

EPISODES IN POLITICAL ILLUSION:  
THE PROLIFERATION OF WAR IMAGERY IN FRANCE (1804-1856)

By

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation investigates a neglected, yet central component of nineteenth-century visual culture in France, namely the proliferation of war imagery across a range of established and emergent visual forms including painting, printmaking, battle panoramas, illustrated newspapers and photography. Far from mere reflections of the propagandistic aims of state power, representations of war produced between the First Napoleonic Empire and the Crimean War (1804-1856), the first major armed conflict to break out on European soil since the wars of the First Napoleonic Empire, depended on a wide range of belief systems beyond officially-sponsored political agendas. Throughout this dissertation, I situate war imagery as a material and discursive platform which not only informed perceptions about war and peace, but also implicated a larger set of contemporary issues as diverse as the development of liberal political doctrines, imperialism, industrial modes of production and the interaction of early forms of mass culture with more established media such as painting over the course of the nineteenth century. While art historical studies of representations of war have predominately focused on the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods and on the paintings of Jacques-Louis David and his students, the present study focuses on a corpus of works (and their

relevant reproductions) by artists who have fallen outside the purview of the dominant interpretations of nineteenth-century artistic production in France, including the battle painters Louis-François Lejeune, Carle Vernet, Horace Vernet, the war artist Henri Durand-Brager and the panoramist Jean-Charles Langlois. In addition to focusing on the interrelations which existed between different media used to picture war, I identify a set of formal strategies used by artists to compose and picture armed combat in order to make it appear legible and engaging. Through an array of archival and primary sources, including Salon criticism, government documents, diaries, letters and newspaper articles, I argue that the visual representations of war produced by these artists invited spectators to consume war at a remove, as a series of affective and appealing images.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

An extraordinary photograph (Fig. 1.1) taken by Charles Nègre in 1857 depicts a man, whom the title identifies as an “apprentice of Charles Nègre,” gazing down at a print. His rolled up sleeves and apron suggest his status as a worker. The camera captures him as he takes a break from his endeavors to step outside to admire the object of his labor. He turns to the side in an awkward pose with one leg crossed behind the other and angles the print toward the camera where it comes into remarkable focus. The print in question is a photogravure made in Nègre’s studio based on a reproductive photograph (Fig. 1.2) by Robert Jefferson Bingham of Adolphe Yvon’s large-scale battle painting, the *Capture of the Malakoff Tower* (Fig. 1.3), exhibited at the Salon of 1857. Yvon’s enormous painting, which measured over 80 x 40 feet (600 x 900 cm), depicted a decisive battle from the Crimean War, the first major armed international conflict to occur on European soil since the Napoleonic Wars at the start of the century. But the specifics of the painting and the heroics of the battle are irrelevant to the sets of viewing relationships which Nègre’s photograph constructs. In depicting a photogravure based on a photograph based on Yvon’s painting, Nègre staged this stubbornly self-reflexive scene

to represent, in a reproductive medium, a viewer (the worker) looking at a reproduced image. Through the mediating presence of a representation of war, the problem of reproducibility is thus figured as a chain of obliquely ordered signs - an allegory - of the relationship between spectatorship and visual production during the industrial age.<sup>1</sup>

The photographer's interest in picturing this very specific kind of viewing encounter hails from the historical moment of the 1850s, a period that witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of modes of visual reproduction, including photography and photogravure. Nègre's inclusion of a reproduction of his photogravure of the *Capture of the Malakoff Tower* raises the question as to why he used a battle as the focal point of his image and not for example a photogravure of a decorative element from the Chartres cathedral or any of the dozens that were made in his studio during the same period.<sup>2</sup> The answer lies in the particular valences that representations of war carried during the period pertaining to their mass availability in an astonishing range of visual formats. Representations of war not only filled the exhibition spaces of the Salon, but were also to be seen in the shop windows of print sellers, in the rotundas where panoramas were installed, and on the pages of luxurious folio books and illustrated weekly newspapers. Nègre's photogravure of Yvon's *Malakoff*, for example, was but one of six different

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<sup>1</sup> Paul de Man conceives of allegory as a form of representation whereby meaning is constituted out of distant, indirect relationships. He states: "It remains necessary, if there is to be allegory, that the allegorical sign refer to another sign that precedes it. The meaning constituted in the allegorical sign can then consist only in the repetition of a previous sign with which it can never coincide, since it is of the essence of this previous sign to be pure anteriority...allegory designates primarily a distance in relation to its own origin." See Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1983), 207. Steve Edward's work on English nineteenth-century photography and labor identifies "allegorical reading" as the methodological basis for his project of exploring how photography's discourses and practices were figured "in opposition to the workers' world." See Steve Edwards, *The Making of English Photography - Allegories* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 14.

<sup>2</sup> For more on Charles Nègre's photogravures see Françoise Helibrun, *Charles Nègre, Photographe, 1820-1880* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1980). I would like to thank Jacob Lewis for first bringing this remarkable photograph to my attention.

copies that were available for purchase in 1857 in a variety of reproductive media including photography, lithography and engraving.<sup>3</sup>

The well-known and oft-reproduced image of war that is the object of the worker's gaze does more than picture a decisive battle in the Crimean War; it is in fact central to Nègre's self-reflexive meditation on the process surrounding the production of reproductive images. Beyond its subject matter, *Malakoff* embodied a set of material values connected to its status as a reproducible object made for dissemination on a large scale, a quality that nineteenth-century viewers would have associated with war imagery in particular. By including the *Malakoff* photogravure within his image, Nègre signaled his professional eminence as a producer of photomechanical reproductive images, a mode of visual production that was rapidly undergoing commodification at the time. The overall importance of *Malakoff* within Nègre's photograph suggests that representations of war had more significance within the economy of nineteenth-century visual culture than has previously been acknowledged, extending beyond individual artistic achievement, stylistic evolutions and "documentary" value. Though representations of war have been traditionally seen as functioning as a form of propaganda for the advancement of state power, this dissertation contends that they in fact signified materially and discursively within the larger historical framework of nineteenth-century France.

The present study locates the significance of war imagery within a wide range of belief systems beyond officially-sponsored political agendas. Its research and arguments

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Bann's work on the interrelationships among nineteenth-century media has served as an invaluable methodological guide for this study. See Stephen Bann, *Parallel Lines, Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 125.



are based on a corpus of works (and their relevant reproductions) by a group of artists who have not featured prominently within art historical accounts of the period. The artists examined in this dissertation, including the battle painters Louis-François Lejeune, Carle Vernet, Horace Vernet, Henri Durand-Brager and the panoramist Jean-Charles Langlois, were well regarded during their lifetimes and were widely discussed by nineteenth-century critics, yet remain on the margins of contemporary art historical inquiry. This can be explained in part by the fact that these artists worked outside the tradition of grand manner history painting established by Jacques-Louis David and his students - a mode of artistic practice that has dominated art historical approaches to the study of visual representations of armed combat during the period.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the “school” of Davidian classicism, the artists examined in this dissertation do not fit comfortably within other categories commonly used to conceptualize nineteenth-century artistic practice including romanticism or realism. Instead of focusing on the exemplary movements and “styles” traditionally emphasized in art historical scholarship, the study of artists who represented armed combat and the range of their works across different visual media has allowed me to identify and interrogate the structures that sustained the

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<sup>4</sup> Previous studies of nineteenth-century representations of war have emphasized the production of canonical works of art, most notably the large-scale history paintings made by Jacques-Louis David and his students under the patronage of Napoleon Bonaparte. Christopher Prendergast’s examination of Napoleonic painting is an example of this tendency. Christopher Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting: Antoine-Jean Gros’s La Bataille d’Eylau* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997). The majority of inquiries either focus on individual artists, as is the case with David O’Brien’s work on Gros, or on individual conflicts, such as Nina Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer’s examination of French artistic responses to the Greek War of Independence, Hollis Clayson’s study of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and Ulrich Keller’s work on the Crimean War. These studies have provided me with vital methodological models for evaluating the complex interrelations between contemporary military events and their visual representation. See David O’Brien, *After the Revolution, Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda under Napoleon* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Nina Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer, *French Images from the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1830, Art and Politics under the Restoration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), Hollis Clayson, *Paris in Despair: Art and Everyday Life under Siege (1870-71)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Ulrich Keller, *Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

interest of both artists and viewers in war as a mode of artistic practice and as a dominant cultural narrative over the course of the nineteenth century. Moreover, during the fifty year period covered in this dissertation, visual representations of war became the site of an unprecedented intermingling between nascent mass cultural forms and more traditional modes of visual production, a problematic which the study of artists such as Carle Vernet, Horace Vernet and Henri Durand-Brager brings to the fore.

In addition to its focus on a neglected body of visual works, the broad chronological frame of this dissertation, over a fifty year span between 1804 and 1856, encompasses a period of time which has been traditionally slighted by art historians. Despite the flourishing of art historical studies which focus on the French Revolution, the First Empire and the Second Empire in recent years, the periods of the Bourbon Restoration (1815-1830) and the July Monarchy (1830-1848) remain relatively understudied.<sup>5</sup> By prioritizing the visual thematic of war across historical periods not often seen as having any relationship to one another, the present inquiry seeks to remedy

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<sup>5</sup> This general historiographic trend has recently been challenged by several important studies by scholars of early nineteenth-century French art history. Michael Marrinan's *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe. Art and Ideology in Orleanist France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), Beth Wright's *Painting and History during the Bourbon Restoration. Abandoned by the Past*. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Marie-Claude Chaudonneret's *L'État et les artistes : de la Restauration à la monarchie de Juillet* (Paris : Flammarion, 1999) focus exclusively on the period between the fall of the First Empire (1815) and the Révolution of 1848. While studies of this period remain relatively rare, there has been a spate of recent interest in Jacques-Louis David's late career which extended into the 1820s. See Philippe Bordes, *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*, exh. cat. (New Haven : Yale University Press for the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2005), and the collection of essays in *David after David: Essays on the Late Work*, ed. Mark Ledbury (New Haven: Yale University Press the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007). Todd Porterfield's *Allure of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) and Darcy-Grimaldo Grigsby's *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) also rely on an extended chronological frame to interrogate the visual politics of early nineteenth-century imperialism. More recent studies which focus on a broad period of the early nineteenth-century beyond the Revolution and the First Empire include Satish Padiyar's *Chains: David, Canova and the Fall of the Public Hero in Post-Revolutionary France* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State Press, 2007) and Susan Siegfried's *Ingres: Painting Reimagined* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) .

the chronological segmentation which has dominated the study of France's nineteenth-century visual production.

The pages that follow position representations of war within the context of the practices that surrounded their production and the political, social and cultural circumstances that informed their reception during the first half of the nineteenth century in France. The period under consideration in this study, from the First Empire through the Crimean War, witnessed the proliferation of representations of war on an unprecedented scale, thanks in large part to modern modes of image making such as lithography, the panorama, illustrated newspapers and photography as well as more traditional media such as painting and engraving. This profusion of war-related imagery, which began in the years immediately after the French Revolution, was not only the result of government patronage but was also due to the efforts of enterprising image makers working across nineteenth-century media who capitalized on public interest in France's military endeavors. In addition to the example of Nègre already discussed, Jean-Charles Langlois, a Napoleonic officer and student of the prolific battle painter Horace Vernet, erected panoramas from the 1830s through the 1860s that brought contemporary battles to life for the audiences who could afford to pay the entry fee. While government-sponsored large-scale battle painting became a ubiquitous fixture at Salon exhibitions and elicited a lively and often contentious critical discourse, representations of war also abounded as consumer goods that could be possessed for a price.

These new patterns of dissemination and consumption which emerged during the period expanded opportunities to participate visually in France's national military

achievements. In reviews of battle paintings exhibited at the Salon, in contemporary accounts of the battle panoramas and other textual sources from the period, the viewing of representations of contemporary war was repeatedly likened to a participatory encounter with the military event. This powerful illusion, often characterized by a willingness to temporarily forget the boundaries between representation and reality, between telling and showing, dominated the critical discourse of the period. Textual descriptions of such viewing experiences were by no means limited to painting. Etienne-Jean Delécluze, a student of the painter Jacques-Louis David turned art critic, recalled the first time he saw an engraving of a contemporary French Revolutionary battle in 1792: “Though quite young, I remember the emotion that I felt after the first hostilities as a crowd of onlookers that I was a part of went to see an engraving at Martinet, on rue du Coq, that represented French soldiers fighting with the traces of a passing canon ball visible on of one their chests.”<sup>6</sup> Amidst the fractious political chaos of 1792, which marked not only the start of a period of continuous warfare that would last nearly twenty-five years but also the beginnings of the Terror, Delécluze characterized his viewing experience as a collective one, as part of a “crowd” of enthralled viewers in front of the window of a print shop.

Delécluze’s description of viewing a print of contemporary battle as an impassioned encounter with the event itself vibrantly illustrates a discursive phenomenon that this dissertation situates in relation to a set of formal strategies deployed by a group

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<sup>6</sup> Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Les beaux-arts dans les deux mondes en 1855* (Paris: Charpentier, 1856), 229-30. “Je me souviens de l’émotion que j’éprouvai, ainsi que la foule des curieux dont je faisais partie, quoique bien jeune, lorsque après les premières hostilités on allait voir chez Martinet, rue du Coq, une gravure représentant des soldats français combattant, et dont l’un avait sur la poitrine la trace du passage d’un boulet de canon.”

of artists to encourage spectatorial engagement with representations of war. In contrast to the history-cum-battle paintings produced during the First Empire by artists such as Jacques-Louis David and Antoine-Jean Gros where episodic details are subordinated to a single moment of narrative transcendence, the visual objects that are the focus of the present study represented contemporary battles in terms of a series of episodic and topographical details, elements traditionally eschewed by history painters. Among other examples, I locate the series of battle paintings made by the military officer Louis-François Lejeune (1775 – 1848) during the First Empire as important precedents for the work of the century's most important battle painter, Horace Vernet (1789-1863), who depicted nineteenth-century battles as a series of salient episodic details and earned a reputation as the nation's preeminent painter of war.<sup>7</sup>

The prevalence of war as a subject for visual representation during a time in French history marked by several bloody revolutions and the ousting of governing regimes nearly every other decade was no coincidence. In the post-revolutionary period when few people had the right to vote and take part in the official business of politics, when representative government was something that existed in theory only, representations of the French army's exploits provided a pivotal point of contact between governing authority and the broader public. Though decisions to go to war were made by governing elites, visual representations of these events, in the form of panoramas,

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<sup>7</sup> My understanding of episodic narrative structures in nineteenth-century French painting has been informed by Michael Marrinan's work on the *genre historique*, a merging of genre and history painting that he considers to have emerged during the July Monarchy (1830-1848) to support the didactic aims of King Louis-Philippe's official arts programme. See Michael Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis Philippe, Art and Ideology in Orleanist France, 1830-1848* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). As Susan Siegfried has argued, the *genre historique* was not unique to the July Monarchy. She dates its appearance to the Directory in response to the pressures of depicting contemporary events of the Revolutionary period. See Susan Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," *The Art Bulletin* 75 (1993): 250.

paintings, and prints, were addressed to a much wider audience. In a period of political instability, war imagery provided a consistent and highly visible means of picturing an idealized extension of state power as well as its limits.

As highly charged objects through which expectations and perceptions about the stability and strength of the nascent French nation could be articulated, the visual images under consideration in this study conjured the illusion of a shared set of political values by subsuming the authority of the state within the image of its military prowess. This link between visual representations of the army's exploits and the nation as a whole was ensured by important changes to the ideological identity of the French army during the early years of the Revolution from an aristocratic institution that fought for the King into a meritocratic one that waged war on behalf of the French people.<sup>8</sup> This shift has occasioned several recent studies within the "new military history," a historiographic trend within military history which seeks to bring cultural, sociological and other non-operational concerns to bear upon the history of warfare and similarly moves images of

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<sup>8</sup> This is a classic argument about the impact of the French Revolution upon the nature of war. Carl van Clausewitz, an officer in the Prussian and Russian armies during the Napoleonic Wars, made this important observation in *On War*, posthumously published in 1832. See Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 591-592. More recently, revisionist military historians have shown that despite the nationalization of warfare that the Revolution made possible, it was still difficult to recruit and retain soldiers who were committed to the cause of defending the Republic. See S.P MacKenzie, "The armies of the French Republic and the War of the First Coalition, 1792-7," in *Revolutionary Armies in the Modern Era: a Revisionist Approach* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 33-50; Alan Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Historian Manuel de Landa has discussed the new character of Revolutionary warfare in terms of a transformation in the army's chain of command from the "clockwork" armies of the *ancien régime* into the Post-Revolutionary "motorized" armies. The "motorized" French army was more flexible and mobile than ever before and gave more authority to individual platoon commanders. See Manuel de Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Swerve Editions, 1991), 65-70.

war beyond their current isolation as a quaint subfield into a complex cultural and social framework.<sup>9</sup>

During the post-revolutionary period, war imagery, and battle painting in particular, constituted something akin to a self-portrait of government authority. Far from a direct or transparent expression of military events, representations of war advanced a set of larger claims about individual political agency, national identity and the stability of the fledgling nation. In this way, war imagery was not so much an *a priori* expression of power but rather an affirmation of its existence and an appeal for support.<sup>10</sup> As Hannah Arendt has argued, modern government power is constituted through diffuse and unofficial forms of consent given by individuals in support of founding state institutions such as its laws, or more germane to this dissertation, its military:

It is the people's support that lends power to the institutions of a country, and this support is but the continuation of the consent that brought the laws into existence to begin with. Under conditions of representative government the people are supposed to rule those who govern them. All political institutions are manifestations and materializations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them.<sup>11</sup>

For Arendt, public support produces state power and sanctions government to uphold laws and maintain institutions. Within her theory, the counter-term to power is violence, which becomes a tool of governments that possess no power. In light of this insight, I

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<sup>9</sup> For more on “the new military history,” see Joanna Bourke, “New Military History,” in *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History*, ed. Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpott, Basingstoke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 258-280. See also: Torbjorn L. Knutsen, “Old, Unhappy, Far-off Things: The New Military History of Europe,” *Journal of Peace Research* 24 (Mar., 1987): 87-98.

<sup>10</sup> The cultural historian Keith Michael Baker has defined politics as the process through which competing groups make claims. Political culture is “the activity through which individuals and groups in any society articulate, negotiate, implement, and enforce the competing claims they make upon one another and upon the whole. Political culture is, in this sense, the set of discourses or symbolic practices by which these claims are made.” Baker’s conception of political culture informs my own approach to the political dimension of war imagery as a cultural site of negotiation. See Keith Michael Baker, “Introduction,” in *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* ed. Keith Michael Baker (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harvest Books, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1969), 41.

understand war imagery as a compelling visual invitation to a broadly constituted form of consent that is essential for the legitimization and propagation of government power. The visual and textual sources that I interrogate in this dissertation show that while representations of war often abetted the process of bolstering government authority, they sometimes they acted as a site of its contestation. Indeed, the criticism that war imagery elicited often exposed the fact that the process of securing government power depended not on the inalienable authority of those who ruled, but rather upon the consensus of those who were ruled over.<sup>12</sup>

The most recent art historical account of French war imagery to deal with the entire period covered in this dissertation was written in 1889 by the art critic Arsène Alexandre, and spanned the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. The introduction of his *Histoire de la peinture militaire en France* reads like an apology for the critical fortunes of battle painting during his lifetime.<sup>13</sup> In the first paragraph, Alexandre gave voice to the critics: “We declare outright that military painting in France passes under the eyes of critics as not being painting at all; or implicitly, not good painting.”<sup>14</sup> In the face of such skepticism, he justified his examination of military painting by claiming it as an authentic form of history painting:

Despite its definition, the real “history painting” is not so much that which retraces episodes rehashed from Greek or Roman annals, but the painting of contemporary life, and, as a special chapter, battle painting, still smelling of gun

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<sup>12</sup> Jürgen Habermas has examined Arendt’s notion of power as a “collective act of speech.” See Jürgen Habermas, “Hannah Arendt’s Communications Concept of Power,” *Social Research* 44, no. 1 (1977): 6.

<sup>13</sup> François Robichon has written the most extensive account of war imagery from the late nineteenth century to date. See François Robichon, *La peinture militaire française de 1871 à 1914* (Boulogne-Billancourt: Association des amis d’Edouard Detaille, B. Giovanangeli, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Arsène Alexandre, *Histoire de la peinture militaire en France* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1889), 1. “Nous déclarons tout net que la peinture militaire, en France, passe aux yeux de nombreux critiques pour n’être pas de la peinture. Pour de la bonne peinture, s’entend.”



powder. Even if it only had this documentary value, it would still be worth the effort to track its development and study its principle manifestations.<sup>15</sup>

Alexandre sought to rescue *la peinture militaire* from critical oblivion and insert it into an empirical history of art which consisted of tracking stylistic evolution and exemplary practitioners. His overall goal was to situate war imagery within the hierarchy of genres, in this case right at the top, the position traditionally reserved for history painting. This strategy helps to explain his omission from the book of Jean-Charles Langlois, a battle panorama painter who also exhibited battle paintings at the Salon; Alexandre explained that “we do not consider the panoramas to be art at all...we simply ask which museum has conserved the ones that are no longer in use.”<sup>16</sup> He inscribed his objects of study, primarily battle paintings, at the top of an aesthetic hierarchy that depended upon an opposition between “high” and “low” categories of visual production, premised upon a separation between forms of Art (epitomized by battle painting) and the debased objects associated with consumer culture (Langlois’ panoramas).

A decade later, in his influential *Du Romantisme au réalisme*, Léon Rosenthal positioned nineteenth-century battle painting at the bottom of the cultural hierarchy. Using Horace Vernet’s monumental *Capture of the Smahla* (1845) as an example, he claimed that such paintings were mere illustrations, “deplorable to eyes sensitive to purely aesthetic joys.”<sup>17</sup> In so doing, Rosenthal followed the precedent set by Baudelaire

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<sup>15</sup> Alexandre, *La peinture militaire*, 3. “La vraie ‘peinture d’histoire’ ce n’est pas tant, en dépit de la définition, celle qui retrace des épisodes remâchés des annales grecques ou romaines, que la peinture de la vie contemporaine, et, comme chapitre particulier, la peinture de batailles, celle sent encore la poudre. N’eût-elle que cette valeur documentaire, cela vaudrait encore la peine de retracer ses étapes et d’étudier ses principales manifestations.”

<sup>16</sup> Alexandre, *La peinture militaire*, 276-277. “Nous ne considérons guère les panoramas comme des œuvres d’art...Nous demandons simplement quelle musée a recueilli ceux qui ne servent plus.”

<sup>17</sup> Léon Rosenthal, *Du romantisme au réalisme, Essai sur l’évolution de la peinture en France de 1830 à 1848* (Paris: Éditions Macula, 1987), 218.

in the 1840s, who had called Vernet “the complete antithesis of an artist” and a “frequent and agile masturbation, an irritation on the French epidermis.”<sup>18</sup> While Rosenthal and Baudelaire’s criticism went against Alexandre’s project of securing a position of eminence for *la peinture militaire* within a traditional hierarchy of genres, these seemingly contrasting sets of claims are in fact symptoms of the same art historical problem, namely, the separation between domains of culture that has shaped the history of art.

Efforts such as theirs to distinguish “art” from “non-art” and to erect boundaries between spheres of culture falter under the methodological imperative of studying the broad contours of a category of visual production that demonstrates the permeability of such boundaries and their perpetual shifting and susceptibility to “border crossings.”<sup>19</sup> Through an interrogation of the relationships between visual representations of war, emergent forms of visual production and reproduction across a range of media and structures of political power during the first half of the nineteenth century in France, the

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<sup>18</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Critique d'art*, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1992), 130.

<sup>19</sup> The recent work of Jacques Rancière repudiates modernism’s separation of art from the heterogeneity of things exterior to it: “The idea of modernity is a questionable notion that tries to make clear-cut distinctions in the complex configuration of the aesthetic regime of the arts. It tries to retain the forms of rupture, the iconoclastic gestures, etc., by separating them from the context that allows for their existence: history, interpretation, patrimony, the museum, the pervasiveness of reproduction... The idea of modernity would like there to be only one meaning and direction in history, whereas the temporality specific to the aesthetic regime of the arts is a co-presence of heterogeneous temporalities.” Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), 25- 26. Rancière historically locates the beginning of the “aesthetic regime” of the arts, a term he advocates in place of “modernity,” at the beginning of the nineteenth-century with the political failure of the French Revolution and the rise of Romantic aesthetics. See Jacques Rancière, “Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics,” in *Communities of Sense, Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. William Kaizen Beth Hinderliter, Vered Maimon, Jaleh Mansoor and Seth McCormick (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 43.

present study seeks to delineate the rich modes of negotiation and interchange that characterized the “social practice” of visual culture during the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

### **Chapter Summary**

My discussion of war imagery from the First Empire (1804-1815), which is the subject of my second chapter, is focused on a large, under-studied body of battle paintings, drawings and engravings made by several artists, including the military officer and painter Louis-François Lejeune, and his contemporary, Carle Vernet. By bringing a rich body of visual and textual primary source material to light, I show how artists such as Lejeune and Vernet employed a pictorial rhetoric closely related to the one used in printed maps, atlases, and illustrated campaign memoirs from the period such as the *Voyage dans la basse et haute Égypte* (1802), written by Napoleon Bonaparte’s trusted advisor and future minister of the arts, Dominique-Vivant Denon. This rhetoric was instrumental in productively engaging support for waging two decades of seemingly endless war, and in doing so, it set new standards for spectatorial engagement with representations of armed combat that would endure throughout the century.

I position the broad public appeal of war imagery in relation to its increasing attachment to modern modes of image making such as lithography, various automatic drawing devices, photography and mechanized printing techniques which allowed representations of war to be reproduced with unprecedented speed and economy. I contend that this emergent visual culture of war expanded the public’s opportunities to

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<sup>20</sup> I borrow this term from Althusser who borrowed it from Marx. Social practice can be defined as “the complex unity of practices existing in a determinate society.” See Louis Althusser, “On the Materialist Dialectic on the Unevenness of Origins,” in *For Marx* (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 167.

participate in France's national military achievements as engaged viewers of its images. During the Bourbon Restoration (1815-1830), the governing regime that replaced the First Empire, war imagery abounded, thanks in large part to the nascent medium of lithography and the growing popularity of the aquatint process. Despite strong official political reaction against the representation of such subjects, images of Napoleonic military events continued to appear at Salon exhibitions, in illustrated books and were sold (often illicitly) as individual prints – an issue explored in the third chapter of this dissertation. For example, Horace Vernet, one of the most prolific artists of the nineteenth century, was allowed to show his large painting *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* at the Salon of 1827. Reversing the traditional relationship between media, Vernet's painting re-worked a lithograph of the same subject that he had produced one year earlier for an opulent illustrated book on the life of Napoleon. The painting was itself reproduced as an engraving that the artist "licensed," and it circulated through several illicit counterfeit lithographs and engravings. I show how this flood of Napoleonic imagery not only mediated the process of reconciling a nation at peace with France's recent military past, but also served the political needs of a powerful group of opposition elites, including the future King Louis-Philippe and his coterie of advisors, whose brand of conservative liberalism would become official doctrine during the July Monarchy (1830-1848), the regime that succeeded the Bourbon Restoration.

My project situates "power" as a diffuse phenomenon rooted in broad public support of government institutions for which war imagery could serve as a compelling and accessible visual expression. In my fourth chapter, I examine the failure of King Louis-Philippe's attempt to use large-scale military imagery to deflect criticism of his

regime's refusal to go to war with its European neighbors. This provides the basis for a much needed rethinking of the relationship between art and politics during the period. Though war imagery has often been seen as reflective of political intentionality, I point to a lively critical discourse that understood the production of government-sponsored representations of war, including the battle paintings of Horace Vernet, as a material indicator of France's waning military influence in Europe after Waterloo. There was however, another form of large-scale war imagery that escaped critical disdain, the painted battle panoramas of Jean-Charles Langlois, understood to be outside of the sphere of the fine arts. I show how these privately produced, for profit, monumental circular canvases garnered nearly universal praise as surrogates for the experience of modern warfare and challenged the illusionistic limits of battle painting.

One of the aims of this dissertation is to investigate the epistemological structures that shaped the development of legitimizing categories of knowledge such as the "eyewitness" and "reportage" in relationship to visual representations of contemporary war during the nineteenth century. The final chapter of my dissertation situates these two concepts in relation to the dramatic shift of the patterns of dissemination and reception for war-related visual images occasioned by the Crimean War (1854-1856), the first major conflict to break out within Europe since the Napoleonic Wars at the beginning of the century. The Crimean War was the first to be widely photographed and receive coverage in the nascent mass press. By examining the coverage of the Crimean War by the major French illustrated daily newspaper *L'Illustration*, I characterize the modern discourse of "reportage" as a mode of commodity consumption as well as a technologically and commercially figured rhetoric of "eyewitness" authority imparted by

the producers of the news. While government-sponsored battle paintings exhibited at the Salon earned the scorn of critics, the abundance of war imagery in emergent media such as illustrated newspapers and photographs confirmed the strength of the nation's productive powers for many who were wary of the war's potential to disrupt France's economy.

## **Chapter 2: War Imagery and the Visuality of Participation during the Consulate and First Empire**

### **Of Bloody Heads and Broken Maps**

The French Revolution's eradication of the symbolic forms of the *ancien régime* in favor of a proliferation of new ones demonstrated the contingent relationship between visual representation and political culture. This showed "that members of society could invent culture and politics for themselves."<sup>1</sup> Revolutionaries attempted to conjure a coherent system of symbolic meaning out of a host of new visual representations of the French nation including Hercules, Liberty, Marianne and Revolutionary martyrs. Some of the most powerful signifiers of the Revolution took the form of fragments, which heralded the dissolution of the political authority of the symbols of the past. As Linda Nochlin has observed, the French Revolution "constituted the fragment as a positive rather than a negative trope. The fragment, for the Revolution and its artists, rather than symbolizing nostalgia for the past, enacts the deliberate destruction of the past."<sup>2</sup> The regicide of Louis XVI produced the most emblematic fragment of the Revolution by literally disembodimenting the traditional locus of political authority, France's king. A 1793

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<sup>1</sup> Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 88.

<sup>2</sup> Linda Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces. The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994), 8.

print by the engraver Villeneuve, *Food for Thought for Crowned Charlatans* (Fig. 2.1), one of the emblematic prints of the Revolution, pictured the grisly aftermath of the guillotine's scientifically egalitarian decapitation of Louis XVI.<sup>3</sup> His detached head, dripping with blood, represented a Revolutionary symbolic order defined by its lack of wholeness.

This literal fragmentation of France's traditional source of political authority was accompanied by a shattering of other dominant institutions, such as the aristocracy and the clergy. In the face of this breakdown of former systems of meaning and value, French military power emerged as a possible substitute set of beliefs capable of uniting a fractured and politically radicalized citizenry.<sup>4</sup> War between Revolutionary France and the rest of monarchical Europe was not only instrumental for defending the French Revolution both inside and outside France's borders, but was just as importantly a means of producing political consensus for the newly constituted French nation. According to historian François Furet, Revolutionary war acted as a "powerful instrument of political acceleration" to consolidate and advance the aims of the French Revolution.<sup>5</sup>

A print from 1797 (Fig. 2.2), produced during a period of weak government and continuous warfare under the Directory, which governed in the wake of the Terror, represented a form of fragmentation of an altogether different order from the print discussed earlier. Here, a cut up map of Europe speaks to an alternate future for post-Revolutionary France, distinct from the one portended by Louis XVI's severed head.

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<sup>3</sup> For more on Villeneuve, about who little is known, see Annie Duprat, "Autour de Villeneuve, le mystérieux auteur de la gravure 'La contre-révolution'," *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 3 (1997): 423-39.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Black, *From Louis XIV to Napoleon: The Fate of a Great Power* (London: University College London Press, 1999), 162-171.

<sup>5</sup> François Furet, *Revolutionary France. 1770-1880*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Blackwell: Oxford, 1992), 102-103.



The print proposes that in the place of a literally and figuratively disembodied monarchy, France's new social order could instead be fashioned through a militarized reconfiguration of its borders. Four generals, Pichegru, Moreau, Hoche and Bonaparte unroll a life-size map, based on two maps by the mapmaker Jean-Baptiste Poirson that were available for purchase at the same shop that sold the print. The print depicts Bonaparte and his generals literally refashioning the map of the French Empire, cutting apart and putting back together territory as though it were only a matter of tearing paper. Bonaparte dominates the composition, both in terms of his animated demeanor and the portion of the map he holds, by far the largest. His section depicts the territory conquered during his Italian campaign, which secured his rise to prominence as a general during the Directory and later, as First Consul and in then 1804, Emperor of France. An eagle, the symbol of France's army, looms over the map of the German Empire, with a sword in his claw, hinting at France's unrealized military ambitions for that part of Europe.

During a period of nearly continuous warfare between 1792 and 1815, France extended its territory over the majority of Western Europe and justified its military intervention through the enlightenment ideals of the French Revolution. Unlike Louis XVI's head, the cut-up map of Europe was a post-revolutionary fragment capable of being put back together again. Its shattered form could, as this chapter will argue, serve as the point of departure for rearticulating a new symbolic language based upon national military exploits to which an entire nation could lay claim. France's military engagements were accompanied by a steady stream of battle paintings, prints, books, plays and newspaper accounts which made the reconfiguration of the map of Europe, as

seen in the aforementioned print, into a thrilling national event that could be experienced through a proliferation of visual objects.

Though the scholarship on the visual representation of the Directory and First Empire's military endeavors has often been understood through the large-scale history paintings of Jacques-Louis David and his students, I will attend to a related and no-less important body of visual imagery that opened up novel possibilities of spectatorial engagement with France's territorial expansion. Artists such as Carle Vernet and Louis-François Lejeune specialized in a new mode of representing contemporary battles that was characterized by the depiction of episodic and topographical details, elements traditionally eschewed by history painters. Their work, along with other forms of visual production across a range of media, encouraged political participation in national military exploits and was instrumental in productively engaging support for the waging of two decades of seemingly endless war. This chapter explores the sets of belief structures and modes of spectatorship that came to be associated with a particular set of representations of contemporary war, premised on an empirical and truthful form of vision, which supported an illusion of participation on the part of a broad public in France's military exploits.

### **Revolutionary Confusion: the Representation of Contemporary War**

Warfare first gripped France in 1792 and continued nearly without pause until 1815, with the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at the battle of Waterloo. These wars differed from their eighteenth-century predecessors in their reliance on popular mobilization and the fact that Revolutionary soldiers no longer fought for a king, but for a

nation; in exchange for citizenship rights, men agreed to give their life for their country by fighting in its wars.<sup>6</sup> Between 1791 and 1794, the French army of the *ancien régime*, dominated by aristocratic officers and mercenary soldiers, was transformed into the first army of citizens recruited through a series of volunteer drafts. French identity became conflated with armed conflict in a way that had not previously been possible when armies were composed of mercenary soldiers who fought for kings and for the aristocratic officers who recruited, paid and commanded them. In August 1793, sans-culottes in the National Convention proposed a mass conscription, the *levée en masse* to which all French citizens were subject:

Henceforth, until the enemies have been driven from the territory of the Republic, the French people are in permanent requisition for army service. The young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions; the women shall make tents and clothes and shall serve in the hospitals; children shall turn old linen into lint; the old shall repair to the public places to stimulate the courage of the warriors and preach the unity of the Republic and the hatred of kings.<sup>7</sup>

The *levée en masse* was subsequently adopted by the Convention and recruited approximately 300,000 soldiers. As the language of the decree made clear, Revolutionary war now implicated every man, woman and child in France. Through language that denoted the physical devotion of every French citizen to the armed cause, their ideological devotion was implicated as well.

Despite the fact that the French Revolutionary army was more democratic and meritocratic than the army of the *ancien régime*, the devotion of the new recruits to *la*

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<sup>6</sup> Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," 235.

<sup>7</sup> Keith Michael Baker, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. John W. Boyer Keith Michael Baker, Julius Kirshner, University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 340-341.

*patrie* and their zeal for fighting has probably been overstated. As the military historian S.P. MacKenzie has argued, “the image of the zealous citizen-soldier driving all before him, with love of liberty in his heart and the fire of revolution in his eye, as typical of French troops, was largely a Jacobin myth.”<sup>8</sup> Military historians have noted that even after the early years of the Revolution and through the end of the First Empire, France’s armies were ill-equipped, undernourished, and poorly trained.<sup>9</sup> The citizen-soldier ideology that attended Bonaparte’s armies did not mitigate the need to use harsh tactics to recruit soldiers. Desertion was endemic.<sup>10</sup> A shortage of muskets meant that soldiers had to fight their enemies up close with bayonets and pikes.<sup>11</sup> The representation of the armed defense of *la patrie* was as important for motivating French Revolutionary soldiers to fight with antiquated weapons as it was for generating popular support of French citizens who did not enlist in the army.

Carl von Clausewitz, author of one of the most influential nineteenth-century military treatises, *On War*, understood firsthand the impact of the French Revolution on European warfare, for he had fought for Prussia and Russia against France in the Napoleonic Wars. He contrasted so-called “cabinet wars,” conflicts waged by aristocratic officers and small mercenary armies from the seventeenth century through the eighteenth century, with the new character of post-revolutionary warfare:

In 1793 a force appeared that beggared all imagination. Suddenly war again became the business of the people – a people of thirty millions, all of whom considered themselves to be citizens...The people became a participant in war; instead of government and armies as heretofore, the full weight of the nation was

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<sup>8</sup> MacKenzie, “The armies of the French Republic and the War of the First Coalition, 1792-7,” 49.

<sup>9</sup> Paddy Griffith, *The Art of War of Revolutionary France, 1789-1802* (London: Greenhill Books, 1998), 39-62.

<sup>10</sup> For a rich account of the problem of desertion during the period, see Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire*.

<sup>11</sup> MacKenzie, “The armies of the French Republic and the War of the First Coalition, 1792-7,” 34.

thrown into the balance. The resources and efforts now available for use surpassed all conventional limits; nothing now impeded the vigor with which war could be waged, and consequently the opponents of France faced the utmost peril.<sup>12</sup>

Clausewitz argued that this new brand of warfare extended participation in military events to a new contingent of non-combatants who would nevertheless play a role off the battlefield in the waging of war. He recognized that the new nature of post-revolutionary war now implicated an entire nation's resources, both in terms of material and ideological participation.

This dramatic shift toward wars fought in the name of a nation instead of an aristocratic elite demanded a reconfiguration of the visual representation of warfare, which had not been officially encouraged in France since 1746, when the battle painter Joseph Parrocel was commissioned to represent the *Conquêtes du Roi en Flandres* under Louis XV.<sup>13</sup> In France, history painters represented contemporary warfare metaphorically, such as Charles Le Brun's *Alexander* cycle, which honored the military achievements of Louis XIV through allegorical allusion to the feats of Alexander the Great. Le Brun could not have directly depicted Louis XIV's battles – to do so would have amounted to a transgression of the rules of academic artistic production which dominated French cultural life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Within French academic theory, battle painting was considered a lower genre closer to portraiture and landscape painting; its necessary reliance on contemporary history placed

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<sup>12</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 591-592.

<sup>13</sup> William Olander, "Pour transmettre à la postérité : French painting and revolution, 1774-1795," (PhD Dissertation, New York University, 1983), 90.

it outside of the elevated and erudite domain reserved for the representation of ancient and mythological history by history painters.

French battle painting, when it was encouraged during the *ancien régime*, not surprisingly emphasized the achievements of the king over the episodic details which comprised the military event being represented. King Louis XIV's conquests were represented by Adam Van der Meulen, a Flemish artist who had found favor with the French court. His paintings and tapestry cartoons were widely emulated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, setting the standard for what would become the French tradition of topographical battle painting during the *ancien régime*. Van der Meulen relied on an iconographic formula of elevating the King in the foreground and placing a battle landscape in the background. In Van der Meulen's *The French Army at Lobith* (Fig. 2.3), King Louis XIV directs the course of battle that occurs in the middle and foreground. He is set apart from the battle itself and is the compositional focus on the painting. His white horse, pointing gesture and the light that concentrates around his horse signal Louis XIV's status. In terms of space, Van der Meulen prioritizes the foreground, while the middle and backgrounds, where the actual cavalry battle is taking place between the Dutch and French soldiers, appears compressed and schematic. Such a compositional arrangement reflects the ideological imperative of representing battles during the age of "cabinet wars" – to depict the monarch's eminence for a small, elite audience of aristocratic courtiers and military officers who were responsible for carrying out the king's orders. Accordingly, Van der Meulen's painting furnishes more attention on Louis XIV's dominance than it does on the episodic or

topographical details of the battle – elements that could only serve to distract from the monarch's importance.

In contrast, the French Revolution required that artists discover a different visual language to represent warfare as the purview of an entire nation and by extension, the French citizenry as an idealized whole. Despite the fact that the conventions of *ancien régime* battle imagery, epitomized by Van der Meulen's *Lobith*, no longer corresponded to the conditions of Revolutionary war, artists still retained the figure of the commander in many of the earliest representations of battle from the period. In a drawing by Jean-Antoine Constantin, the *Siege of Toulon* (Fig. 2.4), the mounted officer is pictured on a hilltop, a placement consistent with the conventions of traditional French battle painting. Constantin was not present at the siege, where a young artillery major named Napoleon Bonaparte secured a Republican victory over Royalist and English forces by moving the canons to a strategically advantageous location above the Toulon harbor in December, 1793. In the absence of new conventions for representing Revolutionary war, Constantin mimicked Van der Meulen's habit of placing the commander on a hill, overlooking the battleground below. The drawing demonstrates the difficulty of completely disposing with the *ancien régime* tradition of battle painting despite a shift in the politics of Revolutionary warfare in France.

The first decisive victory for the French Revolutionary army occurred in 1792 at the battle of Jemmapes. The battle took place outside of Mons, Belgium against the Austrian army and occasioned a flurry of prints and newspaper articles. One of the prints that issued immediately after, the *Battle of Gemmape* (Fig. 2.5), struggles to locate the center of action. The image lacks any sense of narrative or topographical focus. Instead

of focusing on one point of authority, as in the tradition of Van der Meulen, the artist included several points of dramatic focus. The commanding authority of the king has been replaced with two different commanding officers who look nearly identical to each other: one is pictured on a horse gesturing in a way similar to Louis XIV in Van der Meulen's *Lobith*. The other officer stands in the middleground, next to his mounted counterpart and points into the background. The engraver's recourse to multiple points of commanding authority betrays the unease that accompanied questions of political representation during the Terror, when the print was made.

The radical newspaper *Révolutions de Paris* published its own engraving of the battle of Jemmapes (Fig. 2.6) to accompany its printing of General Dumoriez's official dispatch to the minister of war. As befitting the political coloring of the newspaper, the print almost entirely effaced any element of commanding authority in favor of masses of soldiers moving together. According to the newspaper, the letter and the accompanying engraving required no editorializing: "The account alone of this memorable affair, the first pitched battle carried out by the soldiers of the republic, sufficiently honors all of the individuals who comprise the army."<sup>14</sup> Dumoriez's letter narrated the events of the battle as a series of linear developments which culminated in entering the city gates of Mons and receiving the keys of the city.

In contrast to the orderliness of Dumoriez's prose, the engraving represents the battle as a flurry of activity devoid of identifiable actors or particular episodic details. The caption to the engraving reads: "November 17, 1792, General Dumourier [*sic*] enters

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<sup>14</sup> Prudhomme, "Nouvelles des armées," *Révolutions de Paris* 1792. "Le récit seul de cette mémorable affaire, première bataille rangée qu'aient livrée les soldats de la république, fait assez l'éloge de tous les individus qui composent l'armée."



Mons after a battle without precedent in history. The French have shown that they are worthy of fighting for liberty.” The detritus from direct combat litters the foreground; columns of French soldiers in formation advance horizontally across the middleground, moving in an idealized harmony with one another. General Dumoriez is not easily identifiable: he could be either one of the three men mounted on white horses. Instead of focusing on the eminence of the commanding general, the engraving attends to the forward movement of a mass of men befitting the new conditions of warfare. But in trading the hierarchical clarity of traditional French battle imagery for a focus on the army as a cohesive social unit, the *Révolutions de Paris* engraving represented the battle as an obscure mass of partial figures and made it difficult to view and understand the event. As the radical phase of the French Revolution came to an end, artists began to experiment with new ways of depicting contemporary wars, forsaking the muddled, but egalitarian compositional style of the *Révolutions de Paris* engraving as well as the conventions of *ancien régime* battle painting.

### **The *Tableaux Historiques* – From Revolution to Empire**

One of the first substantial attempts to depict contemporary war episodically during the Revolutionary period, with attention to a clear delineation of place and action, occurred in the pages of the *Tableaux historiques de la révolution française*. The *Tableaux* appeared in several different official and counterfeit editions from 1791 through 1817, with new *tableaux* added as new and noteworthy contemporary events

occurred.<sup>15</sup> Engravings in each *livraison*, available through subscription, were accompanied by expert commentary intended to depict the contemporary events of the Revolution as a form of living history which belonged not to an elite set of actors, but to an entire nation. The publishers of the *Tableaux* therefore took advantage of the Revolution's rhetoric of social inclusivity to market the publication to a newly available demographic, "the people," who were themselves actors in the very political and historical episodes depicted in its pages. The first prospectus, which appeared in 1791, claimed that the commentary was furnished by "a man, a patriot, eyewitness, himself an actor in the main scenes...he has made use of the language of truth...For the narration, exactitude is the most important merit."<sup>16</sup> Though the texts which accompanied the engravings were written by several different authors over the course of publication, the claim made by the editors toward exactitude, truth and eyewitness fidelity constituted one of the work's main selling points.

Twenty-six out of 148 engravings in the *Tableaux* depict military defeats, victories and sieges, including the battle of Jemappes and the Siege of Toulon.<sup>17</sup> The *Battle of Jemappes* (Fig. 2.7) is representative of the style employed by the team of no less than seventeen intaglio printmakers who collaborated on the publication using engraving and etching techniques.<sup>18</sup> It was made in 1795 and published in 1797 as the seventy-fifth image in the series, engraved by Pierre-Gabriel Berthault and based on a

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<sup>15</sup> Claudette Hould, "Revolutionary Engraving," in *Images of the French Revolution* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1989), 86-89.

<sup>16</sup> Philippe Bordes, *La Révolution par la gravure : les tableaux historiques de la Révolution française, une entreprise éditoriale d'information et sa diffusion en Europe (1791-1817)* (Vizille: Musée de la Révolution française, 2002), 15. "Un homme, un patriote, témoin oculaire, acteur lui-même dans les scènes principales...il n'a pas épargné le langage de la vérité...Pour la narration, l'exactitude est le mérite principale."

