revolt of Cairo, 21 October 1798*, 365x500 cm (1810, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 21: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa, 11 March 1799*, 532x720 cm (1804, Musée du Louvre)

Fig. 22: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Battle of Eylau, 9 February 1807*, 521x734 cm (1808, Musée du Louvre)

Fig. 23: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Battle of Nazareth*, sketch 135x195 cm (1801, Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts)

Fig. 24: Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Marengo, 4 June 1800*, 180x258 cm (1801, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 25: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Battle of Aboukir, 1 August 1798* (1806, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 26: Louis-François Lejeune, *Battle of the Pyramids, 21 July 1798*, 180x258cm (1806, Musée national du Château de Versailles)

Fig. 27: Jean-Charles Langlois, *Panorama of the Invasion of Algiers*, reconstruction based on sketches. Installation of 23 studies, each 48.8 x 33.5 cm. (1832, Private Collection, Caen, France and Musée Laplace, Beaumont-en-Auge, France) reproduced in John Zarobell, *Empire of Landscape: Space and Ideology in French Colonial Algeria* (2010).

Fig. 28: Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Marengo, 4 June 1800*, detail with Lejeune's equestrian portrait.

Fig. 29: General Junot's Map of Battle of Nazareth, in Susan L. Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," (1993), p. 244.

Fig. 29a: Antoine-Jean Gros's reconstruction of General Junot's map, in Susan L. Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," (1993), p. 244.

Fig. 30: Horace Vernet, *Capture of the Smalah of Abd-el-Kader*. Detail with General Yusuf's team in the background and Sidi-Embarek (in green kaftan)

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