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

drawing by Jacques François-Joseph Swebach-Desfontaines.<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the cramped composition of the other versions of Revolutionary battle imagery discussed earlier, this version of Jemappes is comparatively empty. The events of the battle are distributed over the open space of the landscape. Columns of tiny soldiers march in formation while the mounted commanders gallop in front of them, having just emerged from the right corner of the image. A small man in the immediate foreground stands with his back to the viewer. He directs his attention toward the action in the middleground, which in turn directs the viewer's gaze back as well. A lone log in the foreground also points to the dramatic action unfolding behind it. The walled city of Mons occupies the background, its walls and church tower clearly articulated. The specificity of the battle's locale is emphasized along with a series of strategic occurrences, making the battle knowable and accessible through a proliferation of visual details.

This mode of representing battles with attention to episodic and topographical particularities extended to other non-military subjects depicted in the *Tableaux*. As a commercial publication which sought to turn a profit, the goal was to enthrall its audience with a textual and visual narrative of contemporary history that it would be willing to pay for. The combination of expert commentary and engravings in the *Tableaux* proved to be a successful formula, if the longevity of the publication and the several counterfeit editions are any indication. It is likely that the commercial success of the *Tableaux* was due in large part to the publication's status as an object of historical knowledge which

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<sup>19</sup> The *Battle of Jemappes* was engraved by Berthault and finished by an etcher, Malapeau. This collaborative effort was in keeping with the commercial structures of production for commercial engraving during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This is an issue discussed by Stephen Bann with regard to a later version of the *Tableaux historiques de la révolution française*, the *Tableaux historiques des campagnes d'Italie*. See Bann, *Parallel Lines, Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, 47-53.

packaged the political and social chaos of the Revolution into a series of readable, visible and therefore knowable events.

The success of the *Tableaux historiques de la révolution française* was parlayed into a related publication entitled the *Tableaux historiques des campagnes d'Italie*. It was published by Auber, the same publisher of the 1798, 1802, 1804 and 1817 editions of the original “Revolutionary” version. This edition was probably conceived as a continuation of the first version and was announced in the immediate aftermath of Napoleon Bonaparte’s victorious Italian campaign of 1797. In the span of a few years, the *Tableaux historiques* had transformed from a Revolutionary compendium of current historical events to a military one, implying a temporal and historical continuity between the French Revolution and the period of warfare subsequent to it. The new volume reinforced the idea that France’s military conquests across Europe were rooted in the values of its Revolution. This change was also appropriate to a nation whose Revolutionary government had been replaced by a militarized one under the authority of General Napoleon Bonaparte as First Consul in 1799. The *Tableaux* marketed an illusion of participation in an epoch whose historical episodes were still being written – to read and view the publication, as the editors claimed, was to behold the continual forward march of historical events as they unfolded.

As with its predecessor, the *Tableaux historiques des campagnes d'Italie* promoted its commitment to exactitude and historical accuracy. But unlike its antecedent, the military version touted its unique and esteemed artist, Carle Vernet, who provided the drawings that served as the basis for the engravings sold in the publication. Vernet was a well-known landscape and genre artist, the son of Joseph Vernet, painter of

the *Ports de France*. He was inducted into the Academy in 1789 and became known as an excellent horse painter as well as chronicler of modern life with his print series *Les Incroyables* and *Les Merveilleuses*. In 1806, just in time for the publication of the *Tableaux historiques*, he was given an official title by Bonaparte as the *Premier peintre du dépôt de la guerre*. The *Tableaux*'s use of an acclaimed artist caused some confusion over whether the work should be considered as "art" or as "history," an uncertainty which betrayed the problematic status of representations of contemporary military events as both objects of historical knowledge and works of art.

The *Journal général de la littérature de France* classified the *Tableaux* under the category of "fine arts" in its fifth issue of 1806; in the next issue, the classification of the publication changed to "history." Within the "fine arts" category, the *Tableaux* were celebrated as a "perfectly executed work, and can perhaps be seen as the last word in typography. M. Carle Vernet understood how to vary the subjects he had to depict with great talent."<sup>20</sup> But in the next edition of the *Journal*, the *Tableaux* were placed under the classification of history, noting "We place it instead in the 3rd class, under the title of *History*, because however magnificent the engravings are, they are nevertheless mere accessories to the text."<sup>21</sup> Within the classificatory system of the *Journal*, the *Tableaux* belonged more to history than to the fine arts, despite the participation of Carle Vernet as the primary draftsman.

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<sup>20</sup> "Quatrième classe. Beaux-arts," *Journal général de la littérature de France* 1806, 153. "d'une exécution parfaite, et peut-être regardé comme le dernier terme de la typographie. M. Carle Vernet a su varier, avec beaucoup de talent, les situations qu'il avait à peindre."

<sup>21</sup> "Troisième classe. Histoire," *Journal général de la littérature de France* 1806, 171. "Nous le reportons dans la troisième class, au titre de l'*Histoire*, parce que quelque magnifiques qu'en soient les gravures, elles ne sont néanmoins que des accessoires au texte."

Under the rubric of “history,” the *Tableaux historiques des campagnes d’Italie* were explicitly publicized as an authoritative and truthful source for contemporary military history, dedicated to the *général en chef* of the French Army, Napoleon Bonaparte: “The majority of the sites were represented on location, and drawn with the utmost exactitude by Carle Vernet, first painter of the *Dépôt de la guerre*. Duplessi-Bertaux, the Callot of our time, made the etchings and the plates were finished by the best artists in Paris. The text contains the letters of the *général en chef* and his official rapports.”<sup>22</sup> The claim of exactitude depended on the fact that the prints were based on drawings made on the very site where the battles had taken place, promising viewers access to specific details about the topography of the land conquered by the French army that would have been considered as a form of privileged, or insider, information usually reserved for military personnel. It was therefore the merit of exactitude, over and above any other aesthetic criteria, that the publication marketed as its chief value.

### **The *Ingénieurs-géographes* and the Production of Cartographic and Topographic Knowledge**

The stated commitment of the *Tableaux historiques* to topographical specificity and narrative exactitude, more than clever selling points, allowed the publication to serve as a source of valuable information about France’s contemporary wars. While the *Tableaux* constituted one of the earliest examples of post-revolutionary representations which claimed to depict war with topographic and episodic “exactitude,” a proliferation

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 172. “Les sites ont été la plupart pris sur les lieux mêmes, et dessinés avec la plus grande exactitude par Carle Vernet, premier peintre du dépôt de la guerre. Duplessi-Bertaux, le Callot de nos jours, a fait les eaux-fortes, et les planches ont été terminés par les meilleurs artistes de Paris. Le texte contient les lettres du général en chef et ses rapports officiels.”

of imagery produced during the Consulate and the Empire advanced similar claims. This body of imagery functioned epistemologically, as depictions of locale and action, free of the aesthetic markers of art associated with the French academic tradition of artistic production which shunned contemporaneity, the episodic and excessive topographic detail. Commercial publications such as the *Tableaux*, which sought to depict historical events with a high degree of “exactitude,” shared much common with the body of visual imagery produced by the French army’s *ingénieurs-géographes*, who were responsible for producing visual documents for conducting military campaigns, including landscape *vues* of battlefields and maps of strategically important parcels of land.<sup>23</sup> The *ingénieurs-géographes*, attached to the topographical division of the French army known as the *Dépôt de la guerre*, followed the army on campaigns and provided visual documents to aid with reconnaissance.<sup>24</sup> Just as the claim toward fidelity of site and action constituted an attractive selling point for the *Tableaux*, the same set of claims informed the work of the *ingénieurs-géographes* albeit for a set of non-commercial purposes, the waging of war and the dissemination of its associated visual documents to a wide military and non-military public eager to participate as spectators in the military feats of the French army.

Though the government did not fund the production of battle paintings until 1801, its support of the *ingénieurs-géographes* began just after the outbreak of the Revolutionary wars in 1793. In the absence of official government encouragement for painted representations of contemporary war, the maps and topographical landscape *vues*

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<sup>23</sup> I will henceforth use the French *vue* to characterize this particular form of battlefield landscape that was prevalent during the First Empire. The English equivalent, “view” lacks the specificity connoted by the French term.

<sup>24</sup> The *ingénieurs-géographes* were created under Louis XIV 1696, but were not part of the military until 1769. In 1791, their ranks were dissolved but reinstated in 1793 without military rank, under the pressure of war and the need to produce maps. In 1809, Bonaparte passed an official decree which once again made the *ingénieurs-géographes* part of the army.

of battlefields produced by the *ingénieurs-géographes* provided an important source of reliable visual information about military campaigns and served as an important signifier of successful military conquest, as we have already seen in the fragmented map engraving discussed earlier. The technical problems of map-making had been solved by the end of the eighteenth century and transformed the field from a science into a technology which could more easily be harnessed by the authority of the state.<sup>25</sup> The availability of maps and other topographical information became crucially important for the success of the post-revolutionary French army, whose legendary mobility enabled them to outflank and outmaneuver opponents.<sup>26</sup> Accurate, detailed maps were also required for moving tens of thousands of soldiers across foreign territories, for the construction of roads and for the effective use of detached divisions of skirmishers known as *tirailleurs* and field artillery, who placed their mobile guns at strategically chosen locations.<sup>27</sup>

An 1802 training manual intended for newly recruited *ingénieurs-géographes* enumerated the explicit connection between possessing cartographic knowledge and acquiring territory through military intervention:

The security of a great State depends on how it makes use of its resources and powers, including perfect knowledge of the country where this State will exercise its force...Enlarged by victory with territories that nature has destined for her, she has worked to rejoin them, through geodesic operations, to the general map of her territory, like she attaches them to the Republic through the faith of treaties and

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<sup>25</sup> Anne Godlewska, "Napoleon's Geographers (1797-1815): Imperialists and Soldiers of Modernity," in *Geography and Empire* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 1994), 32. Godlewska's important article argues that the *ingénieurs-géographes* were instrumental in the development of France as a modern, nationalized state. The connection between surveying and state power has also been made with respect to eighteenth-century French imperialism. See Jennifer Palmer, "Atlantic Crossings: Race, Gender, and the Construction of Families in Eighteenth-Century La Rochelle," (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008), 32-75.

<sup>26</sup> John Lynn, "Nations in Arms, 1763-1815," in *Cambridge History of Warfare*, ed. Geoffrey Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 200-202 .

<sup>27</sup> Godlewska, "Napoleon's Geographers (1797-1815): Imperialists and Soldiers of Modernity," 34-35.



the goodness of her administration. Thus the Piedmont, the departments of the Maritime Alpes, of the Leman, of Mont-Blanc, of Mount-Tonnerre, of the Sarre, of the Rhine-Moselle, and of the Roer, will soon be a part of the map of France just as they are already part of her territory.<sup>28</sup>

Cartographic representations of newly acquired territories, such as the ones listed above, visually represented political and military successes in the form of state-sponsored documents. But as the French army conquered more territory under the Directory, Consulate and Empire, the *ingénieurs-géographes* had difficulty keeping pace. Maps, costly and laborious to produce, could not be made fast enough to meet the demands of a quickly expanding French nation, a problem invoked by the training manual. While the manual celebrated the expansion of French borders, the nation's victorious army and the important role played by the *ingénieurs-géographes* in the endeavor of military conquest, it also acknowledged the lag-time between the acquisition of new territory and the production of cartographic documents, noting that these conquered territories would "soon" be added to the map of France. Decisive battles may have expanded France's borders in a matter of hours or days, but the visual representation of this change took considerably longer to appear in cartographic form.

The French army needed maps to plan and carry out campaigns in a series of distant locales for which topographical information, such as the position of rivers and mountains, could determine the way a battle would be fought. Bonaparte's corps of

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<sup>28</sup> Dépôt général de la guerre, *Instruction sur le service des ingénieurs-géographes du dépôt général de la guerre* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de la République, Thermidor an XI, 1802), 1-3. "La sûreté d'un grand État dépend trop de l'emploi plus ou moins utile qu'il sait faire à propos de sa force et de ses ressources, pour que la parfaite connaissance des pays où doit exercer cette force ...Agrandie, par la victoire, de plusieurs départements que la nature semblait lui destiner, elle travaille à les réunir, par des opérations géodésiques, à la carte générale de son territoire, comme elle les attache à la République par la foi des traités et les bienfaits de son administration. Ainsi le Piémont, les départements des Alpes-Maritimes, du Léman, du Mont-Blanc, du Mont-Tonnerre, de la Sarre, de Rhin-et-Moselle, et de la Roer, vont bientôt faire partie de la carte de France, comme ils font partie de son territoire."

*ingénieurs-géographes* worked tirelessly to respond to this need; expediency became the order of the day. As Bonaparte stated, “taking twenty years to finish a map is to be working too much for the sake of posterity.”<sup>29</sup> A particularly revealing letter sent from the Director of the *Dépôt de la guerre*, General Nicolas Sanson, to the assistant director, Colonel Muriel, demonstrates that the pressure to make maps quickly may not have stemmed from purely operational concerns:

I hear with pleasure that you have found a considerable number of landscape engravers. I am not formally opposed that you are turning them into map engravers, thus delivering them to a new genre. Before anything else, we need maps, landscapes only being an accessory...I repeat to you, my dear Muriel, get as many engravers as you can, good and mediocre...This is what the *Dépôt de la guerre* will be known for, the utility that the government and the military can gain from it. Engravings are a luxury, and they must be made quickly so that we can benefit from them as soon as possible.<sup>30</sup>

Maps could not be made quickly enough to feed the military’s appetite for cartographic information; hence Sanson’s acknowledgment that landscape engravers would suffice in the place of more specialized map engravers. The *Dépôt de la guerre* required engravers, and as Sanson indicated, they were even willing to accept mediocre ones. While the *Dépôt* produced landscape *vues* to memorialize battles, their main concern rested with maps. The focus of Sanson’s letter on engraving as a problematic obstacle to dissemination of cartographic knowledge hints at the importance of the *Dépôt de la*

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<sup>29</sup> P. Guiral, “Napoléon et la géographie de son temps,” in *Mélanges Géographiques offerts au Doyen Ernest Bénévent*, ed. G. Berger (Gap, France: Éditions Ophrys, 1954), 378. ““Mettre vingt années à terminer les cartes et des plans, c’est trop travailler pour la postérité.”

<sup>30</sup> Nicolas Sanson, Directeur général du dépôt de la guerre à Colonel Muriel, directeur adjoint, 1807, Correspondance de M. le colonel Muriel, directeur adjoint du dépôt de la guerre, 3M 247. Vincennes, France: Service historique de l’armée de terre. “J’apprends avec plaisir que vous avez trouvé un nombre tres considerable de graveurs de paysages. Je n’oppose formellement à ce que vous preniez des graveurs de cartes, pour les livrer à un autre genre. Il nous faut d’abord les cartes, les paysages n’étant qu’accessoire. Je vous répète, mon cher Muriel, accapares tous les graveurs que vous pouvez, bons et médiocres...Voilà ce qui donnera de la représentation au Dépôt de la guerre, par l’utilité qu’en retirera le gouvernement ainsi que les militaires. Sur tout point de luxe dans la gravure, et que l’on fasse vite, afin qu’on en puisse jouir le plutôt.”

*guerre*'s engraved maps beyond their important function in the planning and execution of campaigns. Even Bonaparte, the highest ranking official in France, sometimes relied on hand-drawn maps (*cartes manuscrites*) when he requested documents from *Dépôt de la guerre*, often the only kind of maps available.<sup>31</sup> Only through engraving could these maps be disseminated to a larger public, who likely valued them as symbols of a strong military and government, or at the very least as empirical assurance of the French army's successes. Moreover, the production of engraved maps functioned as a sign of the stability of France's state military institutions in the form of an archive of cartographic knowledge with an aura of permanence and stability. Whereas hand-drawn maps could be lost or easily destroyed, engraved maps stood a better chance of enduring.

Early in his military career, Bonaparte recognized the value of the work of the *ingénieurs-géographes* as a form of publicity for the military exploits of his regime. As early as 1796, he took advantage of this graphic section of the *Dépôt* to create propaganda aimed at bolstering his reputation. During his campaign in Italy, he personally selected the landscape artist Pietro Bagetti, who was reluctantly conscripted to work as an *ingénieur-géographe* until the fall of the Empire in 1815.<sup>32</sup> Bonaparte understood that the new brand of national warfare as the "business of the people" produced great curiosity on the part of the public not only to read about his military exploits but to view them as well. The civilian interest in maps, geography, and topography was also encouraged by print media such as newspapers and engravings, all

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<sup>31</sup> Robert Lefebvre, capitaine d'état-major, "Étude sur le cabinet topographique de l'empereur Napoléon Ier," *Le spectateur militaire* 6, no. 33 (Novembre, 1853): 239-42. Bacler d'Albe, in a letter to Général Sanson, demanded the original hand-drawn reconnaissance maps noting that the Emperor "conçoit parfaitement que la mesure de tout copier est fort bonne en temps de paix ; mas la rapidité des ses marches ne lui pas permet d'attendre."

<sup>32</sup> Le Colonel Berthaut, *Les Ingénieurs-géographes militaires. 1624-1831, étude historique*, vol. 2 (Paris: Imprimerie du service géographique, 1902), 2 : 185-187.

under the strict control of censors during the Empire. As one contemporary observer related in 1806,

Since our armies have crossed the banks of the Niemen and the Duna, many newspapers in the capital have been charged with teaching us about the geography and topography of these sites where our brave legions carry our victorious eagles. At the same time, all of the print sellers on the banks of the Seine are covered with maps representing the theater of war.<sup>33</sup>

The dual function of the visual material made by the *ingénieurs-géographes*, as both an instrument of military reconnaissance and a form of publicity for the deeds of the French army, structured the career of one the more well-known *ingénieurs-géographes* who specialized in the productions of *vues* and maps, Bacler d'Albe. Before joining the army as an *ingénieur-géographe*, Louis Ghislain Bacler d'Albe lived in Chamonix, where he produced picturesque alpine landscapes. In 1796, the French army arrived in the region en route to Italy, which they would invade and conquer parts of. Bacler d'Albe joined and made use of his landscape skills as an *ingénieur-géographe* in the army. He quickly rose in the ranks to be appointed head of the *ingénieurs-géographes* for Italy. In 1804, Bonaparte promoted d'Albe as head of the *ingénieurs-géographes* in France and director of his *cabinet topographique*, where he would remain until 1814. As the person in charge of furnishing the Emperor with maps during campaigns, Bacler d'Albe understood better than anyone the instrumental value of cartographic knowledge for the conduct of war.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Guiral, "Napoléon et la géographie de son temps," 382-383. "Depuis que nos armées parcourent les bords du Niémen et de la Duna, plusieurs journaux de la capitale se sont chargés de nous enseigner la géographie et la topographie des lieux où nos braves légions portent leurs aigles victorieuses. En même temps tous les quais sont tapissés de cartes représentant le théâtre de la guerre."

<sup>34</sup> Lefebvre, "Étude sur le cabinet topographique de l'empereur Napoléon Ier," 232. This illuminating article reproduces letters sent from Bacler d'Albe to Colonel Muriel and General Sanson at the *Dépôt de la guerre* requesting cartographic material for his boss, Napoleon Bonaparte.

## “The Touch of an Eyewitness”

Napoleon charged Bacler d’Albe with producing a map of the theater of war in Italy for which no complete or accurate map existed.<sup>35</sup> The map, which was made for the *Dépôt de la guerre*, was engraved and sold in 1802 for the princely sum of 150 francs at Bacler d’Albe’s own shop. This intersection between private commerce and government documents was made possible by a subscription that Bacler d’Albe took up to finance the costly process of engraving. Bonaparte reportedly provided the bulk of the funding, with 84,000 francs. But after publishing the first four *livraisons* of the map, the artist ran into financial difficulties and found himself 44,000 francs in debt, for which he was being sued by his creditors. To avoid prison, the *Dépôt de la guerre* agreed to purchase 160 copies and allowed Bacler d’Albe to retain the copper plates.<sup>36</sup> The elaborate frontispiece for the thirty-sheet map (Fig. 2.8), complete with a vignette of Bonaparte communing with two scantily clad female allegorical figures, proclaimed the map’s author “*Chef des Ingénieurs-Géographes du Dépôt Général de la guerre, Rue des Moulins, no. 542.*” The address denoted Bacler d’Albe’s own shop, and not the *Dépôt général de la guerre*, although the association between the two was no doubt intentional. The map was widely publicized and earned Bacler d’Albe widespread recognition as the preeminent contemporary cartographer in France. One newspaper wrote: “This superb map is one of the most handsome monuments erected for the glory of the French armies.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Anne Godlewska, “The Troubled History of the Survey of Italy,” *An Atlas of Napoleonic Cartography in Italy*, [http://www.geog.queensu.ca/napoleonatlas/main\\_page.htm](http://www.geog.queensu.ca/napoleonatlas/main_page.htm) (accessed March 8, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> Berthaut, *Les Ingénieurs-géographes militaires. 1624-1831, étude historique*, 246-247.

<sup>37</sup> “Géographie,” *Journal typographique et bibliographique*, 4 juin 1801, 270. “Cette superbe carte est un des plus beaux monumens élevés à la gloire des armées françaises.”

The paper noted that a series of prints were also available for purchase at Bacler d'Albe's shop. They represented two battles, Lodi and the Crossing of the River Po, both from the Italian campaign, and one portrait of Bonaparte. The battles were priced more reasonably at 12 francs each, compared with 150 francs for the map. The portrait cost just 6 francs. The engravings were published around 1800 and were also widely publicized in newspapers from the period. In contrast to the prints published in the *Tableaux* or sold in other print shops at the time, Bacler d'Albe's engravings had the virtue of being made by the hand of an *ingénieur-géographe*, an officially sanctioned expert observer of military operations. The fact that Bacler d'Albe was an *ingénieur-géographe* would have lent a high degree of authority to the engravings, permitting them to be understood as transparent and truthful representations of military events. The use of his title on the engravings and on the map, all sold at his personal shop, constituted a commercial strategy of dissemination.

An anonymous writer in *Journal général de la littérature de France* even claimed that Bacler d'Albe's status as an eyewitness was something which could be seen in the *Crossing of the Po*:

This print is engraved with a great deal of care, and with major effect. The original painting has the rare merit of combining a precious exactitude of style and detail with a rich and knowledgeable composition. Drawn on the actual site of the battlefield, by a man who is both an artist and a member of the military, you can see everywhere the touch of an eyewitness.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> "Gravures," *Journal général de la littérature de France* 1800 (Fructidor, An VIII), 287. "Cette estampe est gravée avec beaucoup de soin, et a un grand effet ; le tableau original joint le mérite assez rare d'une exactitude précieuse de style et de détail, à celui d'une composition riche et savante. Dessiné sur le champ de bataille même, par un homme à la fois artiste et militaire, on y voit partout la touche d'un témoin oculaire."

The engraving was based on a watercolor (Fig. 2.9) that Bacler d'Albe made on the site of the crossing of the river, an event which he witnessed in 1798 in his capacity as an *ingénieur-géographe*. It represented the French army in the process of crossing the river at the Italian town of Plaisance in the hopes of cutting off the supply chain of the Austrian army, positioned down river. In the background, the massive French army, depicted as tiny, colorful stick-like figures, waits to cross. Some are shown in the process of crossing, and disembarking on the riverbank in the foreground. The watercolor therefore depicts the crossing as an event with multiple episodic stages. The site is rendered with a high degree of topographic specificity, befitting Bacler d'Albe's *métier*.

The phrase "*Peint sur le lieu par Bacler d'Albe*" appears in the bottom left corner of the reproductive engraving (Fig. 2.10), which beyond a stronger contrast between clouds and sky, is consistent with the original watercolor. If the author of the above passage could indeed "see everywhere the touch of an eyewitness," it was due to a powerful combination of factors including the claim that the subject was depicted on the site (*sur le lieu*) where the battle took place, as well as the inclusion of episodic details and topographic particularities that were understood as authentic to the action and locale of the battle. The "touch of an eyewitness" was therefore less a descriptor of a knowledgeable observer who witnessed a visible event than it was a set of representational strategies that could be deployed to lend representations a higher degree of epistemological value, which licensed them to be viewed as sources of knowledge about particular military events. Moreover, seeing Bacler d'Albe's status as an eyewitness as a visible quality in the engraving points to the discursive resonance of the concept of the "eyewitness" with regard to the representation of contemporary war. The

reception of an image such as this would have therefore been informed by the crucial information that Bacler d'Albe had represented the scene *sur les lieux*.

The category of the eyewitness is a longstanding one in France. As historian Andrea Frisch has compellingly argued, the discursive authority of the eyewitness emerged slowly and unsystematically from “an intersection of an outmoded feudal ethics and an embryonic nation-state in the age of print.”<sup>39</sup> Frisch concentrates on the epistemic development of the authority of the eyewitness within a juridical context: as the system of justice changed in early modern France to become more “depersonalized,” so too did the standards of testimony evolve. The witness, and no longer the judge, became the privileged domain of quasi-objective witnessing. Her study demonstrates that the concept of the eyewitness is one shaped by the developing nation state and is not “a philosophical abstraction.”<sup>40</sup>

The term *témoign oculaire* had been in wide use since the eighteenth century, when it merited an entry in Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire universel raisonné des connoissances humaines*. For witnesses to be “ocular,” they needed to be not only contemporary to the events in question but also needed to be “on the actual site where the events occurred.”<sup>41</sup> The *témoign oculaire*, according to the *Encyclopédie*, was the most authoritative of all types of witnessing:

There is more certitude because the [*témoign oculaire*] is more assured of the event and does not fear being contradicted by the narrative of an event or the circumstances of those who he has consulted. Time and distance from the place where the event occurred considerably diminish historical certainty which makes

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<sup>39</sup> Andrea Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 12.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 13,

<sup>41</sup> “Témoign.” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire universel raisonné des connoissances humaines*, edited by Denis Diderot Fortunato Bartolomeo De Felice, Jean Le Rond d' Alembert, 1774, 347. “qu'il ait été sur les lieux mêmes où ils sont arrivés; ce qui lui donne la qualité de *témoign oculaire*”



us depend on a suite of narrations...But a contemporary ocular witness does not require this suite of narrations. It is he who is witness for himself. But if the contemporary witness was not an ocular one, his testimony is thereby less certain.<sup>42</sup>

Seeing an event take place absolved the *témoin oculaire* from relying on the “narrations” of others. This is consistent with the importance of vision as a privileged vehicle of knowledge in the Enlightenment period.<sup>43</sup> *Témoins oculaires* supplied their own narratives and were themselves the source of knowledge precisely because of having seen the events take place. In the *Encyclopédie*, a *témoin oculaire* referred mainly to a witness in a court case, but was understood as the most authoritative of all kinds of witness and extend well beyond judicial contexts. The vision of an eyewitness was therefore thought to be direct and reliable.

### **The Spectator as Witness**

Not surprisingly, written accounts of battles were often published by *témoins oculaires*, usually generals, who had participated in them. These accounts were thought to carry more authority precisely because of the contemporary value that eyewitnesses commanded. One of the best known official accounts of a Napoleonic battle published during the First Empire was Louis Alexandre Berthier’s *Relation de la bataille de Marengo*, published in 1805. At the battle of Marengo, the French army led by the newly

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. “son témoignage a alors plus de certitude ; car il est plus assuré alors de son fait, & ne craint pas d’être trompé dans la narration du fait ou des circonstances par ceux qu’il a consultés. Le tems & la distance des lieux diminuent considérablement la certitude historique; car l’un & l’autre nous met dans la nécessité de dépendre d’une suite de narrations...Mais un *témoin* contemporain & oculaire n’a pas besoin de cette suite de narrations. C’est lui qui est *témoin* à soi même. Mais si le *témoin* contemporain n’a pas été oculaire, son témoignage alors est moins certain.”

<sup>43</sup> For more on the discourse of vision during the Enlightenment, see Martin Jay, “Dialectic of Enlightenment,” in *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 83-148.

appointed First Consul, Napoleon Bonaparte, defeated the Austrian army, forcing it to retreat from Italy. In addition to marking Bonaparte's ascension to power as First Consul, the victory at Marengo also reaffirmed the notion that his legitimacy as ruler was based on his superior abilities as a military commander and not on despotic power-grabbing.<sup>44</sup> The fifth anniversary of the battle occasioned a lavish ceremony which took place on the battlefield during which Berthier, the minister of war, presented the newly crowned Emperor Bonaparte with the *Relation de la bataille de Marengo*. The book featured five maps made by the *ingénieurs-géographes*, one landscape *vue* of the battlefield by Bagetti (also an *ingénieur-géographe*) and an engraved frontispiece based on a watercolor by Carle Vernet, whose work was also featured in the *Tableaux*. At the beginning of the *Relation*, Berthier included a brief dedication. He wrote: "I am honored to present to your majesty a monument to the glory of Bonaparte and of the devotion that, on these fields which will forever be celebrated, so many brave [soldiers] witnessed, five years ago, France's hero, the liberator of Italy."<sup>45</sup> Under the short text, he included the following crucial information, which anchored the ceremony in time and place: "On the field of Marengo, 25 Prairial, anniversary of the battle."<sup>46</sup> The engraving (Fig. 2.11) depicts Berthier, who stands on the ground, presenting Napoleon, mounted on a white horse, with a map. A grenadier holds the map up in the direction of the Emperor's gaze. Berthier gestures toward it and Bonaparte in turn gestures back toward his minister of war. The moment of presentation, rendered by Carle Vernet, is a series of

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<sup>44</sup> For more on this problem see Todd Porterfield and Susan Siegfried, *Staging Empire: Napoleon, Ingres and David* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Le Maréchal Berthier, *Relation de la bataille de Marengo, gagnée le 25 prairial an 8* (Paris: L'Imprimerie impériale, 1805), i. "J'ai l'honneur de présenter à votre majesté un monument de la gloire de BONAPARTE, et du dévouement que, dans ces champs à jamais célèbres, tant de braves témoignèrent, il y a cinq ans, au héros de la France, au libérateur de l'Italie."

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. "Sur le champ de Marengo, le 25 Prairial, anniversaire de la bataille."

exchanges based around an authenticating cartographic document. The outward facing map, Berthier's turned back, a series of expressive gestures and the shallow, stage-like foreground invite viewers to participate in the moment of exchange. In concert with the information in the dedication that the *Relation* was presented on the battlefield on the fifth anniversary of the battle, Vernet's engraving serves as a corroborating visual witness, a *témoin oculaire* for Berthier's act of formal, written, presentation to Napoleon. By representing Berthier's dedication as a close-up episode in the process of taking place, Vernet's engraving stages an opportunity for viewers of the image to witness the moment of official exchange. Vernet's engraving invites viewers to understand the image as an official document of a military event located in a specific time and place, providing a visual representation of up-close access to the event.

What Clausewitz called "the peoples' new share in these great affairs of the state," allowed war to take on unprecedented social importance and licensed those in power to conduct war "untrammelled by any conventional restraints."<sup>47</sup> The wars waged between 1792 and 1815 demanded not only an endless supply of soldiers but, as Clausewitz understood, a larger cultural apparatus of legitimation to support the war effort and the state institutions that waged it – the "peoples' new share." With regard to the production of visual representations of contemporary wars, it is important to define this apparatus of legitimation not in terms of the sheer number of images produced but rather through visual representation as a mode of social practice through which viewers could "participate" in these politicized military events. Episodic and topographic representations of contemporary war were valued for the illusion of access, order and

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<sup>47</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 593.

clarity. They carried the promise of an infallible form of vision, that of the expert observer, the *témoign oculaire*, whose representation of the particularities of a battle's site and actions encouraged expectations that the complexities of a battle could indeed be grasped through vision alone. This form of war imagery effaced the political complexities of France's armed engagements and instead focused attention on the 'authenticity' of the representation and the extent to which it permitted spectatorial engagement with the depicted battle.

### **History Painting and Battle Painting**

The production of episodic and topographic prints which flourished after France became engaged in warfare with its European neighbors in the 1790s reflected a widespread interest in viewing representations of contemporary battles. But it was not until 1801 that the Consular government, under the rule of Napoleon, officially encouraged France's most esteemed artists, its history painters, to represent contemporary military events on a grand, painted scale. As we have already seen, battle paintings occupied a low rung within the French academic hierarchy of genres which helps to explain why representations of war during and immediately after the French Revolution proliferated in prints, illustrated books and small-scale watercolors. History painting, the most eminent and largest-scale of all the genres, was reserved for classical and mythological subjects intended to instruct and elevate viewers through timeless and morally aggrandizing examples. History painters worked under a set of rigorous conventions imparted by the French academy and represented their erudite subjects

through a single defining narrative moment, subordinating extraneous details and episodes not directly in support of their unified and timeless narrative focus.

Though contemporary battles had never been considered an appropriate subject for history painting, the French Consular government sought to force the two together for the sake of publicizing the government's military achievements. It was an awkward fit. In 1801, the government announced a competition for a large-scale history painting representing the Battle of Nazareth, a battle which Napoleon had won against all odds in 1799 against the Turkish army in Egypt. As David O'Brien has demonstrated, it was Bonaparte's Minister of War, Alexandre Berthier, the author of the *Relation de la bataille de Marengo*, who encouraged the Ministry of the Interior to organize and implement the competition.<sup>48</sup> The painting was to measure over seven meters in width, an unprecedented size for an unprecedented subject in history painting. All ten of the submitted sketches were exhibited at the Salon of 1801 and a winner was chosen, a little known, young student of Jacques-Louis David, Antoine-Jean Gros.

Gros, a painter trained in the classical tradition of history painting, produced a sketch that was neither acceptable as a history painting nor as a topographical battle painting.<sup>49</sup> Because of this and the disorganization that characterized the arts administration of the Consular government, *Nazareth* was never made into a finished painting. Gros' sketch (Fig. 2.12) was criticized by critics for fusing the monumental, transcendent ethos of history painting with the particular feats of individual soldiers along with the features of the officers. For the Nazareth competition, the government furnished the participating artists with a set of documents: a textual account of the battle's general

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<sup>48</sup> O'Brien, *After the Revolution, Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda under Napoleon*, 54.

<sup>49</sup> Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," 146-51.

progression followed by a list of numerous particular episodes. Artists could request a map of the battle from the *Dépôt de la guerre* drawn up by one of the generals who participated in it. Though this was the first major opportunity for history painters to receive government support uncommon during the Revolutionary years, the degree of tight control maintained by the government over the subject matter was more stringent than it had been before the Revolution.

Gros, more than any other artist, tailored his painting to the government's official version of the battle and even went to the extreme of exhibiting a series of documents that he created underneath his final sketch at the Salon of 1801. These documents (Fig. 2.13, Fig. 2.14) consisted of a textual account of the episodes depicted in the painting, a hand-drawn replica of the map drawing by a general who participated in the battle and a topographical plan that represented the terrain included in the painting relative to what was not included. The choice to include these documents must be understood within the context of the sketch itself. In the *Battle of Nazareth*, dramatic action is compressed into the foreground with very little indication of the terrain, other than the inclusion of Mont Tabor in the left background. Topographical detail is minimized in favor of a focus on particular human bodies in swirling combat – most of the landscape appears as a muddy cloud. The clarity and order of episodic and topographic details that had come to dominate contemporary representations of war in print media were anathema to Gros' *Nazareth*. The artist, as a history painter, did not want to burden his painting with the kinds of particularities that were the domain of maps and landscape paintings, minutiae which detracted from the task of representing the transcendent and epic aspects of a historical event.

The documents that Gros included with his painting acknowledged and reinforced contemporary expectations that representations of battles should permit viewers to identify and “witness” a clearly defined series of episodes in an expertly rendered, “authentic” location. To demonstrate his commitment to this set of expectations without actually making this a defining element in his painting, Gros used the documents to pick up where the painting had left off. They topographically represented the terrain surrounding the battle and gave a large overview of the movement of troops, information not available in the painting. The inclusion of these documents in the display of the *Battle of Nazareth* suggests that Gros recognized that the positive reception of his painting depended to some extent on the legibility of those episodes contained within the frame. The documents Gros included with the *Battle of Nazareth* therefore attempted to legitimate the painting outside the frame, with direct recourse to the kinds of official visual documents produced by the *ingénieurs-géographes*.

While Gros needed official-looking topographic documents to legitimate his painting, another painter, Louis-François Lejeune, made such details the subject of his 1801 Salon entry, the *Battle of Marengo* (Fig. 2.15). Much smaller than Gros’ *Nazareth* and therefore not a history painting, the *Battle of Marengo* featured a vast overview of the battle, with small figures distributed throughout the foreground, middleground, and background. Working outside of the grand manner of history painting but still painting a historical subject, Lejeune’s painting had more in common with the prints contained in the *Tableaux* and those based on *vues* produced by *ingénieurs-géographes* such as Bacler d’Albe. In contrast to the *Battle of Nazareth*, the *Battle of Marengo* situated the battle across a deep landscape such that different stages of the battle could be seen: a series of

close-up skirmishes in the foreground, columns of soldiers clashing in the middleground, and more soldiers about to enter into the fray in the background. Topographical details such as a church tower and a mountainous horizon in the background added to the illusion that the painting constituted an exacting record of the fighting as well as the terrain. While Gros' *Nazareth* was castigated by critics, the reaction to Lejeune's *Battle of Marengo* was more positive: he received numerous favorable reviews and was even awarded a *prix d'encouragement* in the amount of 3,000 francs by the government.<sup>50</sup>

The positive reception of Lejeune's painting was informed by two important pieces of information disseminated in the guidebook for the Salon of 1801 - the artist's status as the *aide de camp* to the Minister of War, Alexandre Berthier, and Lejeune's participation in the battle of Marengo. His painting was therefore made by the hand of a highly informed *témoin oculaire*, which likely ensured its reception as a reliable and "authentic" representation of the event which promised to give viewers access to a series of particularizing details that could only be provided by an eyewitness. In contrast to Gros' *Nazareth*, whose legitimating details came from physical sources external to the painting, the "truth" value of Lejeune's *Marengo* was guaranteed by the signature of the artist himself. Along with a plethora of episodes and detailed attention to the articulation of the landscape, conventions which also characterized prints of contemporary war at the time, Lejeune's status as an expert observer of contemporary battles ensured that his painting could be interpreted as visibly possessing the "touch of an eyewitness." Lejeune's style of painting and the series of claims it promoted quickly found favor with a public eager for representations of war that seemed to offer seemingly unmediated and

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 246-51.



clear depictions of armed conflict. The artist would later brag in his memoirs, published well after the First Empire, that he was able to exhibit a painting in each of the Salons from 1798 until 1812. He produced at least eight battle paintings during the Napoleonic Empire and became a fixture of Salon exhibitions. Lejeune's manner of battle painting successfully located a pictorial language which allowed his work to operate as a site of dynamic interplay between officially sanctioned documents of war and affective and orderly depictions of the events and site of a battle. Despite the fact that his paintings would not have been considered history paintings, or perhaps because of this, they promoted a form of spectatorial engagement which licensed them to be understood as transparent and "true" depictions of contemporary battles owing largely to a successful set of pictorial strategies embraced by Lejeune to translate expert eyewitness vision into battle painting.

### **The Value of Maps and *Vues: Histoire des guerres des gaulois***

As we have already seen, the pictorial mode of Lejeune's *Battle of Marengo* was more akin to the landscape *vues* of the *ingénieurs-géographes* and engravings in the *Tableaux historiques* than to the genre of history painting. The artist's status as an *aide de camp* to the Minister of War, Alexandre Berthier, and an eyewitness of the battle allowed his painting to be understood as a source of authentic eyewitness information. While the value of his work as both artistic object and object of knowledge benefitted the reception of Lejeune's paintings within the rarefied Parisian art world, it also carried over to other areas of cultural production outside of it.

In 1803, the publication of the *Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français. en Italie* was announced in the catalogue of the official bookseller of the École Polytechnique and the École des Ponts et Chaussées, Librairie Bernard, 31 Quai des Grands Augustins. The opulent multi-volume book, written by Joseph Servan, *général de division*, featured five separate volumes (sold together) about French military history from the ancient feats of the Gallic King Bellovesus, circa 600 B.C.E. through the present day. The military events from 1797 onwards filled an entire book, a few short years of history for one-fifth of the *Histoire*. The book was eventually published in 1805, in several different editions at different price points. Three different editions contained all volumes of the book as well as the atlas, which included twelve maps and the two engravings by Lejeune; it ranged in price from sixty-seven to 150 francs depending on the quality of paper one desired. A more modest abridged edition featured the last volume of the *Histoire* which described the French army's conquest of Italy from 1797 and thereafter. It came with only four maps but sold for the more affordable price of eighteen francs. The atlas was not sold separately and could only be acquired through the purchase of the complete edition.

The announcement for the book's imminent publication devoted the vast majority of its space to what must have been the most anticipated part of the book and ostensibly its most attractive selling point, the atlas which contained a series of engraved maps and *vues*. It was to consist of

new maps of Gaul, France and both ancient and modern Italy, in four maps; Corsica and Sardinia, based on precious material drawn by Lapie and engraved by Tardieu. It also includes the picturesque description of the Battle of Marengo and of the Passage of the Mont Saint-Bernard, in two sheets drawn by Lejeune, General Staff officer, who shared in the glory of these two events and whose

painting of Marengo was universally admired in the last exhibition of the Art Salon.<sup>51</sup>

The description of the maps and “picturesque descriptions” contained in the atlas emphasized that both types of visual material were based on authoritative sources.

Lejeune’s status as someone who “shared in the glory” of Marengo and the crossing of the Mont Saint-Bernard indicated the special value of his engravings as did the fact that his battle painting of *Marengo* was exhibited at the Salon of 1801. His two engravings in the atlas of *Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français en Italie* were therefore made by someone who was both an expert eyewitness and a nationally recognized artist. The engraving of the *Battle of Marengo* (Fig. 2.16) is an approximate reproduction of the painting exhibited at the Salon of 1801; the engraver Pierre-Philippe Choffard took some liberties with the placement of soldiers in the landscape and condensed Lejeune’s expansive landscape. Other than the descriptive legend in the booklet which accompanied the atlas, the reproduction of *Marengo* is entirely decontextualized from its former display at the Salon. The atlas version pictorially corroborates the information about the battle of Marengo in the text of the book as well as displayed on the preceding maps, and simultaneously takes advantage of Lejeune’s double status as both publicly recognized artist and expert military eyewitness. This

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<sup>51</sup> *Notice abrégée des principaux livres de Bernard, Ventôse An XI*, (Paris: Bernard Libraire de l'Ecole Polytechnique et de celle des Ponts et Chaussées, 1803), 9. “Avec un grand Atlas composé de Cartes nouvelles des Gaules, de la France, de l'Italie ancienne et moderne en quatre cartes; de la Corse et de la Sardaigne, dessinées par *Lapie* d'après des matériaux précieux, et gravées par *Tardieu*. Il renfermera aussi la description pittoresque de la Bataille de Maringo [*sic*], et du Passage du Mont Saint-Bernard, en deux planches dessinées par *le Jeune*, Officier de l'État-major, qui a partagé la gloire de ces deux événemens, et dont le tableau de Maringo a été universellement admiré à la dernière exposition du Sallon [*sic*] des Arts.”

shows that his work operated within a broad cultural sphere, functioning as evidence of the particularities of a battle in the context of a publication which sought to delineate an official history as well as a ‘truthful’ visual representation in the Parisian Salon.

The maps in the atlas, we are told in the description, are based on “precious material.” Bernard’s 1805 announcement, printed after the book’s publication, provided the information that Pierre Lapie, the maker of the maps, was a captain in the *ingénieurs-géographes*. This meant that the “precious material” upon which the maps were drawn consisted of cartographic documents conserved at the *Dépôt de la guerre*, a fact that would have bolstered the authority of the publication’s visual material. To add to the allure of special access to important “precious” material, the text of the atlas also informs the reader that some of it has never been published before.<sup>52</sup> The twelfth map, the one which was sold separately from the book, represented the French Reserve Army’s campaign in Italy (Fig. 2.17). The most elaborate of the twelve included in the atlas, it not only indicated the order of battle for Marengo and for the passage of the Mont Saint-Bernard, but also included a topographical *vue* of the latter on the bottom left corner “taken on the day when the army landed in Italy.”<sup>53</sup>

The *Histoire* received a series of glowing reviews in the press, including one by Joachim Le Breton, a writer for the *Décade philosophique*, one of several newspapers dedicated to culture which emerged during the First Empire.<sup>54</sup> After lavishing praise upon Servan’s text, he turned his attention to the merits of the atlas: “The atlas deserves

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<sup>52</sup> Joseph Servan and Pierre Lapie, *Atlas de l'histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français en Italie* (Paris: Bernard, 1805), 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Notice abrégée des principaux livres de Bernard*, (Paris: Bernard Libraire de l'Ecole Polytechnique et de celle des Ponts et Chaussées, 1805), 14.

<sup>54</sup> For more on Le Breton, see Susan Siegfried, *Ingres: Painting Reimagined* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 174.

special mention: Zanoni and Bacler d'Albe have provided maps of Italy that have been rightfully praised, but they are quite rare and very costly. In the atlas that we announce here, the material of these two skilled geographers has been brought together at a lower cost for the public.”<sup>55</sup> For Le Breton, the atlas was valuable because it disseminated knowledge to a wider public than the more costly maps that were available. As we have already seen, Bacler d'Albe's map of the theater of war in Italy sold for 150 francs. It was possible to purchase the entire *Histoire* and the atlas for sixty-seven francs; one could even buy the map of the Italian campaign for eighteen francs. What this shows is that the demand for official cartographic material that represented land conquered by the French army ran high. Its unavailability and costliness added to the value of the atlas of the *Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français*. Lejeune's participation in the publication benefitted the public reception of his work (would have underscored his status as an expert observer) and demonstrated the flexibility and fluidity of its meaning within a broad cultural arena where accurate visual representations of the French army's conquests based on expert, eyewitness vision were particularly sought after.

The publication of the *Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français* and the valuable atlas included with it occurred just after Napoleon Bonaparte decided that a greater number of government-produced maps should be disseminated to the public. Up until 1803, only high-ranking members of the military had regular access to the maps made by the *ingénieurs-géographes*. After this point, Bonaparte, in an effort to

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<sup>55</sup> Joachim Le Breton, “Histoire. Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français en Italie “ *Revue, ou Décade Philosophique, Littéraire et Politique*, no. 30 (1805, 30 Messidor, An XIII): 145. “L’atlas mérite une mention particulière : Zanoni et Bacler d’Albe, ont donné des cartes d’Italie justement estimées ; mais elles sont très rares et très coûteuses. Dans l’atlas que nous annonçons, on a réuni, à moindres frais pour le public, et approprié à l’histoire des deux nations, les matériaux de ces deux habiles géographes.”

standardize cartographic language across military and civilian domains and publicize the exploits of his military, made military maps available to a wider civilian audience.<sup>56</sup> But even with the new availability of maps, including those published in the *Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français en Italie*, the price would have been prohibitive for the vast majority of the French population. With the average salary for a worker around nine francs per month, maps would have been an unaffordable luxury.<sup>57</sup> As a further obstacle to wide public dissemination of maps, many were considered confidential state secrets. Such was the case with the cartographic survey of Egypt, undertaken during Napoleon's ill-fated invasion of the country but not published until the 1830s.<sup>58</sup>

### **Mapping, Vision and Landscape**

Beyond the use of military maps as an instrumental technology of warfare, they were, as we have already seen, highly prized sources of visual information about the territorial conquest by the French army for a non-military public. Maps shared this prized cultural status with engraved *vues* of battles made by eyewitness observers and battle paintings with similarly distinguished authors. Images such as these played a crucial role in articulating the topographic and cartographic results of French imperialism to civilians who had not taken part in the military conquest of foreign territory but who desired nevertheless to take part in these national exploits through visual representations.

Visual engagement with representations of war thought to possess the “touch of an

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<sup>56</sup> Josef Konvitz, *Cartography in France, 1660-1848: Science, Engineering, and Statecraft* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 99-101.

<sup>57</sup> See the section Claire-Elisabeth-Jeanne Gravier de Vergennes Rémusat, “Le coût de la vie sous le premier Empire,” in *Mémoires de Mme. de Rémusat*, ed. Charles Kunstler (Paris: Hachette, 1957), 359.

<sup>58</sup> For more on the cartographic survey of Egypt, see Anne Godlewska, *The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt, A Masterpiece of Cartographic Compilation and Early Nineteenth-Century Fieldwork*, Cartographica (Toronto University of Toronto Press, 1988).

eyewitness” promoted a powerful political illusion of visual access and participation in national military events. This chapter will now turn its attention to ways in which representations of the topographical specificities of land conquered by the French army contributed to the illusion of participation with particular attention paid to the battle paintings of Louis-François Lejeune. In the series of battle paintings made by Lejeune and exhibited at the Salons of 1804 and 1806, the soldier-artist made use of a pictorial mode that viewers would have associated with maps and *vues*. The bonds between these instrumental, official visual materials and Lejeune’s *oeuvre* provided a context for his paintings to be valued as “truthful.”

Critics understood Lejeune’s paintings as truthful renderings of the site where a battle had taken place largely because people knew that he was a soldier and therefore an expert eyewitness observer. The knowledge of Lejeune’s professional status shaped the way that critics viewed the formal elements of his paintings, promoting the belief that eyewitness vision was something which could be translated in pictorial terms into a battle painting. Not surprisingly, Lejeune’s occupation as a military man took the form of a pictorial language that critics associated with maps:

Lejeune combines the exact and geometric rendering of places and battle, in one word, the truth of action, with all of the magic of picturesque effects. He had to reformulate the rules of painting in order to be a man of war and man of art at the same time. Up until now there have been those who have traced battle plans in the manner of map makers, who produced exactitude without illusion. Or in the case of painting, there was illusion without exactitude.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Le Pausanias français: ou, description du Salon de 1806* (Paris: Imprimerie de Demonville, 1806), 215. “Il a créé son genre, il a résolu un problème fort difficile, celui de combiner le développement exact et géométrique des points et des lignes d’une bataille, en un mot, la vérité de l’action avec toute la magie des effets pittoresques. Il fallait en quelque sorte reculer les bornes de la peinture, il fallait être à la fois homme de l’Art et l’homme de guerre. Jusqu’ici ceux qui avaient tracé des plans de bataille, ou l’avaient fait à la manière des Géomètres, et alors il y avait de l’exactitude sans illusion, ou avaient composé en Peintres, et il y avait de l’illusion sans exactitude.”

As this critic understood, Lejeune's paintings were not maps. But they successfully translated the pictorial authority of maps, their "exact and geometric rendering" of the site where a battle had taken place, into a battle painting with "picturesque" effects.

Lejeune's close professional association with the Minister of War, Alexandre Berthier, would have permitted him easy access to the numerous maps produced by the *Dépôt de la guerre*. In fact, Lejeune's military personnel dossier is filled with numerous letters to superiors requesting an elevation to a rank that would allow him access to the documents housed at the *Dépôt*. In 1800, he wrote to Berthier: "I ask that you employ me to work at the *Dépôt de la guerre* so that I can obtain the necessary information for the historical work I am doing to honor the government."<sup>60</sup> A year later, he wrote to Berthier yet again, asking to be elevated in rank "at the necessary level so as not to be distracted from the work that I have taken up again on the collection of paintings on the principal battles won by the French armies at which I was present."<sup>61</sup> Just as Lejeune's status as a member of the military benefited the reception of his paintings, his status as an artist worked in his favor when it came to securing the favor of his military superiors.

Three out of the four paintings exhibited by Lejeune at the Salons of 1804 and 1806 represented subjects from Napoleon's 1798 Egyptian campaign which preceded the general's rise to power as First Consul. Though the campaign was an unqualified military disaster, it benefitted the General Bonaparte's standing back in France through a

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<sup>60</sup> Louis-François Lejeune à Alexandre Berthier, Louis-François Lejeune à Alexandre Berthier, 1800, 2 Pluviôse, an 8, Dossier Lejeune, 8YD1417. Vincennes, France: Service historique de l'armée de terre. "et en me faisant employé au Dépôt de la guerre, afin que j'y puisse recevoir les renseignements qui me sont nécessaires pour le travail historique dont j'ai fait hommage au gouvernement."

<sup>61</sup> Louis-François Lejeune à Alexandre Berthier, 1801, 3 Frimaire, an 9. Dossier Lejeune, Vincennes, France : Service historique de l'armée de terre. "avec l'ordre nécessaire pour n'être point distrait du travail que j'ai repris, de la collection des tableaux des principales batailles gagnées par les armées françaises et auxquelles je me suis trouvé."



proliferation of visual representations across a range of media, including large-scale history paintings by Antoine-Jean Gros and Anne-Louis Girodet. The Salon of 1804 featured Gros' *General Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa*, which represented Bonaparte as a Christ-like healer of his sick troops.<sup>62</sup> In contrast to the aggrandized Emperor depicted in Gros' painting, Lejeune focused his attention on representing the Egyptian campaign as a series of historical events that honored the institution of the French military and not only its esteemed leader. At the Salon of 1804, Lejeune exhibited the *Battle of Aboukir* (Fig. 2.18) and the *Battle of Mont Tabor* (Fig. 2.19). In 1806, he showed the *Battle of the Pyramids* (Fig. 2.20). Like his *Battle of Marengo*, Lejeune's three Egyptian campaign battle paintings paid particular attention to topographical specificities of the landscape.

Bonaparte's conquest of Egypt was accompanied by an elaborate scientific mission to discover, classify and study the flora, fauna, ancient monuments and contemporary customs of Egypt. The findings of the hundreds of scientists, draftsmen, and other experts would be used to publish the *Description de l'Egypte* in 1808 as a luxurious multi-volume folio monument to the imperial ambitions of France. As Edward Said has argued, the scientific mission conceived of Egypt as a passive object to be studied. The project provided a benevolent cover for French military intervention and obscured the true rationale for invading Egypt, territorial conquest.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, when

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<sup>62</sup> For more on Gros's relationship to Napoleonic propaganda, see Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire, Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798-1836* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 53-61. See also O'Brien, *After the Revolution, Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda under Napoleon*.

<sup>63</sup> Despite Edward Said's and Linda Nochlin's efforts to situate orientalism in its proper imperialistic context, there is a prolific body of scholarship which celebrates Napoleon's Egyptian campaign for its contribution to the supposedly neutral and objective science of Egyptology. One blatant example of this tendency is *The Discovery of Egypt, Artists, Travelers and Scientists*. In the introduction Lise Maniche writes, "On reading the works of the members of Napoleon's expedition, we are reminded in a vivid and

Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, no accurate map of it existed. As an extension of the civilian scientific mission, the French army's *ingénieurs-géographes* undertook a geographic survey.<sup>64</sup> Once finished, the geographic survey of Egypt comprised a three-sheet geographic map and a forty seven-page topographic map, an unusually large size.<sup>65</sup> The format of the survey speaks to the important spatial dimension of the conquest of Egypt. Whereas Napoleon's armies encountered armed resistance from Egyptians and found the country logistically difficult to conquer, the survey presented the French military with an opportunity to master the land symbolically through the practice of mapping.<sup>66</sup>

An anonymous print made shortly after Napoleon's failed military conquest of Egypt (Fig. 2.21) represents the collusion between mapping and France's military intervention in Egypt. *Bonaparte, First Consul, Standing on the Tallest Egyptian Pyramid*, shows Bonaparte standing on the top of a pyramid, with his back is turned away from the viewer, toward the vast, empty landscape that recedes into the background. To underscore the impressive height of the pyramid, the print shows only the very tip of the pyramid and a series of figures looking out from it into the vast landscape in the background. This highly unusual point of view creates a space where the viewer's gaze is on the same level with the viewers on the pyramid, establishing a powerful illusion of

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memorable way that these were the forerunners of generations of scholars who rediscovered for us one of the greatest civilizations of antiquity." See Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in *The Politics of Vision. Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (Oxford, U.K.: Westview Press, 1989), 33-60; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979); Fernand Beaucour, Yves Laissus and Chantal Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt, Artists, Travelers and Scientists* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), 7.

<sup>64</sup> Jeremy Black, *European Warfare, 1660-1815* (London: University College London Press Unlimited, 1994), 200.

<sup>65</sup> Godlewska, *The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt, A Masterpiece of Cartographic Compilation and Early Nineteenth-Century Fieldwork*, 8.

<sup>66</sup> As Godlewska points out, "the atlas was based on field surveys carried out through the duration of the expedition wherever and whenever the troops were available to defend the surveyors from the hostility of the Egyptians." See *Ibid.*, 3.

what it is like to stand on top a pyramid and gaze outward into an expansive landscape. Bonaparte is shown using a telescope to look out into the landscape. An *aide de camp* standing next to him holds a map and points out in the same direction. A group of men to Bonaparte's right look through another viewing device at the pyramids in the distance. Another man, whose uniform and activity designate him as an *ingénieur-géographe*, is seated, intently sketching the landscape in front of him. Two men to the right also participate in these activities of looking: they point, also gesturing at the land in the distance. Here, the violence of military intervention is subsumed into the activity of looking at and recording the particularities of an expanse of land. The various instruments employed for this purpose in the print, whether a telescope, a map, a pointing finger, or an intently sketching *ingénieur-géographe*, all underscore the importance of long-range, accurate vision in the practice of imperial conquest.

As W.J.T. Mitchell has argued, the discourse of imperialism is premised as much upon the imperative of literal territorial expansion as it is upon the representation of this fact in figurative, visual terms:

Imperialism conceives itself precisely (and simultaneously) as an expansion of landscape understood as an inevitable, progressive development in history, an expansion of "culture" and "civilization" into a "natural" space in a progress that is itself narrated as "natural." Empires move outward in space as a way of moving forward in time; the "prospect" that opens up is not just a spatial scene but a projected future of "development" and exploitation.<sup>67</sup>

Mitchell's argument implicates the genre of landscape painting but could be equally appropriate for maps as well as battle painting, which both involve the visual representation of expanses of land in varying scales and vantage points. His focus on the

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<sup>67</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 17.

importance of the spatial dimension of the discourse of imperialism with regard to visual representation also helps to explain the prized status of maps during the period. Maps, like landscapes and topographic battle paintings, suggest spaces where bodies can gain access to, and in the case of representations of recently conquered land, they also function as a metaphor for military power.

Lejeune's Egyptian campaign battle paintings, which pay particular attention to the topographical features of parcels of land subject to the violent intervention of the French army, depict the business of imperialism as a matter of territorial possession made possible through a form of uninhibited, expansive vision. His focus on the topographic specificity of battlefields also lent his paintings a high degree of epistemological authority and connected them to the tradition of *vues* and maps based on eyewitness observation. It is possible that Lejeune would have had access to the unpublished geographic survey of Egypt for his three paintings of the Egyptian campaign, the *Battle of Aboukir*, the *Battle of Mont Thabor* and the *Battle of the Pyramids*, but it is more likely that these paintings are based on a well-known non-military source, Dominique-Vivant Denon's *Voyage dans la basse et haute Égypte*, first published in 1802, the year when Denon was also appointed as director of the central museums of France. Trained as an artist and printmaker, Denon ingratiated himself with Josephine and was asked by Bonaparte to take part in the Egyptian campaign with the hundreds of other map makers, scientists, and artists.<sup>68</sup> He followed the military expedition through Egypt and sketched battles, people, animals, and plant life.

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<sup>68</sup> Judith Nowinski, *Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825): Hedonist and Scholar in a Period of Transition* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970), 76-78.

His sketches were engraved when he returned to Paris and they accompanied the text in which he described Napoleon's campaign in Egypt. At the end of the book, Denon explained that his publication was based on authentic, eyewitness experience and attested to its truth-value:

I have tried in this book to give my readers the idea of this very important country and the memories that I have retraced; I have tried to present its forms truthfully, its color, and the character that is unique to it; I have tried, as an eyewitness, to convey all of the details of a grand and singular campaign that was the principal part of this famous expedition! If I have attained this goal, I will have achieved it through the advantage of having drawn and described everything from nature.<sup>69</sup>

Denon's designation of himself as an eyewitness, like Lejeune's status as an *aide-de-camp*, provided readers with a justification for his claims of truthfulness. To add to the publication's value as an object of knowledge, in addition to Denon's engraved drawings, it was also richly illustrated with maps and battle plans drawn by *ingénieurs-géographes*.

Three of the illustrations in *Voyage dans la basse et haute égypte* are devoted to the battle of Aboukir, the same battle that Lejeune represented for the Salon of 1804 (Fig. 2.18). The battle of Aboukir was Napoleon's final victory in Egypt after a series of defeats in a campaign which was disastrous for the French army and for the tens of thousands of civilians and enemy soldiers who were slaughtered during the three years of French presence. Bonaparte undertook the invasion of Egypt as a means of cutting off the British from their trade route with India but found himself cut off from his supplies

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<sup>69</sup> Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte, pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte* (London: M. Peltier, 1802), 347-348. "Je suis parvenu à donner à mes lecteurs l'idée d'un pays si important par lui-même et par les souvenirs qu'il retrace ; si j'ai pu lui présenter avec vérité ses formes, sa couleur, et le caractère qui lui est particulier ; si enfin, comme témoin oculaire, je vous ai fait connoître les détails d'une grande et singulière campagne, qui faisoit partie principale de la vaste conception de cette expédition célèbre ! Si j'ai atteint ce but, je le devrai sans doute à l'avantage d'avoir tout dessiné et tout décrit d'après nature."

after a defeat in the first battle of Aboukir in 1798. The battle represented by Denon and Lejeune is the second, victorious battle of Aboukir against British-allied Turkish forces which took place on July 25, 1799 and directly preceded Napoleon's election as First Consul.

Denon produced a battle plan of the Battle of Aboukir (Fig. 2.22), including a key with a guide to deciphering the symbols featured on the map. He included a textual description of the battle, itself borrowed from the official government representation of Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign written by General Berthier, Lejeune's superior, lending the illustrations a greater authoritative weight. His book also featured three more engravings of Aboukir including an up-close representation of the fort at the end of the peninsula, a bird's eye view of the peninsula, and a *vue* of the battle. Denon's bird's eye view of the peninsula of Aboukir (Fig. 2.23) represents the land protruding into the foreground and receding into the background in a similar way to Lejeune's representation of the land in his painting of the same site. The key difference is that Lejeune has taken Denon's landscape and reversed it. In the painting, the peninsula projects back into the distance from a bird's eye view (Fig. 2.24). In Denon's engraving, the land is shown at a similar angle, but the fort is in the foreground. Though Denon claimed that all of his engravings were done "*d'après nature*," this view in particular would have been physically impossible to render through eyewitness vision alone. The only way to view the peninsula at Aboukir from this angle would have been from a boat, approaching the land. But Denon's elevated view would have only been possible to see from a position high above the water. The peninsula of Aboukir, in both the painting and the engraving, is thus depicted as much clearer and more accessible than human vision would have

allowed, transforming the land into an idealized territory to be visually seized in one totalizing glance.

Because of the detailed articulation of the land from a long-range perspective above and out to sea, the idealized bird's eye vantage point of the Aboukir peninsula in the engraving and in the painting border on the cartographic. But strangely, both versions of the peninsula are also topographic, in that they reveal the particularities of the land's surface including the architecture of the fort, waves, boats and individual trees. The merging of cartographic and topographic features of the Aboukir peninsula into a single image permits an omnipotent gaze to perceive two very different conventions of representation as though they were one sweeping, naturalized point of view.

This stages a viewing encounter above and beyond the idealized conditions enjoyed by the observers perched atop the pyramid in the print, *Bonaparte, First Consul on the Tallest Pyramid in Egypt*. In the print, these viewers are privy to an unobstructed view of the Egyptian landscape that extends into a distant horizon line. But they are not high enough to perceive the geographic outlines of the territory they intend to conquer. This is the job reserved for the *ingénieurs-géographes* who are shown intently sketching and surveying with the end goal of producing a cartographic representation of the land they behold. Alternatively, Lejeune's painting of the *Battle of Aboukir*, based on Denon's engravings, conjures an illusion where viewers are granted access to an unlimited imperializing gaze which trumps the phenomenological limits of the mapping technologies used by the *ingenieurs-geographes* in the print. Though Lejeune's *Aboukir* played off the cultural value of maps and *vues*, his representation of the battle's site went

far beyond those conventions to conjure the illusion of impossibly powerful, long-range vision.

### **The Affect of the Episode**

Lejeune's merging of topographic and cartographic visual modes does not entirely explain why his paintings were valued as authentic representations of contemporary armed combat. His use of discrete episodes to narrate the key incidents of the battle was equally important for the reception of his work. It was in fact Lejeune's depiction of battle in a simultaneously episodic and topographic mode which caused his paintings to be understood as complete and authentic transcriptions of battles.<sup>70</sup> For example, when he reviewed Lejeune's Salon of 1806 entry, the *Battle of the Pyramids*, the art critic Pierre-Jean Baptiste Chaussard could hardly contain his enthusiasm over the painting's *tour de force* illusion of depicting a battle in all of its entirety: "From one look, one sees everything: no episode has escaped one's vision, not a single detail; everything can be found here without confusion. The skilled painter has rendered an exact account of everything; he has perfectly calculated his lines, his plans, his Order, his composition; and everywhere a perfect clarity."<sup>71</sup> In addition to Lejeune's status as an officer in the French army, Chaussard's belief in the exactitude of Lejeune's painting was supported by the series of disparate episodes distributed throughout the composition which depicted the events of the battle with an eye toward clarity and order. The scattering of episodes

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<sup>70</sup> This is a point emphasized by Susan Siegfried. See Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France."

<sup>71</sup> Chaussard, *Le Pausanias français: ou, description du Salon de 1806*, 217. "Pour obtenir plus d'espace, l'Artiste a pris son point de vue de fort haut, de manière que d'un regard on embrasse tout l'ensemble : il ne lui échappe pas un Épisode, pas un Détail; tout s'y trouve, et s'y trouve sans confusion ; le Peintre habile s'est rendu un compte exact de tout ; il a parfaitement calculé ses Lignes, ses plans, son Ordonnance, sa composition ; et par-tout une netteté admirable."



in his paintings made war appear as something that could be contained, ordered, and understood through vision alone.

When critics wrote about Lejeune's paintings, they often remarked upon the large crowds gathered around them. As one critic who reviewed the Salon of 1804 warned, "if you like battles, then you will try, if you are able, to break through the crowd to see the paintings of Lodi, Mont Thabor, and Aboukir by Lejeune."<sup>72</sup> The popularity of the paintings was related to their approachability in terms of both scale and the episodic treatment of their subject matter. In contrast to the monumental history paintings made by Lejeune's contemporaries on view at the Salon of 1804, including Gros' celebrated *General Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa*, Lejeune's battle paintings were much smaller, which would have automatically designated them outside the genre of history painting in terms of both scale and content. Monumental history paintings such as *Jaffa* commanded attention in an exhibition space through their scale and their narrative organization around a single unified action; the various episodes that appeared in history paintings were subordinated to this single moment of narrative transcendence. Lejeune's smaller battle paintings, on the other hand, made use of a visual language more in line with prints and the lower genres of landscape and portraiture. They encouraged an entirely different, and arguably more open-ended, form of visual engagement that revolved around the proliferation of episodes and the absence of a heroic center of focus. Whereas Napoleonic history paintings were often charged with honoring the singular

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<sup>72</sup> Exposition au Salon du Louvre, 1804, Collection Deloynes, Paris: Département des estampes, Bibliothèque nationale de France. "Si vous aimez les batailles, vous tâcherez, si vous pouvez, de percer la foule pour voir de plus près et pour ajourer celles de Lodi, du Mont Thabor, et d'Aboukir par Lejeune."

figure of Bonaparte, Lejeune's paintings focused their attention on the multiplicity of participants in a battle and on the series of episodes which occurred therein.

As we have already established, Lejeune's battle paintings were more closely related to the genre of battle *vues*, such as those made by the *ingénieurs-géographes*, than to the academic genre of history painting. But even in *vues* produced during the period, the episodes of the battle were often subordinated to the expansive landscape in the background or only a few episodic moments of the battle were included. The latter is the case with the *vue* of the battle of Aboukir (Fig. 2.25) that Denon included in his *Voyage*. The scene was sketched *d'après nature* by Denon and engraved by Jean Dupleiss-Bertaux, who specialized in prints of contemporary events. In this horizontally oriented engraving, there is little emphasis on the dramatic recession of the peninsula and more of a focus on the episodes of the battle. The horizontal format allowed Denon to extend the field of action across an expansive foreground where the action takes place. The moment Denon represented is the same one Lejeune chose for his painting. As Denon explained in his text, "the flags and the gathered booty all offer an image of a complete victory. Bonaparte with his aides is, at this very moment, at his post by the fountains which we have just taken from the Turks; the Pasha, wounded and taken prisoner, is brought before Bonaparte."<sup>73</sup> These episodic details are completely absent from the two other engravings of the battle included in the *Voyage* discussed earlier which focus on the topography (Fig. 2.23) and grand overview of the battle plan (Fig. 2.22). Whereas Denon needed a separate *vue* to represent the battle's episodes, Lejeune managed to combine a

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<sup>73</sup> Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte, pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte* "les drapeaux, les trophées apportés, tout offre l'image d'une victoire complète. Bonaparte avec son état major se trouve en ce moment au poste des fontaines, qu'on venoit d'enlever aux Turks ; le pasha, blessé, et prisonnier, est amené devant lui."

long-range topographical view of the site with the episodic action into one painting. To view Lejeune's painting of *Aboukir* was to gain access to the battle in terms of its temporal and spatial location.

Denon's *vue* of the battle relies on minutely small figures to depict the episodic actions. The most important event of the battle, the capitulation of the Turkish Pasha to Bonaparte, occurs in the left foreground; he is the wounded figure being led toward the figure sitting on the horse who is supposed to be Bonaparte. These figures are far too small to signify as actors in a dramatic battle. They stand in for the figures featured in Denon's textual narration of the battle but their actions cannot be accessed as salient close-up episodes. Though Denon's *vue* of Aboukir does not provide this kind of close encounter with the events of the battle, the author did understand the emotional impact of seeing war up-close. In the text of his *Voyage dans la basse et haute égypte*, he mused "O war, how you make for brilliant history! But seen from up close, how hideous you become, no longer able to hide the horror of your details!"<sup>74</sup> In Denon's engraving of the battle of Aboukir, the horrors of war are subordinated to a series of operational actions seen from a safe vantage point removed from the thick of the fray - the loading and firing of the canons, the raising of muskets, the capitulation of a high-value prisoner. But the "horror of details" described by Denon as something he encountered as an eyewitness in Egypt are nowhere to be found in his *vue* of the battle.

Lejeune's painting of the same battle, like his other battle paintings, did depict war as a series of enthralling and often horrifying details. Though it focuses on the same

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<sup>74</sup> Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte, pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte* (London: M. Peltier, 1802), 157. "O guerre, que tu es brillante dans l'histoire! Mais vue de près, que tu deviens hideuse, lorsqu'elle ne cache plus l'horreur des détails."

narrative moment as in Denon's battle and borrowed from some of Denon's visual material published in his *Voyage*, Lejeune's *Aboukir* plunges the viewer into a series of close encounters with salient episodic events. The small scale of the painting in conjunction with its hovering bird's eye vantage point would have made the scene particularly inviting by promoting an illusion of visual mastery of an entire armed encounter, both in terms of the land to be conquered as well as the episodes which occur.

As we have already seen, both visual and textual eyewitness accounts of battles were highly prized sources of knowledge about contemporary military events which took place in distant locales during the period. Such eyewitness accounts were usually limited to written texts such as *relations de bataille*, *vues* made by *the ingénieurs-géographes* and related-cartographic material. Lejeune's battle paintings, on the other hand, forged a path between these kinds of official materials and the representation of war as a form of artistic production outside of the conventions of history painting. The fact that his paintings were exhibited in the Salon and understood as "art" but were quite obviously not history paintings, permitted a novel form of spectatorial engagement that was understood to be based both on aesthetic affect as well as the visualization of eyewitness knowledge normally reserved for official documents.

In the 1804 Salon guidebook, we are told exactly which part of the battle is depicted: "On 7 Thermidor, the army engaged in battle. The first enemy line was defeated as well as the village that covered the second line."<sup>75</sup> The text provides an overview of the action in the middleground and background, such as General Murat's charge of the fort of Aboukir, and the charge of General Lannes that compels half of the

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<sup>75</sup> Pierre and Seydoux Sanchez, Xavier, *Les Catalogues des Salons des Beaux-Arts, I (1801-1819)* (Paris: L'échelle de Jacob, 1999), 85-86.

Turkish army to jump into the water in an attempt to seek refuge on boats that have already left the harbor. The text then elucidates the details in the foreground in a separate section after this general overview. We learn that “in the foreground, M. Larrey dresses the wound of General Fugières who has lost an arm. General Bonaparte surveys the line, accompanied by General Alexander Berthier and his officers.”<sup>76</sup>

In contrast to the aggrandizing language of history painting, Lejeune gives very little visual or textual priority to his representation of Bonaparte save for an inscription at the bottom of the painting - “Bonaparte, General en Chef.” While he and Berthier are slightly set apart from the rest of the figure groups, they are not in any way the heroic focus of the battle. In fact, Lejeune’s sense of humor surfaces with his choice of the motif (Fig. 2.26) that anchors the composition in the center foreground: a single, meditative camel gazing out at the viewer. Within the *Battle of Aboukir*, a camel signifies as powerfully as a commanding general. This evenness of pictorial attention in the foreground is significant and is part of what made Lejeune’s battle paintings so compelling to critics and spectators. It is also what permitted his pictures to be read outside of the rules of history painting.

The composition of the painting is divided into registers, with a distinctive foreground, middleground and background. In the absence of a heroic focus of action and a hierarchy of pictorial order, the eye is given the illusion of freedom to wander freely throughout the composition. Spectatorial engagement with Lejeune’s battle paintings depends on the process of uncovering these disparate episodes scattered

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 86. “Sur le devant, M. Larrey panse le général Fugieres qui eut un bras emporté. Le général Bonaparte parcourt la ligne, accompagné du général Alexandre Berthier et de ses officiers.”

throughout the composition. In this way, individual eyewitness accounts of war could be enacted each time a viewer participated in the process of uncovering an episode.

The foreground reads like a horizontal frieze of episodes (Fig. 2.27) spread out in such a way that the eye cannot rest on a single one for long. A fallen tree to the right of the camel leads to a figure group of captured Turkish soldiers and their French captors (Fig. 2.28). Directly to the right of this group, isolated scenes of action take place: a Turkish soldier on the ground single-handedly fights a mounted French soldier as his Turkish comrade ducks to get out of the way of the raised sword; directly to their right, two French soldiers ride on camels and drink water. In the heat of the battle, heroic action is depicted next to commonplace incidents. The soldier with the water jug tips it over, dramatizing the degree of his thirst. His companion gestures toward him, no doubt a plea to leave some for him. In another characteristic nod to the humorous expressivity of animals, the camels ridden on by the soldiers are not left out of the narrative action; their heads turn toward each other, and the mouth of one stays slightly open as if engaging in a conversation with his companion. The “conversant” camels are oblivious to the violent episode occurring right next to them: a French and a Turkish soldier in the midst of a violent struggle to the death. Lejeune depicts the moment just before the French soldier thrusts his bayonet into the Turkish soldier’s mouth. Lejeune’s apparent lack of concern for glorifying moral grandeur permits spectators to apprehend war in a way to which they would not ordinarily have been privy in a history painting from the period.

The importance of this process of uncovering the episodic action is best represented by a scene in the bottom right portion of the foreground, (Fig. 2.29) a surprise

for enterprising eyes. A piece of fabric, perhaps the remnant of a tent, has fallen on top of a cactus. Under it a barely visible soldier, perhaps French, holds a gun. He constitutes the one human figure who gazes directly out at the viewer. The act of discovering the figure who is literally under cover in the foreground signals an entire chain of “uncoverings” that allow viewers to participate in witnessing the chain of events which comprise the battle.

### **Being There: Transparency and the Eyewitness Episode**

Lejeune took an active role in cultivating a belief that the episodic and topographic details depicted in his battle paintings were based on eyewitness experience, a fact that, according to critics, accounted for the throng of spectators who reportedly surrounded his paintings at Salon exhibitions. This was accomplished through textual claims he made in the Salon *livrets* and through his manner of signing his paintings. It was generally assumed that Lejeune had participated in the battles that he represented. This was true of *The Battle of Marengo* from the Salon of 1801, but not for the majority of battles he represented during the Empire. He was not present at the battles depicted in any of the works he exhibited at the Salons of 1804 and 1806, a fact obscured by their entries in the official Salon guide. In a striking publicity move, Lejeune claimed that the *Battle of Mont Thabor*, the *Battle of Aboukir*, and the *Battle of Lodi* were painted “d’après nature.” This caused confusion among critics who reviewed his paintings and

persisted in the *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne*, to state incorrectly in 1843 that Lejeune had served in Egypt.<sup>77</sup>

Lejeune's signature on his paintings was often accompanied by his rank. In the *Battle of Aboukir*, after the date and name of the battle, Lejeune publicized his *métier*: "Lejeune, officier du génie." The *Battle of the Pyramids*, Lejeune's 1806 Salon entry, was signed, "Lejeune, Chef de bataillon, au corps impérial du génie." Critics evaluated his work in direct relation to his personal experience on the battlefield, which was thought to have given Lejeune the ability to represent battle with the highest degree of fidelity. In this sense, his status as an outsider to the art world worked to his advantage. As one critic, writing in 1804, noted, "It is easy to recognize that he has had the [military] camps for his atelier and the battlefield as a model."<sup>78</sup>

This belief in Lejeune's representations of battle as indicators of personal war experience is part of a larger historical development which valued personal, individualized experience as a source of knowledge. Lejeune's personal experience in battle imbued his paintings with a high degree of authority, licensing them to be valued as sources of first-hand knowledge about the waging of war. As Peter Dear has argued, our basic understanding of what constituted "experience" underwent a profound change during the course of the seventeenth century. The modern notion of experience was predicated on individualized, particularized events and not on universal commonplaces, as it had been under what Dear conceives as the Aristotelian model of experience. He

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<sup>77</sup>Michaud, "Louis-François Lejeune," in *Biographie Universelle Ancienne et Moderne* (Paris: Delagrave et compagnie, 1843), 43. Lejeune's personnel dossier, conserved at the Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre clearly indicates that Lejeune did not serve in Egypt: Dossier Lejeune: 8Yd1417.

<sup>78</sup>Le Salon de 1804, Collection Deloynes. Paris :Département des Estampes, Bibliothèque nationale. "Il est aisé de reconnaître qu'il a eu les camps pour atelier et les champs de bataille pour modèles."



writes that “experiences in the Aristotelian sense were...usually constituted as statements of *how things happen* in nature, not as statements of how *something had happened* on a particular occasion.”<sup>79</sup> As Dear argues, personal experience began to constitute a way to “establish expertise.”<sup>80</sup> This reconceptualization of experience contained broad ramifications for the production of knowledge; personal expertise cultivated through first-hand experience could be seen as value-free or transparently accurate.<sup>81</sup> The high-esteem held for knowledge gained through personal experience is an important key for considering how Lejeune’s battle paintings were received by contemporary critics and audiences.

By and large, critics focused on the direct encounter with war that Lejeune’s battle paintings were thought to provide. As the art critic Chaussard noted when reviewing Lejeune’s 1806 Salon entry, the *Battle of the Pyramids*, “lucky citizens can enjoy the spectacle of a battle without exposing themselves to danger, and even children and families can imagine themselves before the view of the actions of their fathers or their relations. They will follow all these events with their eyes...Everything is correct, everything is truthful; one takes part in the action.”<sup>82</sup> When he turned his attention to a reproductive engraving of Lejeune’s 1801 Salon submission, the *Battle of Marengo*, the critic found that the affective power of his painting translated seamlessly into a print medium. The reproductive print by Coigny (a different engraving from the version

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<sup>79</sup> Peter Dear, *Discipline and Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 125.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>81</sup> Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact, Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 70-72.

<sup>82</sup> Chaussard, *Le Pausanias français: ou, description du Salon de 1806*, 215-216. “d’heureux citoyens pourront jouir du spectacle d’une bataille sans en courir le danger, ou plutôt des enfants, des familles s’enflammeront à la vue des actions de leurs pères et de leurs proches. Ils suivront de l’œil, pour ainsi dire, (216) tous les pas...Tout y est juste, tout y est vrai ; on assiste à l’Action.”

included in *Histoire des guerres des gaulois en Italie*) “is the exact representation of the object, that is to say the truth, history, of which we thus become eyewitnesses.”<sup>83</sup> This idea that Lejeune’s paintings allowed spectators to “take part in the action” produced a powerful illusion of access and participation through which viewers could assume the position of eyewitnesses and enact their own encounters with France’s military exploits. This freedom of viewers identified by period sources to move in and out of the battle and to engage with the actions as eyewitnesses came to dominate the expectations around contemporary battle painting throughout the nineteenth century. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, these kinds of values become particularly important for the work of Horace Vernet, the century’s most prolific battle painter.

The fact that Lejeune’s paintings were not history paintings seemed to work to their advantage when it came to licensing spectators to believe in their truth value: “There is nothing here that can be studied, combined, or calculated in a studio...All of these details are too real for the imagination to compose them or for the spirit to intuit them; one must have seen them to render them with such truth.”<sup>84</sup> The supposed transparency with which his paintings represented war also guaranteed a crowd of viewers gathered around them, something frequently cited in the critical discourse. At the Salon of 1806, as with previous exhibitions, critics often made reference to these crowds: “Even though this composition is of a genre less elevated than the [works by Gros and Hennequin], and that its small dimension makes it more landscape than history, [this painting] is always

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 596. “C’est ici la représentation exacte de l’objet, c’est à dire la vérité, l’histoire, dont nous devenons alors témoins oculaires.”

<sup>84</sup> *Arlequin au Muséum, ou critique en vaudeville des tableaux exposés au Salon*, (Paris: Brasseur aîné, 1806), 23. “Ce n’est pas là de ces choses étudié, combiné, calculé dans un atelier... Tous ces détails sont trop vrais pour que l’imagination les compose, ou que l’esprit les devine; il faut les avoir vus pour les rendre avec cette vérité.”

flooded with a large number of spectators who enjoy contemplating, outside of harm's way, a spectacle made to strike every imagination."<sup>85</sup> Another critic, after praising the aesthetic merits of the elevated genre of history painting, pointed out that such representations "are not faithful representations. Military men do not recognize their maneuvers."<sup>86</sup> He argued that Lejeune's battle paintings were honored by a "row of spectators three deep" because of their commitment to representing the soldiers "in the order and in the positions they had at the moment of the combat."<sup>87</sup>

The above critic's reference to the fact that Lejeune's paintings allowed soldiers to recognize the combats they had taken part in was not an isolated one. As if to prove the fact that Lejeune's battle paintings constituted faithful eyewitness transcriptions of the events of a battle, critics regularly deferred to the rhetorical authority of soldiers when they reviewed his paintings. While examining Lejeune's *Battle of Mont Thabor*, exhibited at the Salon of 1804, a critic "eavesdropped" on a soldier explaining the painting to a friend:

See there, said a soldier to his friend, see there, on the right, that mountain that rises like a cut-off cone? That's Mont Thabor...I was there and it's there where I was wounded; I fought well and Buonaparte knew it and gave me the legion of honor...I'm no good at painting but this picture is true; so natural, the sites and the houses are so well imitated that I feel like I'm still there. My heart is beating like I've just heard a gun go off and I've just had the horror of getting wounded and it was not due to fear that it beat this way then.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> C., "Salon de 1806, 1er article," *Mercure de France*, 27 septembre 1806, 602. "Quoique cette composition soit d'un genre moins relevé que les deux précédentes, et que par la petitesse des dimensions elle appartienne plutôt au paysage qu'à l'histoire, elle est toujours assiégee d'un grand nombre de spectateurs, qui aiment à contempler à l'abri du danger, un spectacle fait pour frapper toutes les imaginations."

<sup>86</sup> "Suite de l'examen des tableaux," Collection Deloynes. Paris : Département des Estampes, Bibliothèque nationale de France. "...Ne sont pas des représentations fidèles, les militaires ne reconnaissent pas leurs manœuvres."

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> "Lettre adressée à Messieurs Les rédacteurs du journal des sciences, de littérature, et des arts," Collection Deloynes, Paris : Département des Estampes, Bibliothèque nationale de France. "Vois-tu, disant un militaire à son camarade, vois-tu à droite cette montagne qui s'élève dans les vues comme un cône

This text stages an eyewitness experience in front of *The Battle of Mont Tabor* with great rhetorical effect. We are privy to the information that this particular soldier was wounded during the course of the battle whose representation he beholds. For this soldier, the experience of standing in front of Lejeune's painting is all too real: his rapidly beating heart is the product of a visceral reaction to the events depicted in the painting. The implication is that the representation is so extraordinarily real that it causes the soldier to relive the experience of the battle he is gazing at. The critical identification of soldiers as arbiters of a battle painting's truth-value suggests that critics were looking for license to read these representations as transparently truthful. Soldiers were called upon to function as eyewitness experts capable corroborating the authenticity of the battle painting in question beyond reproach. Thus, the consistent allusion to soldiers provided a means for critics to verify their opinions that battle painting could translate the experience of war on canvas.

The soldier's active identification with the painting, casually overheard by the snooping critic, provides what can be called an "evidential context" to support the critic's own opinion.<sup>89</sup> After overhearing the soldier's impassioned eyewitness testimony, the critic evaluates the episodes and concludes that "all of this is so truthful that there is

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tronqué ? C'est le mont tabor...; j'y étais, j'y fus blessé, je m'y conduisis bien, Buonaparte le sut et je suis de la légion d'honneur... Je ne me connais pas en peinture mais ce tableau est vrai ; si naturel, les lieux, les maisons sont si bien imités, (386) qu'il me semble y être encore. Tiens, mon cœur bat comme lorsque j'entendis sonner la charge, et que j'ai eu l'honneur d'être blessé et ce n'était pas de peur qu'il battait alors."

<sup>89</sup> Simon Schaffer, "Self-Evidence," in *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson James Chandler, Harry Harootunian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), XX.

nothing left to desire.”<sup>90</sup> He then attempts to move away from the painting in order to evaluate another one but finds that he is unable to do so. As he walks away from it, he discovers that “you cannot step away from this painting without turning around to look at it some more.”<sup>91</sup> The responses of the critic and the soldier are thus both focused on the body’s reaction to the painting before them. For the soldier, it is his beating heart; for the critic, it is his professional compulsion to look. Such corporeal reactions can be understood as an index for the dynamic experience of viewing one of Lejeune’s battle paintings. These sorts of responses, along with the ones discussed earlier, suggest a mode of active viewing that allows for the events depicted in the landscape to be interpreted as transparently real and not the result of artistic imagination.

The belief that Lejeune’s paintings directly pictured the experience of war effaced the subjective hand of the artist and his submission to a system of artistic conventions. But occasionally, the recognition of his participation in a larger system of artistic conventions challenged the powerful illusion propagated by his supposedly transparent images. In the middle of the foreground of the *Battle of Aboukir*, just behind the central camel, two bodies, Turkish and French, lay motionless atop one another (Fig. 2.29). In a motif that anticipates what Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby has called the compositional “fulcrum” of Girodet’s *Revolt of Cairo*, painted six years later, Lejeune depicted the grisly aftermath of the decapitation of a French soldier.<sup>92</sup> His bodiless head sits in front of the dead Turkish soldier’s hand. This headless French body felicitously intersects with

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<sup>90</sup> “Lettre adressée à Messieurs Les rédacteurs du journal des sciences, de littérature, et des arts,” Collection Deloynes, Paris : Département des Estampes, Bibliothèque nationale de France. “Tout cela est d’une vérité, d’une vigueur qui ne laissent rien à désirer.”

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. “Plus on voit ce tableau, plus on veut le voir : on ne s’éloigne pas sans retourner la tête pour l’admirer encore.”

<sup>92</sup> Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 149.

a large cactus, a plant Lejeune used as an authenticating example of Egyptian flora. The space between the soldier's decapitated neck and the cactus discloses the difficulty Lejeune may have encountered in rendering this episode of violence as a close-up painted detail. Whereas Girodet avoided this problem with a carefully placed helmet where the bloody neck of his decapitated French soldier would have appeared, Lejeune seems to have initially offered it up to view.

In an early etched state of a reproductive engraving of *Aboukir* (Fig. 2.30), however, this same detail of the headless neck is not blocked by the cactus that appears in the painting. A letter to the etcher of this print, dated one month before the opening of the Salon of 1804, confirms that the print was made before the painting could have been altered.<sup>93</sup> Thus, we can assume that in its original state, the painting probably featured the headless body in plain view. In its present state, the upper part of the cactus that intersects with the headless body's neck is covered in thickly applied paint and differently shadowed its other parts, suggesting indecision over revealing the entire bloody neck or covering it up with local plant life. For a form of battle painting which was widely understood as directly transcriptive, this passage of muddy, thick paint between cactus and bloody body constitutes an area in the painting where Lejeune's alleged fidelity to the representing the battle would have come up against the conventions of artistic decorum.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> "Lettre LX, Lejeune à Desaulx," *Nouvelles archives de l'art français* 26 (1900): 9-10. The letter is dated August 5, 1804. The Salon of 1804 opened one month later.

<sup>94</sup> It is impossible to tell when the painting would have been altered to cover up the decapitated neck. After the Salon of 1804, this painting was displayed in the Salon des Maréchaux in the Tuileries palace. After the fall of the First Empire, the painting was returned to Lejeune and was not sold to the state until 1861. My hypothesis is that the painting was altered for its display in the Salon des Maréchaux by someone other than Lejeune. Careful inspection of the painting reveals that an unsteady hand applied a layer of thick green paint that appears not to have been blended to match the rest of the cactus. Lejeune

There are several reasons which might explain why a decapitated French soldier went unmentioned in the press. It is likely that prevailing standards of etiquette may have prevented critics from discussing a moment of violent trauma inflicted on a French body; the discourse prioritized Lejeune's paintings as transparent depictions of the course of a battle which were not subject to the demands of any set of conventions other than the imperative of truth. That is, to acknowledge that Lejeune's selection of episodes was based on any other criteria besides the events of the battle would have challenged their status as transcriptions of the events they purported to depict. For many critics, Lejeune's battle painting did not tell or narrate, so much as show war in all of its multivalent details as it really occurred. The decapitated body depicted in Lejeune's *Aboukir* showed a form of grisly violence which had no corresponding linguistic grounding in the discourse of early nineteenth-century battle painting. This is the kind of violence that, as Simone Weil wrote in 1941, "turns anybody who is subject to it into a thing. Exercised to the limit, it turns man into a thing in the most literal sense: it makes a corpse out of him. Somebody was here and the next minute, there is nobody here at all."<sup>95</sup> At stake in these battle paintings is the illusion of the nobility of war – if death must happen in clashes between armies, this body of imagery affirmed that the loss of human life occurred within a circumscribed arena of meaning with regard to masculine heroism and national duty. The horror of war, as Weil emphasized and Lejeune hinted at, is the specter of becoming an object separated from any form of larger signification.

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was a stickler for directly observing his plant life; in the letter to Dessalux, he implored the etcher to go the *Jardin des plantes* in Paris to study the Egyptian palm tree and cactus so that they would look realistic in the reproductive engraving of *Aboukir*.

<sup>95</sup> Simone Weil, "The Illiad or the Poem of Force," *Chicago Review* 18, no. 2 (1965): 6.

## Conclusion

By the time Napoleon crowned himself Emperor in 1804, the foreign and economic policy of France had become inextricably tied to waging imperial wars of expansion across Europe and North Africa. France's military achievements, as the purview of an entire nation, provided a dependable and compelling point of contact between citizens and the state. The support of France's war efforts entailed the support of the state, a fact that elevated the political importance of representations of contemporary wars and made them an expedient expression of state power.

This chapter has focused on a body of visual imagery that was produced during the early years of the First Napoleonic Empire, a period when other continental armies struggled to keep pace with France's military might. This changed in 1807 at the Battle of Eylau, an event Lejeune witnessed. Bonaparte's *Grande armée* was fought to a draw and for the first time during the Empire, the French public had to contend with the possibility of a major, crushing loss.<sup>96</sup> Lejeune was asked to supply an eyewitness drawing of the battlefield detritus which would later be depicted by Gros in his history painting of the battle.<sup>97</sup> The drawing was engraved (Fig. 2.31) by the *Dépôt de la guerre* which would have given it a greater aura of official authority. For the first time in Lejeune's career as an artist, he was asked to represent a near-defeat. The image

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<sup>96</sup> Michael Marrinan argues that Gros challenged Napoleon's political authority by creatively engaging with the official documents that Denon provided. While he does not discuss Lejeune's drawing or engraving, he uses Lejeune as an example of an artist complicit with structures of Napoleonic power. While I concur with this observation, I also think that it is important to attend to the modes of spectatorship that Lejeune's paintings enabled as well as the sets of claims and belief structures that such "complicity" depended upon. See Michael Marrinan, "Literal/Literary/'Lexie': history, text, and authority in Napoleonic Painting," *Word & Image* 7, no. 3 (1991).

<sup>97</sup> Lejeune's drawing (Musée du Louvre) and the subsequent reproductive engraving fit the description given by Denon for the *concours* for Eylau which Gros would win. It is likely that Gros would have seen the drawing and may have used it for his painting. See *Dominique-Vivant Denon, L'oeil de Napoléon*, ed. Pierre Rosenberg and Marie-Anne Dupuy (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1999), 338.



represents Napoleon in the process of giving medical attention to wounded Russian soldiers, an episode which would have deflected attention away from the specter of French defeat. The same day as this event was to have taken place, Bonaparte also conducted a review of the troops. In addition to the cries of “Long live the Emperor!,” soldiers also reportedly called out for “peace and bread.”<sup>98</sup>

The battle paintings made previously by Louis-François Lejeune served as a pictorial analogue to the impression of a strong French army, which in turn implied the strength of the nation, its institutions and leaders. With their simultaneous attention to the particularity of the land being conquered and their focus on a proliferation of episodic details, Lejeune’s battle paintings produced an idealized space of war that promoted an illusion of visual mastery over a set of military events which now implicated every man, woman and child in France. To behold one of Lejeune’s battle paintings in the space of the Salon, surrounded by a crowd of fellow spectators, was to be treated to a picture of war which spoke to the strength of an entire nation.

The transparency that so many critics associated with Lejeune’s battle paintings, and wanted to see in them, speaks to way in which the clear visibility of Napoleonic military exploits could articulate the health of France’s government. This helps to explain the enthusiasm over Lejeune’s battle paintings at public exhibitions. As a painter of France’s armed victories, Lejeune’s paintings helped to uphold a contingent system of belief which maintained power structures in post-revolutionary France.

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<sup>98</sup> Capitaine Vidal de la Blanche, “Eylau dans la peinture et et l’histoire,” *La revue de Paris* 21 (1914): 372.

### **Chapter 3: Representing War during Peacetime: Paradoxes and Proliferation during the Bourbon Restoration**

#### **War Imagery and the Legacy of the Restoration**

Art historians have contended that the Bourbon Restoration (1815-1830) marks a period when the representation of Napoleonic military imagery practically disappeared. This was asserted in 1914 by the art historian Léon Rosenthal and has been echoed in recent scholarship. In the space of one sentence, Rosenthal denied the possibility of representing the recent military past in painting during the period. “The Restoration did not nourish military painting and more or less eliminated subjects pertaining to national contemporary history.”<sup>1</sup> More recently, Michael Marrinan has argued that imagery associated with Napoleon was “kept clandestinely alive in the popular arts during the years of the Bourbon Restoration rule.”<sup>2</sup> The notion that Bourbon authorities systematically repressed representations of recent military events has established itself as the orthodox interpretation. Many of the pictures of war that were produced have been identified with a set of radical, oppositional politics which served as a beacon for

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenthal, *Du romantisme au réalisme, Essai sur l'évolution de la peinture en France de 1830 à 1848*, 79. “La Restauration avait donné peu d'aliments à la peinture militaire et supprimé pour ainsi dire, l'histoire contemporaine nationale.”

<sup>2</sup> Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis Philippe, Art and Ideology in Orleanist France, 1830-1848*, 22.

“liberal” dissent against the Bourbons, who, in this binary scheme, have been framed as reactionary and repressive.<sup>3</sup>

These interpretations of images of the recent Napoleonic past and the contemporary consequences of the fall of the First Empire would seem to be confirmed by the policies of the Bourbons during the early years of the Restoration when Bourbon officials attempted to purge public and private spaces of any visual or textual material that related to the Revolution or the Empire, including paintings, busts of Napoleon, songs and even catechisms about the former Emperor. Officials enacted a policy of what was called at the time *oubli* and *mise-en-place*, a “compulsory” forgetting of the past twenty-five years of Revolution and Empire, in order to put the new regime into place. The aim of these iconoclastic policies was as historian Sheryl Kroen has argued, “effacement not only from the public landscape but from the very memory of the population of any alternatives to legitimate monarchy.”<sup>4</sup>

One of the great paradoxes of nineteenth-century French art production is that despite the political will of the Bourbon Restoration government against representing the recent Napoleonic past, such imagery flourished. While there is no question that paintings and prints of imagery related to Napoleon and military engagements of the First Empire could function as signs of political opposition to the Bourbons, this chapter will

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Marrinan and Nina Anathansoglou-Kallmyer have both interpreted the Restoration *oeuvre* of two of the period’s most important artists, Théodore Géricault and Horace Vernet in light of the “liberal opposition” to the Bourbons. See Marrinan, Michael. “Vivre en marge. Géricault et la vie militaire.” In *Géricault: Dessins et estampes des collections du musée de l’Ecole des beaux-arts*, edited by Emmanuelle Brugerolles. Paris: Ecole nationale supérieur des beaux-arts, 1998 ; Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer, Nina. “Imago Belli: Horace Vernet’s *L’Atelier* as an Image of Radical Militarism under the Restoration.” *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986): 268-80, Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer, Nina. “Sad Cincinnatus: *le soldat laboureur* as an image of the Napoleonic veteran after the Empire.” *Arts Magazine* 60, no. 9 (1986): 65-75.

<sup>4</sup> Sheryl Kroen, *Politics and Theater. The Crisis of Legitimacy in Restoration France, 1815-1830* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 57.

suggest that this body of war-related imagery, far from being a marginal and partisan art, was in fact central for producing a common discursive ground for a diverse public to come to terms with the chaotic social and political upheavals of the previous twenty-five years of Revolution and war. In the absence of political consensus during the period of Bourbon rule, war imagery proposed that there was such thing as a shared national past. By the end of the period, visual representations of Napoleonic war had gained the favor of a powerful group of elites who were critical of the Bourbon government though not formally opposed to it, and who would later put it into the service of their own government regime under the July Monarchy (1830-1848). This chapter suggests that one reason for the proliferation of war-related imagery during the Restoration was the relative openness of Napoleon as a subject for visual representation after his fall from power. Despite strong official political reaction against the representation of Napoleonic subjects, images related to France's recent military past continued to appear at Salon exhibitions, in illustrated books and, as prints.

### **“Things Seen:” The End of Empire**

Though war raged all over the European continent from 1792 until 1815, the inhabitants of Paris had not yet seen the grisly spectacle of war in their own city. This changed in 1814, when the Allies invaded Paris, leading to Napoleon's first abdication and exile. The succession of events between 1814 and 1815 included Bonaparte's abdication, return from exile, successful battle against the allies at Montmirail, and subsequent defeat at Waterloo, which provided a series of opportunities for Parisians to experience the war. Long accustomed to viewing images of war in Salon exhibitions and

in the windows of print-sellers, by 1814 war had arrived in real form. Battles broke out in the city between French forces loyal to Bonaparte and the allies. Processions of wounded French soldiers returned from battle and allied soldiers occupied the city at various intervals between 1814 and 1815.

A series of three drawings made by Etienne-Jean Delécluze, a former student of Jacques-Louis David, represented these events which marked the tumultuous end of the First Empire. Two of the drawings depict the return of wounded French (Fig. 3.1) and Russian soldiers (Fig. 3.2) after the Battle of Montmirail in 1814. A third drawing showed a scene from 1815: the encampment of allied soldiers who remained in Paris to assure the successful second return of the Bourbons after Napoleon's defeat and final abdication after Waterloo. All three of these drawings carry a notation on the bottom left-hand corner, *vidit*, which in Latin means *things seen*. Delécluze's inclusion of the notation is significant for it attests to his own status as an eyewitness observer of these events.

Phrases such as *vidit*, *d'après nature* and *peint sur les lieux* were routinely included in contemporary battle imagery during the First Empire to make such representations appear as truthful, eyewitness depictions of war. Whereas history painters were expected to idealize and transcend the brute particularity of important historical events and hence excluded any such notation from their works, artists who represented contemporary war in lesser genres including engraving and small-scale battle painting embraced the episodic details of a combat and used these notations to bolster their claims of depicting the event faithfully. Delécluze, drawing what he *saw* and textually reminding his viewers of it, took part in this process of staking a claim to a high

degree of veracity for his representations. By using the notation *vidit*, Delécluze departed from the classicizing rules of history painting in which had had been trained. It is important to consider his motivation for doing so.

By the time Delécluze made these drawings at the end of the First Empire, the representation of contemporary military scenes had become a fixture of artistic production for history painters and artists such as Lejeune and Carle Vernet who worked in lesser genres more closely related to landscape than to the *grand genre*. The fact that the arts in general, and especially history painting, had taken to depicting contemporary history for the political benefit of Napoleon Bonaparte was bemoaned by partisans of the French classical tradition of painting opposed to tainting the genre of history painting with lowly subjects of contemporary history. With Napoleon's firm control of the arts during the First Empire, government-sponsored commissions for history paintings were almost exclusively devoted to national, contemporary subjects such as battles, triumphal entries into cities and the signing of treaties. Artists who had been trained to represent classical Greek and Roman subjects, such as Jacques-Louis David, Francois Gérard, and Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, accommodated contemporary subjects into their practice and many, such as Antoine-Jean Gros, staked their reputation on representing Napoleon's heroic endeavors. In the eyes of many critics during the Restoration, the First Empire had caused history painters to compromise their artistic standards for the benefit of Napoleon's propaganda machine.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For an excellent discussion regarding the regret that Antoine-Jean Gros experienced for having represented contemporary history on a monumental scale during the First Empire, see Chapter 6 of O'Brien, *After the Revolution, Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda under Napoleon*, 190-236.

Few critics felt stronger about maintaining the classical Davidian tradition than Etienne-Jean Delécluze, the author of these drawings. In fact, when his peers welcomed commissions from Napoleon's government throughout the First Empire, Delécluze renounced painting altogether and refused to accept any state-sponsored commissions. For Delécluze, the classical tradition had compromised its rigorous system of values based on Greco-Roman traditions, abandoning them for the temporary favor of the government. Reflecting on the First Empire in his journal, Delécluze wrote in 1827 that "the emperor and his regime fatigued me daily. The habits of adulation to which men of letters and artists had become accustomed were anathema to me. Little by little I lost courage, and I gave up the exercise of my art, painting."<sup>6</sup> In the absence of commissions from the government or other individuals, Delécluze occupied his time by copying the Marie de Medici cycle by Peter-Paul Rubens at the Luxembourg Gallery "with the idea of reforming my studies which had been directed toward antiquity, to give them a more modern varnish."<sup>7</sup> Delécluze's notion of the modern was an exclusively artistic one, epitomized by his imitation of the Baroque manner of Rubens at the Luxembourg, and a function of his rigorous attachment to the model of Greco-Roman antiquity as the true source for painting. It was inconceivable that art could accommodate contemporary subject matter such as Napoleonic battles, which had in his opinion contributed to the ruinous state of history painting during the first part of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>6</sup> Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Journal de Delécluze, 1824-1828*, ed. Robert Baschet (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1948), 373. "L'empereur et le régime impérial me fatiguaient journellement. Les habitudes d'adulation que les gens de lettres et les artistes avaient contractées m'étaient antipathiques. Peu à peu je perdis courage, et je renonçai en quelque sorte à l'exercice de mon art, la peinture."

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. "dans l'idée de reformer mes études qui avaient été dirigées vers l'antiquité, pour leur donner un vernis plus moderne."

During the Restoration, critics were free to express their hostility toward contemporary military events as a subject for serious art, something they could not do under Bonaparte. One critic, writing in 1819, was relieved to see a lack of *batailles modernes* in the Salon exhibition. He then reflected upon the way that battles had taken over the Salons of the First Empire:

Then, when it was permitted to represent only battle scenes and our eyes were fatigued by the eternal aspect of carnage, of death, and of ruins, in the middle of which stood the cold and ferocious soldier, numb to these horrors...Painting and Europe have been both liberated and the arts here applauded, like humanity, at the downfall of the common oppressor.<sup>8</sup>

For this anonymous critic, the representation of Napoleonic war was synonymous with an enslavement of the arts for purely political and militaristic ends. Like many of his peers, he understood battle painting as a politically partisan, divisive genre, no longer necessary after the cessation of hostilities. In a time of peace, the representation of war had no place.

Delécluze never publicly exhibited his three drawings of contemporary military events surrounding the fall of the First Empire, neither did he show them in any Salons, nor have them reproduced in print form. They remained out of sight. Nevertheless, the drawings are unusually well documented, owing to a description of them that Delécluze gave to the curators at Versailles as part of the bequest to the Château de Versailles a year before his death in 1862.<sup>9</sup> Delécluze, for example, described in detail one of the

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<sup>8</sup> “Sur quelques tableaux du Salon,” *L’Ami de la religion et du roi, journal ecclésiastique, politique, et littéraire*, November 10 1819, 415. “Depuis il ne fut plus permis de représenter que des scènes de batailles, et nos yeux étoient fatigués de l’éternel aspect du carnage, de la mort, et des ruines, au milieu desquelles s’élevait la figure froide et farouche d’un soldat insensible de ces horreurs...La peinture et l’Europe ont été affranchies l’une et l’autre, et les arts ont applaudi, comme l’humanité, à la chute de l’opresseur commun.”

<sup>9</sup> Xavier Salmon, *Trésors cachés, chefs-d’oeuvre du cabinet d’arts graphiques du chateau de Versailles* (Paris: Somogy Editions d’Art, 2001), 116-117.



drawings depicting wounded French soldiers returning from the Battle of Montmirail (Fig. 3.1), Bonaparte's last victory during his temporary return to power after his first exile:

February 17, from two to three o'clock, the wounded of the French Imperial Guard, some of whom had participated in the Montmirail affair, made their entry in Paris along the boulevards, making their way toward the Invalides hospital...A mother supports her son, a soldier of the young guard, who is recognized by his dog. Behind, a young man, pulling a limping horse by the bridle upon which sits a grenadier whose head is wrapped in a bloody rag...Beyond this sad and imposing procession, in the back of the picture, appear curious onlookers on foot and in carriages, moved by the spectacle so different from the gay and joyous one that they were used to seeing on the same day each year.<sup>10</sup>

Delécluze's letter describing each scene reads like a description of a battle painting lifted out of a Salon catalogue. Like the battle paintings described in the Salon *livrets*, Delécluze's drawings would become a part of France's historical record and needed to be treated accordingly.

Though Delécluze emphasized the contemporaneity of his subject matter through the mention of *vidit* in the bottom left-hand corner of the drawings, he attempted to impart hints of the antique to the procession, as befitted his aesthetic convictions. As an artistic subject, the procession recalled the iconography Roman triumphal arches as well as friezes on ancient Greek temples such as the Parthenon. The horizontal orientation of the drawing, like an antique frieze, provided Delécluze with an opportunity to imbue the line of French soldiers returning victorious from the battle of Montmirail with an air of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. « Le 17 février, de deux à trois heures, les blessés de la garde impériale française, dont une partie avait pris part à l'affaire de Montmirail, firent leur entrée à Paris et suivirent les boulevards, se dirigeant vers l'hôtel des Invalides...Une mère soutient son fils, soldat de la jeune garde, qui est reconnu par son chien. Derrière, un jeune garçon, tirant par la bride un cheval boiteux sur lequel est un grenadier à cheval, dont la tête est enveloppée d'un linge ensanglanté...Au delà de ce triste et imposant cortège, au fond du tableau, sont des curieux à pied et en voiture, émus par un spectacle si différent de celui gai et joyeux qu'on avait coutume de voir chaque année à pareil jour. »

solemn moral grandeur. Moreover, Delécluze even made reference to a famous episode from Homer's *Odyssey* in the middle of the drawing (Fig. 3.3), where a dog runs up to a wounded soldier and wags his tail in recognition of his returned master. The incident recalls the moment where Ulysses, absent for twenty-eight years is recognized only by his faithful dog Argos.<sup>11</sup>

Delécluze's recourse to a subdued form of classicism in all three of his drawings may have been an attempt to elevate what he probably perceived as an ill-advised subject for serious artistic practice. But even as he tried to redeem these contemporary military scenes, the appearance of the term *vidit* in all three of these drawings also provided a convenient hedge against the perceived lowliness of the subject. By asserting his position as a dispassionate observer of the events he depicted, Delécluze affirmed their status as mere historical documents and not as ambitious works of art, something which may have led him to donate to them to the historical museum at Versailles and not to the great repository of fine art, the Louvre. In contrast to the works of art displayed at the Louvre or even at the Luxembourg (reserved for living French artists) during the Second Empire, Versailles was reserved for subjects pertaining to French national history and was understood as a less artistically eminent collection.

Delécluze's notation of *vidit* on each drawing to designate a mode of representation distinct from the *beau idéal* reveals the profound problem that contemporary subjects posed to the aesthetic hierarchies of the classical tradition. Having bemoaned the slavish devotion of history painting to Bonaparte's political agenda under the First Empire, he thought the situation no better after the Bourbons assumed the

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<sup>11</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. George Herbert Palmer (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 266-67.

throne in 1815: the willingness of painting to accommodate the subjects of contemporary political circumstance continued unabated. The former pupil of David thought that by taking on contemporary political subjects, “painting was now nothing more than a compliant art, ready to aid the new arrivals, just as it had served the one who had just fallen.”<sup>12</sup> For Delécluze, the classical tradition of painting became degraded under the pressure of taking on politically opportune subjects, be they Bourbon or Bonapartist. The only way for the Davidian tradition to renew itself would be through the representation of timeless, classical subjects. But as the unexhibited drawings make clear, the representation of contemporary events, especially military ones, during the period of prolonged peace after Waterloo provided many artists with a means of engaging with a form of modern, lived experience that classicism forbade.

After the definitive return of the Bourbons in 1815, ambitious history painters no longer received State commissions to represent battle on history painting’s monumental scale as they had during the Empire. Painters who had flourished under Bonaparte’s patronage of national military subjects found themselves free to return to depicting classical subjects. Charles Landon, a conservative critic who supported the return of the Bourbons, wrote that under Bonaparte, “all kinds of talent became tributaries and instruments of his ambition. Pity those, who by cupidity or to advance on the road of favor, perhaps out of necessity, dedicate themselves to a constant work of flattery.”<sup>13</sup>

The Bourbon government touted itself as a peacekeeper, and in fact it delivered the

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<sup>12</sup> Delécluze, *Journal de Delécluze, 1824-1828*, 374. « La peinture n’était plus qu’un art complaisant, prêt à aider les nouveaux venus, comme il avait servi à soutenir celui qui venait de tomber. »

<sup>13</sup> C.P. Landon, *Annales du musée et de l’école moderne des beaux-arts* (Paris: Imprimerie de Chaignieau Ainé, 1814), 34. “tous les genres de talents devinrent les tributaires et les instruments de son ambition. Plaignons ceux-qui, par cupidité ou pour s’avancer dans le chemin de la faveur, peut-être aussi par la dure nécessité, se font une étude constante de la flatterie.”

French people from twenty-five years of war and unified them in peace. Artists who had earned their reputations under the Empire by representing Napoleon's military achievements turned to subjects more favorable to the Bourbons, including contemporary Bourbon deeds, medieval French history and religious painting.

Antoine-Jean Gros is the famous example of an artist who readily left contemporary military subjects behind. He spent the Restoration years attempting to recapture the essence of a classical tradition that he now saw as having become, partly through his own earlier painting, degraded under the pressure of depicting the military glories of one man. As David O'Brien has argued, the artist felt himself responsible for the downfall of classicism and tried to repair the damage by dedicating himself to classically inspired subjects.<sup>14</sup> Gros saw that history painting's status as the most esteemed of all genres was diminishing; he tried, without success, to take on classically-inspired subjects and resuscitate the Davidian ideal. His Salon of 1822 submission, *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Fig. 3.4) was widely regarded as a critical failure.<sup>15</sup> With David exiled to Brussels for having voted the execution of Louis XVIII's brother, Louis XVI, in 1793, Gros took over his studio and became the logical progenitor of the Davidian classical tradition. Artists such as Gros, Girodet, Guérin and Gérard who had matured during the First Empire now found themselves competing in Salon exhibitions with a generation of younger artists for whom Davidian classicism was an outmoded and even irrelevant language.

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<sup>14</sup> O'Brien, *After the Revolution, Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda under Napoleon*, 192-208.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 220-22.

## Regime Change and Mapping

This move away from military subjects in official art corresponded to the weakening of France's military institutions during the Restoration. As historian Paddy Griffith has argued, the Bourbons were "suspicious" of the French army and sought to limit its power, a desire shared by other European powers supportive of France's newly founded peacetime government.<sup>16</sup> Under the terms of the Second Treaty of Paris, signed on November 20, 1815 after the Hundred Days, France was required to pay a heavy indemnity (700 million francs) and fund the occupation of 150,000 allied troops from Russia, Prussia, England and Austria for a period of three to five years at the cost of 150 million francs.<sup>17</sup> The heavy financial burden placed on France by Europe's powers in conjunction with foreign occupation meant that the new French government's army would no longer pose a threat to achieving peace within Europe. Over half of the French army was sent home, with officers and soldiers put on half-pay, or *demi-solde*. By 1817, the French army was a shadow of its former self and numbered no more than 117,000 men.<sup>18</sup>

Along with works of art pillaged by the French during the First Empire, the Allies also demanded the restitution of their maps and related intelligence materials seized during the course of the French army's campaigns. In an attempt to conserve copies of the cartographic documents that Napoleon's army had taken from the conquered territories before the Allies could repossess them, Louis XVIII authorized the engraving

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<sup>16</sup> Paddy Griffith, *Military Thought in the French Army, 1815-1851* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1989), 12.

<sup>17</sup> Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, *The Bourbon Restoration*, trans. Lynn Case (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), 129.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

and publication of every map in the *Dépôt de la guerre* for which it possessed the original copper plates in April 1814. In the same month, the Allies took back over 800 volumes from the library of the *Dépôt de la guerre*, surveying equipment, “all the maps they could find and the printing paper.”<sup>19</sup> As a part of the terms of the Second Treaty of Paris which were harsher than those of the First Treaty of Paris, drawn up before Napoleon’s return from exile, France’s territory was reduced from its 1792 borders, which included territories conquered by the Revolutionary army, to its 1790 limits. In concert with the redrawing of France’s borders, the treaty also stipulated that all of the maps in France’s possession that represented these ceded territories also had to be given to the Allies, even if they had been made by the French *ingénieurs-géographes*.<sup>20</sup> Under the terms of the peace treaties of 1814-1815, the archives of the *Dépôt de la guerre*, which had played an integral role in France’s military successes and stood as a monument to them, were dispersed all over Europe. These once carefully guarded state secrets were now shared knowledge between powers.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the instrumental value of maps for carrying out military campaigns during the First Empire, they were prized as accurate sources of information that permitted a mode of informed spectatorship of the army’s conquests of distant territories. As we have already seen, a proliferation of visual representations across a range of media translated the epistemological authority of maps into an artistic mode which promised the illusion of visual access to France’s military combats in terms of troop movements,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 413.

<sup>21</sup> According to Colonel Berthaut in his invaluable account of the *Ingénieurs-géographes*, several important maps and their copper plates were hidden away in private homes from the Allies during the period of restitution, including the copper plates for the map of the French Empire. See Berthaut, *Les Ingénieurs-géographes*, 392.

heroic actions and topographical accuracy. But with France's imperial ambitions eliminated by the nation's defeat and the exile of its former leader, the reception of these forms of war-related imagery changed. In the new era of post-Waterloo peace, there were no more campaigns to follow or territorial acquisitions to behold. Accordingly, battle paintings such as Lejeune's were especially vulnerable to critiques about the subservience of art to contemporary political circumstance. Whereas many critics regretted history painting's foray into Napoleonic subject matter but understood that it was out of financial and political necessity, Lejeune had represented such lowly contemporary themes out of choice. For many critics, this was an unforgivable transgression.

In particular, it was against Lejeune's manner of representing a battle as a source of topographical knowledge that Restoration critics took direct aim. Jacques-Nicolas Paillot de Montabert, a former student of David's, published an important multi-volume treatise on painting in 1829.<sup>22</sup> In one section, Paillot de Montabert lambasted what he saw as the new fashion in battle painting:

Needing to find in a battle painting the exactitude of a journalist, tactical research, the scrupulous history of the event, the faithful topography of the site, the servile imitation of costumes, even the image of the atmosphere the day and hour of the combat, all of these demands, I say, are the result of ignorance of the properties of art; all of these laws are the remnants of barbarism.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The literature on Montabert is scant. In 2007, he was the subject of an exhibition in his native Troyes. See *Jacques-Nicolas Paillot de Montabert, Troyes 1771-1849, Peintre et théoricien de l'Art*, Troyes, Musée Saint-Loup, 5 mai-9 septembre 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Jacques-Nicolas Paillot de Montabert, "Des tableaux de batailles," in *Traité complet de la peinture* (Paris: J.-F. Delion, 1829), 434. "Exiger qu'on retrouve dans un tableau de bataille l'exactitude de gazetier, les recherches tactiques, l'historique scrupuleux de l'événement, la fidele topographie des lieux, l'imitation servile des costumes, l'image même de l'atmosphère au jour et à l'heure de ce combat, toutes ces demandes, dis je, sont le résultat de l'ignorance des propriétés de l'art ; toutes ces lois sont un reste de barbarie."

The kinds of battle paintings he had in mind were without a doubt Lejeune's. With the fall of the First Empire and no military campaigns to follow, Lejeune's paintings appeared to many critics as bereft of artistic value. Paillot de Montabert, like Delécluze, a former student of David and partisan of the Davidian classical tradition, protested against what he saw as a kind of servile dedication to representing a battle in too much empirical detail. He denigrated the specific type of battle painting associated with Lejeune: "If the painter wants to wrestle with the *ingénieur-géographe*, then he will not be, let us repeat, neither engineer, nor painter, nor geographer; if he overly researches the exactitude of the uniforms, of the hats, then he will become cold and insipid."<sup>24</sup> The reference to the *ingénieur-géographe* alluded to the reliance of painters like Lejeune on documents furnished by the *Dépôt de la guerre* to compose their paintings. Delécluze, writing about battle painting, accused topographic battle painters "under the pretext of giving a clearer idea of the position, of marches, and the evolution of an army, of spreading small figures on an immense terrain. What this does is to visibly degenerate their paintings, as I've said, into topographical maps."<sup>25</sup>

### **Painting Napoleonic Battle after Napoleon at the Salons of 1817 and 1819**

Despite the absence of official support for battle painting and the sigh of relief many critics breathed that such subjects no longer dominated the most important part of exhibitions, the "genre of battles" continued to exist, and even flourished under the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 434-435. "Si le peintre veut lutter avec l'ingénieur géographe, il ne sera, répétons-le, ni peintre, ni ingénieur ; s'il recherche trop l'exactitude de forme des habits, des chapeaux, il pourra devenir froid et insipide."

<sup>25</sup> Étienne-Jean Delécluze, "Beaux-arts, Salon," *Journal des débats, politiques, et littéraires*, 30 Septembre 1824, 4. "Les peintres de batailles en particulier, sous prétexte de donner une idée plus juste de la position, des marches et des évolutions d'une armée, sèment de petites figures sur un immense terrain, ce qui fait dégénérer visiblement leurs tableaux, comme je l'ai dit, *en cartes topographiques*."



Bourbons. Though the political change of 1814-1815 rendered obsolete the monumental mode of battle painting-cum-history painting as practiced by Gros and others, smaller-scale iterations appeared with regularity at Restoration Salons. Their critical reception demonstrates that the meaning of war-related imagery underwent something of a transformation during the period. No longer charged with the ideological imperative of representing particular conflicts for the benefit of a government or ruler, they instead reinforced the divide between the peaceful post-Waterloo present and the recent bellicose past. One of the first artists to adapt battle painting to the change in ideological circumstances after Waterloo was Louis-François Lejeune, the painter whose dedication to topographical battle painting was widely decried by critics. In his paintings exhibited at the early Salons of the Restoration (1817 and 1819), Lejeune traded his characteristic long-range topographical landscapes and his focus on the maneuvers of the entire army for an emphasis on his personal war-time experiences removed from the grand annals of decisive battles from the First Empire. Though for an entirely different set of reasons than Delécluze, Lejeune sought refuge in “things seen” as a way of avoiding the problematic subject matter of contemporary military encounters.

The Salon of 1817, the first official Salon exhibition of the Restoration, featured an anonymously exhibited battle painting entitled *Vue du monastère et des taureaux antiques de Guisando, sur les bords de l'Alberge, en Castille* (Fig. 3.5). The Salon booklet gave a lengthy description of the painting, noting that “the author has transported into this landscape the event that happened to him on April 5, 1811, when he was

attacked by eight hundred Guerrillas of Don Juan Médico.”<sup>26</sup> This mention of the author’s participation in the depicted events provided viewers with enough information to determine the identity of the painter as Louis-François Lejeune. The critics who chose to review the anonymous painting instantly recognized its author’s characteristic rendering of a battle in terms of discrete, piquant episodes and local color: “This able artist has maintained anonymity; but there is not a single person who does not recognize him as the brave military man who painted the Battle of Marengo a few years ago.”<sup>27</sup>

Lejeune’s decision to exhibit the painting anonymously demonstrates his clear understanding that the political tide had turned against exhibiting a Napoleonic military scene in the Bourbon-sponsored Salon exhibition. To negotiate the new political climate, he adopted a strategy of naming, or rather non-naming, which also extended to the title of the painting. Unlike the battle paintings he exhibited during the First Empire, he avoided giving his anonymous Salon of 1817 entry a title that identified a battle. Instead, he called it a “vue,” presenting it as a landscape of an exotic Spanish locale complete with a monastery and large-scale bull sculptures. Despite the purported anonymity of the author and the innocuous title, it was sufficiently clear who the author was and what the painting depicted. As a result, Lejeune’s painting was apparently removed by Bourbon officials

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<sup>26</sup> *Les Catalogues des Salons des Beaux-Arts, I (1801-1819)*, ed. Pierre Sanchez and Xavier Seydoux (Paris: L’échelle de Jacob, 1999), 288. “L’auteur a transporté dans ce paysage, l’événement qui lui est arrivé le 5 avril 1811, lorsqu’il fut attaqué par huit cents hommes des Guérillas de don Juan Médico.”

<sup>27</sup> Toussaint Bernard Emerich-David, Institut national d’histoire de l’art, 8h 1902 (2), no. 6 “Beaux-arts, Salon, Sixième Article,” *Epreuves du moniteur* 1817. “Cet habile artiste a gardé l’anonyme ; mais il n’est personne qui ne le reconnaisse pour le brave militaire qui a si bien peint, il y a quelques années, la bataille de Maringo [sic].”

from the Salon after being up long enough to be enthusiastically reviewed by a handful of critics.<sup>28</sup>

Just as during the First Empire, critics understood Lejeune's paintings as direct transcriptions of the events they depicted. As one critic characteristically noted, "the variety of the incidents surpasses the imagination, and all of the scenes are terribly truthful."<sup>29</sup> Lejeune included several markers of topographical specificity including a monastery in the background and the famous bull sculptures left by the Neolithic Celtiberians. These massive bulls puzzled some viewers, causing a critic to remark humorously that "at first glance, one does not recognize that these are made by the hand of man; and I heard someone say around me that these were the local animals."<sup>30</sup> A combat between the French convoy and the Spanish guerillas occurs in the right foreground in a compressed space. The left side of the composition opens up into a lush, green landscape complete with mountains and a rainbow.

While the topographic specificity and the proliferation of episodic actions were consistent with Lejeune's style and allowed the anonymous painting to be attributed to him, the *View of Guisando* is unlike any of his previous works. It focused less on collective military actions during the course of an important battle and more on individual, heroic action, notably that of the painting's author. In fact, in a painting full of discrete episodes, it is the incident featuring Lejeune that is the center of the dramatic

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<sup>28</sup> Etienne Jouy, "Beaux-arts," in *Mercure de France (rédigé)* (Paris: L'Administration du mercure, 1817), 354. In his Salon of 1817 review, Jouy states in a footnote that "ce tableau vient d'être momentanément enlevé du salon, par une délicatesse tout à fait politique." This may help to explain why the painting was reviewed by some, but not all critics.

<sup>29</sup> E.F.A.M. Miel, *Essai sur les beaux-arts et particulièrement sur le salon de 1817* (Paris: Didot, 1817), 355. "La variété des incidens surpasse l'imagination, et toutes les scènes sont d'une affreuse vérité."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 356. "Au premier coup d'œil, on n'y reconnaît pas des ouvrages faits de main d'homme ; et j'ai entendu dire autour de moi que c'étaient des bêtes du pays."

action. An area of inexplicable light shines down on the focal point of the painting in the middle of the foreground: the author, in the center, is completely stripped of clothing while a guerilla's foot covers his genitals (Fig. 3.6). The artist's nudity was explained in the *livret* as the result of having been attacked and robbed by the guerillas. The confrontation between the guerilla and Lejeune is also a highly sexualized one which plays upon ethnic difference, characterized in the painting as a contrast between Lejeune's pale white skin and the guerilla's brownness. In fact, the guerrilla's skin tone nearly matches the color of the Lejeune's horse that lies underneath his former master, also a victim of the attack.

This intermingling of bodies may have been an attempt to elevate the subject matter through an emulation of the conventions of the *grand genre*. Lejeune's surprising representation of himself as a heroic male nude is reminiscent of the central scene in Girodet's *Revolt of Cairo* (minus its elevated gravitas and its larger scale). At the left edge of the action in the foreground of Lejeune's painting, another nude man is about to have his throat slit and next to him dogs devour a human carcass. For the purposes of retrospectively exhibiting a Napoleonic subject in the Salon of 1817, Lejeune may have decided that a personal war-time incident filled with dramatic gestures, male nudes, ancient sculptures and an exotic landscape was more appropriate than representing a purely military maneuver as he had done during the First Empire.

Lejeune followed suit with his 1819 Salon entry, *View of the Attack on the Grand Convoy, near Salinas* (Fig. 3. 7), which many critics incorrectly inferred was also based on his personal experiences during the French army's ill-fated attempt to conquer Spain during the First Empire. At the time of the incident, late May 1812, Lejeune had already

joined up with the *Grande armée*, which was preparing for the invasion of Russia.<sup>31</sup> The subject of the painting, which alluded to Napoleon Bonaparte's defeat in Spain, gave the artist an opportunity to align himself with France as a defeated nation under the Bourbons. Unlike his Salon of 1817 painting, Lejeune's *Salinas* was not removed by the censors, indicating that the military defeat of Bonaparte may have been a more acceptable subject in 1819. Delécluze devoted several pages to Lejeune's *Salinas* in his review of the Salon of 1819 and was one of many critics who incorrectly assumed that the artist had witnessed the attack: "Monsieur Lejeune, deeply moved by an event he witnessed, and keeping a crowd of heroic actions in his memory of which he wanted to perpetuate the memory, was led to pile up a countless quantity of figures in his composition."<sup>32</sup> Delécluze marveled at the artist's ability to produce a harmonious composition despite the presence of so many episodes.

The painting depicts an incident in which a convoy led by French soldiers transporting the women of the court of Joseph Bonaparte and English prisoners to France was attacked by Spanish rebel soldiers. As a way to shift attention away from the militaristic subject matter of the painting, Lejeune focused on the reaction of civilians, notably aristocratic women, to the attack. This was not the only painting of noble female heroics at the Salon of 1819: Antoine-Jean Gros exhibited his *Embarkation of the Duchess of Angoulême*, a classicizing history painting which featured Louis XVI's daughter fleeing France after Napoleon Bonaparte's return from exile in 1815 and the last

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<sup>31</sup> Louis-François Lejeune, *Memoirs of Baron Lejeune Aide-de-Camp to Marshals Berthier, Davout, and Oudinot*, vol. 2 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1897), 146. On May 26, 1812, the day after the *Salinas* convoy attack took place, Lejeune arrived in Posen, Poland.

<sup>32</sup> Etienne-Jean Delécluze, "Beaux-arts, onzième lettre," *Lycée français ou mélanges de littérature et de critique* 3 (1820): 134. "Monsieur Lejeune, vivement frappé par un événement dont il a été témoin, et conservant dans sa mémoire une foule d'actions héroïques dont il désire perpétuer la mémoire, a été entraîné à amonceler dans sa composition une innombrable quantité de figures."

work of a contemporary political subject that the artist would undertake.<sup>33</sup> In concert with Gros' painting, Lejeune represented a subject that Bourbon censors would have been receptive to seeing.

The armed combat between French, English and Spanish soldiers is dramatized by the evocative reactions of the women in the painting. In the middle foreground, light shines down on two well-heeled women in a carriage who gesture toward the guerillas. In the foreground (Fig. 3.8), a finely dressed woman wields a rifle and fights back the attackers. To their left (Fig. 3.9), a woman whose baby has fallen on the ground throws her arms up in horror, a scene that could have been taken directly out of David's *Sabine Women*. As in Lejeune's 1817 painting of *Guisando*, there are nods to the French classical tradition. In the right bottom corner of the painting, Lejeune has included a Belisarius figure (Fig. 3.10) in the form of a blind French soldier being guided to safety by a young boy. In both of these paintings, Lejeune attempted to reconfigure a pictorial mode for depicting the military events from the First Empire for an audience no longer enthusiastic about following the marches and positions of Napoleon's defunct army. His recourse to close-up actions in the process of occurring, instead of a sweeping, topographic overview of the combat, would become a central concern of the nineteenth century's most important battle painter, Horace Vernet, who helped ensure the durability of contemporary warfare as a subject for modern art.

The "crowd" became even more prevalent as a figure in Salon criticism of Lejeune's paintings during the Restoration than it had been during the Empire. Nearly every critic who reviewed the paintings in 1817 and 1819 remarked upon the presence of

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<sup>33</sup> O'Brien, *After the Revolution, Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda under Napoleon*, 197-201

a large crowd and many incorporated the crowd's presence into their reviews. The critic Edme Miel saw that Lejeune's *Guisando* attracted an exceptionally large crowd: "one thinks that images like this should necessarily attract a crowd, always insatiable for strong emotions; no painting has ever had such a crowd as this one."<sup>34</sup> Other critics refer to the crowd as an obstacle to viewing the painting: "When we perceived that the crowd around the *View of Guisando* was a little less large, we could approach it."<sup>35</sup> Even Emerich-David, writing in the official government newspaper *Le Moniteur*, singled out Lejeune's painting as the one in the Salon that was "sought by the crowd with the most eagerness."<sup>36</sup> For critics writing on Lejeune's painting at a time when the subject of Napoleonic war was widely regarded as both unfashionable and politically suspect, the popularity of the paintings provided a convenient rationale for reviewing Lejeune's work that allowed them to distinguish their elevated tastes from those of the public.

Reference to the crowd allowed critics to distance themselves from the admiring masses, by contrasting the latter's uncritical thirst for violent war imagery with their own critical faculty of balanced and informed judgment. Etienne Jouy, who would later become one of Horace Vernet's most ardent supporters, did not share the enthusiasm of the painting's admirers for the violent episodes: "Do not be mistaken, it's not the sparkling beauties that earn such a prodigious amount of spectators; it's due to the choice

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<sup>34</sup> Miel, *Essai sur les beaux-arts et particulièrement sur le salon de 1817* "On pense bien que de telles images ont dû attirer la foule, toujours insatiable d'émotions fortes ; aucun tableau n'a eu un tel succès d'affluence."

<sup>35</sup> Jouy, "Beaux-arts," 355. "Nous nous aperçûmes que la foule un peu moins grande, autour du *Monastère de Guisando*, nous permettait d'en approcher."

<sup>36</sup> Emerich-David, "Beaux-arts, Salon, Sixième Article." "De tous les tableaux du salon, c'est celui que la foule recherche avec le plus d'empressement."

of a revolting action that the author has obtained an enthusiastic success.”<sup>37</sup> The violence depicted in the painting was, according to the critic, the cause of its popular success; the more dignified critic admired the painting’s other attributes, which were more artfully rendered. “When the crowd has sufficiently contemplated these horrors, unfortunately *historical*, the connoisseurs will stay to calmly admire this magnificent landscape.”<sup>38</sup>

This rhetorical separation between the overly enthusiastic masses and the disinterested critics with regard to the representation of military events of the recent past constitutes a turning point in the reception of war-related imagery after 1815. Such representations would continue to command public attention and adulation during peacetime, despite falling out of favor politically and critically. In contrast to the period of the Restoration, war imagery during the First Empire was tied to engage public support for Bonaparte’s war effort, providing a point of contact between citizens and the most visible government institution in France, the military. Writing against a battle painting could too easily be understood by Napoleonic officials as a critique of the regime itself since its referents were inextricably bound up with the political legitimacy of Bonaparte.<sup>39</sup> With the fall of the First Empire and the Bourbon regime’s attempt to limit the representation of France’s recent history, critics were suddenly free to disclose their distaste for battle painting, which they did. But paradoxically, this freedom to criticize battle painting openly called attention to its enduring relevance as an area of visual production despite the fact that it no longer served an official political purpose. As a

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<sup>37</sup> Jouy, “Beaux-arts,” 356. “Ne vous y trompez pas cependant, ce ne sont pas les beautés dont elle étincelle qui lui valent un aussi prodigieux concours de spectateurs ; c’est au choix d’une action révoltante, que l’auteur est redevable du succès d’enthousiasme qu’il obtient.”

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 355. “Quand la foule aura suffisamment contemplé ces horreurs, malheureusement *historiques*, les connoisseurs resteront pour admirer plus froidement ce magnifique paysage.”

<sup>39</sup> Richard Wrigley, *The Origins of French Art Criticism from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 212.



direct consequence of Bonaparte's fall from power, the representation of Napoleonic war was no longer directly tied to a particular political configuration, which in turn made its meaning more fluid than it had been under the First Empire. As we shall see, during the Restoration, imagery related to the First Empire was not necessarily synonymous with adoration of Napoleon's government, his policies, or a coherent political agenda, whether Bonapartist or liberal.

### **Napoleonic Imagery: Ambivalence and Contradiction**

In the absence of Napoleon's political and military authority, a "legendary" Napoleon was able to proliferate. This "legend" was an amorphous political phenomenon but was not actually based on a set of coherent politics.<sup>40</sup> It was most closely allied with what has been called the "liberal" opposition to Bourbons, a heterogeneous group of loosely affiliated political ideologies including "republicans, Bonapartists, constitutionalists, parliamentary democrats and even revolutionaries" to which I will turn in the next section of this chapter.<sup>41</sup> While the diffusion of Napoleonic war imagery was without question partly linked to the "liberal" opposition to Bourbon rule, there are other factors in play. One of these is what Stephan Bann has characterized as the "desire for history" and the rise in historical self-consciousness that occurred during the Restoration. For Bann, the "desire for history" during the 1820s is best understood as a popular and widespread phenomenon that materialized itself across different domains of culture in all of Europe and particularly in France. This

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<sup>40</sup> For more on this diffuse cultural phenomenon see Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon* (London: Granta, 1999).

<sup>41</sup> David Skuy, *Assassination, Politics, and Miracles. France and the Royalist Reaction of 1820* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 92.

popularization of history for a wider public outside of the educated elite took the form of the historical novel à la Walter Scott, historical museums, a profusion of paintings that represented scenes from medieval history and the Renaissance with shining clarity, and a new generation of Romantic historians, among them Prosper de Barante, who felt that history could be “exact and serious” as well as “true and lively.”<sup>42</sup>

While Bann focuses his analysis on the Restoration-era obsession with medieval French history, a historical appetite for the recent Napoleonic past was equally pervasive across different domains of culture. The taste for Napoleonic imagery during the Bourbon Restoration was in part the result of a desire to try to make sense of the tumultuous events of the very recent past, including the Revolution and the Empire. It would be a mistake to equate visual representations of the Napoleonic military past produced during the Bourbon Restoration with a coherent set of political commitments.<sup>43</sup> Bereft of the political intentionality it had been invested with only years earlier, this body of imagery met with ambivalence, tinged with regret and nostalgia. To view an image of Napoleonic war during the Restoration was to take stock of the momentous changes of the past in relationship to the peaceful present.

Delécluze, as David’s student and a defender of the classical tradition, furnishes one of the best examples of the kind of ambivalent and contradictory range of meanings that military images of Napoleon accommodated during this period. Writing in his

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<sup>42</sup> Prosper de Barante, *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne de la Maison de Valois*, 6th ed. (Paris : Furne, 1842), xxvii. Cited in Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 22.

<sup>43</sup> Nina Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer has written widely on the links between liberal political commitment and Napoleonic imagery during the Restoration; she contends that this imagery was indeed a powerful focal point for oppositional politics during the period. See Nina Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer, “Liberals of the world unite : Gericault, his friends, and La Liberté des peuples,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 116, no. 1463 (1990).

journal in 1828, he described an engraving based on a large-scale drawing of a military review in 1800 made by Jean-Baptiste Isabey and Carle Vernet. While he did not divulge the title, it is surely the *Review of Quintidi* (Fig. 3.11):<sup>44</sup>

It's the review of Buonaparte, First Consul, in the court yard of the Tuileries, in 1800... This engraving is extremely interesting. However far removed it is from perfection with regard to art [*sous le rapport de l'art*], each person, taken individually, is rendered with great truth... The bearing and attitude of Buonaparte as well as his traits are rendered with an extreme fidelity. I acquired this engraving, and when I gaze upon it, it is as though I am taken back to 1800, that I am present at these reviews that were then the object of conversations and the curiosity of all of Europe, and that, comforted from the memory of the crimes of the Revolution that threatened us still, everybody, upon seeing Buonaparte conqueror of foreign lands, ready to erect a dam against domestic factions, *sees again* a political happiness that *Napoleon* never gave us.<sup>45</sup>

Delécluze was no fan of Napoleon's politics and deeply opposed the way that he controlled the arts for his own political benefit. In his journal he reflected that "there has perhaps never been a Frenchman of our time more than myself who has more sincerely bemoaned the misfortunes that Buonaparte brought upon France."<sup>46</sup> And yet, despite his extreme distaste for the government and political legacy of Buonaparte, an engraving of his military review engendered in Delécluze a reflection on the past and mediated his relation to it.

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<sup>44</sup> For more on this drawing, see Tony Halliday, "The Embodiment of Strength: Depicting a General as Civil Leader," in *Conflicting Visions: War and Visual Culture in Britain and France c.1700-1830* ed. John Quilley and Geoff Bonehill (London: Ashgate, 2005), 169-187.

<sup>45</sup> Delécluze, *Journal de Delécluze, 1824-1828*, 329-30. "C'est la revue de Buonaparte, premier consul, dans la cour des tuileries, en 1800... Cette gravure est extrêmement intéressante. Quoiqu'il s'en faut bien qu'elle soit parfaite sous le rapport de l'art, (330) chaque personnage, pris en particulier, est rendu avec une grande vérité... Le port et l'attitude de Buonaparte aussi bien que ses traits sont rendus avec une fidélité extrême. J'ai fait l'acquisition de cette gravure, et, quand je jette les yeux dessus, il me semble que je suis reporté à 1800, que j'assiste à ces revues qui faisaient, alors, l'objet de la conversation et de la curiosité de toute l'Europe, et que, soulagé du souvenir des crimes de la révolution qui menaçait encore, tout le monde, en voyant Buonaparte vainqueur de l'étranger et prêt à opposer une digue aux factions de l'intérieur, revoit un bonheur politique que *Napoléon* ne nous a pas donné."

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 375. "Il n'y a peut-être jamais eu un français de notre époque qui ait plus que moi sincèrement gémi sur les malheurs que Buonaparte a attirés sur la France."

Interestingly, Delécluze denied the engraving the status of “art” and describes its merits in terms of the truth-value of the personages depicted. As we have already seen, Delécluze’s notion of the “document” implied direct and truthful observation of contemporary events, as it did with his own drawings of wounded French and Russian soldiers from 1814. The “fidelity” that Delécluze observed in the engraving was a powerful enough rhetorical device to transport him back to 1800, to support his projections of himself into the recent past: “it is as though I am taken back to 1800, that I am present at these reviews.” Delécluze’s imaginative projection of himself as a witness to the military review is remarkably similar to the claims made by Salon critics who reviewed Lejeune’s battle paintings during the First Empire, when they wrote about being transported to the site of the battle depicted in the painting. In both cases, authenticating details, understood to be indicators of a high degree of fidelity to people, places, and events, moved these writers to imagine that they could experience the events of the past anew. This evocative rhetoric of participating in an event via a visual representation depended upon a willingness to believe in an image’s transparency: that it pictured the event as it actually had occurred.

In Delécluze’s interpretation of the engraving’s authenticating details, the critic recognized that visual representations of the recent Napoleonic past which pertained, on the one hand, to the hopes invested in Bonaparte as the inheritor of the French Revolution and, on the other hand, to the eventual, retrospective disappointment in his reign. Upon gazing at the engraving, Delécluze imagined himself watching the military review as it happened. But in the course of his reflection, he realized the discrepancy between the figure of Bonaparte in the engraving from 1800 and the figure of Napoleon by 1815. In

the passage cited above, Delécluze engaged in a historical reckoning between the image of the heroic young general of Brumaire and the Napoleon of the Empire and its aftermath. The engraving provided Delécluze with a springboard back in time to 1800 but it also necessitated a confrontation with the historical divide between these two different versions of Bonaparte, the young hero and the mature despot. By Delécluze's own account, Napoleon of 1828 was one and the same with "the tyranny that he had established."<sup>47</sup> It is the sight of the engraving which allowed its writer to identify these two different and coexisting understandings of the recent past, recalling the hopeful hero as well as the despot. The engraving enacted a self-conscious form of historical interpretation that facilitates a reflection on two wildly incongruous versions of Napoleon, the hero and the despot, so that the two can be accommodated at once.

Delécluze's reflection suggests his deeply ambivalent relationship with the recent Napoleonic past. No partisan of Bonaparte, Delécluze nevertheless identified visual representations of Napoleonic military events as part of his lived experience during a time of social and political upheaval. In the same text, Delécluze explained that he relied on images as a basis for recalling his participation in the momentous events of the past three decades:

All of these artistic productions, the Oath of the Tennis Court, Marat and Le Pelletier, the Military Review of the First Consul, the Emperor at Tilsit and at Wagram, are like memories of dreams that suddenly awaken the spirit. I would need a sustained and solitary reflection to make myself believe that I participated in the Federation of 1790 on the Champ de Mars, that I saw Louis XVI, Robespierre, Barras, Buonaparte, Napoleon, Louis XVIII, and that I am only 45 years old.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 374. "la tyrannie qu'il avait établie."

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 330. "Toutes ces productions des arts, le jeu de paume, Marat et Le Pelletier, le consul passant la revue, l'empereur à Tilsit et à Wagram, sont comme des souvenirs de rêves qui se réveillent tout à coup dans l'esprit. Il me faut une réflexion soutenue et aidée de la solitude pour me persuader qu'il est certain que

The works of art that he cites, made by David, Isabey, Carle Vernet, and others, function like the engraving to facilitate the author's understanding of his position as a contemporary viewer looking back at a recently elapsed historical moment. These visual objects function in parallel to the author's own personal experience of having seen the illustrious group of historical actors whom he cites, making sure to separate "Buonaparte" the hero from "Napoleon" the deposed tyrant. Delécluze's relationship to these images of the past is mediated through his own status in the contemporary historical moment of 1828. The images are not used as the basis for nostalgic rumination or polemics. Rather, they prompt him to take account of his role as a subject in the tumultuous recent past. Military imagery of the Napoleonic period was not only the material for "liberal" and Bonapartist sentiment but also for historical reflection. As such, it occupied an area of ambivalent and often contradictory meanings. Assigning this imagery an oppositional, anti-Bourbon, or even Bonapartist range of meaning misses out on the fluidity of its signification in the absence of Buonaparte as a political authority figure. Delécluze's *Journal* provides an insightful example of how Napoleonic military imagery could simultaneously bear divergent meanings for an individual viewer.

Delécluze represents one voice among many from this period that recognized the value of Napoleonic military imagery as a powerful historical mediator between past and present; his reflection demonstrates how even a harsh critic of Buonaparte's policies could positively value Napoleonic military imagery. Another significant and revealing example of the uneven relationship between images of Napoleon the military hero and a hostile

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j'ai assisté à la fédération de 1790 au champ de mars, que j'ai vu Louis XVI, Robespierre, Barras, Buonaparte, Napoléon, Louis XVIII, et que je n'ai que quarante-cinq ans."

opinion of his politics during the Restoration period is found in the memoirs of Louis-Jérôme Gohier. Like Delécluze, Gohier was an active critic of Napoleon's policies during the Empire; he served as the President of the Directory up until Bonaparte's *coup d'état* on 18 Brumaire forced him and the other members of the Council of 500 from power. Gohier, whose political career was profoundly and negatively impacted by Bonaparte's rise, was more qualified than most commentators to offer criticisms of the former Emperor's reign. As a committed Republican, Gohier felt that Bonaparte had betrayed the ideals of the Revolution for his own, personal political ambition. His opinion of visual representations of Napoleon as a military hero is therefore important to understanding their multiple and often unexpected valences.

In a portion of his memoirs where he writes about the question of "Bonapartists, What are they?," the issue is addressed with direct recourse to visual representations:

The artists who, instead of...pulling out some obscure monk from the cloister where he is buried, consecrate their brush, their chisel, their burin to transmitting for posterity that highest achievements of our braves; all those who honor the *patrie* and all who respect it, are in no way Bonapartists; they are French, and in immortalizing their country, immortalize themselves.<sup>49</sup>

Gohier immediately distinguished the representation of national subjects from political intention. The representation of national subjects associated with Bonaparte does not necessarily indicate a political opinion; such subjects, according to Gohier, are more nationalistic than political. The separation between partisan politics and honoring *la patrie* is crucial to understanding Gohier's own political orientation, which can be

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<sup>49</sup> Louis-Jérôme Gohier, *Mémoires de Louis-Jérôme Gohier, Président du Directoire au 18 Brumaire*, vol. II, Mémoires des contemporains pour servir à l'histoire de France, troisième livraison (Paris: Rossange Frères, 1824), 319. "Les artistes qui, au lieu de se traîner à la suite de Le Sueur, pour arracher quelque moine obscur du cloître où il s'est enseveli, consacrent leur pinceau, leur ciseau, leur burin, à transmettre à la postérité les hauts faits de nos braves ; tout ce qui honore la patrie et tout ce qui la fait respecter, ne sont point des bonapartistes, ce sont des Français, qui en immortalisant leurs pays, s'immortalisent eux-mêmes."

described as one of moderation, against the radicalism of the French Revolution and the authoritarian rule of Bonaparte. For Gohier, visual representations which reminded viewers of their French national identity were capable of erasing the kinds of partisan divisions that had dominated French politics since the Revolution. Hence, he advocated that artists depict “braves” (soldiers) and not officers or the figure of Bonaparte. He argued that images of Napoleonic war, understood as an idealized, collective endeavor of the nation, could perform a valuable role of fomenting national identity in the wake of decades of political divisions. For Gohier, this body of imagery erased political factions and enabled a broadly conceived public to picture themselves as French above all else.

Accordingly, Gohier scoffed at the Bourbon’s proscription of Napoleonic war imagery, arguing that such imagery would actually help shore up the former Emperor’s status as a despot in the public imaginary and in turn, help to ensure social stability. He tells the story of a print that a “trembling” print seller clandestinely showed him. It was an aquatint by Jean-Pierre Marie Jazet based on Horace Vernet’s painting *The Tomb of Napoleon* (Fig. 3.12). He described it in detail and considered the actual effect it will have upon viewers:

In the distance, resplendent with glory, the shadows of the brave who died while defending their country’s liberty, and they seem to say: JUST AS FOR US, THIS IS HOW IT WILL ALL END FOR YOU! What an apotheosis! Ah! Far from proscribing this, far from covering it with a veil, offer it up for all to see, and the sensations it will cause, the profound reflections that it will give birth to, will teach all of the enemies of the liberty of peoples what remains of the one who was the most powerful despot, the most absolute on earth. One can therefore have in their possession the print of this terrible apotheosis without being a Bonapartist. A large number of our braves miss the warrior who led them to victory; but, French above all, they would be indignant if they were asked to serve a new tyrant of their country.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 320-21. “Dans un lointain resplendissant de gloire, les ombres des braves morts en défendant la liberté de leur pays, et qui semblent lui dire : C’EST AINSI, C’EST COMME NOUS QUE TU DEVAIS



Gohier's reading of the print focuses almost entirely on Napoleon as a fallen despot. The soldiers in the image serve as levelers of the Emperor's former grandeur and authority; according to Gohier, they stand in as reminders of a more common, as opposed to extraordinary, fate. The image, according to such a reading, is didactic above all else, capable of representing Bonaparte's mortality and casting him as a mere man who meets the same death as the soldiers who fought for him. Bonaparte died in 1821 on the island of St. Helena where he was in his second forced exile. His death provoked a sudden profusion of imagery that has been traditionally understood as fueling his "legend." As we have already seen, the political and social implications of this "legend" were neither coherent nor exclusively emblematic of an oppositional, "counter-discursive," political positions. Gohier supported the Bourbons and was adamant that a monarchy was the only form of government capable of unifying a divided France.

Horace Vernet's painting, which Gohier called the "apotheosis," is listed in the artist's account books as the *Tombeau de Napoléon*. It was painted in 1821 and sold for 3,000 francs to Gabriel Delessert, a wealthy banker who would later become Prefect of Police during the July Monarchy. A copy of the painting (now in the Wallace Collection) was also sold for the same lofty sum to Jacques Lafitte, another member of a successful banking family. Vernet made 500 francs from selling the rights to have the painting engraved by Jazet, who would earn his reputation translating Vernet's paintings into

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FINIR ! Quelle apothéose ! Ah! Loin de la proscrire, loin de la faire couvrir d'un voile, offrez-la à tous les regards, et que les sensations qu'elle fera éprouver, que les réflexions profondes qu'elle doit faire naître, apprennent à tous les ennemis de la liberté des peuples ce qui reste à celui qui a été le despote le plus puissant, le plus absolu de la terre." "On peut donc avoir en sa possession l'estampe de cette terrible apothéose sans être un bonapartiste. Un grand nombre de nos braves regrettent le guerrier qui les a conduits à la victoire ; mais, Français avant tout, ils s'indigneraient si on leur proposait de servir un nouveau tyran de leur patrie."

prints.<sup>51</sup> Delessert and Lafitte were both close associates of the duc d'Orléans, the future King of the French, Louis-Philippe, who was one of Horace Vernet's most important patrons during the Restoration and July Monarchy.<sup>52</sup> Far from radicals, the duc d'Orléans and his coterie of associates believed, like Gohier, in the fundamental need for a strong government, but were weary both of absolutism and the excesses of the Revolution. For this loosely allied group of bankers, politicians, and nobles, who were opposed to the Bourbon regime but were committed to maintaining some form of monarchy, representations of Napoleonic and Revolutionary war provided a visual language that could signify as a broadly based, and publicly attractive, set of political ideals.

Nobody could have been more aware of the fluidity of meaning for these subjects than Horace Vernet. For example, the duc de Berry, the next in line for the Bourbon throne, purchased two of Vernet's Napoleonic-themed genre paintings, the *Wounded Trumpeter* (Fig. 3.13) and the *Dog of the Regiment* (Fig. 3.14), in 1820.<sup>53</sup> Both of these paintings were widely known through reproductive engravings and had been reviewed by

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<sup>51</sup> Armand Dayot, *Les Vernet, Joseph, Carle, Horace* (Paris: Armand Magnier, 1898), 200-201. Dayot provides an account book that lists the vast majority of paintings, lithographs, and engraving permissions that Horace Vernet sold throughout his career. Though there are occasional misspellings and incomplete information, it is an invaluable resource for any scholar examining Vernet's *oeuvre*.

<sup>52</sup> In a nineteenth-century biography on Delessert, his biographer characterizes Delessert's liberalism as "intelligent et modéré, par un sentiment profond des principes de stabilité et de conservation qui font la force et le vie des gouvernements et des sociétés, par un désir ardent et sincère de provoquer ou de soutenir la réalisation de toutes les améliorations matérielles, morales, et politiques, nécessaires pour le bonheur et la prospérité de [son] pays." See J. Tripier Le Franc, *M. Gabriel Delessert* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1859), 43-44.

<sup>53</sup> Dayot, *Les Vernet, Joseph, Carle, Horace* 200. The duc de Berry paid 5000 francs for both paintings. He is listed in the account books as the duc de Berny, probably as a result of an original misspelling or an incorrect transcription of the manuscript. A few months later, the Duc was assassinated while attending the Opera by Pierre Louvel, who acted alone in an attempt "to extinguish the Bourbon line." For more on the assassination, see David Skuy, *Assassination, Politics, and Miracles. France and the Royalist Reaction of 1820*, 8-11.

critics. They contributed to the spread of imagery of the recent military past beyond a limited circle of liberal elites.

### **Horace Vernet and the “Nouvelle École”**

Horace Vernet produced his largest and most expensive paintings for the duc d'Orléans. In 1822, the duc cemented his relationship with the painter by commissioning four battle paintings, for which he paid the high price of 10,000 francs each. The *Battle of Montmirail*, the *Battle of Jemmapes*, the *Battle of Hanau* and the *Battle of Valmy* were made between 1820 and 1824. In addition to securing the patronage of the second most powerful Bourbon in France, Vernet gained the adoration of “liberal” critics as a result of the controversy caused by the rejection of two of his paintings, the *Barrier of Clichy* and the *Battle of Jemmapes*, from the 1822 Salon exhibition, due to their politically problematic content.<sup>54</sup> In response to the rejection of these two paintings from the Salon, Vernet mounted a private exhibition in his studio that featured forty-five of his paintings, drawings and prints, many of which represented Napoleonic military subjects.<sup>55</sup> This

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<sup>54</sup> For an extended account of the controversy, see Marie-Claude Chaudonneret, *L'Etat et les artistes. De la Restauration à la monarchie de Juillet (1815-1833)* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999), 102-105. Chaudonneret's exacting archival research has helped to dispel the once dominant understanding of Vernet as a victim of conservative politics with regard to his private 1822 exhibition. According to Chaudonneret, Vernet used the rejection of his two paintings to help style himself as an academic outsider and rebel with regard to the conservative politics that dominated the Salon. While he guaranteed himself a reputation as a rebellious, subversive painter, Chaudonneret maintains that he “exploited” the refusal of the *Battle of Jemmapes* and the *Barrier of Clichy* for his personal gain. This understanding of Vernet's Restoration *oeuvre* differs with the one promoted by Nina Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer in a group of several essays written during the 1980s. In particular, see Nina Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer, “Imago Belli: Horace Vernet's *L'Atelier* as an Image of Radical Militarism under the Restoration,” *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986). See also Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer, “Liberals of the world unite : Gericault, his friends, and La Liberté des peuples.”

<sup>55</sup> I have found no evidence that Vernet charged visitors to enter his private exhibition as David had done with the *Sabines* in 1799. Unlike David, Vernet had cultivated a wide group of patrons and, if his account books are any indication, he did not need to make money from the exhibition, which was for the sake of publicity as much as it was out of protest to the jury's decision to censor the *Barrier of Clichy* and the *Battle of Jemmapes*.

private exhibition became a cause célèbre among political opponents of the Bourbons and established Vernet's reputation as the painter *par excellence* of Napoleonic subjects in the face of Bourbon censorship.

For the next Salon in 1824, Vernet exhibited an exceptionally large number of paintings, over twenty, including the majority of the works he displayed in his private 1822 exhibition with the exception of the *Battle of Jemmappes*. In the official Salon guidebook, listed after *Equestrian Portrait of the Duc d'Angoulême*, and a painting of a royal hunt, was the notation "*Plusieurs tableaux, même numéro.*" These were no doubt the numerous paintings from Vernet's 1822 private exhibition. As Marie-Claude Chaudonneret has shown, it was due to the sustained efforts of Count de Forbin, the Director of Museums under the Bourbons, that several paintings of Napoleonic military subjects by Vernet and Lejeune were exhibited at the Salon of 1824 against the wishes of the king's Interior ministers.<sup>56</sup> Though the artist had already established a reputation for himself during the early years of the Restoration and through his private exhibition of 1822, Vernet's participation in the Salon of 1824, with Forbin's assistance, led to the recognition on the part of several important critics that he, along with Eugène Delacroix, was a founding member of what was called the *nouvelle école*, also designated at the time as Romanticism.<sup>57</sup> In particular, Vernet's battle paintings were singled out as evidence of the artist's independence from the Davidian tradition of history painting, then maintained in Paris by Gros. The attention paid to his battle paintings in 1824 allowed this supposedly moribund genre to take on a new kind of meaning as an example of the

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<sup>56</sup> Chaudonneret, *L'Etat et les artistes. De la Restauration à la monarchie de Juillet (1815-1833)*, 104-08.

<sup>57</sup> Vernet's submission to the Salon of 1817, the *Battle of Tolosa*, met with a warm critical reception. This was due to Vernet's novel treatment of his subject matter and also to the fact that the battle was medieval and not modern.

*nouvelle école* of painting which had successfully severed its ties to the academic tradition of history painting. Horace Vernet's battle paintings were therefore not only acceptable to a new generation of critics but an exciting part of artistic practice beyond what Stendhal called the "tyranny" of David.

Vernet's submissions to the Salon of 1824 were enthusiastically reviewed by critics. The artist was identified as being one of the progenitors of a new kind of painting that traded the classical ideal for subjects inspired by contemporary tastes, including the recent military past in the case of Vernet. Though Vernet represented historical subjects, it was widely affirmed that he was not a history painter in the traditional sense of the term. As Delécluze remarked in his review of the Salon of 1824,

The modern school appears to be formed after the justified successes that M. H. Vernet, its founder, has obtained. This artist, who observes our mores so well, and that I have willingly called a painter of high comedy, is never trivial, is always true, but lacks elevation...He takes man as he is, reproduces him with truth, with spirit; I will repeat that the works of M. H. Vernet are painted comedy...this love of exact and ruthless truth puts up with everything, even the ugly [*la laideur*].<sup>58</sup>

For Delécluze, Vernet was the founder of a new modern school of painting which represented its subjects with "exact truth," that is to say, in a manner that was far removed from the *beau idéal* of classical French painting. Vernet specialized in depicting his own times as they appeared, including contemporary figures and their

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<sup>58</sup> Etienne-Jean Delécluze, "Beaux-arts, Salon," Delécluze, "Beaux-arts, Salon," 1 Septembre, 1824, 1. "L'école toute moderne qui semble s'être formée depuis les justes succès qu'a obtenus M. H. Vernet, son fondateur. Cet artiste, qui observe si bien les mœurs, et que j'appellerois volontiers un peintre du haut comique, n'est jamais trivial, est toujours vrai, mais manque d'élévation...Il prend l'homme tel qu'il est, le reproduit avec vérité, avec esprit, ce qui me fait répéter que les ouvrages de M. H. Vernet sont de la comédie peinte...cet amour de la vérité exacte et impitoyable qui s'arrange de tout, même de la *laideur*."

habits, something which Delécluze understood in theatrical terms as “comic.”<sup>59</sup>

Vernet’s treatment of his subject matter differed from Delécluze’s own drawings of Allied and French soldiers from 1814 and 1815, in which the critic attempted to strike a balance between his status as a detached observer of “things seen” and classicizing elements such as flowing drapery and dramatic gestures that the former student of David had been trained to include. Vernet, on the other hand, did not share Delécluze’s allegiance to neoclassical standards. Instead of adapting the representation of a contemporary event to the conventions of history painting, he created a new visual mode of depicting contemporary life in painting that defied existing categories of artistic production.

For many critics, Vernet’s turn away from the ideals of classical history painting in favor of contemporary subjects was the most important achievement of the new manner of painting. His paintings, they argued, faithfully pictured contemporary circumstances in a way that appeared to be immediately intelligible to viewers. As Adolphe Thiers contended, the French classical tradition of painting was akin to a weight on Vernet’s free spirit. Vernet’s inspiration came from his contemporary surroundings, not academic authority:

Nothing ties him down, because nothing can limit his talent, with the exception of the grand historical ideal, which he could attain if he desired to; but it would be impossible for him to dedicate himself to it with a character like his own; he has been too moved by what surrounds him to abandon the times, habits, and contemporary subjects to move himself towards the ideal of grand antique subjects.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The “comic” used by Delécluze to describe Vernet’s work was distinct from the “tragic.” These two terms were part of traditional aesthetic theories based on literature and extended to painting. Throughout his lengthy career, the “comic” was often used to characterize Vernet; he was often compared to the vaudeville theater playwright, Eugene Scribe and to the Franconi Brothers circus.

<sup>60</sup> Adolphe Thiers, *Adolphe Thiers, critique d'art, Salons de 1822 et de 1824*, ed. Marie-Claude Chaudonneret (Paris: Editions Champion, 2005), 110. “Rien ne le fixe, parce que rien ne peut limiter son

Thiers, who would later become the minister of Education under the July Monarchy (and was already a close associate of Vernet's patron, the duc d'Orléans), promoted the idea that history painting in the grand manner would only slow Vernet down. This clever argument flipped on its head a French aesthetic hierarchy that placed history painting at the apex, and proposed a new set of criteria that situated contemporary subjects at the top. For Thiers, Vernet led the *nouvelle école* of painting because he determined his own criteria and had no use for the old ones. Vernet's paintings, in contrast to the serious, highly studied genre of history painting, allowed the artist to express his unbounded talent for representing his immediate, contemporary surroundings free from the strictures of academic tradition.

Of all the paintings that Vernet displayed in the Salon of 1824, the *Battle of Montmirail* (Fig. 3.15) was the one that garnered the most critical attention, and was almost universally adored, even by a classicist like Delécluze. The battle, fought in February 1814, was part of Napoleon's Six Days campaign where the overwhelmingly outnumbered *Grande armée*, retreating from the disastrous Russian campaign, defeated the Allies in a series of battles of little overall strategic importance. The Allied armies still arrived in Paris in March of that same year, resulting in Napoleon's first abdication. The battle of Montmirail was therefore an event which precipitated the downfall of the First Empire and the installation of the First Restoration government, a military subject that would have been palatable to Royalist sympathizers.

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talent, excepté le grand idéal historique, auquel il aurait pu atteindre s'il l'eut tenté ; mais il était impossible qu'il s'y dirigeât avec une organisation comme la sienne ; il était trop frappé de ce qui l'entourait, pour abandonner le temps, les mœurs et les sujets actuels, et se porter vers l'idéal des grands sujets antiques."

The expansive horizontal format of *Montmirail*, along with the three other battle paintings in the series (*Hanau*, *Jemmappes*, *Valmy*) provided a broad overview of the landscape and the movements of troops across the foreground and middleground. This compositional strategy is similar to the one employed by his father, Carle Vernet and by Louis-François Lejeune, a painter with whose work Vernet would have likely been familiar. As in works made by these artists during the First Empire, Vernet positioned viewers at a hovering bird's eye angle slightly above the action and depicted the battle in terms of its salient episodes distributed throughout the composition with particular attention to the details of uniforms and weapons. This pictorial devotion to the particulars of a battle was understood by critics during the First Empire and the Restoration as conveying valuable knowledge about modern military encounters. Vernet, not a career military man like Lejeune, nevertheless borrowed the same set of conventions that Lejeune had used to stage the illusion of an eyewitness expert vision of a military event. It seems to have worked. As Delécluze remarked in 1824, "By seeing [Vernet's] works, one can experience a course in strategy and gain a complete understanding of life in the camps."<sup>61</sup> Other critics found the same to be true: "It seems that M. Horace lives in the camps: one would think that he was on the field, painting in the moment of action."<sup>62</sup>

Though Vernet and Lejeune shared a common commitment to depicting contemporary military engagements in terms of a proliferation of details about site,

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<sup>61</sup> Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Journal des débats, littéraires et politiques*, 1 Septembre 1824, 1. "En voyant ses ouvrages, peut-on faire un cours de stratégie et prendre une connaissance complète de la vie des camps."

<sup>62</sup> Une société de gens de lettres, *L'année française, ou mémorial des sciences, des arts et des lettres* (Paris: Crapelet, 1825), 105. "Il semble que M. Horace vive dans les camps : on croirait qu'il est sur le terrain, et qu'il peint au moment de l'action."



actions and weapons, Vernet's battle paintings at the Salon of 1824, and especially *Montmirail*, were celebrated as triumphs of art, a claim seldom made on behalf of Lejeune's work, even during the First Empire, and probably influenced by his status as a military officer first and foremost. Moreover, technical infelicities in Lejeune's paintings such as the flatness of figures were readily forgiven by critics who valued his battle paintings for the knowledge they imparted rather than their artistic ambitions. Horace Vernet's vocation, in contrast, was that of an artist, a fact underscored by his family name. In the *Battle of Montmirail*, Vernet's technical skill manifests itself largely through the atmospheric, foreboding sky and clouds which hover over the battle. The beautifully rendered sky helps to reinforce the expansiveness of the terrain and also lends a degree of emotional affect to the scene. Vernet's choice to make his battle painting more of a landscape than a monumental figure painting ensured that it would be taken seriously as an ambitious work of art by critics. *Montmirail* effectively restored battle painting to its traditional status within the hierarchy of genres, as a historical landscape rather than as a form of history painting.

In his review of the Salon of 1824, Stendhal seized on *Montmirail* as a triumph of the new tendency in painting, writing that "I've seen two or three thousand painted *battles*; I have seen two or three in reality, and this allows me to proclaim the one of Horace Vernet to be a masterpiece... There is more truth and nature in just the sky of this painting, than in twenty landscapes to which the connoisseurs are devoted."<sup>63</sup> For

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<sup>63</sup> Stendhal, "Salon de 1824," in *Mélanges III, Peinture*, ed. Ernest Abravanel (Geneva: Cercle du Bibliophile, 1972), 9. "J'ai vu deux ou trois mille *batailles* en peinture ; j'en ai vu deux ou trois en réalité, et cela me suffit pour proclamer un chef d'œuvre, celle de M. Horace Vernet... Il y a plus de vérité et de nature, dans le ciel seulement de ce tableau, que dans vingt paysages consacrés par l'admiration des connoisseurs. "

Stendhal, the new tide of European culture was turning. Whereas classicism clung to outmoded conventions that limited artists to a narrowly conceived repertoire of subjects and styles no longer relevant to modern times, Vernet's *Montmirail* exemplified the new school of painting, free from the constraints of an academic system.

In a revealing passage, Stendhal compared Vernet's *Montmirail* with David's *Intervention of the Sabine Women* and concluded that

The battle of M. H. Vernet is worth more than the battle of David. What sympathy can a French person feel, who has given a few blows of the saber during his life, for people that fight *completely naked*? The most common sense indicates that the legs of such soldiers would soon be completely covered in blood, and, that in any time, it would have been absurd to go to battle completely naked.<sup>64</sup>

Stendhal ridiculed David's pretension of representing authentic Roman warriors in his *Intervention of the Sabine Women*, a painting he would have been able to view at Luxembourg museum.<sup>65</sup> He humorously contrasted David's fidelity to the rigorous strictures of history painting with the material conditions of modern warfare (which audiences were familiar with by 1824) to take David to task for making a painting that failed to acknowledge its own times. In comparing Vernet's *Montmirail* to David's *Sabines*, Stendhal constructed an argument in favor of a new school of painting, which he called *romantic*. For Stendhal, Vernet depicted battle in a vernacular visual language that resonated with contemporary viewers as being from their own time:

What is *romantic* in painting is the *Battle of Montmirail*, this masterpiece of Horace Vernet...The *romantic* in all the arts, is who represents the men of today, and not of these heroic times so far removed from us, and who probably never

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 81-82. "A talent égal, la bataille de M. H. Vernet vaudrait mieux que la bataille de M. David. Quelle sympathie peut sentir un Français, qui a donné quelques coups de sabre en sa vie pour des gens qui se battent *tout nus* ? Le plus simple bon sens indique que les jambes de tels soldats seraient bientôt tout en sang, et, dans tous les temps, il fut absurde d'aller nu au combat."

<sup>65</sup> Chaudonneret, *L'État et les artistes. De la Restauration à la monarchie de Juillet (1815-1833)*, 33-34.

existed. If one wants to go through the effort of comparing these two battles that I have just cited, and especially the quantity of pleasure that they give to the viewer, one will be able to form a clear idea of what is romantic in painting.<sup>66</sup>

The genre of battle painting, thought by many critics at the beginning of the Restoration to be on the brink of extinction, was understood by both Thiers and Stendhal as a means of challenging the aesthetic authority of Davidian painting. Far from a marginal subject during the Restoration, the representation of military subjects from the recent past provided contemporary audiences with a readily recognizable, and according to Stendhal, pleasurable, picture of themselves in a way that David's naked warriors could not. In this way, Vernet's *Battle of Montmirail* not only depicted a particular historical event, but also spoke to the retrospective historical self-consciousness that was prevalent during the period.

The fact that Vernet's battle paintings were not grand manner history paintings worked to their advantage. Instead of attempting to make contemporary military events conform to the rigorous standards of history painting as David and his students had done during the First Empire, Vernet employed a visual language more akin to topographic and episodic battle painting, understood as a lower genre. Because Vernet eschewed the conventions of Davidian history painting, he enjoyed freedom from its predetermined set of rules. Working outside of the tradition of neoclassicism, it appeared that Vernet's only imperative was to depict contemporary subjects with unwavering fidelity – something

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<sup>66</sup> Stendhal, "Salon de 1824," 81. Ce qui est *romantique* en peinture, c'est la *Bataille de Montmirail*, ce chef d'œuvre de M. H. Vernet...Le *romantique* dans tous les arts, c'est ce qui représente les hommes d'aujourd'hui, et non ceux de ces temps héroïques si loin de nous, et qui probablement n'ont jamais existé. Si l'on veut se donner la peine de comparer les deux batailles que je viens d'indiquer, et surtout la quantité de plaisir qu'elles font au spectateur, on pourra se former une idée nette de ce qu'est le romantique en peinture.

that critics also associated with battle painters such as Louis-François Lejeune and his father, Carle Vernet. This independence from academic artistic rules was, for Stendhal, part of the painter's appeal to a broad public of contemporary viewers and was an integral component of the value of his work. Moreover, as Stendhal pointed out, Vernet's artistic liberty translated into an economic one: he was the only artist working in 1824 who "enriches himself through his talent and in a manner absolutely independent from the budget of the State."<sup>67</sup> Vernet's perceived status as an artist who determined his own set of rules and worked outside of official patronage contributed to his attractiveness for the liberal-leaning elites who patronized him throughout the Restoration and were themselves in search of a break with a set of predetermined rules.

### **War and Politics: Napoleonic Painting after Napoleon**

The dominant interpretation of Horace Vernet's Restoration *oeuvre* contends that his depiction of Napoleonic military subjects demonstrates his fidelity to what has been called "radical militarism."<sup>68</sup> According to this appraisal of Vernet's work, "radical

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., "Au fait, quel est le seul peintre qui, en 1824, s'enrichisse par son talent et d'une manière absolument indépendante du budget de l'état ? M. Horace Vernet." This is not exactly true. Vernet was regularly patronized by the ruling Bourbons during the Restoration. The *Maison du Roi* purchased Vernet's *Joseph Vernet, attaché à un mât* in 1822 for 6,000 francs. Vernet also painted *Charles X passant une revue au Champ de Mars* in 1824 and was paid the lofty sum of 9,950 francs. These figures are published in Dayot, *Les Vernet, Joseph, Carle, Horace* 202-05.

<sup>68</sup> Nina Anathanassoglou-Kallmyer, "Imago Belli: Horace Vernet's *L'Atelier* as an Image of Radical Militarism under the Restoration," *The Art Bulletin* 68 (June 1986): 268-280. Kallmyer refers to Vernet as a "Bonapartist," but the meaning of the term was highly variable then and now. Calling Vernet a "Bonapartist" therefore depends on what we mean by the term. I take "Bonapartism" to refer to a political effort to restore France to an Empire (preferably headed by a descendent of Napoleon Bonaparte) after 1815. The political historian Frédéric Bluche has used the two terms "Bonapartism" and "Napoleonism" to distinguish between political commitment to restoring the Empire and the flowering of the "myth" of Napoleon. He argues that Bonapartism "should be only understood in a political sense," whereas "Napoleonism," refers to a more nebulous phenomenon through which the legend of Napoleon took shape. Bluche claims that the two terms were used interchangeably during the nineteenth century, but that twentieth-century authors have tended to keep them separate. See Frédéric Bluche, *Le bonapartisme. Aux origines de la droite autoritaire (1800 - 1850)* (Paris: Les nouvelles éditions latines, 1980), 169. More

militarism” is closely allied with the politics of liberal opposition to the conservative policies of the Bourbon government. Vernet’s *Atelier* (Fig. 3.16), painted in 1821, and displayed in his private exhibition of 1822, and then again in the official Salon of 1824, is thought to demonstrate the artist’s commitment to liberal politics: the various military accoutrements, the presence of Napoleonic veterans on half pay, all within an atmosphere where the mix of artists and writers carry on with a reverent nostalgia for the Imperial past. This painting, like others in Vernet’s *oeuvre* from the period, has been interpreted as signs of a “liberal” political engagement against the Restoration government. But as we have already seen, the connection between the representation of Napoleonic war during the Restoration and political commitment cannot be automatically extrapolated from this kind of imagery: the term “liberal” had very little to do with a progressive, leftist, political engagement. This has led to a larger assumption that Napoleonic military imagery from the period was necessarily associated with a set of radical “Bonapartist”

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recently, Sudhir Hazareesingh has argued that the two terms cannot be easily separated: “Bonapartism and the legend can appear as not only fundamentally different phenomena, but also as inversely related...On the one hand, the myths about Napoleon cannot be understood except in fundamentally political contexts – as attitudes shaped by deliberate Napoleonic propaganda; as expressions of firmly held values; and as beliefs which had measurable, practical consequences. On the other hand, the sheer intensity of the legend had a direct bearing on politics, often blurring the boundary between ‘history’ and ‘myth, between actual events and their subsequent perception and representation.” See Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon*, 5-6. Hazareesingh’s notion of the interrelationship between the two terms also reflects a more open definition of “politics” beyond official political institutions, extending to the realm of language and culture. Vernet seems to have cultivated a broad circle of friends and patrons during the Restoration who represented a wide spectrum of political beliefs including the Comte de Forbin, the duc d’Orléans, Jacques Laffitte, Théodore Géricault, the Duchesse de Berry, etc. Rather than focusing on Vernet’s political commitment as a “Bonapartist,” I understand his Restoration-era *oeuvre* in terms of its ability to signify across a plurality of political ideologies: this also helps to explain why Vernet’s reputation soared during the Restoration; while it may have signified as radical for some (and perhaps even for himself *pace* Kallmyer), his work also operated between different political registers. This is why the Duchesse de Berry could purchase Vernet’s *Dog of the Regiment* and the *Wounded Trumpeter* and not be taken as a Bonapartist for doing so. In other words, I understand Vernet as a painter of consensus, one reason why the duc d’Orléans and other “liberals” embraced his work. Kallmyer has cited Vernet’s Second Empire biographers to support her argument regarding Vernet’s personal politics. However, it must be noted that biographers writing on Vernet during the Second Empire were interpreting his Restoration *oeuvre* from the point of view of a period when it was not only permissible, but encouraged, to idealize representations of Napoleon I.

politics despite the fact that representations of Bonaparte as military hero were not automatically associated with a positive understanding of his reign. Horace Vernet's representations of Napoleonic military subjects were valued by a group of men for whom the reign of Bonaparte was a cautionary tale and yet, they commissioned representations of his military accomplishments as a way of articulating their political ideals.

These confusions suggest that it would be useful to address what it meant to be a "liberal" during the Restoration. The word *libéral* came into use in France at the end of the seventeenth century to describe a quality of generosity and openness; the word also designated "that which is worthy of a free [individual], for example, *education libérale* and *arts libéraux*."<sup>69</sup> The word changed from a moral concept into a political one shortly after 1789 and became more widely used during the Restoration.<sup>70</sup> To provide a succinct definition of the political connotations of the word is a risky endeavor: the closer one comes to grasping it as a unified concept, the blurrier it becomes. As historian David Skuy has argued, despite their complex heterogeneity and their lack of coherent political doctrines, Restoration liberals were united in the belief that the French Revolution "had not been about the Terror, but about the Declaration of Rights of Man; it was not the Law of Suspects, but *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. By extension, the Empire was not about Napoleonic tyranny. It exemplified through its military glory the greatness of the French nation."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, "Liberalism, Nationalism and Socialism: The Birth of Three Words" *The Review of Politics* 32, no. 2 (1970): 151.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>71</sup> Skuy, *Assassination, Politics, and Miracles. France and the Royalist Reaction of 1820*, 92.

“Liberalism” during the first half of the nineteenth-century signified a range of possible meanings without a fixed set of political values.<sup>72</sup> According to Lucien Jaume, who has examined the discursive evolution of French liberalism throughout the nineteenth century, its objective is to “reconcile, if possible, the rights and liberties of the modern individual with the legitimacy of the sovereign State.”<sup>73</sup> Jaume argues there is not one form of “liberalism” but rather, many different “families.” During the nineteenth century, one of the most powerful of these “families” is what historians have called “conservative liberalism.”<sup>74</sup> To be this kind of liberal during the Bourbon Restoration would have meant being in favor of a constitutional monarchy and maintaining a suspicion of absolute power, the kind exercised by the ruling Bourbons during the period. However, this kind of liberal discourse was not hostile to governing power. On the contrary, it sought to ground the power to govern in strong institutions that buttressed the power of the state and in turn, severely limited individual agency. The liberty of the state, idealistically and rhetorically constituted as a collective body, took precedence over the liberty of the individual.<sup>75</sup> This notion of the collective, idealized social body struck a powerful chord with French “liberals” during the Bourbon Restoration. With the historical shadows cast by the divisive Revolution and Bonaparte’s years of warfare,

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<sup>72</sup> For a brief discussion on the difficulty of using the term with regard to politics during the first half of the nineteenth century in Europe, see James Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 5-6.

<sup>73</sup> Lucien Jaume, *L’Individu Effacé, ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français* (Paris : Librairie Fayard, 1997), 16.

<sup>74</sup> Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1994), 215-219. Hazareesingh writes that conservative liberals “had no inherent love of liberty.: they opposed absolutism essentially because of its wastefulness and inefficiency, and also because its frozen social hierarchies seemed to offer little scope for the upward mobility of impatient and enterprising social groups...the enhancement of social equality through redistribution was firmly disavowed.”

<sup>75</sup> For an extended discussion of the what Jaume calls the “doctrinaire” approach to liberal discourse see his chapter entitled “Un libéralisme élitaire. Guizot et les doctrinaires,” in *L’individu effacé, ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français* (Paris: Librairie Fayard, 1997), 119-169

images that purported to represent a collective body were especially attractive to people who comprised the ruling elite of the French state.

### **Vernet's *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge***

More than many of Horace Vernet's paintings of Napoleonic military subjects, *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* clarifies how his work became associated with the political causes of the duc d'Orléans, the future King Louis-Philippe. *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* is a painting that calls attention to the ways that representations of Napoleonic war after Napoleon could picture and promote a plurality of political ideologies during the Bourbon Restoration. This painting, as we shall see, played a role in figuring a particular kind of liberalism at a time when its values were still in the process of being articulated. As such, this picture of war is especially compelling because it not only embodied a set of political values, but also played an active role in constituting them.

*Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* (Fig. 3.17) is a large painting, eight and half feet wide and six and a half feet tall, large enough to be considered a history painting. Though the Bourbons often censored public representations of Napoleon, the painting made it past the censors and appeared in the Salon of 1827. And despite the fact that the painting lacked a title in the official *livret*, there was no way for viewers to avoid the overtly Napoleonic subject matter, with the man himself pictured in the center of the composition, carrying the tri-color flag across the bridge.

Horace Vernet was made a member of the Institut de France in 1826, and had received numerous medals at previous Salons, thereby exempting him from having to



submit his works for approval by the Salon admission jury.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Vernet had the support of the French museum director and Bourbon political appointee, Auguste de Forbin, who is pictured in Vernet's *Atelier*. Forbin would have had the authority to allow Vernet's painting to gain admission into the Salon and had tried to gain admission for earlier paintings that were threatened with rejection. *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* depicts an episode of the earliest phase of Revolutionary wars, when Napoleon was still a general. In 1796, during the Italian campaign, Bonaparte, along with General Augereau, led French troops over a bridge in Arcole, Italy in an ill-fated attempt to defeat the Austrian Army on the other side. The battle lasted two days after the bridge crossing and resulted in a French victory. The episode became an integral part of Bonapartist mythology, aided importantly by its stirring representation by the young Antoine-Jean Gros shortly after the battle.

As David O'Brien has recently demonstrated, Gros's painting (Fig. 3.18) helped Napoleon to cultivate an image of a self-sacrificing, courageous, citizen soldier.<sup>77</sup> Quick to recognize the propagandistic value of the painting, Napoleon himself paid for it to be engraved, thus ensuring its diffusion to a large audience. The print was enormously successful and was issued in multiple editions. In painting his own version of *Arcole*, Horace Vernet directly incorporated formal aspects of Gros's iconic image, such as the position of Napoleon's head, turned three-quarters to the right, and the opposing leftward direction of his march, to the left.

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<sup>76</sup> Chaudonneret, *L'État et les Artistes*, 60.

<sup>77</sup> David O'Brien, *After the Revolution, Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propoganda under Napoleon* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State Press, 2006), 34.

In formal terms, Vernet's painting is even more indebted to Charles Thévenin's portrait-cum-history painting of the other general present at the battle, General Augereau (Fig. 3.19). Thévenin's painting combines a full-length depiction of Augereau with anecdotal details of the event: the desperation of the young drummer boy, the fallen soldier directly underneath the general, and the shattering wooden post in the middle foreground. Vernet enlarged this scene, flipped the composition around so that Bonaparte crosses the bridge in the other direction, and included a great deal more episodic detail. These details do more than merely describe the specifics of the event; they suggest its presentness, that it is actually in the process of occurring. Vernet transformed the broken wood fence in the foreground of Thévenin's composition (Fig. 3.20) into a moment of explosion, with splinters flying high in the air (Fig. 3.21) A soldier to right of the shattered post covers himself from the debris while the soldier just in front of it is caught in a moment of free-fall; the man's gun flies into the foreground, toward the viewer's space, which is already threatened by the soldier whose wounded head protrudes forward.

In the painting, flying objects, exploding wood, and falling bodies receive as much attention as the man in the middle of the composition who carries the tattered flag. In sharp contrast to Thévenin's General Augereau, who marches out on his own and towers above a compressed group of identical-looking soldiers behind him, Vernet's figure of Napoleon is incorporated within a large group, his stature comparable to the lower officers who surround him. Bonaparte is placed within the group, and yet, his choice to charge across the bridge makes him the exception to it. Like Thévenin, Vernet represented the incipient moments of the charge across the bridge. But Vernet depicted

the reaction of the soldiers behind Napoleon and directly engages them in the dramatic action of his choice to lead the charge. The soldiers standing behind Bonaparte are suspended in a moment just prior to action: the drummer boy looks up to Napoleon, his pose, with one leg stepping forward, suggesting his readiness to charge across the bridge. (Fig. 3.22) The general behind Bonaparte gestures to the men near him, encouraging them to take part. These details tell us that the instant represented in Vernet's picture is the one right after Bonaparte has decided that he will lead the charge but just before his men have decided to accompany him. Thus, the picture temporally fixes this momentary gap between heroic action and group accord. The effect is to make *Napoleon Crossing the Bridge at Arcole* less about the heroics of one man, and more about his dynamic leadership and power within a group of individuals.

Horace Vernet's painting was made in 1826 for Jacques Laffitte, one of the most powerful bankers in France from the time of the First Empire until his death in 1844 during the July Monarchy. Before and during the revolution of July 1830, he was a devoted advisor to the duc d'Orléans (the future King Louis-Philippe) and was instrumental in helping him secure the throne. Laffitte paid Vernet the staggering sum of 10,000 francs for the painting in 1827, the same amount that the future King, the duc d'Orléans, paid for large-scale battle paintings commissioned from Vernet during the Restoration.<sup>78</sup> The political ideology that helped the duc d'Orléans secure his power in 1830 can be loosely described as "conservative liberalism," a term discussed earlier.

This particular brand of liberalism was not an official doctrine, but rather a series of political principles that favored a constitutional monarchy whose authority, in ideal

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<sup>78</sup> Armand Dayot, *Les Vernet, Joseph, Carle, Horace* (Paris : Armand Magnier, 1898), 207.

terms, derived from the consent of the polity. It was in no way a progressive or radical political position but rather one that was deeply suspicious of popular sovereignty and direct representative government in general. François Guizot, a future minister under King Louis-Philippe and a close associate of Jacques Laffitte, argued that power, properly channeled into the hands of those who truly deserved it, could be the ultimate guarantor of personal liberty. According to Guizot, power should be granted to “the bravest, the cleverest, the one who convinces us that he is the most capable of exercising it and of satisfying the common interest, of accomplishing everyone’s thought.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, for conservative liberals like Guizot, and his coterie of associates like Laffitte, Delessert, and the duc d’Orléans, those who govern do so through the accord of the people and act on their behalf to “accomplish everyone’s thought.”

The presentness of the action in the painting invites the viewer to participate in witnessing these events unfold and moreover, to make a decision regarding who is the most fit to lead and in turn, as Guizot put it, “accomplish everyone’s thought.” The multiple points of dangerous action signal to the viewer that to enter the scene is to risk extreme physical harm: throughout the composition, soldiers are either dead or dying. Sharp objects fly through the air. Faced with all of these moments of physical violence that are depicted in the process of occurring, Napoleon’s decision to charge across the bridge makes his leadership appear all the more heroic. Like these soldiers, the viewer beholds the action and is encouraged to come to the same conclusion as to who should cross the bridge first. Thus, *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* represents a moment when Napoleon’s status as a leader is in the process of becoming. But crucially, it is also

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<sup>79</sup> François Guizot, *Des moyens de gouvernement et d’opposition dans l’état actuel de la France* (Paris: 1821), 163-164.

a moment when the men standing behind him are in the process of deciding to go along with him. Some within the group hesitate; others such as the general directly behind Napoleon encourage the men to move across the bridge. Although Napoleon is the focal point in the middle of the composition, the group of soldiers dominates the right half.

Unlike the soldiers in Thévenin's painting, Vernet's soldiers are not only more pictorially important, but they are also highly individualized. In short, the soldier group plays a crucial role in the drama of the painting to the point where the relationship between those who lead and those who consent to being led is shown to depend upon both parties. Napoleon needs them to follow him as much they need him to lead them across the bridge. His position of power is not made evident through his superior stature, as it is with Thévenin's painting of General Augereau. Rather, Napoleon's capacity to lead is demonstrated through his courage, which instead of being some intangible or even metaphorical quality, is made palpable through the material presence of demonstrable moments of danger distributed throughout the composition.

Horace Vernet understood how to translate didactic clarity into pictorial form. The composition is peppered with the red, white, and blue colors of the tri-color flag, most noticeably in the clearly delineated uniforms worn by the men and the tattered flag itself. In fact, Vernet pays just as much attention to the formal details of sartorial display as he does to the articulation of the multiple instances of violent action. This helps explain why, for example, the dead soldier protruding into the foreground is not overly horrifying to behold. We read his immobile body as dead and yet, the intricate details of his costume, down to the spurs on his boots and the gold button on his bag, receive as much attention as the bleeding wound in his head. The attention to description creates a

style of visual representation whereby the drama of violence becomes subsumed in an intricate play of surface details and tour de force visual effects.

In painting *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge*, Horace Vernet reconfigured an event from Revolutionary history to suit the needs of conservative liberals during the Restoration. Though it is Napoleon who crosses the Arcole bridge, this sanitized image of organized and entertaining heroism helped to cultivate a set of political values that would serve the interests of the future king Louis-Philippe and his advisors, including the owner of the painting, Jacques Laffitte. The painting, like the text cited earlier, promotes the notion that the authority of those who rule is granted by an idealized collective body. This particular conception of political authority would become ideologically important for conservative, bourgeois liberals as a mean of justifying their ascension to power during the July Monarchy. At the head of this loosely affiliated group of aspiring politicians was the duc d'Orléans. In an effort to differentiate himself from the absolute authority of the restored Bourbons, the Duc d'Orléans's authority was figured as emanating from the people he sought to govern. This enabled his government to position itself as a benevolent regime and paradoxically, to embolden the authority of the state at the expense of the liberty of the individual.<sup>80</sup>

Writing in 1824, Gohier, the former republican head of the Directory government, offered his appraisal of how the liberty of the French nation could be guaranteed: "The catastrophe that ended the despotism of Bonaparte has made us feel the necessity of a constitutional government that no faction can shake...if the destinies of peoples are in the

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<sup>80</sup> One important example of how the liberty of the individual was sacrificed to the authority of the state is censorship during the July Monarchy. See Richard Terdiman, "Counter-Images: Daumier and *Le Charivari*," in *Discourse/Counterdiscourse, The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 149-198.

hands of those who govern them, the stability of a throne rests on the interest that the people have in supporting it.”<sup>81</sup> *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* is a fitting answer to the hopes of the republican, turned supporter of constitutional monarchy. The painting represents a group of soldiers who are in the act of giving their accord to follow their leader over the bridge. As Gohier pointed out in 1824, three years before the making of *Arcole*, the stability of a government depended upon the will of the people to uphold its power. In *Arcole*, Vernet appropriated a Napoleonic military theme to function as a powerful synecdoche for the political aspirations of “liberal” constitutional monarchists during the Bourbon Restoration. As such, the painting serves as a valuable reminder that images of Napoleonic war made during the Bourbon Restoration signified broadly, across the political spectrum. Their value for conservative liberals like Gohier, the duc d’Orléans and Lafitte only grew during the July Monarchy, when Napoleonic military imagery gained official favor with the French government.<sup>82</sup>

### **Horace Vernet and Restoration Print Culture**

Vernet’s rapid rise to artistic prominence during the Restoration was due in large part to the dissemination of his war-related paintings in reproductive print form. The circulation of his prints reinforced critics’ notion of Vernet’s popular appeal and specifically associated him with the representation of military subjects for a broad public, outside of the domain of the French classical tradition. When Salon critics reviewed

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<sup>81</sup> Gohier, *Mémoires de Louis-Jérôme Gohier, Président du Directoire au 18 Brumaire*, 325. “La catastrophe qui a terminé le despotisme de Bonaparte a d’ailleurs assez fait sentir la nécessité d’un gouvernement constitutionnel qu’aucune faction ne puisse ébranler..si les destinées des peuples sont dans les mains de ceux qui les gouvernent, la stabilité d’un trône repose sur l’intérêt qu’ont les peuples à le soutenir.”

<sup>82</sup> For an extended consideration on the role of official Napoleonic imagery during the July Monarchy, see Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis Philippe, Art and Ideology in Orleanist France, 1830-1848*.

Vernet's paintings, they often remarked upon the visibility of their reproductions: "The *Barrier of Clichy*, the *Soldier Laborer*, and all of these warriors, aged in combat, reproduced in aquatints and lithographs, decorate the living rooms, the bedrooms, and the modest shelter of the old soldier who has become father and citizen."<sup>83</sup> The critic inferred that Vernet's prints crossed class boundaries between "salons" and "modest shelters." The presumed presence of Vernet's prints in different kinds of classed spaces seemed to confirm his status as a "national" artist and provided evidence that images which invoked France's recent military past constituted a sort of common ground among people who had lived through the political tumult of the Revolution and First Empire.

The *Barrier of Clichy* (Fig. 3.23) was one of the two controversial paintings that had been rejected by the jury of the Salon of 1822 for its provocative content, the defense of Paris against the allied troops after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in which the artist participated. The painting was exhibited in Vernet's private protest exhibition of 1822, and then at the official Salon of 1824; it was widely circulated in aquatint form, engraved by Pierre Marie Jazet, who reproduced Vernet's paintings in engraving and aquatint throughout Vernet's lengthy career. Critics who reviewed Vernet's work at the Salon of 1824 did not have to describe the *Barrier of Clichy* precisely because, as they pointed out, "the beautiful engraving of M. Jazet made all of Paris familiar with it."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> A. Barginet, "Beaux-Arts, Salon de 1824, IIe article," *Panorama des Nouveautés Parisiennes*, 2 Octobre 1824, 22-23. "La barrière de Clichy, le Soldat laboureur, et tous ces guerriers vieilliss dans les combats, reproduits par l'aquatinte et la lithographie, ornent les salons, les boudoirs, et le modeste asile du vieux soldat devenu père et citoyen."

<sup>84</sup> Une société de gens de lettres, *L'année française, ou mémorial des sciences, des arts et des lettres*, 105. "Nous ne parlerons pas de la *Barrière de Clichy*; tout Paris a vu ce tableau à l'exposition de M. Horace en 1822, et la belle gravure de Jazet l'a fait connaître." Delécluze, in the *Journal des Débats* on October 5, 1824, writes that the engraving of the *Barrier of Clichy* "is everywhere."



Though reproductive prints of Vernet's paintings were, with few exceptions, reproduced as aquatints by Jazet, the emergent medium of lithography provided Vernet with the opportunity to produce his own original print editions; his lithographs made during the Restoration became crucial to securing his status as an artist who freely operated between different domains of culture, beholden to no rules except for the ones he set for himself. Vernet, like many artists during the early years of the Restoration, including Gros, his father Carle Vernet and Girodet, began to experiment with lithography just as it came into social use in France after Waterloo. Throughout the Restoration, lithography's status as a print medium was hotly debated. Lithography was considered both a *produit de l'industrie* and a component of the fine arts. The Salon of 1817 was the first to feature lithography, though it was classified in the catalogue as a *produit de l'industrie*. By 1824, had earned its own section in the catalogue as a component of the *beaux-arts*. Despite the official status of "art" conveyed upon lithography in 1824, it still lacked the historically eminent status that engraving had assumed as early as the seventeenth century in France.

The connection between war and lithography began shortly after the medium's discovery in Bavaria by Aloys Senefelder, who first used it as a reproductive printing process to copy sheet music in the 1790s. Napoleon's minister of arts, Dominique-Vivant Denon, visited Munich in 1809 and reportedly met Senefelder in his atelier and made a series of lithographs including a representation of *La Sainte Famille en Egypte*.<sup>85</sup> Though Denon was enthusiastic enough to try his hand at the new print medium, he did not make any motions to bring the technology back to France with him. It has been

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<sup>85</sup> Dominique Vivant Denon, *L'oeil de Napoléon*, 504.

suggested that Denon may have been wary of the medium's potential for rapid dissemination, a risk that engraving did not carry with it.<sup>86</sup> The more laborious and costly medium of engraving was more easily controlled by the State, as engravers required funding to produce their works. It was conceivable that with lithography, the means of production could easily be taken away from his and Bonaparte's control.

Another important early connection between lithography and war also occurred shortly after France's victory at Austerlitz in 1805. Louis-François Lejeune, the officer and battle painter, was on his return from Germany when he stopped in Bavaria, where he was received by the king who directed him to Senefelder's atelier. Lejeune described the experience of visiting the atelier in his memoirs:

The results obtained by the [lithographs] appeared to me incredible, and they wished me to try my hand at the work...I made a sketch with their crayons on one of their stones. I then left them, and an hour later, to my great surprise, they sent the stone to me with twenty impressions of my design. I took these proofs with me to Paris, and showed them to the Emperor, who at once recognized the immense value of the invention, and he told me to follow it up, but I found very few people disposed to aid me, and other affairs soon called me away.<sup>87</sup>

Both Denon and Lejeune were instantly impressed with the new medium, but it was not until 1816 that lithography came into widespread use in France. The medium's early connection to war would continue to grow throughout the period of the Bourbon Restoration; artists were drawn to it for precisely the same reasons that hindered its introduction into First Empire France, that is to say, the ease and speed of making prints.

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<sup>86</sup> Marie-Anne Durpuy-Vachey, ed., *Le cabinet de M. Denon, collectionneur et lithographe* (Chalon-sur-Saone: Musée Denon, 2005), 8.

<sup>87</sup> Louis-François Lejeune, *The Napoleonic Wars through the Experiences of an Officer on Berthier's Staff*, vol. 1 (London: Leonaur Ltd., 2007), 44.

The newly popularized medium of lithography allowed for images to be reproduced more rapidly than by the more laborious process of engraving.

The rapidity of lithographic production is an important aspect of how images of Napoleon were spread during the Restoration, which allowed the Napoleon of legend to prosper. At this historical moment, there is an unmistakable convergence between the reproductive technology of lithography and the fluidity of the meaning of Bonaparte as a cultural sign. As we have seen, the representation of Napoleon, specifically his association with military grandeur, was subject to a multiplicity of readings after he was no longer in power. Without Napoleon as the principal and dominating referent of war imagery that he had been during the First Empire, he became a cultural sign capable of taking on multiple, and often contradictory connotations – a process aided by the emergent media.

The variability of Napoleon Bonaparte as a bearer of meaning finds a material analogue in the example of the circulation of Vernet's *Napoleon Crossing the Arcole Bridge* in print form. Vernet's painting of *Arcole*, shown in the Salon of 1827, was first conceived as a lithograph around 1822, commissioned for a large illustrated book entitled *La vie politique et militaire de Napoléon*.<sup>88</sup> The book's author was Antoine-Vincent Arnault, a playwright and close associate of Bonaparte during his rise to power in the

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<sup>88</sup> While there is no way to prove that Vernet's lithograph predated his painting, it is likely that this was the case. The artist's account books show that Vernet was paid in 1823 for a "stone for the *Vie de Napoléon*," and by early 1827, Arnault had already published an octavo-format version of his *Vie de Napoléon* which replaced the lithographs in the luxurious folio version with reduced-size reproductive etchings of the lithographs from the original edition. Vernet's two lithographs for the folio version appeared in the first volume of the *Vie*, along with one by Théodore Géricault, *La marche dans le désert*. Géricault's lithograph, according to a recent exhibition catalogue, was published between 1822 and 1823, suggesting that Vernet's two lithographs would have been published around the same time, a full three years before the painting would have been made. See *Théodore Géricault. The Alien Body: Tradition in Chaos*, ed. Serge Guilbaut, Maureen Ryan, and Scott Watson (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 1997), 199.

1790s; he was appointed to the Ministry of the Interior after Brumaire and then made general secretary of the University for the duration of the Empire. He was removed from his post by the Bourbons in 1816, and then went into exile in England, but returned to France in 1819. In 1829 he became *secrétaire perpétuel* of the French Academy. In his will Napoleon left Arnault a generous 100,000 francs, which the author may well have used to finance the publication of the book.<sup>89</sup> Following Napoleon's death in 1821, the *Vie* was published through subscription as a folio between 1822 and 1826. The text narrated the principal events of Napoleon's life, starting with his childhood through his second and final exile on St. Helena. Each section of the text, referred to as a "tableau" was accompanied by a lithograph. Vernet contributed two illustrations, as did Géricault, another artist who experimented early on with the new medium.<sup>90</sup> As Arnault claimed in his introduction, the book was intended to be an unbiased, politically neutral source of historical information about Bonaparte: "the events, scrupulously gathered together, are told with exactitude... We offer the material for a judgment but not the judgment itself."<sup>91</sup> The posturing of the book as a politically colorless historical work likely ensured that it would meet with the approval of the Bourbon censors.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> William Hazlitt, *The Life of Napoleon*, vol. 6 (Paris and Boston: The Napoleon Society, 1895), 254.

<sup>90</sup> For more on Géricault's contributions to Arnault's book, see Michael Marrinan, "Vivre en marge. Géricault et la vie militaire," in *Géricault: Dessins et estampes des collections du musée de l'École des beaux-arts*, ed. Emmanuelle Brugerolles (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1998), 89-106.

<sup>91</sup> Antoine Vincent Arnault, *Vie Politique et Militaire de Napoléon* (Paris: Émile Babeuf, 1822-1826), I. "Les faits, recueillis avec scrupule, y seront racontés avec exactitude... Nous offrons la matière d'un jugement, en non un jugement tout fait."

<sup>92</sup> As a former close associate of Bonaparte, Arnault revered him as a historical figure, a political actor and as a gifted general. But this did not make Arnault a "fervent Bonapartist," as it has been claimed in one recent exhibition catalogue. There is no evidence to suggest that Arnault engaged in any Bonapartist political activities during the Restoration. As this chapter has argued, admiration for Napoleon did not necessarily translate into political commitment. As Frédéric Bluche has argued in *Le bonapartisme: aux origines de la droite autoritaire 1800-1850*, the writings of Arnault and his close friends including Jouy and Jay (who favorably reviewed Horace Vernet's 1822 protest exhibition and published it as a pamphlet) do not indicate any trace of political Bonapartism, but rather a devotion to what he calls the "liberal credo."

In Vernet's account books, two payments of 1500 francs are recorded for the lithographs that he contributed to what is designated as *Vie de Napoléon*, a high amount for an individual lithograph which reflected the ambition of Arnault's book.<sup>93</sup> Vernet contributed three lithographs which represented in order of their appearance, the *Childhood of Napoleon* (Fig. 3.24), in which a young Bonaparte directs the tactics of a snowball fight among his peers in his schoolyard, the *Passage on the Arcole Bridge*, and the *Return from Syria*. The nineteenth section of the book featured a description of the battle of Arcole, illustrated by Vernet's lithograph (Fig. 3.25). The presence of this lithograph, likely published three years before the painting of the same subject was made, presents a striking reversal of the traditional generative roles played by painting and reproductive printmaking. Rather than reproducing Vernet's painting, the *Arcole* lithograph drove its production.<sup>94</sup> The drama of group accord, which was crucial to the painting's articulation of conservative liberal governing ideology, is also visible in the lithograph. As in the painting, the Napoleon in the lithograph holds a flag and lunges forward despite the physical intervention of a soldier just under him. A larger group in the back is split between those who stay behind and those who charge ahead. The element of danger is also an important element of the lithograph, which serves to dramatize the decision facing the soldiers to cross the bridge or not.

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<sup>93</sup> Dayot, *Les Vernet, Joseph, Carle, Horace* 203-04. For example, Vernet was routinely paid between 150 and 500 francs for each of his lithographs that he made for the publisher Delpech. The entries in the account books have allowed me to date Vernet's lithographs for this book to approximately 1822-1823. While Vernet contributed three lithographs to the volume, only two payments for the *Vie de Napoléon* are to be found in his account books.

<sup>94</sup> This reversal, though atypical, was not unprecedented. William Olander has shown that during the French Revolution, the production of prints of contemporary history far outpaced the production of paintings of the same events. Charles Thévenin's print of the *Prise de la Bastille* predated his painting by five years. See Olander, "Pour transmettre à la postérité : French painting and revolution, 1774-1795," 277-81.

For Vernet, the historical event of Bonaparte crossing the Arcole Bridge was defined not by the heroism of one man, but the willingness of others to follow him in spite of great personal danger. The lithograph, like a preparatory study, gave Vernet the opportunity to experiment with the formal dynamics of the negotiation between Bonaparte and his soldiers. But unlike a preparatory study which would have remained private, the lithograph of *Arcole* was made expressly to be disseminated. The relationship between the painting of the bridge crossing and its lithographic antecedent implies a form of leveling among media that was an integral part of Horace Vernet's artistic practice over the course of his career.<sup>95</sup> The ease with which he worked between media, with little regard for traditional aesthetic hierarchies, helped Vernet earn a reputation for incredible facility.

For his painting of Arcole, Vernet heightened and extended the drama of group accord visible in the lithograph. The deliberations of the soldiers in the group in the right-middleground are more pronounced as are the protestations of the soldiers already on the bridge. Vernet also made the danger of crossing more palpable by including a proliferation of *tour de force* visual effects such as the soldier falling off the bridge and the splitting wood, both of which are not present in the lithograph. Moreover, whereas the bridge in the lithograph features a railing, in the painting it is absent. This dramatizes the ease with which Napoleon or his soldiers could fall into the water. Another crucial difference separates the painting from the lithograph, namely the flag carried by Bonaparte. In the painting, it is the tricolor, suppressed during the Restoration but

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<sup>95</sup> This is an issue which I explore in more depth in Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation.

nevertheless tolerated, whereas in the lithograph, it is the flag of the 51<sup>st</sup> *demi-brigade de ligne*.<sup>96</sup>

As Arnault later remarked in his memoirs, published in 1833, the massive folio volume was not a best-seller, for which he blamed two groups of malfeasant publishers who had “borrowed” from it: “It is not widespread in commerce, but is very well known by the compilers [*compileurs*] who thought it useful to take advantage of, and to foreigners who thought it advantageous to use it for counterfeit versions.”<sup>97</sup> The *compileurs* that Arnault invoked most likely refer to the hundreds of authors who, recognizing the popularity of Napoleonic history books, produced texts that were simply a compilation of stolen source material. The “foreigners” who made counterfeit versions of Arnault’s book constitute the other problematic group of publishers.

Arnault’s accusation against foreign counterfeiters was justified. The foreigners in this case were Belgian. In 1825, right after the publication of the elaborate illustrated folio edition of *Vie politique et militaire*, another historical account of Napoleon’s military feats appeared in Brussels, “adorned with twelve engravings.” The third edition of *Précis de Napoléon du Consulat et de l’Empire*, published by J.B. Dupont, directly copied at least ten of the lithographs in Arnault’s *Vie*.<sup>98</sup> The lithographs are

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<sup>96</sup> In the octavo edition’s reproductive etching of Vernet’s *Arcole* lithograph, the flag carried by Bonaparte appears to be white. The change to a white flag away from the historically precise flag of the regiment may have been related to the 1827 seizure of Vernet’s first lithograph, the *Childhood of Napoleon*. The white flag was probably a precautionary measure taken by the publishers of the next edition of the *Vie de Napoléon* to ensure that the *Arcole* lithograph would not be seized as well. For a description of the seizure and the appeals made by the publishers, see : “Nouvelles politiques,” *L’ami de la religion, journal ecclésiastique, politique et littéraire*, 22 décembre 1827, 188.

<sup>97</sup> Antoine Vincent Arnault, *Souvenirs d’un sexagénaire*, vol. IV (Paris: Librairie Duféy, 1833), 402. “[Elle] est peu répandue dans le commerce, mais elle est très connue des compileurs qui ont cru utile de la mettre à contribution, et des étrangers qui ont cru avantageux d’en donner des contrefaçons.”

<sup>98</sup> This edition of the book is not owned by the Bibliothèque nationale de France and is extremely rare. This may be a sign of its counterfeit status. The only copy that I have been able to locate is conserved in

unapologetically translated into engravings and are more abstract and less detailed than the originals. Of the ten counterfeited engravings, two are after Horace Vernet, *Napoleon's Childhood* and *Arcole*. This unauthorized copy of Vernet's *Arcole* (Fig. 3.26) lithograph is unsigned and features the same composition, though the lines are heavier and the details more spare.

This rapid multiplication of Vernet's lithographic illustration of the battle of *Arcole* does not end with its Belgian counterfeiters. The painting, displayed in the Salon of 1827, was also subject to a process of repeated and slightly altered copying. Vernet frequently turned to the engraver, Pierre Marie Jazet, to reproduce his paintings. Jazet paid Vernet 500 francs for the rights to reproduce *Arcole* in the form of an aquatint; the first proof was published in 1829 in a large, folio format (Fig. 3.27). The engraving replicates the drama of group accord from the painting and captures the exacting detail of the uniforms, the exploding wood, and the blood of the wounded soldier who protrudes into the foreground. Like Vernet's original lithograph that appeared in Arnault's history of Napoleon, Jazet's aquatint was also copied and sold with a few minor adjustments by the engraver Jean-Francois Charon (Fig. 3.28) and others, too numerous to cite. It is impossible to tell whether the Charon engraving is based on the painting or on Jazet's reproductive engraving, although it is more likely that Charon would have needed a printed copy of the image to produce his own version.

The fluidity of meaning that accompanies images of Bonaparte during the Restoration is directly related to the proliferation of his image in forms that are out of the control of authors, publishers and official administrators. The process of disseminating



*Arcole* across different kinds of media demonstrates that the image had a life well beyond its appearance in the Salon of 1827. The initial lithograph, the subsequent painting, the final aquatint reproduction, and the bevy of unauthorized copies of *Arcole* make it clear that by the mid-1820s in France, Napoleonic imagery constituted a pervasive phenomenon not tied to any one political constituency or supreme referent.

### **Lithography and the Sensibility of Immediacy**

Though lithography is itself a mechanical, highly mediated process, the medium was understood early on as a direct rendering of the hand of the artist, an expedient alternative to the laborious process of engraving. Lithography during the Restoration was more than just a new print medium – it was understood as a direct and transparent form of print making, as distinct from engraving. The period understanding of lithography motivated artists such as Vernet, Géricault and Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet to use their crayons to depict subjects that did not fit easily within established categories of artistic production such as contemporary battles, the social conditions for veterans of the First Empire, the urban poor and dispossessed. As with Horace Vernet's battle paintings, deciphering the meanings of these lithographs did not require a formal education and erudite understanding of "art," though the objects themselves were understood as a form of artistic expression. The body of war-related lithographs from the Restoration provides yet another example of the increasing acceptability of contemporary war as a subject for artistic engagement, this time as a direct expression of the artist's creative impulses in the form of drawings made on a stone.

The earliest official reaction to the medium in France occurred in the Academy's 1816 *Rapport* on lithography. The 1816 *Rapport sur la lithographie* betrays the early confusion over the status of the medium and a basic quandary over what the end result should be called. Lithographs are called "*Les gravures, ou plutôt les dessins,*" "engravings or more like drawings," somewhere in between original drawing and the familiar and established process of engraving.<sup>99</sup> The report framed lithography as a welcome relief from the tedious process of engraving with its replacement of the sensitive burin by the more flexible crayon and ink. The most positive and promising quality inherent in the medium was its supposed ability to transpose the waxy drawing on the stone onto a sheet of paper without the intervention of mechanical processes. The end product was therefore more faithful to the lithographer's hand. But this supposed unmediated quality did not come without its caveats. As the *Rapport* noted,

For as many who possess the precious gift of creation, or at the very least who are initiated into the secrets of the art of drawing, there are so many copyists who can only follow the traces of painters, and who can only arrive at a sort of perfection by mechanical means. It is only this class of laborious artists, worthy, but hardly equipped to understand the resources of art, for whom lithography can do some wrong.<sup>100</sup>

At its best, lithography could allow talented artists to promote the Academy's revered art of drawing, thought to be the primary building block of great history painting. But in the hands of a lesser artist, that is to say an artist who worked hard but lacked the skill of

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<sup>99</sup> "Rapport sur la lithographie, et particulièrement sur un recueil de dessins lithographiques, par M. Engelmann" in W. McAllister Johnson, *French Lithography, The Restoration Salons, 1817-1824* (Kingston, Ontario: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1977), 23.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 36. "Pour quelques graveurs qui possèdent le don précieux de créer, ou tout au moins qui sont initiés dans tous les secrets de l'art du dessin, combien cet art ne compte-t-il pas de copistes qui se bornent à suivre les traces de peintres, et qui ne peuvent arriver à une sorte de perfection que par les moyens mécaniques. C'est à cette seule classes d'artistes laborieux, estimables, mais peu propres à entendre les ressources de l'art, que la lithographie peut faire par la suite quelque tort."

drawing, lithography could present problems for the *beaux-arts*. This sense of propriety over the new medium in its *Rapport* and the trepidation over the possibility of less adept copyists using lithography attest to the Academy's stake in controlling its diffusion and practice at a time in France when the prized academic genre of history painting stood on increasingly unstable ground.<sup>101</sup>

The association between lithography and immediacy was one that became attached to the medium very early on in its development. This belief was not limited to the Academy. The value of immediacy was often discussed by both the medium's harshest critics and most enthusiastic supporters as its defining feature:

Lithography, this genre of engraving so rapid, so popular, expands the art of drawing: the advantage of possessing, with this ingenious process, the work itself of the painter, his touch, his genius is, without any intermediary expression, warmly admired by its enthusiasts; the caustic and loose pencil of our artists captures what we ridicule today, the scenes of popular and military habits [*moeurs*], and the comic episodes furnished by the big city.<sup>102</sup>

Lithography's value was conceived of as an unmediated link to the artist's hand, style, and more importantly, *esprit*. One of the most pervasive ideas within the early critical writing on the medium contended that the operation that transformed an artist's intimate drawing into a lithograph was direct, almost automatic. For many, the process of lithography produced a more honest, truthful image relative to the distance between artists and their final lithographic product:

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<sup>101</sup> For an extended discussion of the situation of history painting in the first years of the Bourbon Restoration and in particular, Géricault's relationship to it, see "Coda," in Thomas Crow, *Emulations, Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), 279-299.

<sup>102</sup> Une société de gens de lettres, *L'année française, ou mémorial des sciences, des arts et des lettres*, 150-151. "La lithographie, ce genre de gravure si expéditif, si populaire, donne un nouvel essor à l'art du dessin : l'avantage de posséder par ce procédé ingénieux l'œuvre même du peintre, sa touche, son génie, son expression sans intermédiaire, est vivement apprécié par les amateurs : aussi le crayon caustique et léger de nos artistes saisit-il les ridicules du jour, les scènes de mœurs populaires et militaires, et les épisodes comiques dont la grande ville fourmille."

Lithography, we have said, has become the means of improvisation that has allowed artists to indulge their natural verve, to immediate observation of nature, and in spreading the art of drawing, has increased the public's taste for art, and has given the artists [*dessinateurs*] the taste for truth.<sup>103</sup>

This commonly held understanding contended that lithography was a printing process seemingly without process, a direct transcription of the artist's thoughts. The notion that lithography was more truthful because of a lack of mediation between the artist and the subject represented is key to understanding the ways in which such images were valued. If lithography was thought to erase the boundaries between artists' thoughts and their visible, material expressions, then lithography was especially suited to Horace Vernet. Critics often discussed his paintings using language that was similar to way that lithography was understood as an unmediated expression of the artist's hand:

For all his verve, originality, and energy, he can rival anything that art has produced up until the present. In fact, with all of these imaginative qualities that I have described, he has also received, as though by inspiration, the talent to draw with an extraordinary control and facility. Nothing therefore confines him in his conceptions, and for a long time, his execution has been almost as rapid as his thoughts.<sup>104</sup>

This notion of Vernet's incredible ability to transmit his thoughts rapidly and directly from brush to canvas, without any kind of mediation, was widely held during the

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<sup>103</sup> Adolphe Thiers, "De la Lithographie et de ses progrès," *La Pandore* 259 (30 Mars 1824), in McAllister W. Johnson, *French Lithography, The Restoration Salons 1817-1824* (Kensington, Ontario: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1977), 47. "La lithographie, avons-nous dit, est devenue un moyen d'improvisation qui a permis aux artistes de se livrer à leur verve naturel, les a ramenés à l'observation immédiate de la nature, et qui, en répandant davantage les productions du dessin, a augmenté chez le public le gout de l'art, et chez les dessinateurs le gout de la vérité."

<sup>104</sup> M, *Revue critique des productions de peinture, sculpture, gravure, exposées au Salon de 1824* (Paris: J.G. Dentu, 1825), 93-94. "Mais dans quelle partie de l'art M. Horace Vernet s'est-il le plus distingué ? Je ne crains pas d'affirmer avec tout le monde que c'est dans la peinture dite de *genre*, et dans la peinture des batailles. Dans ces parties, il peut rivaliser pour la verve, l'originalité et l'énergie, avec tout ce que l'art a produit de mieux jusqu'à présent. En effet, avec toutes les qualités de l'imagination que j'ai décrites, il a reçu en outre, comme par inspiration, le talent de dessiner avec une fermeté et une facilité extraordinaires. Rien ne l'arrête donc dans ses conceptions, et depuis long-temps l'exécution chez lui est presque aussi rapide que la pensée."

Restoration and indeed, continued to be asserted throughout the five decades of his career.

Even among lithography's biggest detractors, the lithographs of Charlet and Vernet were singled out for praise. For example, the anonymous author of a book of criticism on the 1824 Salon exhibition held the medium in very low regard: "The multitude of productions, be they immoral or vulgar, which lithography has produced, the weapon that it has lent and continues to lend to factional passions, and moreover its weakness have almost inspired in me a distaste for this entire art."<sup>105</sup> The critic's disdain for the medium knew no bounds; throughout the entire article, he launched a series of scathing reproaches. "Even painters have neglected their works to produce these little scraps of paper which will soon go from the print seller's window to the dust of his boxes."<sup>106</sup> The invectives waver from accusing the medium of enflaming political passions to accusing it of being a passing fad.

The harshness of this criticism makes it all the more puzzling that the critic singled out the work of Vernet and Charlet as exceptions to this rule. For the critic, the merits of their lithographic productions were directly tied to the medium's expediency and immediacy as guarantors of the artists' direct expression: "All the better that the Vernets, Charlet and others use lithography to render the amusing bursts of their spirit. A genre that demanded more care would cool their verve and dim their originality."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 290. "La multitude des productions, soit immorales, soit grossières, auxquelles la lithographie a donné le jour, l'arme qu'elle a prêtée et prête encore aux passions de partie, puis enfin sa faiblesse même m'ont inspiré presque un dégoût pour cet art tout entier."

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 291. "Des peintres mêmes ont négligé leurs ouvrages pour produire des petits chiffons de papier qui sont passés rapidement de l'étalage du boutiquier à la poussière de ses cartons."

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 290. "Que les Vernet, les Charlet et autres se servent de la lithographie pour rendre les saillies spirituelles de leur esprit, rien de mieux. Un genre qui exigerait plus de soins refroidirait leur verve et éteindrait leur originalité."

Thus, in the proper hands, lithography can actually serve as a vehicle for rendering interior creative *esprit*. In this case, such a belief is made possible through the critic's idea of lithography as a material externalization of the artist's interior creative impulses, the "creative burst" of the artist captured for the privileged viewer in the form of a lithograph.

Within the context of France in the 1820s, the critic's allusion to political "passions" probably refers to opposition against Bourbon rule, the polarizing political issue of the period. The Bourbon government discouraged any representations of Napoleon and any military subject related to him and punished some offenders, such as the Pellerin firm in Epinal, with fines and prison time.<sup>108</sup> However, as we have seen with the case of Vernet's *Arcole*, there were countless exceptions to this policy on display in the Salons, the bookshops, and the print seller's windows during the Bourbon Restoration. Subjects related to the Napoleonic military were part of a politically problematic category for the Bourbon regime but they were still widely circulated. However, neither Charlet, nor Vernet were fined or imprisoned for any of their lithographs that dealt with subjects related to Napoleonic war. As historian Robert Goldstein has demonstrated, Restoration censorship can be characterized by its uneven application; there was no law that addressed the censorship of images until 1820, thus

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<sup>108</sup> Jean-Charles Pellerin was convicted in 1816 of "housing and merchandising seditious representations of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Imperial Army." He was tried and sentenced to six months prison, a six hundred franc fine and was held responsible for the cost of the trial. For more on censorship and the Pellerin firm, see Barbara Ann Day-Hickman, *Napoleonic Art: Nationalism and the Spirit of Rebellion in France (1815-1848)* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 36-47. The contrast between the government's treatment of Vernet and their treatment of the Pellerin publishing firm is noteworthy. Whereas Vernet was allowed to exhibit several paintings of Napoleonic subjects and reproduce them as prints, Pellerin broadsides were regarded by the government as more dangerous, perhaps because they were intended for a rural audience in the provinces.

giving artists complete freedom up until that point.<sup>109</sup> While lithographs such as those made by Vernet and Charlet could function as signs of dissent against the ruling order, it is problematic to assume that this was their only or most important significance.

By focusing on the marvels of direct expression and artistic “verve,” the critic exempted Charlet and Vernet from his denigration of the medium in general. But what is puzzling about this appraisal of Charlet and Vernet is how it implicitly ignores the political nature of their imagery in favor of issues of originality and amusement. Indeed, to confront the politically charged subject of Napoleonic veterans, Charlet and Vernet often made use of humor. In one typical lithograph by Vernet (Fig. 3.29), a disabled Napoleonic veteran plays “horsie” with a little girl posed on his functional leg, while his other leg is a wooden stump. Wooden legged veterans were something of a theme for both lithographers as they appeared in several lithographs by Charlet. In one (Fig. 3.30), two young children tell an aged veteran, “They say you were born with a wooden leg.” Visibly moved, the old soldier gestures at his leg and speaks. He sits on a bench attached to what could be a monument to battle, complete with a sculptural frieze depicting a cavalry charge. The frieze, which depicts war in terms of a heroic clash of forces, serves as a counterpoint to the veteran’s disability and the naïveté of the children. Charlet employed a veil of humor to acknowledge the discrepancy between France’s recent military past and the conditions of life in the peaceful present. The military triumphs of the past were serious business (epitomized by the inclusion of the frieze), but in Charlet’s lithographs, their seriousness was temporarily challenged through the comic, understood here in terms of the naïve line of questioning by children. This comic element, “a

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<sup>109</sup> Robert Justin Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth-Century France* (Kent, Ohio and London, England: The Kent State University Press, 1989), 99.

distanced and sustained engagement with the world in its negativity,” opened up the possibility of recognizing the contemporary consequences of history as an enduring part of everyday lived experience.<sup>110</sup>

Two lithographs made by Charlet depict the viewing of lithographs as a social activity. Not surprisingly, soldiers are an important element within the social space of viewing lithographs. The *Merchant of Lithographic Drawings* (Fig. 3.31) shows the stall of a lithograph vendor, who is pictured slumping, possibly napping, while two soldiers examine the numerous lithographs. A second lithograph (Fig. 3.32) represents a storefront of print shop beset by a gaggle of diverse social types all actively gazing and pointing at the lithographs on view. Soldiers are again featured prominently. Carle Vernet, Horace Vernet’s father, also made a lithograph (Fig. 3.33) which depicted the storefront of the Delpech lithograph shop. It too showed the experience of looking at lithographs as a form of social interaction. Adolphe Thiers, who was a supporter of Vernet’s painting, noted in an article the phenomenon of diverse groups of people viewing lithographs:

The public was grouped in front of a boutique, and contemplated the numerous lithographs that decorated it with the exquisite pleasure that brings them gay and biting truth, truth easy to understand, truth frozen in front of them, and often inspired by them...How men of different habits, morals, and spirits, stopped together before a soft sketch, and despite the diversity of their tastes, laugh nevertheless about the same subject, with the same sentiments and humorous pleasure.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Alex Potts, “The Romantic Work of Art,” in *Communities of Sense. Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Beth Hinderliter, et al. (Durham Duke University Press, 2009), 58.

<sup>111</sup> Adolphe Thiers, “De la Lithographie et de ses progrès,” *La Pandore* 259 (30 Mars 1824), in W. McAllister Johnson, *French Lithography*, 46. “Le public s’est groupé devant la boutique des étalagistes, et a contemplé les nombreuses lithographies qui les décorent avec la volupté que lui procure la vérité gaie et piquante, la vérité facile à comprendre, la vérité prise autour de lui, et souvent empruntée à lui-même. Que de classes, que de rangs confondus parfois en présence d’une charmante caricature de Charlet ou d’Horace Vernet ! Que d’hommes différens de costumes, de mœurs, d’esprit, arrêtes ensemble devant un léger



Thiers delighted in lithography's accessibility to different groups of people outside of the official space of the Salon and understood such scenes as evidence of the possibility of establishing social cohesion despite apparent class differences. As a theoretician of what would later become known as "conservative liberalism" and a future President of the Third Republic in the bloody aftermath of the Paris Commune, Thiers had a political interest in the production of consensus. While there is no doubt of lithography's radical political potentiality in the hands of an artist like Charlet during the Restoration, it was nevertheless already being recuperated for the staging of the illusion of social equality by those who wielded power in France.

## Conclusion

It was precisely this sort of cultural and class leveling which Baudelaire attacked in a section of his article, "Some French Caricaturists," published between 1857 and 1858, devoted to a scathing critique of Charlet. Baudelaire criticized Charlet for pandering to national sentiments, for producing art that was pleasing to the masses: "A drawing by Charlet is rarely a truth; it is almost always a caress directed at the preferred caste. There is nothing beautiful, good, kind, spiritual, only the soldier."<sup>112</sup> For Baudelaire, Charlet had created a body of work that repeated clichéd national sentiments to the point of rendering them insipid. Charlet was not alone in this tendency. The other figure Baudelaire associated with this sort of watered-down flattery of public enthusiasm

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croquis, et malgré la diversité de leurs goûts, riant néanmoins du même sujet, avec le même sentiment de plaisir d'hilarité."

<sup>112</sup> Baudelaire, *Critique d'art*, 207. "Un dessin de Charlet est rarement une vérité; c'est presque toujours une câlinerie adressée à la caste préférée. Il n'y a pas de beau, de bon, de noble, d'aimable, de spirituel, que le soldat."

for war was Horace Vernet. The poet routinely chastised Vernet throughout the 1840s and 1850s, after the artist had gained official government favor. While their work may have signified as a rallying point for those who wished to challenge the legitimacy of the Bourbon government during the Restoration, it also served a wider ideological purpose, as a body of visual imagery through which a common national past could be visualized and fractious social divisions could be covered up.

**Chapter 4:**  
**“We no longer produce anything but battles in a time when we no longer  
fight:” The (Over)production of Official War Imagery  
during the July Monarchy**

**Introduction: The July Monarchy and the Proliferation of War Imagery**

A critic reviewing the dozens of battle paintings at the 1837 Salon exhibition paused to consider what separated the paintings he saw before him from the ones made during the First Empire under Napoleon Bonaparte. The majority of the battle paintings on view were commissioned by King Louis-Philippe to fill the galleries of the historical museum at Versailles, which was the July Monarchy (1830-1848) government's ambitious attempt to garner public support through a didactic presentation of the nation's history. Though these representations of war were intended to honor France's history of military achievements as a living part of its contemporary national identity, the preponderance of freshly made battle paintings of past events suggested a troubling discrepancy to the critic. Ever since the treaties of 1815 that marked the end of the First Empire and of the nation's status as an international military superpower under Napoleon Bonaparte, French foreign policy strived to maintain the delicately held peace within

Europe and prevent “regional multilateral great power conflicts” from breaking out.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the battle paintings commissioned during the Revolution and First Empire, a period of continuous warfare and mass mobilization, the July Monarchy’s official embrace of military imagery occurred amidst a period of prolonged intra-European peace. This issue shaped the criticism of battle painting during the July Monarchy. As the critic for *L’Artiste* wrote:

One imagines a battle [painting] commissioned when spirits were filled with the great deeds it signaled, when the sound of success was on everybody’s mouths, and wonder and admiration in every heart. One imagines Napoleon charging Gros with representing the exploits of Nazareth or Eylau, and one is not surprised to see so much ardor and interest... One imagines Gérard retracing the day of Austerlitz when this victory shook all of Europe. Even more, it is now that all these men, all these triumphs, have grown in the memory of the people. For them, Napoleon has the stature of a demi-god, and his battles are the combats of giants; and our artists seek with difficulty to idealize these figures and these memories. This is why the battles that will garnish the walls of the palace of Versailles are generally without interest.<sup>2</sup>

For this critic, and many other during the period, battle painting became an impossible endeavor when set against recent French history’s “combats of giants.” From the vantage

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<sup>1</sup> This is the term used by the political scientist Sandra Halperin to characterize large-scale international conflicts such as the Napoleonic Wars. She argues that the period from 1815 to 1914 witnessed few of these kinds of wars because, “Europe’s monarchs and aristocracies feared that another major conflict within Europe would call into use the mass armies that, during and immediately after the Napoleonic Wars, had triggered revolutionary upheavals and threatened to destroy the social order.” She contends, however, that the period should not be understood as a peaceful one, owing to internal, civil struggles that occurred throughout nineteenth-century Europe. See Sandra Halperin, *War and Social Change in Modern Europe: The Great Transformation Revisited* (London and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 384, 119-120.

<sup>2</sup> “Salon de 1837, 5e article, peinture,” *L’Artiste*, no. 9 (1837): 113-14. “On conçoit une bataille commandée alors que les esprits sont pleins des hauts faits qui l’ont signalée, alors que le bruit du succès est dans toutes les bouches, que l’étonnement et l’admiration sont dans tous les cœurs. On conçoit Napoléon chargeant Gros de représenter les exploits de Nazareth ou d’Eylau, et l’on n’est pas étonné de voir dans l’œuvre de l’artiste tant de fougue et d’intérêt... On conçoit Gérard retraçant la journée d’Austerlitz, alors que cette victoire ébranlait l’Europe entière. Bien plus, c’est que maintenant tous ces hommes, tous ces triomphes ont grandi dans la mémoire du peuple. Pour lui, Napoléon a la taille d’un demi-dieu, et ses batailles sont des luttes de géants ; et nos artistes cherchent à peine à idéaliser ces figures et ces souvenirs. Voilà pourquoi les batailles qui vont garnir les lambris du palais de Versailles seront généralement dénuées d’intérêt.”

point of the peaceful present, the battle paintings on view at the Salon of 1837 appeared as empty, even futile gestures toward a grander, increasingly remote past.

In place of these memorable military contests that dominated the beginning of the century, King Louis-Philippe, the “Napoleon of peace,” forged a path of political stability and economic expansion.<sup>3</sup> War was understood by Louis-Philippe, many of his ministers and other European heads of state as a destabilizing force which threatened the delicately maintained intra-European *détente*. The mass mobilizations that came with large-scale international combats also brought with them the specter of revolution, something that European courts and the July Monarchy in particular, wanted to avoid. The July Monarchy’s policy of maintaining peace was often attacked as an indication of an inveterate weakness, a sign that the King, viewed as an archetypal *bourgeois*, did not want to sacrifice the growth of profits for the sake of engaging in armed conflict with other European powers. As we shall see, the charge that France’s reputation as a militarily redoubtable power was being sacrificed for the sake of protecting financial interests was one to which the July Monarchy government was particularly vulnerable.

In 1840, the age of France’s military power gained symbolic closure with the final burial of Napoleon’s body, exhumed from its grave on the island of St. Helena, in a specially constructed tomb at the Invalides, the French military hospital. At the urging of Adolphe Thiers, Louis-Philippe’s prime minister, a ship was dispatched to retrieve the Emperor’s body and an elaborate procession was staged upon the ship’s reentry into

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<sup>3</sup> Heinrich Heine ironically called King Louis-Philippe the “Napoléon de la paix.” See Heinrich Heine, *Lutèce: lettres sur la vie politique, artistique et sociale de la France* (Paris: Imprimerie J. Claye, 1855), 133.

France and the arrival of the body in Paris.<sup>4</sup> Though the public spectacle was originally conceived as a way of “exploiting the Emperor’s popularity in France,” it also unwittingly symbolized the end of an era.<sup>5</sup> That is how Heinrich Heine, an especially astute observer of French culture in the 1830s, understood the burial: “The emperor is dead and with him, the last old fashioned kind of hero has been extinguished. The new world of shopkeepers [*épiciers*] breathes easy, as though having been relieved of a brilliant nightmare. On the imperial tomb rises a new bourgeois and industrial era which admires an entirely different kind of hero, such as the virtuous Lafayette or James Watt, the cotton spinner.”<sup>6</sup>

When he came to power during a bloody three day revolution in July 1830 that ousted the Bourbon king Charles X, Louis-Philippe publicly staked his legitimacy as a ruler on his past military achievements and his devotion to French military glory. The regime trumpeted its commitment to French military action for the sake of popular support but dedicated itself to peace with France’s neighbors; this produced a political conundrum from the start. A proclamation made to the Chamber of Deputies on December 30 by Jacques Laffitte, who was one of the duc d'Orléans supporters in his ascension to the throne, put this problematic duplicity on display:

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Burton, “Vendôme/Invalides: The Paris of the Bonapartes (1802-1871),” in *Blood in the City. Violence and Revolution in Paris (1789-1945)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 78-80. For more on the construction of Napoleon’s tomb at the Invalides, see Michael Paul Driskel, *As Befits a Legend: Building a Tomb for Napoleon, 1840-1861* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon*, 155.

<sup>6</sup> Heine’s reference to James Watt as a “cotton spinner” came from the improvements Watt made to the Newcomen steam engine which was subsequently applied to the cotton gin. Heine, *Lutèce: lettres sur la vie politique, artistique et sociale de la France*, 161. “L’empereur est morte. Avec lui s’est éteint le dernier héros selon l’ancien goût, et le nouveau monde des épiciers respire à l’aise, comme débarrassé d’un cauchemar brillant. Sur la tombe impériale s’élève une ère bourgeoisie et industrielle, qui admire de tout autres héros, comme par exemple le vertueux Lafayette, ou James Watt, le filateur de coton.”

France will not permit the violation of the principle of non-intervention, but she will try her best to prevent compromising a peace that could have been saved. If war becomes inevitable, it needs to be proven to the world that we did not want it and that we only did it because we were placed in a position between war and abandoning our principles... We will continue to negotiate, but while negotiating, we will arm ourselves. In very little time, we will have, beyond our fortifications, 500,000 men in battle, well armed, well organized, well commanded; one million national guard will support them, and the King, if he is needed, will be at the head of them all.<sup>7</sup>

The passage starts out in steadfast commitment to maintaining peace and claims war as a last resort. In case France should be compelled to engage in armed combat with another state (importantly, the passage refers to European states), it would only be out of absolute obligation and not choice. The passage then takes a curious turn from non-intervention to a bold embrace of armed power: five hundred thousand men in the army, one million in the National Guard, and the power of the king could be ushered into battle “in very little time.” The split personality of the passage, half non-interventionist, half bellicose, serves as an apt characterization of July Monarchy’s relationship to war. It was important for Louis-Philippe to represent his commitment to arms in symbolic terms, and at the same time avoid plunging France back into a state of permanent war with its European neighbors.

The government’s commitment to peace meant that representations of war were asked to perform an urgent, if not impossible task: to represent France’s military

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<sup>7</sup> *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, ed. M.J. Madival, vol. XLIV (Paris: Société d’Imprimerie et Librairie administratives Paul Dupont, 1887), 701. “La France ne permettra pas que le principe de non-intervention soit violé, mais elle s’efforcera d’empêcher que l’on compromette une paix qui aurait pu être conservée. Si la guerre devient inévitable, il faut qu’il soit prouvé à la face du monde que nous ne l’avons pas voulue et que nous ne l’avons pas faite que parce que l’on nous plaçait entre la guerre et l’abandon de nos principes.....nous continuerions à négocier, mais en négociant, nous armerons. Sous très-peu de temps, nous aurons, outre nos places fortes, cinq cent mille hommes en bataille, bien armés, bien organisés, bien commandés ; un million de gardes nationaux les appuieront, et le roi, s’il en est besoin, se mettra à leur tête.”

achievement as an enduring component of contemporary civic life within a climate of extended peace and political will against waging the kinds of wars that defined the early nineteenth-century. While official war imagery has often been seen as reflective of political intentionality, this chapter will show that the government's efforts to use representations of war to elicit public support ultimately exposed the regime's duplicitous attitude toward war and peace. As I will argue, instead of proving the government's devotion to France's contemporary military glory, the phenomenon of war imagery's overabundance became the unintended subject of a lively critical discourse which focused on its material proliferation as much and sometimes more than on its subject matter. These critical rumblings suggested that the government was substituting material proliferation of war-related imagery in place of actual heroic military engagement, and in fact it was.

During the eighteen years of the July Monarchy's reign, officially commissioned visual representations of war proliferated on an unprecedented scale and across a startling variety of media, far eclipsing their production during the First Empire. To give some sense of the magnitude of this effort, over 173 paintings of military subjects were shown at Salon exhibitions during the July Monarchy from 1836 to 1838, eclipsing in just three years the 143 paintings of war-related subjects exhibited over the entire ten-year course of the First Empire.<sup>8</sup> While the official art of the July Monarchy has traditionally been understood as propaganda in support of the regime's political intentions, I argue that an examination of the discrepancy between the regime's foreign policy and its dedication to

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<sup>8</sup> These statistics are based on the listings of exhibited works in the Salon catalogues. Not included in this tally are portraits of generals or French rulers including Napoleon Bonaparte and Louis-Philippe d'Orléans. I counted 143 war-related subjects for the Salon exhibitions held from 1804 – 1814 and 173 for the three Salon exhibitions held between 1836 and 1838 during the July Monarchy.



the proliferation of official war imagery opens up new possibilities for understanding the relationship between art and politics during the period.

Government expenditures on war-related visual representations took the form of large-scale publicly oriented projects, most notably Louis-Philippe's historical museum at Versailles for which hundreds of battle paintings were commissioned and its associated print publication, the *Galeries historiques de Versailles*, the unrealized goal of which was to reproduce every single object displayed in the museum. These ambitious endeavors worked together as part of the same strategy of material abundance across different forms of media and technologies of visual reproduction, a phenomenon that I will account for in the pages that follow. This chapter accordingly considers the meaning of war imagery filling the historical museum at Versailles and its related publication not as successful propaganda for the government's political aims but rather as a set of material claims grounded in a proliferation of visual objects.

During the July Monarchy, critical invectives were especially targeted at battle painting; they focused not only on its overabundance but also on its mediocrity. The genre of battle painting became a symbol of the failure of history painting in general and called into question its ability to project a set of collective, civic values under a new government. There was however, another form of large-scale war imagery that escaped critical disdain, the painted battle panoramas of Jean-Charles Langlois. After examining the proliferation of officially-sponsored war imagery, this chapter will show how these privately produced, for profit, monumental circular canvases garnered nearly universal praise as surrogates for the experience of modern warfare and challenged the illusionistic limits of conventional battle painting. In the last part of this chapter, I will examine how

the period's most important battle painter, Horace Vernet, attempted to reinvigorate the genre of battle painting. He responded to critical challenges to the genre by translating a set of formal and material characteristics of the panorama to suit a new form of battle painting for France's contemporary military combats in Algeria, widely understood at the time as a weak substitute for the intra-European warfare of the First Empire.

### **The Affect of Horace Vernet's Battle Painting: Before and After 1830**

During the Bourbon Restoration, the duc d'Orléans and his coterie of supporters were able to make use of Napoleonic military imagery to align themselves against the ruling Bourbon regime. The future king's decision to commission four major battle paintings from Horace Vernet in 1820 provided him with a subtle way of setting himself apart from official power during the Restoration. Vernet's reputation as a rebellious, politically oppositional artist had been created in 1822, when one of the four battle paintings Louis-Philippe had commissioned from him, the *Battle of Montmirail*, was rejected from the Salon exhibition by government officials, as mentioned earlier. Taking advantage of this very public slight, Vernet mounted a private exhibition in his studio of the rejected painting and many other works based on Napoleonic subjects.<sup>9</sup> The private exhibition sealed his reputation as the foremost painter of the recent Napoleonic past. Though Vernet's depictions of France's former military exploits were not explicitly aligned with organized political opposition to the regime, they nevertheless became associated with liberal opposition to the Bourbon government during the Restoration.

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<sup>9</sup> Chaudonneret, *L'État et les artistes. De la Restauration à la monarchie de Juillet (1815-1833)*, 102-105.

When Louis-Philippe became king in 1830, he attempted to take advantage of the politicized connotations of Revolutionary and Napoleonic military events to legitimize his authority and lay claim to a broad base of popular support for his regime. A proclamation issued on the eve of his assumption to the throne made direct reference to one of the military campaigns that Horace Vernet had represented for the future king during the Restoration, the Battle of Jemmapes:

A republic would threaten to divide us terribly and would isolate us from the rest of Europe. The duc d'Orléans is a prince who is devoted to the ideals of the Revolution. The duc d'Orléans has never fought against us. The duc d'Orléans was at Jemmapes. The duc d'Orléans carried the tricolor into battle, and only the duc d'Orléans can wear its colors now; we will not have any others. The duc d'Orléans has committed himself: he agrees to the kind of constitution we have always wanted and accepted. His crown will come from the French people.<sup>10</sup>

The proclamation was authored by a group of wealthy opposition liberal elites who supported the duc d'Orléans' ascension to the throne. It was hastily composed at the home of Jacques Laffitte, the patron of Horace Vernet's largest battle painting made during the Restoration, *Napoleon Crossing the Bridge at Arcole* (1826). Alluding to Louis-Philippe's participation in illustrious battles of the Revolution and Empire suggested his devotion to *la patrie* without aligning him with any particular social group or any defined political agenda. This savvy political use of the wars of the Revolution and Empire to legitimize the ruling authority of Louis-Philippe also marked an important shift in terms of the ideological work that official representations of war were asked to perform after 1830. As the proclamation confirmed, France's recent military exploits no longer functioned within the context of an opposition politics as they did during the Restoration.

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<sup>10</sup> "Déclaration des députés faisant appel au duc d'Orléans," in *Louis-Philippe, l'homme et le roi, 1773-1850*, (Paris: Archives Nationales, 1974), 300.

For the first time since the treaties of 1815, representations of Revolutionary and Napoleonic war were put into the service of bolstering public support for a ruling government.

Charles Blanc, a committed socialist and critic of the July Monarchy, saw through the proclamation's attempt to collapse France's past military triumphs with the new Orleanist political establishment. In his *Histoire de dix ans* Blanc was incredulous: "By speaking of the tricolor flag and of Jemmapes to a crowd with little concern for political forms, the concern was to elevate the chosen member of the bourgeoisie through this national sentiment which the victories of the Republic and Empire had so powerfully exalted. Finally, the sovereignty of the people was invoked, the better to destroy it: old ruse of the cowardly ambitious."<sup>11</sup> Blanc's frustration revolved around the inability of the majority of French citizens to understand the references to France's past military glory as "political forms" that were being put into the service of a government which sought to limit the power of the people whom it supposedly served.

Writing retrospectively in 1847, his contempt for the regime was colored by events such as the 1834 massacre of elderly men, women and children by National Guard troops on the rue Transnonain. The event, which was connected to a series of working class insurrections that occurred in Paris and in the provinces from 1830-1834 was memorialized in a lithograph by Honoré Daumier and was aggressively censored by the

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<sup>11</sup> Louis Blanc, *La révolution française, l'histoire de dix ans*, vol. 1 (Bruxelles: Meline, Cans, et Compagnie, 1847), 117. "En y parlant du drapeau tricolore et de Jemmapes à une foule peu soucieuse des formes politiques, on intéressait à l'élévation de l'élu de la bourgeoisie ce sentiment national qu'avaient si puissamment exalté les victoires de la république et de l'empire. Enfin on invoquait, pour mieux la détruire, la souveraineté du peuple : vieille ruse des ambitieux sans courage!"

government.<sup>12</sup> Blanc contended that excitement over war imagery obscured the government's true intentions of marginalizing the rights of workers and enriching France's ruling classes. Within this line of thinking, it was in the political interests of the July Monarchy for representations of war to continue to elicit the same enthusiastic responses as they had since the Revolution.

By 1830, this affective response to representations of France's military past lamented by Blanc was something that critics had come to associate with Horace Vernet's battle paintings from the Restoration.<sup>13</sup> For the first Salon exhibition of the July Monarchy, in addition to several classically-inspired paintings that he sent from Rome where he was serving as the director of the French Academy, Vernet presented two of the battle paintings commissioned by Louis-Philippe in the 1820s, the *Battle of Jemmapes* and the *Battle of Valmy*. This not only publicly recalled Vernet's close bonds with the new regime but also affirmed the new artistic politics of the July Monarchy, which officially welcomed the representation of Napoleonic military subjects in the hopes of forging social cohesion and a stable government.

Like many commentators before him, Charles Lenormant, a close friend and associate of the powerful July Monarchy minister François Guizot, and author of an 1833 book on contemporary artists, *Les Artistes Contemporains*, understood Horace Vernet's battle paintings in terms of the enthusiastic responses they garnered at exhibitions.<sup>14</sup> His review of the Salon of 1831 contended that Vernet's *Jemmapes* and *Valmy* produced

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<sup>12</sup> David Kerr, *Caricature and French political culture, 1830-1848: Charles Philipon and the Illustrated Press* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 110-114.

<sup>13</sup> For more on the critical discourse surround Horace Vernet during the Bourbon Restoration, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>14</sup> This view of Vernet's battle paintings was echoed by Stendhal and Adolphe Thiers, to name just two.

what he called a “revolution in the arts,” which he characterized as a new kind of viewing relationship made possible through Vernet’s departure from the norms of the French classical tradition. “The crowd became accustomed to seeking out its own emotions in a painting of six feet, thrilled to see itself represented without bombast and almost without poetry, or at least without the only form of poetry that the French nation has ever known and does not allow for the painting of contemporary events except as a theatrical apotheosis.”<sup>15</sup> By “theatrical apotheosis,” Lenormant referred to the history paintings of contemporary Napoleonic subjects made during the First Empire by the students of Jacques-Louis David. In contrast to these celebrated paintings and the “poetry” they used to depict contemporary events, Vernet’s depictions of the same type of subjects were smaller in scale and avoided the high-minded visual rhetoric associated with French neoclassical painting. Instead of a single moment of narrative transcendence of a god-like hero (usually Bonaparte) typical of First Empire history paintings of military exploits, Vernet made use of a spread-out episodic narrative structure in which many actors simultaneously participated in the battle. In his battle paintings on view at the Salon of 1831, the triumphs of the French army were depicted as socially inclusive, collective deeds, befitting a government which had come to power on the heels of a popular revolution.

One of Horace Vernet’s most outspoken critics, Gustave Planche, doubted that Vernet’s battle paintings would continue to provoke the kinds of impassioned responses

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<sup>15</sup> Charles Lenormant, *Les Artistes contemporains*, vol. 2 (Paris: Alexandre Mesnier, 1833), 89. “La foule s’habitua à chercher ses émotions dans une toile de six pieds ; elle s’enthousiasma d’elle-même représentée sans emphase et presque sans poésie, sans cette poésie, au moins, la seule que la nation française eût connue, et qui n’admet la peinture des événemens contemporains que sous les formes de l’apothéose théâtrale.”

from viewers that they had during the Restoration. As Planche argued, after the July Revolution Vernet's work became unmistakably allied with the ruling government and no longer carried the oppositional charge it once had. "One remembers how *Jemmapes* and *Valmy* were banned during the last Restoration, and how the public, always eager to express its opposition to the foolish fears of power, did not hesitate to appear in droves at the studio of the artist."<sup>16</sup> In his review of the Salon of 1831, Planche homed in on the change in political fortune of Vernet's military imagery and connected it directly to the Revolution of 1830. "Confess it frankly," he wrote, "the memory of the enthusiasm with which we granted, or contributed to the success of M. Horace Vernet shames our taste [in art]. We have applauded, adored, and recommended him like a political pamphlet."<sup>17</sup>

With changed political conditions and a new regime in place, Planche asserted that Vernet's battle paintings had acquired new meaning:

Everything has been said about the merit of these compositions; but everything that has been said would not be worth saying today. The political merit has completely vanished...The glory of our last thirty years is no longer forbidden; we can talk about it at ease. The king, in the solemnities where he has spoken directly to us, has not hesitated to recall the great military events that M. Horace Vernet has retraced. How has he retraced them? That is the only question that one can pose today.<sup>18</sup>

Just as the fall of Napoleon had in 1815, the Revolution of 1830 revealed that the meaning of battle painting was entirely contingent upon political actuality as well as on

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<sup>16</sup> Gustave Planche, *Études sur l'école française (1831-1852)*, vol. 1 (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1855), 14. "On se rappelle que *Jemmapes* et *Valmy* furent proscrits sous la dernière restauration, et que le public, toujours empressé de manifester son opposition aux craintes si souvent et si ridiculement niées du pouvoir, ne manqua pas de se porter en foule à l'atelier de l'artiste."

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. "Avouons-le franchement : le souvenir de l'empressement avec lequel nous avons consenti, ou concouru, au succès de M. Horace Vernet fait honte à notre gout. Nous l'avons applaudi, adoré, préconisé comme un pamphlet."

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* "Tout a été dit sur le mérite de ces compositions ; mais tout ce qu'on a dit ne serait plus bon à dire aujourd'hui. Le mérite politique s'est complètement évanoui...La gloire de nos trente dernières années n'est plus proscrite ; on en parle à son aise. Le roi, dans les solennités où il s'adresse directement à nous, n'hésite pas à rappeler les beaux faits d'armes que M. Horace Vernet a retracés. Comment les a-t-il retracés ? Voilà l'unique question qu'on puisse poser aujourd'hui."

the public's shifting opinion of war. During the Bourbon Restoration, the prohibition of Revolutionary and imperial war imagery had produced a political charge made possible through contemporary political circumstances, and not necessarily by the images themselves. By 1831, Horace Vernet's battle paintings had become emblems of Orleans political authority and no longer signified for Planche as reminders of stifling Bourbon prohibitions of military glory.

Despite doubts that visual representations of the recent military past, and Vernet's in particular, no longer carried an affective charge after the July Revolution of 1830, the July Monarchy embraced war-related imagery as a means of positioning itself as a benevolent authority dedicated to France's citizens. Louis-Philippe continued to commission battle paintings from Horace Vernet as he had during the Bourbon Restoration, with one crucial difference. After 1830, the scale of Vernet's paintings increased dramatically. The four battle paintings that established Vernet's reputation during the Restoration, *Jemappes*, *Montmirail*, *Valmy*, and *Hanau* were all small-scale works relative to the larger scale traditionally reserved for history painting. Critics had lauded Vernet for painting contemporary military events in a diminutive scale. In the words of one enthusiastic supporter, the artist had "thankfully reduced national history painting to its true proportions: the French army uniform is not at all picturesque enough to be painted in a large format."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The subtext of this praise for Vernet's small battle paintings is a criticism against history painters during the First Empire, who embraced contemporary military subjects at the behest of Napoleon at the expense of classically inspired subjects that were the traditional domain of the *grand genre*. Une société de gens de lettres, *L'année française, ou mémorial des sciences, des arts et des lettres*, 104. "On doit lui savoir gré aussi d'avoir réduit la peinture historique nationale à ses véritables proportions : l'habit français n'est point assez pittoresque pour être peint en grand."



After Louis-Philippe assumed the throne, contemporary military subjects took on gigantic proportions; the largest paintings made by Vernet during the July Monarchy not only dwarfed his earlier work but also surpassed the size of the history-cum-battle paintings made by Jacques-Louis David and his students during the First Empire. For example, Vernet's *Battle of Montmirail* measured 178 x 290 cm - smaller than a typical First Empire battle painting made by a history painter, such as Antoine-Jean Gros' *Napoleon Visiting the Battlefield of Eylau* (1807) which measured 521 x 784 cm. Vernet's largest painting made for Louis-Philippe during the July Monarchy, the *Capture of the Smahla* (1845) measured an astonishing 489 x 2139 cm. The precipitous growth of the physical proportions of Horace Vernet's battle paintings after 1830 was an indication of the changed status of the artist's main patron, Louis-Philippe, who went from a figure of opposition under the preceding Bourbon regime to the ruler of the July Monarchy with the coffers to support an ambitious public arts program. The main point here is that the productive energy invested in representations of war took on a compensatory function as a means of filling the gap left by the absence of large-scale international conflicts. As we shall see, the monumental scale of Horace Vernet's battle paintings during the July Monarchy was just one facet of this productive effort, which extended to an entire logic of production across a range of domains of artistic practice.

The proliferation of representations of war under the July Monarchy government was not so much a demonstration of Louis-Philippe's power as a monarch, as an appeal for support that lay at the heart of the political philosophy of the regime. For Louis-Philippe and his ministers, the sovereignty of government power derived from gaining the consent of those whom the government ruled over; the king himself was only

sovereign insofar as he maintained a level of consent to exercise his powers. François Guizot, whose well-developed theory of sovereignty informed the political operations of the July Monarchy, claimed that the expansion of government power depended upon seeking out and opening channels of communication with the public. According to Guizot, public works and institutions were indispensable for bringing people into direct contact with their government. In the *History of the Origins of Representative Government* (1821-1822), Guizot affirmed that, “representative government does not attribute sovereignty as inherently residing in any one person - all its powers are directed to the discovery and faithful fulfillment of that rule which ought ever to govern their action; the right of sovereignty is only recognised on the condition that it should be continually justified.”<sup>20</sup>

Within the governing experiment that was July Monarchy liberalism, public expressions of government authority in the form of large-scale battle paintings projects like those commissioned from Vernet opened up valuable channels of political communication between government power and the people; they were the motor which drove the people’s recognition of government’s right to rule. For the leaders of the conservative liberal regime of the July Monarchy, the visual language of war offered an expedient mode of forging a broad base of public support for the sake of extending the reaches of governing power.

Alexis de Tocqueville, liberal statesman and democratic political theorist who supported the July Monarchy, succinctly summarized why the French liberal state required the symbolic evocation of war: “I do not wish to speak ill of war: war almost

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<sup>20</sup> François Guizot, *The History of the Origins of Representative Government*, trans. Andrew R. Scobel (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002), 52.

always broadens a people's mental horizons and elevates its character. In some cases it alone can prevent the excessive development of certain inclinations naturally produced by equality and must be considered the necessary remedy for certain inveterate diseases to which democratic societies are liable."<sup>21</sup> For Tocqueville, war served a purpose for the modern state akin to a medicine. War was curative, and even essential to curing the social ills in society. The production of war imagery was integral to maintaining the stability of the July Monarchy's new experiment in representative government even as the regime sought to eliminate the outbreak of large-scale international conflicts within Europe. The paradoxical need to acknowledge and flatter France's militaristic identity while maintaining internal stability explains the proliferation of government-sponsored war imagery during the period.

**Battle Paintings for the *Musée historique* at Versailles: “*We no longer produce anything but battles in a time when we no longer fight.*”**

In 1832, the newly appointed King Louis-Philippe d'Orléans began to renovate the dilapidated Château de Versailles into a massive French history museum to serve as a powerful political symbol of the recently established constitutional monarchy. The project of transforming Versailles into a public, educational space constituted the regime's most visible attempt to engage its citizenry through what it hoped would be a visually stimulating and accessible official version of history. Upon its completion in 1837, the museum boasted over 4,000 works of art, many of which had been

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<sup>21</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 649. Cited in Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire, The Rise of Imperial Liberalism and Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 191.

commissioned especially for the space. Louis-Philippe originally sought to finish the entire museum in less than two years, with a projected opening date of 1834. However, the ambitions of the project grew and the museum was not inaugurated until July 1837.<sup>22</sup> This massive public works project, paid for by Louis-Philippe's *liste civile*, embodied one of the most fundamental governing philosophies of the coterie of doctrinaire liberals who had helped the regime come to power, namely the importance of bringing its citizens into contact with publicly oriented manifestations of governing authority.<sup>23</sup>

The important ideological role accorded to war imagery during the July Monarchy was made clear by its prominence at the historical museum of Versailles. Various types of pictures filled the galleries of the historical museum, ranging from large-scale battle paintings to smaller scale genre paintings, sculptures and watercolors. Louis-Philippe requisitioned for the museum many of the previously made history-cum-battle paintings by Gros, Gérard, and Girodet and also commissioned hundreds of new battle paintings from contemporary artists, including Horace Vernet. The small-scale watercolors were commissioned from the *Dépôt de la guerre* and were executed by artists working for the *Dépôt*, under the orders of its director, General Pelet. Louis-Philippe also requisitioned a large collection of watercolors made by the *ingénieurs-géographes* during the First Empire from the iconographic collection of the *Dépôt de la guerre*; these formed the bulk of the *Galerie des aquarelles*.<sup>24</sup> In the museum, representations of military exploits were

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Gaetgens, *Versailles de la résidence royale au musée historique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1985), 89.

<sup>23</sup> Craiutu writes: "Those who exercised political power, argued Guizot, must open and institutionalize new channels of communication in society in keeping with the demands of publicity." Aurelian Craiutu, "Rethinking Political Power: The Case of the French Doctrinaires," *European Journal of Political Theory*, no. 2 (2003): 138.

<sup>24</sup> The *Dépôt de la guerre* possesses letters between the officials at the Ministry of War and the planners of Versailles which demonstrate that military experts had a hand in the iconographic planning of the museum.

cobbled together, thus assembling genres of art that had traditionally been understood as distinct.

Dozens of painters were given commissions for battle paintings, with twenty-nine paintings ordered for the Gallery of Battles alone. Of all of the renovations at Versailles, the Gallery of Battles was the most extensive. Plans for this section of the museum began in 1833. An entire wing of the building measuring 120 meters long and 13 meters wide was reconfigured to make room for thirty-three large-scale battle paintings (Fig. 4.1). This was a vast space for the display of illustrious military events.<sup>25</sup> The chronological span of the battles covered two millennia, beginning with the battle of Tolbiac of 424 and ending with the battle of Wagram of 1809. Napoleonic battles feature prominently in the Gallery, with five out of the thirty-three battles dedicated to battles directed by Bonaparte. As Thomas Gaetgens has shown, the archival evidence indicates that the choice of the battles kept changing throughout the four years of work on the gallery with no clear iconographic or political agenda guiding the selection.<sup>26</sup>

Previous studies of the historical museum at Versailles have focused on its uniqueness as a space for historicist illustration of national events of the French past. According to Michael Marrinan, the space enacted a “simulation of historical narration” and disarmed any political traces from the image of Napoleon or from parts of France’s radical past.<sup>27</sup> This interpretation maintains that the “richly nominative” historical

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<sup>25</sup> Gaetgens, *Versailles de la résidence royale au musée historique*, 104.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-21.

<sup>27</sup> Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis Philippe, Art and Ideology in Orleanist France, 1830-1848*, 207. See also, Michael Marrinan, “Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe’s Versailles,” in *The Popularization of Images, Visual Culture under the July Monarchy*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Gabriel P. Weisberg, The Princeton Series in Nineteenth-Century Art, Culture, and Society (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 113-143. Marrinan’s highly original and exhaustive study of the official art of the July Monarchy demonstrated the painstaking measures that Louis-Philippe and his advisors took

museum at Versailles represented France's history as an accessible, publicly-oriented narrative in keeping with the regime's political agenda, with aesthetic criteria involving style, "school" and genre largely neglected.<sup>28</sup> Though the history museum at Versailles offered the regime an opportunity to use visual imagery to its own political advantage, there is no question that contemporary art critics recognized that the official version of history displayed before them failed to measure up to the perceived eminence of its referents. The quantity of battle paintings on view at Salon exhibitions prior to and just after the inauguration of the historical museum in 1837 gave physical expression to the perception that France's best days were firmly located in the past.

Nearly all of the battle paintings commissioned by Louis-Philippe for the historical museum first appeared at Salon exhibitions before being taken to their final destination at Versailles. Critics understood that the battle paintings displayed before them were destined for the museum and evaluated them with this fact in mind. The critic writing for the *Journal des artistes* was shocked by the sheer number of battle paintings on display at the Salon of 1836:

The first observation that strikes one when entering the Salon, is that the totality of paintings ordered for the *Musée historique* de Versailles are battle subjects, subjects taken from all periods of our annals. We would have imagined that the *historical* museum would not only have contained the painted history of our combats, but that everything that could have immortalized our kings, ours lawmakers, our great citizens, in whatever rank they occupied, would be in the domain of this vast and important collection. It appears that this is not the case; the *livret* resembles a military guidebook, where armed events are catalogued in a number around 300: We no longer produce anything but battles in a time when we no longer fight.<sup>29</sup>

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to ensure that officially produced art properly represented the imperatives of the regime. His study of the regime's political artistic agenda has informed my own reading of the reception of these official works of art.

<sup>28</sup> Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles," 139.

<sup>29</sup>"Salon de 1836, 3e article," *Journal des artistes*, no. 11 (1836): 163. "La première observation qui frappe en entrant au Salon, c'est que la totalité des tableaux commandés pour le *Musée historique* de Versailles,

For this critic, there were far too many battle paintings at the Salon of 1836. He puzzled why the history of France should be presented almost exclusively in terms of its battles. The paradox of the relative peace that reigned over Europe and the presence of such a large number of battle paintings was not lost on the critic. The absence of international armed combat between nations that had defined the early part of the nineteenth century made the material presence of so many battle paintings appear incongruous and excessive. The couplet at the end of the paragraph, “We no longer produce anything but battles in a time when we no longer fight,” demonstrates the critic’s awareness of the disparity between the state’s material encouragement of image-based war and its lack of enthusiasm for actual armed combat. The physical profusion of so many battle paintings struck the critic as more important than the historical subjects those paintings represented.

The couplet that the critic used to dramatize the discrepancy between the high number of battle paintings on view and the absence of large-scale international armed conflict appeared in several other sources from the period. In Alexandre’s Lenoir’s review of the Salon of 1837, he wrote: “I have even more paintings to examine, but I overhear in front of all these mediocre paintings headed for the Versailles gallery: *Do we*

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sont des sujets de bataille, sujets pris à toutes les époques de nos annales. Nous avons imaginé que le Musée *historique* ne contiendrait pas uniquement l’histoire peinte de nos combats, et que tout ce qui a pu immortaliser nos rois, notre magistrature, nos grands citoyens, dans quelque rang qu’ils aient vécu, était dans le domaine de cette vaste et importante collection. Il paraît qu’il n’en est pas ainsi ; le livret ressemble à un répertoire militaire, où des faits d’armes sont catalogués au nombre de deux à trois cents : On ne fait plus que des batailles, Depuis que l’on ne se bat plus.”

only make battles in a time when we no longer fight?”<sup>30</sup> One year later, the critic writing for the *Journal des artistes* dismissed battle painting as “an occupation that has become quite vulgar since we no longer fight.”<sup>31</sup> Alphonse Karr used the phrase to mock the battle paintings on display at the Salon of 1840: “As for battles, only one is ever painted and it’s always the same. A battle always represents a place and a moment where no one fights, or rather where one no longer fights.”<sup>32</sup> The phrase was also deployed in a vaudeville play from 1837 about a bourgeois master painter, *Crouton, Master of his School or a True Artist-Painter*: “Here are a hundred combats for Versailles/ In truth the French people / Have never seen so many battles/ Since there has been peace.”<sup>33</sup>

More surprising than the pervasive use of this refrain as a way of underscoring the disproportionate number of battle paintings in Salon exhibitions relative to the peace within Europe is its original source: a section of an 1819 vaudeville by the same playwrights as *Crouton* about the proliferation of a form of war imagery in an altogether different medium, lithography: “Long live lithography!/ It’s the rage all over;/ Large, small, ugly, pretty,/ The crayon retraces everything./ The entire boulevard/ Is now a Salon/ Where without even posing,/ Everyone finds themselves on display!/ The walls are covered/ With soldiers and noble feats/ One sees only battles/ Since we have had only

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<sup>30</sup> Alexandre Lenoir, “Mémoires, le Salon de 1837,” *Société des études historiques* 33 (1837): 111.

“J’aurais encore bien des tableaux à signaler; mais j’entends dire devant toutes ces toiles médiocres, destinées à la galerie de Versailles : *On ne fait donc plus que des batailles depuis qu’on ne se bat plus ?*”

<sup>31</sup> “Salon de 1838, 5e article,” *Journal des artistes*, no. 12 (1838): 162. “métier devenu bien vulgaire depuis qu’on ne se bat plus.”

<sup>32</sup> Alphonse Karr, “Musée du Louvre,” *Les guêpes* (mars 1840): 66. “Pour ce qui est des batailles,—on n’en peint qu’une, toujours la même.—Une bataille représente toujours un endroit et un moment où on ne se bat pas,—ou bien où on ne se bat plus.”

<sup>33</sup> Marie-Emmanuel Guillaume Marguerite Théaulon de Lambert and Jules Joseph Gabriel de Lurieu, *Crouton chef d’école ou le peintre véritablement artiste. Tableau en un acte. Représenté pour la première fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre des variétés le 11 avril 1837* (Paris: Nobis, 1837), 14. “Voilà cent combats pour Versailles/ En vérité chez les Français/ On ne jamais vu tant d’batailles/ Que d’puis qu’on est en temps de paix.”



peace.”<sup>34</sup> According to the art critic Charles Blanc, these lines were “overheard everywhere” during the Restoration, the period when the medium of lithography came into social use in France.<sup>35</sup> Whereas the original source warmly made light of the proliferation of lithographic prints of France’s military feats appeared all over city streets, the disdain of critics who invoked the overabundance of battle painting during the July Monarchy was much more pointed. By virtue of lithography’s properties as a relatively inexpensive, expedient and small-scale form of visual reproduction, abundance was one of its defining characteristics. In this original context, the phrase described with a detached ironic air the egalitarian circulation of war-related lithographs in spaces outside the reaches of official culture. Lithographs, by their very reproductive nature, were expected to abound. But as singular and unique works of art, battle paintings were not. The pervasive appropriation of a phrase originally used to describe the proliferation of a reproductive medium by critics of battle painting during the July Monarchy demonstrates how the material values attached to lithography during the Bourbon Restoration provided a handy rhetorical model for figuring the troubling excess of a more traditional medium, painting.

As the critical embrace of the couplet underscored, Louis-Philippe’s attempt to construct a richly illustrative, didactic space to showcase France’s military triumphs was overshadowed by the material problem of overabundance. One artist in particular became emblematic of this problem, Horace Vernet. He painted three of the five

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<sup>34</sup> Jules Édouard Bouteiller, *Histoire complète et méthodique des théâtres de Rouen*, vol. 2 (Rouen: Giroux et Renaux, 1867), 78. “Vive la lithographie !/ C’est une rage partout : / Grands, petits, laide, jolie,/ Le crayon retrace tout./ les boulevards tout au long/ A présent sont un salon/ Où, sans même avoir posé/ Chacun se trouve exposé ! / On tapisse les murailles/ De soldats et de hauts faits, / On ne voit que des batailles/ Depuis que l’on a la paix.”

<sup>35</sup> Charles Blanc, *Grandville* (Paris: Emile Audois, 1855), 8.

Napoleonic battles for the historical museum's Gallery of Battles: *Iéna*, *Wagram*, and *Friedland* (Fig. 4.2). All were displayed at the Salon of 1836 and solicited equally scathing criticism. Each painting represented marginal episodes from each battle but did not represent actual combat. All three depict Napoleon on horseback, giving orders or receiving information about the battle. They present Napoleon as a rational decision maker who is unquestionably in a position of authority over the battle, but they stop short of depicting combat. In a period when the absence of war from French contemporary life was routinely commented upon, Vernet's decision to represent war devoid of heroic combat did not go unremarked. Critics took note of the absence of armed conflict and excoriated Vernet for removing the dramatic excitement of battle from the frame: "The three *so called* battles of Iéna, Friedland, and Wagram, by Horace Vernet, are three new forms of proof of the facility and rapid execution of the modern *fa presto*, but that is all."<sup>36</sup>

Gustave Planche, who had never been a supporter of Horace Vernet, joined the chorus of critics who understood the military imagery destined for Louis-Philippe's historical museum in terms of its physical excess. Vernet's paintings epitomized this tendency. In his review of the Salon of 1836, Planche attacked Vernet for his excessive output. Seeing past the subjects *Wagram*, *Iéna*, and *Friedland*, Planche focused instead on the square footage of canvas that Vernet covered. France's military glory was overshadowed by the bombast of proportion that grew out of Vernet's speed of execution:

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<sup>36</sup> "Exposition de 1836, 3e article," *Journal des artistes*, no. 11 (1836): 165. "Les trois *soi-disant* batailles d'Iéna, de Friedland et de Wagram, par M. Horace Vernet, sont trois nouvelles preuves de la facilité et de la rapidité d'exécution du *fa presto* moderne : mais c'est tout."

M. Horace Vernet occupies an immense space in the Salon this year, and not only has he covered hundreds of square feet, but then, if one must believe his friends and panegyrist, he required, to achieve this incredible task, less time than the weaver needed to cross the threads of the canvas. It appears that the author has the ambition of becoming the official supplier to the royal museums.<sup>37</sup>

Vernet's production of battle paintings is likened to the canvas-maker's production of canvases. Planche implicated Vernet in a mode of production of *objects* rather than art: the notion of artistic production is elided entirely from the passage; he is a "supplier." The focus is instead upon Vernet as a maker of utilitarian things, not as the eminent painter of France's military glory.

When Vernet's paintings moved from the Salon to Versailles, the criticism remained virulent. That is, although the viewing context changed, the critical problems remained intact.

The three paintings of Horace Vernet that end this long series of high achievements of our ancestors and our contemporaries have been severely enough judged at the last Salon, and nevertheless they contain beautiful things; but these are not battles; they are episodes of the life of the Emperor and it is regrettable that the painter of the Sano-Sierra [*sic*] did not otherwise conceive these three great days, *Iéna*, *Friedland*, and *Wagram*. Unable to surmount the difficulty up front, perhaps he thought he needed to get around, so to speak, translating on such small canvases such large pages of our military history.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Planche, *Etudes sur l'école française (1831-1852)*, 330. "M. Horace Vernet occupe un espace immense au Salon de cette année, et non seulement il a couvert de peinture plusieurs centaines de pieds carrés, mais encore, s'il faut en croire ses amis et ses panégyristes, il lui a fallu, pour achever cette prodigieuse besogne, moins de temps qu'au tisserand pour croiser les fils de la toile. Il paraît que l'auteur ambitionne la fourniture générale des musées royaux."

<sup>38</sup> "Musée historique de Versailles," *La Vogue*, 20 juillet 1837, 1. "Les trois toiles d'Horace Vernet qui terminent cette longue série des hauts faits de nos ancêtres et de nos contemporains ont été assez sévèrement jugées au dernier salon, et cependant elles renferment de grandes beautés ; mais ce ne sont pas là des batailles, ce ne sont que des épisodes de la vie de l'empereur, et il est à regretter que le peintre de la bataille de Sano-Sierra [*sic*] n'ait conçu autrement ces trois grandes journées, *Iéna*, *Friedland*, et *Wagram*. Peut être a-t-il cru devoir tourner pour ainsi dire, ne pouvant la vaincre en face, la difficulté de traduire, sur d'aussi petites toiles, de si grandes pages de notre histoire militaire."

The critic's acerbic irony is evident: each of Vernet's three paintings is quite large (465 x 543 cm); calling them "small" was a thinly veiled way of saying that it was Vernet who had made them appear this way through his choice of insignificant anecdotal details. As most critics had remarked when viewing the paintings at the Salon, these three paintings did not represent battles at all; they were marginal episodes far removed from the drama of armed combat. The impact of that discrepancy to this critic was to demand an even larger format than the one Vernet used: the events represented in the paintings made France's illustrious battle history appear inconsequential and called attention to the gap between the historical grandeur of the event and its pictorial appearance. For the critic, Vernet's representation of these three muted narrative moments was evidence that the painter had failed to accommodate the true grandness of these Napoleonic battles. Significantly, the critic's understanding of *Wagram*, *Iéna*, and *Friedland* as historical events is expressed through the concept of their material size; yet again, their failure to represent war rests in a refusal of the subject matter to be contained within the size of the frame.

Vernet's failure to represent the battle vividly represents a larger problem during the period, namely the vast difference between the received *idea* of the Napoleonic military past and its visual painted expression. Battle painting's inability to contain the historical importance of its depicted events resulted in a critical discourse that focused on the problem of scale. This idea that past military achievements were so important that they simply could not be contained in any gallery space became a critical cliché in the reviews of the Salon of 1836. Louis-Philippe's ambitious project of constructing a unified historical narrative of France's military endeavors foundered partly on the failure

of the genre of battle painting to represent a cherished idea of the grandeur of war. Instead of demonstrating military prowess, the battle paintings at Versailles displayed in starkly material terms the impossibility of conjuring military glory through visual representation.

The critical rancor caused by the proliferation of battle paintings in 1836 and 1837 coincided with a new low point for France's military morale. France's conquest of Algeria, begun in 1829 and extended when Louis-Philippe came into power in 1830, was going very poorly. A series of highly publicized defeats had marred France's attempt to establish a permanent colony. The retreat of the French army at the walled city of Constantine had created a fervor in the press. The officer in charge of Algeria, General Clauzel, was blamed by both the press and the government for France's inability to maintain a stable presence in Algeria. The exchange between the shamed Clauzel and the government became a public affair, eagerly followed by the press.<sup>39</sup> This only amplified the perceived disjuncture between France's contemporary lack of military glory and the overblown display of military imagery at Versailles.

The malaise within contemporary France was explicitly connected to France's military decline and the sense that the once great conquering nation no longer played any important role in determining international politics. Ximénès Doudan was a close advisor to the family of Louis-Philippe's powerful minister of public instruction, and later of foreign affairs, Victor de Broglie, who famously dismissed Algeria as a "box at the opera."<sup>40</sup> Doudan was therefore well placed to comment upon France's military

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<sup>39</sup> H.A.C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy, A Political History, 1830-1848* (London: Longman, 1988), 248-249.

<sup>40</sup> Blanc, *La révolution française, l'histoire de dix ans*, 305.

history during the July Monarchy. His duties as tutor to the Broglie family included discussing the latest state and international developments with them. In many of his letters to the family, he commented on the lack of glory that had been in such ample supply during the Revolution and Empire. For Doudan, the grand deeds and characters of the past created a contemporary stupor in French society:

How the shadows extend over everything so fast !...There is no more Revolution or Empire. There is no longer anyone who knew Mirabeau, had personally seen Bonaparte returning from Italy, given advice to the Emperor and discussed with him all of these gigantic plans, of which there is nothing left but at the Versailles museum. We have not done great things ourselves, but we have seen fall generations much stronger than us.<sup>41</sup>

Doudan sensed an acute lack of heroics in French contemporary life; the *grands hommes* of the Revolution and Empire were now either ailing or dead. Instead of heroic military encounters, France was now engaged in the unheroic endeavors of strengthening its economy through private enterprise and of maintaining the *détente* among Europe's courts. Versailles was like a mausoleum of France's storied past: instead of inspiring contemporary generations, the museum stood as the material embodiment of an eclipsed era.

### **Guiding Visitors: *Musée Historique de Versailles* and the Scale of Reproduction**

The critical problems that plagued the historical museum at Versailles implicated visual media beyond painting. Printed guidebooks of the historical museum were important for the way that the project was understood and provided a larger public with

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<sup>41</sup> Letter XL in Ximénès Doudan, *Mélanges et lettres*, vol. 1 (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1876), 223-224. Comme l'ombre s'étend vite sur tout!...Il n'y a plus de Révolution et d'Empire. Il n'y a plus personne qui ait connu Mirabeau, vu familièrement Bonaparte revenant d'Italie, conseillé l'Empereur et discuté avec lui tous ces plans gigantesques, dont il ne reste plus rien qu'au musée de Versailles. Nous n'avons pas fait grande chose nous-mêmes, mais nous avons vu tomber des générations bien autrement fortes que nous.

the opportunity to gain access to the collection without taking the train or hiring a carriage to go out to Versailles. Yet these guidebooks also played a crucial role in signaling the material failure of the museum. Though the publication of the official museum guidebooks has been seen as mere accessory to the historicist project of the museum, it constitutes an important object of inquiry in its own right.

The political ideology underlying the ambitious project for the historical museum at Versailles was closely linked to the belief that representative government power needed continually to justify itself in order to maintain authority. The importance of publicizing projects and institutions informed Louis-Philippe's decision to give the retired military engineer and inventor with no artistic background, Charles Gavard, an exclusive contract to reproduce every object displayed in the museum in a massive publication entitled *Galeries historiques de Versailles*, which would serve as the official guidebook. The production and controversial reception of Gavard's *Galeries Historiques de Versailles* highlights the pitfalls of the July Monarchy government's attachment to publicity as a political strategy.<sup>42</sup>

Louis-Philippe recognized that his museum could only be a valuable tool for bolstering his authority insofar as reproductions of its collections could be disseminated to as wide an audience as possible. More to the point, these guides would have been aimed at a predominantly middle class audience capable of paying a minimum of 50

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<sup>42</sup> Michael Marrinan examined a different historical museum guidebook, Jules Janin's *Versailles et son musée*, which appears to have been commercially related to Gavard's guidebook. He called attention to the ways in which historical museum guidebooks allowed Louis-Philippe's icono-political agenda of historical narration to be enacted through a complex interaction between historical prose of the text and the historicized visual objects on display. See Marrinan, "Historical Vision and the Writing of History at Louis-Philippe's Versailles."

centimes per week, the cost of the cheapest edition (Fig. 4.3).<sup>43</sup> The guide was published at the king's own expense and for the alleged purposes of immortalizing the museum through the long-lasting medium of engraving. Louis-Philippe is reported to have confided in Gavard that his museum "is not eternal, a fire or a revolution could destroy it without leaving a trace; but the scattered sheets of your large book are sheltered from these opportunities for destruction."<sup>44</sup> Sensitive to the possibility of future revolutions or the specter of natural disaster, Louis-Philippe sought a more stable means of ensuring the legacy of his historical museum in the form of Gavard's publication. When the historical museum at Versailles was unveiled to 1,000 government-invited attendees on April 26, 1837, Gavard was provided with a small room to sell advance copies of his publication, thus demonstrating the close ties between the government and Gavard's publication.<sup>45</sup>

Charles Gavard gained fame in 1830 for his invention of a new perspective-based drawing machine, the diagraph. Through an elaborate system of interconnected mechanical parts, the diagraph allowed users to manipulate a pencil along a point that is kept in constant relation to what the eye beholds (Fig. 4.4).<sup>46</sup> To make the instrument work, one looked through a lens fixed on the object to be copied, and guided a small handle to trace the lines seen through the lens. These drawings then served as the basis

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<sup>43</sup> The daily wage for a worker during the July Monarchy was approximately 3.50 Francs. For the vast majority of France's working class population, this price would have been prohibitive. Louis-Philippe's historical museum was aimed at a distinctly bourgeois audience, which helps to explain why Gavard's diagraph, as an emblem of modern technological "progress" would have been especially attractive to Louis-Philippe.

<sup>44</sup> V. de Mars, "Chronique de la quinzaine," *Revue des deux mondes* (1851). "Mon ouvrage n'est pas éternel, une incendie, une révolution peut en détruire sans en laisser des traces ; mais les feuillets épars de votre grand livre sont à l'abri de ces chances de destruction."

<sup>45</sup> "Inauguration du palais et des galeries historiques de Versailles," *Journal des artistes*, no. 13 (1837): 206. "M. l'intendant général de la liste civile, toujours empressé de favoriser les belles entreprises, a mis à la disposition de M. Gavard, chargé de reproduire par la gravure ce monument vraiment national, une salle où se vendront les livraisons des *Galeries historiques de Versailles*."

<sup>46</sup> David Tomas, *Beyond the Image Machine, A History of Visual Technologies* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 106-107.



for the reproductive engravings in the publication, and were transferred to steel plates using another machine that Gavard had perfected, the pantograph. Gavard's diagraph deskilled the art of graphic reproduction, which had long been the domain of highly-trained reproductive engravers. It also decreased the amount of time it took to reproduce works of art as engravings.<sup>47</sup> The fact that Gavard, and not a publisher who specialized in reproductive engraving, was awarded the monopoly to reproduce the contents of Versailles was a sign of the July Monarchy government's commitment to publicity as one of the bases of maintaining and extending governing power.

Gavard's diagraph provided a rough sketch quickly without having first to make a reduced-size copy of the original work as a model for an engraver. The inventor emphasized the diagraph's relative speed in the first pages of each edition of the *Galeries historiques de Versailles*, which also served as a form of publicity for the drawing machine itself and its illustrious inventor, Charles Gavard:

Never has there ever been a reproduction simultaneously more original, more meticulous and more complete of a more immense, more vast and more complete monument...this immense work, that would have demanded 50 years of patience and labor, will be accomplished in less than four years, as little time as it took King Louis-Philippe to finish the new Versailles.<sup>48</sup>

Gavard even advertised his diagraph in the publication, letting his readers know that it was available for purchase at his shop.

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<sup>47</sup> For the special status of reproductive engraving in France during the nineteenth century, see Bann, *Parallel Lines, Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Gavard, "Prospectus," in *Galeries historiques de Versailles, dédiées à S. M. la reine des français* (Paris: Imprimerie d'Eugene Duverger, 1837), 2. "Jamais reproduction plus originale, plus minutieuse et plus complète à la fois n'aura été faite d'un monument plus immense, plus vaste et plus rempli partout ... ainsi cette œuvre immense, qui eût demandé cinquante années de patience et de travail, sera accomplie en moins de quatre ans, aussi peu de temps que le Roi Louis-Philippe lui-même aura mis à achever le nouveau Versailles."

The *Galleries Historiques de Versailles* was published in three different formats, a small 50 centime booklet, a 2 franc 50 centime folio, and finally an opulent 5 franc folio edition. From 1837 through 1841, one or two new volumes became available every Thursday. The prospectus at the front of every *livraison* announced the intentions of these multiple editions: “This book is before all else destined to be popular; however, next to the edition made for everybody we will have a separate edition, where all of the magnificence of printing, of paper, of ornament, will be applied with a profusion that we will call a ROYAL profusion.”<sup>49</sup> This class-based system of distribution, ranging from “popular” to “royal,” established a hierarchy of editions. By calling the most expensive edition a “royal” one, Gavard effectively tied the language of elite social rank to a publication that was in actuality a nascent mass cultural product, democratically available to anyone who could afford to pay 50 centimes.

The differences in quality between the engravings in the various editions were immense. In the cheapest, 50 centime edition, a reader would receive historical explanations of works of art housed in the museum accompanied by two line engravings made entirely with the diagraph, hence, little more than engraved outlines. The more costly editions featured the historical text plus four engravings made by the hand of a hired reproductive engraver, filling in where the diagraph had left off. Jacques-Louis David’s *Bonaparte Crossing the St. Bernard Pass* was reproduced in all editions. In the 50 centime edition, the painting was reduced to a simple line drawing (Fig. 4.5) with very little, if any, involvement on the part of an engraver. The more labored engraving of

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 2. “Ce livre est avant tout destiné à être un livre populaire ; mais cependant à coté de l’édition faite pour tout le monde nous aurons une édition à part, où toutes les magnificences de l’impression, du papier, de l’ornement, seront jetées avec une profusion que nous appellerions une profusion ROYALE.”

David's painting, with its more convincing illusion of depth and subtle tonal gradations (Fig. 4.6), was only included in the more expensive versions of Gavard's publication.

The underlying primary goal of Gavard's publication was dissemination; for an extra fee, consumers could obtain the luxury version, which built upon the contour delineated in the cheaper edition.

When word of Gavard's monopoly reached the press, a firestorm ensued. The *Journal des artistes*, a periodical that had traditionally represented and defended the interests of artists, was aghast:

How does the administration, now after a period of long research, long hesitations, end up conferring the reproduction of the museum of Versailles to an instrument instead of conferring it to able artists? Is this with the intention of killing artists while at the same time killing the arts?...This system of reproduction should have been renounced; it would have been original without any doubt, and sometimes successful, but will offer an incomplete, discordant work, and will be at the same time an invitation to engravers to go throw themselves in the river...And what of the government? Has it really decided to dethrone art, and to place its scepter, twisted and false, in the hands of industrialism?<sup>50</sup>

The conflict that arose between the *Journal* and the Versailles publication pitted the artistic claims of reproductive engraving against what was perceived as the vulgar and materialistic proliferation of Gavard's sub-standard reproductions which the journal referred to as industrialism. The *Journal des Artistes* criticized the July Monarchy government for turning over the reproduction of Versailles to a machine: "The monopoly

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<sup>50</sup> "Le Diagraphes et le musée de Versailles," *Journal des artistes*, no. 25 (1836): 397. "Maintenant, comment se fait-il que l'administration, après de longues recherches, de longues hésitations, finisse par confier à un instrument la reproduction du musée de Versailles, au lieu de le confier à des artistes habiles ? Est-ce donc dans l'intention de tuer les artistes en même temps que l'art ?...il a fallu renoncer à un système de reproduction qui, sans doute, aurait eu de l'originalité, et, parfois, du bonheur, mais qui eût offert un ensemble incomplet, discordant, et eut été en même temps une invitation aux graveurs d'aller se jeter à la rivière... A quoi donc l'administration ? A-t-elle décidé résolument de détrôner l'art, et de remettre son sceptre, tordu et faussé, aux mains d'industrialisme ?...Dans ce cas, nous aurions un conseil à lui donner. Ce serait, pour être conséquente, ou, comme on dit aujourd'hui, pour être logique, de faire faire les tableaux par la *lithochromie*, les bustes et statues par le *physionotype*, et les gravures par le *diagraphes*. Par ce moyen on se débarrasserait encore plus efficacement des artistes et de leurs prétentions."

on the engraving of objects in the historical museum of Versailles has just been conceded to the *diagraph* of M. Gavard. It appears that the government has resolved to destroy the *art* of engraving for the profit of the engraving *machine*.”<sup>51</sup> What was intended by the government to be a purely illustrative guide to Versailles became instead a debased object emblematic of the decline of art, a far cry from the positive publicity that the government sought. For the editors of the *Journal*, the printed reproductions in Gavard’s publication became a material sign of the deficiency of the museum as a whole.

In contrast to the government’s intention of spinning an accessible narrative of national historic glory in the museum space as well as in the guidebook, these two monumental efforts became mired in controversy. The scale and ambition of both government projects became signs of their bombast. For the editors of the *Journal*, Gavard’s publication was bereft of any artistic merit. Retaliating against what it perceived to be a slight against art in his publication, the *Journal des Artistes* started its own publication, contemptuously titled *Galleries artistiques de Versailles*. The *Journal des Artistes* sought to rectify Gavard’s problematic focus on *history* by producing a guide that was *artistic*. The artistic guide to Versailles was inserted into the *Journal des Artistes* on a bi-weekly basis for approximately one and a half months and featured its own expertly produced reproductive engravings. After this brief run, the *Galleries artistiques de Versailles* ran into a major logistical problem: the ability to study the works of art on display in the galleries of Versailles and make reproductive engravings of them.

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<sup>51</sup> “Nouvelles des arts,” *Journal des artistes*, no. 24 (1836): 384. “Le monopole de la gravure des objets d’art du musée historique de Versailles, vient d’être octroyé au *diagraphe* de M. Gavard. Il paraît que le gouvernement a résolu d’anéantir l’*art* de la gravure au profit de la *machine* à graver.”

The journal advised their readers that they could no longer continue the publication of *Galleries artistiques*:

The administrative veto has with all its force inspired the artist named Diagraph... The diagraph alone can walk the length and width of the Versailles galleries... If we want to make a quick sketch... if we want to take some notes on a painting by Gros or by Vandermeulen, a guard instantly comes up to tell us in a manner more or less impolite, stating that it is not permitted to draw and that it is not permitted to write. If, near a room we have just seen, we want to see something in it again, we are prevented from entering. Finally, if we spent a bit of time in front of this or that work, if we examine it with attention, as to *engrave* it in our memory, not being able to engrave it otherwise, the guard comes impatiently around us and has no problem telling us: get along now... The galleries of Versailles are made to be visited by the ignorant hordes... the galleries were made to be seen and not studied.<sup>52</sup>

In an attempt to gather their own information about the art in the galleries at Versailles, artists associated with the *Journal* were prevented from spending any time studying the works in those galleries.

### **The Pitfalls of Abundance: Engraving and Industry**

Gavard's publication also provoked a well-publicized lawsuit filed by the widow of Antoine-Jean Gros and a classically trained reproductive engraver Jean-Auguste Philippe Vallot, who had been given the right to engrave Gros' *Battle of the Pyramids*

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<sup>52</sup> "De l'impossibilité de continuer les galeries artistiques de Versailles," *Journal des artistes* 2, no. 5 (1837): 57-58. "Le veto administratif excite dans toute sa force en faveur de l'artiste appelé Diagraph... le Diagraph seul peut se promener en long et en large dans les galeries de Versailles... si nous voulons donner un coup de crayon... si nous vouons prendre quelque note sur un tableau de Gros ou de Vander Meulen, un gardien vient à l'instant nous décliner, d'une manière plus ou moins impolie, qu'il n'est pas permis de dessiner, qu'il n'est pas permis d'écrire. Si, après avoir vu une salle, nous voulons revoir quelque chose dans la salle précédente, on nous empêche d'y rentrer. Enfin, si nous nous arrêtons un peu de temps devant telle ou telle œuvre, si nous l'examinons avec attention, comme pour la *graver* dans notre mémoire, ne pouvant la graver autrement, le gardien tourne autour de nous avec inquiétude, et peu s'en faut qu'il ne nous dise : passez votre chemin... Les galeries de Versailles sont faites pour être visitées par la tourbe ignorante... elles sont faites pour être vues, non étudiées."

three years before it entered the historical museum at Versailles.<sup>53</sup> Gros had sold the rights to engrave the *Battle of the Pyramids* to Vallot in 1832 and could not have anticipated that Gavard would also be charged with its reproduction four years later. After Gros' death by suicide in 1834, Madame Gros became the sole beneficiary of her husband's estate and saw to it that no one infringed upon her rights. In 1836, Vallot learned of Gavard's intention to engrave the entire contents of the historical museum at Versailles, and after the publication of Gavard's version in 1841, joined ranks with Gros' widow and sued Gavard for what amounted to copyright infringement, *avant la lettre*.<sup>54</sup> To fit into its allocated wall space in the museum, the painting was slightly enlarged on each side (Fig. 4.7). Gavard's reproduction depicts the enlarged painting while Vallot's version represents its original state (Fig. 4.8).

Vallot's engraving was sold in a large folio format which provided ample space to display the attributes of a classically rendered reproductive engraving, subtly handled gradations with a remarkable tonal range. By contrast, Gavard's version, first traced with the drawing machine and later finished by the hand of an engraver, was less dazzling. (Fig. 4.9). Its comparatively diminutive size (31 x 23 cm) provided little space to display the kinds of tour-de-force effects that a highly studied reproductive engraving demanded. Gavard's engraving lacked deep contrast and consequently, appeared grey

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<sup>53</sup> The painting had been purchased by the State in 1811 in the amount of 11,000 francs and was displayed in the Senate up until the allied invasion of Paris in 1814, when it was put into storage. After the 1830 July Revolution, the *Battle of the Pyramids* was removed from storage and temporarily loaned to an army general, General Bertrand, who in turn gave it back to the State when plans materialized to hang it in the new historical museum at Versailles.

<sup>54</sup> The modern conception of "copyright" materialized in the later half of the nineteenth century in France, brought about precisely because of the dramatic proliferation of technologies of visual reproduction. A law protecting artistic property that would have won the case for Vallot and Gros' widow was not passed in France until 1936. See Annie Prassoloff, "Le droit de graver et les progrès du droit de l'auteur," *Romantisme* 26, no. 93 (1996): 21-26.

and flat (Fig. 4.10). This lack of contrast was no small matter for a reproductive engraving of a painting whose drama revolved around the spatial relationship between Bonaparte's gesture in the foreground and the pyramids in the background. Moreover, in Gavard's version, the faces of Bonaparte's generals who stand around him appear puffy and generalized, whereas in Vallot's version they are sharper and more individualized. Such formal disparities underscored the very different contexts that shaped the production of these engravings.

The Gavard vs. Gros and Vallot court case was covered by artistic periodicals and by more mainstream press such as the *Journal des débats*. At stake was the right of artists to protect their intellectual property from being reproduced in a degraded form. In the words of Madame Gros and Vallot's lawyer, the conflict pitted the immutable values of art against purely commercial interests:

Today, there is a deplorable tendency to speculate on everything, to industrialize everything, even the most noble things, the most elevated, those that make for a moral life and the glory of a nation. The fine arts, for example, are no longer sheltered from these attempts by material interests. It is no longer about making something beautiful and well done, but rather quickly, in large number and cheaply. In the presence of this sad tendency, take away the painter's right to engraving...and publicly spread an engraving unworthy of his work...and instead of Vallot's engraving, beautiful, but 70 francs, you will have the more common engraving of Gavard, terrible, but only 5 francs per copy.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> "Droit de gravure d'un tableau vendu sans réserve et acheté sans stipulation, affaire du tableau des *Pyramides* - Madame la baronne Gros et le sieur Vallot, *graveur*, contre le sieur Gavard, *éditeur des Galeries Historiques de Versailles*," *L'Observateur des Tribunaux, Journal des Documents Judiciaires* (1842): 21. "Il se manifeste de nos jours une tendance déplorable à spéculer sur tout, à tout industrialiser, les choses les plus nobles, les plus élevées, celles qui font la vie morale et la gloire d'une nation, les beaux arts, par exemple, ne sont plus à l'abri de ces atteintes de l'intérêt matériel ; il ne s'agit plus de faire bien et beau, mais vite, en grand nombre et à bon marché. En présence de cette triste tendance, enlevez au peintre le droit de gravure...et répandre dans le public une gravure indigne de son œuvre, livrer ce droit précieux au possesseur matériel du tableau, et au lieu de la gravure de Vallot, belle mais à 70fr., vous aurez trop souvent la gravure de Gavard, détestable, mais à 5fr. l'exemplaire."

In the words of the prosecution, price and proliferation functioned as evidence that Gavard's industrial mode of production threatened Gros' reputation as a skilled, eminent artist. The very signs of Gavard's engraving's merit in the eyes of the government, its cheapness and its profusion, became the signs of its artistic impoverishment for the prosecution. The charges made by Vallot and Madame Gros' lawyer, along with the complaints aired in the *Journal des artistes*, revolved primarily around the dubious quality of Gavard's reproductive engravings and were not necessarily political grievances against the government. However, such criticisms implicated Gavard in a malfeasant system of overabundant visual reproduction sponsored by Louis Philippe's constitutional monarchy. The case eventually made its way through several different judicial bodies to the Royal Orleans court which ruled, not surprisingly, in favor of Gavard.<sup>56</sup>

That this conflict revolved around an iconic representation of a Napoleonic battle is hardly a coincidence. One decade into Louis-Philippe's reign as "King of the French," historical images, and specifically representations of armed combat, had gained an importance for the regime that was increasingly incongruous with their perceived artistic value. As Gavard vs. Vallot made clear, both versions of the engraving possessed radically different values: whereas Vallot's engraving contained a high degree of artistic, connoisseurial value and was more firmly ensconced in the academic tradition of reproductive engraving, Gavard's version embodied the production values that it fulfilled for the government, as a testament to military glory that was understood to be in short

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<sup>56</sup> This is an oversimplification of a very complex set of court cases that the scope of this chapter does not allow me to discuss. To be precise: the case was first heard at the Cour de Paris, who ruled in favor of Gavard. Madame Gros and Vallot then appealed the case to the Cour de Cassation (court of appeals), who ruled in their favor. The case was then sent to the Cour Royale d'Orléans, who ruled in favor of Gavard. Madame Gros and Vallot appealed this decision at the Cour de Cassation, who struck down the appeal, siding with the Cour Royale d'Orléans.



supply during the 1830s. Because war imagery was inextricably tied to the government's political strategy of publicity and proliferation, it is hardly surprising that a lawsuit contesting such a strategy would revolve around a battle painting.

Gavard's version of the *Battle of the Pyramids* functioned in an economy of political actuality whose aim was to produce material, public evidence of heroic French military glory to serve the interests of the July Monarchy; the aim was to use war imagery as a means of bridging a relationship between governing power and bases of support. In the words of François Guizot, "representative government sees itself only in unity, that is to say, in the reason to which the multitude ought to reduce itself...representative government recognises the fact that all power comes from above...[it brings the people] into communication with those who are naturally above them."<sup>57</sup> For the "doctrinaires" in charge of the July Monarchy's representative government, Versailles and its associated print publication constituted an attempt to engage the public with the government's official evocation of France's history. The court case demonstrated, in the stark terms of different modes of visual reproduction, the drawbacks of the government's attempt to conjure national pride through a proliferation of quickly and cheaply made printed images. Gavard's *Galleries historiques de Versailles*, more than an exercise in official propaganda, helps to delineate the contours around which mass culture at the dawn of the industrial age took shape.

### **Industrial Production, Cultural Production**

The paintings embedded in the walls at the historical museum and also

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<sup>57</sup> Guizot, *The History of the Origins of Representative Government*, 63.

reproduced in the pages of Gavard's *Galleries* were but two components of a vast enterprise. Of particular concern for Louis-Philippe was the ability of museum visitors to access Versailles from Paris. To respond to this need, not one but two railroad lines were built between 1836 and 1840 to link Paris with Versailles, one on each bank of the Seine. They became the most expedient way of traveling from Paris to see the historical museum and also gave the government an opportunity to connect its ambitious public arts project to a symbol of modern industrial progress. The 1846 edition of *Galighani's New Paris Guide* advised tourists to take the south bank rail line to Versailles and return on the north bank line "by which means two magnificent views of Paris and the neighbouring country will have been obtained."<sup>58</sup> But just as Gavard's guidebooks and the historical museum attracted negative attention for their outsized ambitions, so too did the railroads. Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, who held the chair of Political Economy at the Conservatoire des arts et métiers, derided the government's decision to construct two separate railroad lines. In an industrial economics textbook published in 1839, he wrote: "Do you understand? Two lines, between Paris and Versailles; not between an industrial city and a sea port, as with Liverpool and Manchester, but between a city of luxury and a city of curiosity; not for businessmen but for idle visitors."<sup>59</sup>

The historical museum's association with a technological marvel of transport underscored the important economic changes that took place in France during the July Monarchy, namely, the rapid expansion of the country's industrial capabilities for which

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<sup>58</sup> *Galighani's New Paris Guide: containing an accurate statistical and historical description of all the institutions, public edifices* (Paris: A. and W. Galighani and Company, 1846), v.

<sup>59</sup> Adolphe-Jérôme Blanqui, *Cours d'économie industrielle* (Paris: L. Mathias Augustin, 1839), 11. "Deux chemins, entendez-vous ? entre Paris et Versailles; non pas entre une ville d'industrie et un port de mer, comme Liverpool et Manchester, mais entre une ville de luxe et une ville de curiosité; non pour les gens d'affaires, mais pour des visiteurs oisifs."

the railroad became emblematic.<sup>60</sup> However, the railroad out to Versailles was hardly affordable for all of the French population; a roundtrip ticket in second class cost 2.50 francs, almost an entire day's salary for a worker.<sup>61</sup> Railroad transport to Versailles would have been available to a particular class of French citizens who could afford the train fare or who could afford to hire a carriage. This was the same group who may have also appreciated the visual spectacle of material abundance displayed inside the museum and reinforced through the proliferation of Gavard's printed guide, namely, the bourgeoisie.

During the July Monarchy, it was commonly believed that France's economic expansion could only occur during a time of peace. For this reason, war was to be avoided. Even Ximenès Doudan recognized that war made the bourgeoisie nervous. In a letter of 1840, he wrote that "the real canon does little to exalt the imagination. Sensible landlords find themselves surprised by a profound melancholy when thinking about the cost of glory. This is not timidity before material danger, it is the horror of fortune, the fear that the teetering soup kettle might tip over, or that it may be disturbed."<sup>62</sup> The contention that war threatened to hinder the pursuit of profits also became one of the rallying cries of republican opposition to Louis-Philippe. Louis Blanc, who would later become one of the most influential socialist thinkers in France and a lead player in the

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<sup>60</sup> France's industrialization during the July Monarchy depended upon the expansion of the railroads and the ability of French companies to acquire raw materials and to transport goods. See Tom Kemp, *Industrialization in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1985), 60-64.

<sup>61</sup> *Voyage pittoresque de Paris à Versailles, description historique du chemin de fer*, (Paris: Schneider et Langrand, 1841), 1.

<sup>62</sup> Lettre LXXXVII, à madame du Parquet, Coppet, 11 octobre 1840 in Doudan, *Mélanges et lettres*, 358-59. "Le vrai canon exalte peu l'imagination. Les propriétaires sensés se trouvent surpris d'une profonde mélancolie en pensant à ce que coûte la gloire. Ce n'est pas timidité devant le danger matériel, c'est l'horreur des chances, la crainte que le pot au feu qui bout doucement ne soit renversé, qu'il ne faille se désheurer."

Paris Commune, argued that Louis-Philippe was too much of a bourgeois to risk France's industrial progress for the sake of heroic military engagement:

The bourgeoisie was not at all tempted by the gleam of heroic adventures. Composed mostly of bankers and industrial merchants, of men of independent means, of peaceful and excitable landlords, the bourgeoisie almost completely had a fear of the unknown. The grandeur of France was for her war; and in war one only gets interruptions of commercial relations, the fall of whichever industry, lost opportunities, and bankruptcy.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the citizen king's efforts to align himself with war imagery and France's recent military past, it was understood that the entire July Monarchy government was more interested in accumulating capital than propagating national glory through armed engagement.

This also helps to explain why Horace Vernet, as the quasi-official painter of the July Monarchy, became caricatured during the period through allusions to industrial forms of production. Though it was Vernet's prodigious output that caused him to be associated with modern industry, the artist participated in a form of modern economic activity typical of men of his economic station during the July Monarchy, namely, railroad speculation. Vernet's account books reveal that he was a shareholder in the newly constructed Versailles railroad, the same line that would have transported visitors to the historical museum. In 1837 and 1838, he made 3,084.75 francs from his investments in the railroad.<sup>64</sup> Vernet's investment in the nascent transportation network was part of a larger phenomenon of speculation rampant in France at the time considered

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<sup>63</sup> Blanc, *La révolution française, l'histoire de dix ans*, 187. "La bourgeoisie n'était nullement tentée par l'éclat des aventures héroïques. Composée en partie de banquiers, de marchands, d'industriels, de rentiers, de propriétaires paisibles et prompts à s'alarmer, elle appartenait presque tout entière à la peur de l'imprévu. La grandeur de la France, pour elle c'était la guerre et dans la guerre elle ne voyait que l'interruption des relations commerciales, la chute de telle ou telle industrie, des débouchés perdus, des faillites, des banqueroutes."

<sup>64</sup> Dayot, *Les Vernet, Joseph, Carle, Horace*, 216-217.

by its critics to be a problematic “epidemic” that encouraged economic and moral depravity.<sup>65</sup>

The connection between Horace Vernet and the railroad was taken up by the caricaturist Bertall, who worked for the literary magazine *Le Diable à Paris*. Bertall represented a modern-day allegory of the arts in France in a lithograph entitled, *La Musique, la peinture, et la sculpture*. Bertall targeted Horace Vernet for satire, associating him with his prodigious output and the railroad (Fig. 4.11). He showed Vernet suspended from a railroad car driving across the top of a giant canvas. The immense canvas and the image of the railroad implicated Vernet in an industrially-oriented mode of production. The print suggested a striking confluence between the industrial symbol of France and Vernet’s seemingly “industrial” manner of artistic production.

The observation that Vernet’s practice was akin to the kind of output made possible by industry was not unique to Bertall’s print. Gustave Planche, one of Vernet’s most colorful detractors, likened the artist’s prodigious output to that of a baron of industry:

If what they say is true, we should bend down on one knee before M. Horace Vernet and ask that he be given a patent; his name deserves to be inscribed next to James Watt in the history of European industry. It is permitted, without exaggeration, to see the brush of M. Horace Vernet as a machine with the force of 160 horses, and when his patent has expired, when, thanks to the fabulous fecundity of his methods, he will become the landlord of two or three regions in France, I hope that he will publish his secret and deign to train students. If it pleases M. Horace Vernet, and if the government, enriched by peace, does not skimp, Paris will become the most beautiful city in the world; all the streets will

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<sup>65</sup> For more on the growth of railroads in France, see Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature, Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 83-93.

be covered in painting, all the houses from the first to the third floor, will offer to the gazes of passersby the most glorious episodes of French history.<sup>66</sup>

Planche took aim at the scale of Vernet's battle paintings as well as the speed with which he made them, likening the artist's brush to a machine. This sarcastic invocation of a ubiquitous Vernet as a greedy landlord, taking over the landscape by covering entire facades of buildings was hyperbolic, but it echoes the complaints about Gavard's sub-standard machine-enhanced engravings as well as the overabundance of battle paintings destined to fill the galleries of the historical museum. In these cases, the appearance of material excess drew attention to the machinations of publicity and propaganda that the government would have preferred to pass unnoticed.

### **Panoramas as Contemporary Military Encounter**

As we have already seen, the abundance of war imagery during the July Monarchy confirmed to many contemporary observers that the nation's reputation as a militarily redoubtable power, already understood to be in jeopardy since France's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, was definitively on the wane. Paradoxically, the proliferation of military imagery during the period made it easier to identify and name the lack of heroism that was understood to plague contemporary France: it in fact visualized the problem. By the time King Louis-Philippe's historical museum at Versailles attempted to represent an

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<sup>66</sup> Planche, *Etudes sur l'école française (1831-1852)*, 330-31. "Si les causeurs disent vrai, nous devons plier le genou devant M. Horace Vernet et demander pour lui un brevet d'invention ; car son nom mérite d'être inscrit à côté de celui de James Watt dans l'histoire de l'industrie européenne. Il est permis, sans exagération, de voir dans le pinceau de M. Horace Vernet une machine de la force de cent soixante chevaux, et lorsqu'il aura épuisé la durée de son brevet, lorsque, grâce à la fécondité fabuleuse de ses procédés, il sera devenu propriétaire de deux ou trois départements, j'espère qu'il publiera son secret et daignera former des élèves. S'il plait à M. Horace Vernet, et si le gouvernement, enrichi par la paix, ne lésine pas, Paris deviendra la plus belle ville du monde; toutes les rues seront ornées de peinture; toutes les maisons, depuis le premier jusqu'au troisième étage, offriront aux regards des passants les épisodes les plus glorieux de l'histoire française."

officially sanctioned idea of military grandeur in the form of didactic, accessible images, the difficulty of containing those lofty ideas became apparent. Victor de Nouvion, reviewing the hundreds of battle paintings at the Salon of 1836 destined to fill the galleries at Versailles, pointed to the impossibility of representing war through painting:

I conclude that the painting of a battle is an impossible thing, and that one is forcibly restricted to choosing only the most brilliant episodes. The episode of a battle will be at least a combat, and the scene should be animated, imposing, majestic, and terrible. There must be soldiers who fight, dead, wounded, noise, disorder, in one word, this dreadful aspect that is inseparable from the idea of a combat. If, instead of this, you represent a general chatting with his staff, or with some soldiers, one will have the right to laugh at you.<sup>67</sup>

This impossibility of visually conjuring a battle through the medium of painting is at the heart of the critical disdain for the battle paintings that were commissioned by Louis-Philippe and installed in the historical museum at Versailles. For the most part, these paintings were understood to fail to project the grand ideas that were associated with the wars of the First Empire. The overabundance and proliferation of battle paintings only made this problem more acute so that this critic, reviewing the Salon of 1836, understood that the large-scale representation of battles had degenerated into a series of tired clichés.

There was another form of war imagery that was thought to be able to depict war in a way that met contemporary expectations of military glory: the panorama. In contrast to the widespread critical view of battle painting's emptiness and superficiality, panoramas that represented battles were understood to make war disarmingly *real*. Battle panoramas, for those who could afford the entry fee, were immensely popular in France from the July

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<sup>67</sup> Victor de Nouvion, "Beaux-arts, Salon de 1836," *La France Littéraire*, no. 23 (1836): 293. "Je conclus que la peinture d'une bataille n'est pas une chose possible, et qu'on est forcément borné à n'en choisir que les épisodes plus brillants. L'épisode d'une bataille, ce sera au moins un combat, et la scène devra être animée, imposante, majestueuse, terrible. Il y faut des soldats qui se battent, des morts, des blessés, du bruit, du désordre, en un mot, cet effroyable aspect inséparable de l'idée d'un combat. Si, au lieu de cela, vous représentez un général causant avec son état major ou avec quelques soldats, on sera en droit de rire de vous."

Monarchy up through World War I.<sup>68</sup> During the 1830s and 1840s they challenged battle painting's ability to represent modern warfare faithfully. Even Quatremère de Quincy, a staunch Davidian classicist, claimed that for the representation of modern battles, "only the vast and special expanse of the panorama can suffice."<sup>69</sup>

Jean-Charles Langlois (1789-1871), a student of Horace Vernet and a former Napoleonic officer, earned a reputation during the July Monarchy as the foremost maker of battle panoramas. The panorama was originally invented by the Englishman Robert Barker in 1787 and quickly gained popularity all over the European continent. Most of these early panoramas represented topographical cityscapes of distant lands. Langlois, by contrast, specialized in representing battles. His first panorama, the *Battle of Navarino*, opened in Paris in February 1831 and was an instant success. His chief innovation was to use false terrain in front of his 360 degree canvas and extend the illusionism of the circular painting into three-dimensional space.

Scholars of visual culture such as Jonathan Crary, Vanessa Schwartz, and the French literature scholar Maurice Samuels have emphasized the panorama's importance as one of the constitutive sites of modern spectacular scopic regimes. According to Crary, the panorama was "one of the places in the nineteenth century where a

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<sup>68</sup> Entry fees for panoramas varied throughout the nineteenth-century. For Langlois' first panorama, the Battle of Navarino, admission cost 2.50 Francs, the same amount of money that a second class train ticket to Louis-Philippe's historical museum at Versailles. 2.50 Francs was the average worker's daily salary in the 1830s. For more on the relationship between the audience for panoramas see François Robichon, "Les panoramas en France au XIXe siècle," (Université de Paris X, 1982), unpublished dissertation.

<sup>69</sup> Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, "Notice historique sur la vie et les ouvrages de M. Gros," in *Recueil des notices historiques lues dans les séances de l'Académie royale des beaux-arts à l'Institut* (Paris: A. Leclere, 1837), 161. "A peine la vaste et spéciale étendue du Panorama pourroit y suffire."



modernization of perceptual experience occurs.”<sup>70</sup> Beyond the panorama’s importance for understanding the nineteenth-century origins of spectacle, its status as a material embodiment of contemporary actuality must be taken into account. Critics regarded Langlois’s battle panoramas as powerful representations of contemporary war at a time when war was perceived as losing its relevance because of the extended peace within Europe.

The panorama of the battle of Navarino, a decisive 1827 battle from the Greek War of Independence, offered viewers a tour-de-force illusion of viewing a battle. It was customary for visitors to a panorama to be led through a narrow corridor and emerge on top of a viewing platform so as not to be subject to an abrupt transition between the entrance of the rotunda and the illusionistic painting displayed on the circular enclosure. Langlois transformed this experience of entering the space of the panorama into part of the historical spectacle (Fig. 4.12): instead of using a regular passageway, he procured one of the ships, the *Scipion*, that had actually participated in the battle of Navarino and made the vessel an integral part of the experience. The inclusion of the *Scipion* was crucial for securing the veracity of the illusion of entering into a space of war. Reviewers of the panorama took note of Langlois’ innovation and focused on it in their discussion of the experience of viewing the battle:

The inventors of this panorama have imagined to have spectators climb the successive levels of the vessel, the *Scipion*. At first, you find yourself near a thirty-six gun battery, at the end of which one sees a part of the crew busy putting out the fire caused by a fire ship. Then one climbs a staircase to the storeroom. There, you can ACTUALLY go through the sleeping quarters of the commanding officer as well as the small gallery armed with canons that preceded it. Finally, a third

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<sup>70</sup> See Jonathan Crary, “Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Grey Room* 9 (2002): 18. See also Maurice Samuels, *The Spectacular Past, Popular History and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

staircase goes all the way up to the rear deck of the *Scipion* from which you discover the entire deck of the ship; and, from there and from all sides, the naval combat and the mountains that surround the bay of Navarino.<sup>71</sup>

The “crew” putting out the fire that the writer mentioned was actually an elaborately constructed diorama placed on the inside of the ship, along with other three-dimensional objects. Another critic noted the placement of navigation manuals and maps on the captain’s dining table. Tools such as a compass and a barometer were placed throughout the quarters.<sup>72</sup> These authenticating objects were part of the highly calculated system of illusion of the panorama which served to bolster the impression of a battle unfolding within the viewer’s space.

In the same panorama, Langlois placed a diorama which depicted two sailors bringing down the body of an injured man below the deck of the viewing platform.<sup>73</sup>

Auguste Jal, who wrote a lengthy review of the panorama, remarked “you did not even perceive the diorama, because the transition from the real to the represented is so well considered.”<sup>74</sup> Here, the savvy critic called attention to his own talent for determining the workings of the illusion. This walk through the space of the *Scipion* produced more

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<sup>71</sup> “Mélanges, Le Diorama de Navarin,” *Petit Courrier des Dames*, 5 Février 1831, 35. “Les inventeurs de ce panorama ont imaginé de faire monter successivement les spectateurs dans les differens étages du vaisseau *le Scipion*. On se trouve d’abord près d’une batterie de trente-six pièces, à l’extrémité de laquelle on aperçoit une partie de l’équipage occupée à arrêter l’incendie que cause un brulot. Bientôt on monte un petit escalier au haut duquel est l’entrepôt. Là on peut parcourir REELEMENT la chambre du commandant, et la petite galerie armée de canons qui la précède. Enfin, un troisième escalier mène jusqu’à la dunette du *Scipion*, d’où l’on découvre alors tout le pont du bâtiment ; et, au delà et de tous les cotés, le combat naval et les montagnes qui entourent la baie de Navarin.”

<sup>72</sup> Auguste Jal, “La Bataille de Navarin, Panorama de M. Langlois,” *L’Artiste* 1, no. 2 (1831).

<sup>73</sup> It is impossible to know what the contents of the diorama were. Wax figures were commonly used during the period, but it is equally possible that the “diorama” to which Jal refers could have been a painted one.

<sup>74</sup> Jal, “La Bataille de Navarin, Panorama de M. Langlois,” 24. “Vous ne vous en étiez pas aperçu, tant la transition du réel au figuré est bien ménagée.”

opportunities to display his aptitude for discerning the illusion of being in the midst of the battle from the mechanics that made it possible:

Here is some blood and the straw hat of the poor sailor who was crushed by a bullet against his carronade; he is the unfortunate one that you saw earlier being brought down the battery...the ax is doing its job in the middle of the flames, and the three dinghies that took you by surprise because you thought they were real, are towing the fire ship to detach it from the ship we are on.<sup>75</sup>

Viewers would have encountered the bloody drama of the battle below-deck well before they saw the painted, circular canvas that represented the naval battle above them. The blood and straw hat served as a powerful synecdoche for the battle itself as well as a narrative device that connected the multiple sections of the below-deck drama. But it was the explicitly mimetic properties of red paint masquerading as blood that enabled the illusion of violence, injury, and carnage to take full effect. The ax, the flames, and dinghies were most likely to be part of a similar system of illusion that combined three-dimensional objects with the illusionistic qualities of paint. Langlois therefore relied on a whole host of visual devices to make the experience of walking through the *Scipion* as visceral as possible.

The critical discourse surrounding Langlois' battle panoramas valorized the experience of not being able to decipher the multiple layers of illusion and in so doing, underscored the tradition of engaged spectatorship that been associated with the "genre of battles" since the Napoleonic Empire. Critics argued that Langlois had discovered a novel way to satisfy expectations of experiencing salient dramatic moments of a battle. While

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 24-25. "Voilà du sang et le chapeau de paille d'un pauvre matelot qu'un boulet a broyé contre sa caronade ; c'est le malheureux que vous avez vu tout à l'heure descendre dans la batterie... La hache fait son jeu au milieu de la flamme, et les trois canots qui vous frappent d'étonnement parce que vous avez pu les croire réels remorquent le bâtiment incendiaire pour le détacher du vaisseau sur lequel nous sommes. Vous comprenez bien que la peinture intervient et se mêle à la construction matérielle du *Scipion* ; mais où commence-t-elle ? Je ne vous dirai pas."

viewers had long been accustomed to viewing paintings of battles in the space of the Salon, Langlois' battle panoramas opened up an entirely new set of possibilities for depicting a battle with more striking authenticity that could be achieved through painting alone.<sup>76</sup> The kinds of episodes that Louis-Francois Lejeune and later, Horace Vernet, had specialized in painting since the First Empire, such as the burst of canon or the horrific drama of a wounded soldier, were transformed by Langlois into a host of mimetic, three-dimensional objects that spectators encountered on their way up to view the circular painting of the battle.

Etienne-Jean Delécluze was one of many critics who marveled at the system of illusion deployed by Langlois for his Battle of Navarino. In his opening remarks for the Salon of 1831, Delécluze announced to his readers that he would be remiss not to mention Langlois' panorama, despite the fact that it did not appear in the Salon. While Delécluze acknowledged the tour-de-force system of illusion deployed by Langlois, he was wary of its implications for traditional "flat" painting:

M. Langlois, not content to seduce by the ability of his brush and by the horizontal circle, has, to better disorient the public, joined reality which will become confused with painting. The effect of this composition, half real, half painted, is quite large. One can suppose that upon experiencing it again, the illusion would only be stronger. If it is so, and if more efforts follow, what will become of flat, framed painting? God only knows.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> For the connection between literature and Langlois' panoramas, see Maurice Samuels, *The Spectacular Past, Popular History and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century France* 50-62.

<sup>77</sup> Etienne-Jean Delécluze, "Beaux-arts, Ouverture du Salon," *Journal des Débats, Politiques, et Littéraires*, 1 mai 1831, 2-3. "M. Langlois, non content de séduire par l'habileté de son pinceau et par le cercle horizontal, a joint encore, pour mieux désorienter le public, la réalité qui va se confondre avec la peinture. L'effet de cette composition à moitié réelle, à moitié peinte, a été très grand. On peut supposer qu'à une seconde expérience, l'illusion sera plus forte encore. S'il en est ainsi, et que les efforts se succèdent rapidement, que deviendra la plate peinture encadrée ? Dieu le sait."

Delécluze recognized that the system of illusion at work in Langlois' panorama went well beyond the conventional illusionistic limits of "flat painting." He viewed the panorama as an unwelcome alternative form of painting that pandered to affective optical illusion over intellectual engagement.

Through Langlois' battle panoramas, war was transformed into an experiential, contemporary encounter, a far cry from the clichéd and static images criticized by detractors of battle painting. In stark contrast to the majority of large-scale battle paintings on display at Versailles and on view in Salons throughout the July Monarchy, Langlois' panoramas earned the approbation of critics for successfully representing war as a series of dramatic, often dangerous encounters.<sup>78</sup> Alexandre Lenoir even suggested that one of Langlois' panoramas, the *Battle of Moskowa*, be transported to the Salon, calling it "the most surprising of all battles that have ever been made."<sup>79</sup> In providing paying middle-class customers with the illusion of dramatic battle, the panorama satisfied the desire for access to the glorious military past that was understood to be on the wane since the peace of 1815.

### **The Absence of Military Glory and Algeria**

In an article dedicated to the Salon of 1845, a critic paused to reflect upon the value of military imagery in a time of prolonged peace:

Next June 18 will be thirty years since the last canon shot was fired from the plains at Waterloo, putting an end to the wars of the Republic and the Empire. Since then, thirty years of peace have succeeded more than twenty years of bloody combats;

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<sup>78</sup> Jal, "La Bataille de Navarin, Panorama de M. Langlois." At one point, Jal tells his female reader-companion: "My god, lower your head, Madame ; a bullet !"

<sup>79</sup> Lenoir, "Mémoires, le Salon de 1837," 110. "La plus étonnante de toutes les batailles qui aient jamais été faites."

for, next to these giant combats of our fathers, one can only count the battle of Navarino, the capture of Anvers, the capture of Algiers, the last efforts of Poland, and our continuous skirmishes in Africa as simple accidents, incapable of shaking the harmony that, like it or not, exists between the powers of Europe. Despite this long peace, there has remained in our spirits a warrior sentiment which continues to make us prefer looking at subjects that retrace our old glory.<sup>80</sup>

The author's understanding of peace was typical for the period. "Peace" was something that had been achieved in Europe after the fall of Napoleon; all other conflicts were understood as minor in comparison with the wars of the Revolution and Empire. Hence, the Polish and Belgian struggles for independence in the 1830s and France's conquest of Algeria were but minor exceptions within an era of uninterrupted peace. These conflicts simply did not qualify as "grand" like the wars of the Empire. The lack of large-scale intra-European armed conflict was a circumstance that needed to be endured, "like it or not." This sentiment was shared by many in the 1830s and 1840s. It became a cliché of art criticism to marvel at the proliferation of battle painting and then criticize its abundant bombast as yet another material indicator of the oppressive peace that had conquered Europe.

Alfred des Essarts, reviewing the Salon of 1839, summed up what the genre of battle painting offered contemporary viewers: "this genre offers much pleasure to the vulgar and consoles our eyes from the long peace that France enjoys despite herself."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> "Tableaux de chevalet, sujets militaires," *Journal des artistes* (1845): 185. "Le 18 juin prochain, il y aura trente ans que le dernier coup de canon tiré dans les plaines de Waterloo a mis fin aux guerres de la République et de l'Empire. Depuis lors, trente années de paix ont succédé à plus de vingt années de luttes sanglantes ; car, à côté des combats de géant de nos pères, on ne peut compter la bataille de Navarin, la prise d'Anvers, la prise d'Alger, les derniers efforts de la Pologne ou nos escarmouches continuelles en Afrique que comme de simples accidents, incapables d'ébranler l'espèce d'harmonie qui, bon gré, mal gré, existe entre les puissances de l'Europe. Malgré cette longue paix, il est resté dans nos esprits un sentiment guerrier qui nous fait toujours porter de préférence nos regards sur des sujets retraçant notre ancienne gloire."

<sup>81</sup> Alfred des Essarts, "Salon de 1839, 1e article," *France et europe, revue politique et littéraire* 1839, 595. "Voilà en résumé ce genre qui plait tant au vulgaire et qui nous console par les yeux de la longue paix dont la France jouit malgré elle."

Ulysse Tencé, another art critic, understood the presence of so many battle paintings at the Salon of 1836 in similar terms: “At least it is certain that never have more war paintings appeared in such a peaceful time.”<sup>82</sup> The authors’ characterization of the period as peaceful reveals how the conquest of Algeria was rhetorically figured: as a minor incursion, a bellicose distraction from the dominant, suffocating peace that existed within Europe. The ability of these critics to dismiss the suffering of the Algerian civilian population and minimize the violence and scope of the French colonial project is consistent with what Edward Said has identified as Orientalism. Said’s characterization of Orientalism as “the muteness imposed upon the Orient as object...[Europe’s] silent Other,” aptly describes the kinds of attitudes displayed by these critics with regard to their dismissal of Algeria as insignificant.<sup>83</sup> For many of Louis-Philippe’s political opponents, the war in Algeria spectacularly displayed the government’s incompetence and weakness.

The accusation that Louis-Philippe was a half-hearted colonizer was widely circulated and gained political traction at the very moment when battle paintings were produced in record numbers for the historical museum at Versailles. Though Louis-Philippe did all he could to evoke his support of the glorious military past, it was widely understood that his conduct of the war in Algeria was incompetent. The successful conquest of Algeria became crucial for demonstrating Louis-Philippe’s support of France’s military glory, but efforts to successfully establish Algeria as a French colony were thwarted by an active Algerian resistance to French military presence, led by General Abd-el-Kader, whose mobile army outwitted the slow and cumbersome French army. To make

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<sup>82</sup> Ulysse Tencé, “Note pour servir à l’histoire des arts et lettres en 1836,” in *Annuaire historique universel pour 1836* (Paris: Thoissier-Desplaces, 1837), 253. “Il est certain du moins que jamais plus de tableaux guerriers n’ont paru à une époque plus pacifique.”

<sup>83</sup> Edward Said, “Orientalism Reconsidered,” *Cultural Critique* 1 (Autumn, 1985): 93.

matters worse, the French failed to locate Abd-el-Kader's itinerant encampment, known as the Smahla. Disease and desertion were endemic among the French army and officers found it difficult to discipline their soldiers.

It was not until 1837 that the French military finally won a significant battle against the Algerians at the walled city of Constantine. The capturing of Constantine offered the kind of contemporary military event that Louis-Philippe needed to shore up support for his constitutional monarchy and to prove to the public that Algeria was no minor military feat. The event was widely reported in the press and was understood as a potential turning point for France's chances of establishing a permanent colony in Algeria. Constantine was an important military victory for Louis-Philippe precisely because it was contemporary.

The victory at Constantine also held a significant symbolic value for Louis-Philippe. One newspaper understood the importance of the victory in terms of its consequences for military imagery: "The capture of Constantine, in reviving sympathies for the military glory of France, provides a new interest in works of art dedicated to perpetuating the memories of the great armed events that immortalize the Empire. Thus, there has been for some days an affluence of curious visitors at the Panorama of Moskowa.<sup>84</sup> The same newspaper announced two weeks later that King Louis-Philippe also visited the panorama, even though the battle depicted dated from the First Empire. The subject matter of the panorama mattered less than the connotations of the panorama itself, as a surrogate for the contemporary experience of war. Langlois' panorama was bound up with the national outpouring of support for military conquest of 1837 and

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<sup>84</sup> "Mosaique," *L'Indépendant, Furet de Paris et de la Banlieue*, 5 novembre 1837. "La prise de Constantine, en réveillant les sympathies pour la gloire militaire de la France, donne un nouvel intérêt aux ouvrages d'art destinés à perpétuer les souvenirs des hauts faits d'armes qui immortalisent l'empire. Aussi, il y a, depuis quelques jours, affluence de curieux au Panorama de la Moskowa."



provided a physical embodiment of military actuality. The king's visit to the panorama just after the military victory at Constantine helps us understand just how powerful this large-scale invocation of up to date, contemporary military glory could be.

Algeria was widely understood by many contemporary commentators as a last chance to restore France's former military prowess. But after the French victory at Constantine, the colonization of Algeria continued to be a difficult undertaking for the French military. To make matters worse, in 1840, France suffered further international humiliation when England and Russia made important diplomatic decisions regarding the sovereignty of Turkey and Egypt without consulting France; this was understood by the Republican opposition - which had been advocating for war against these same European powers since France's humiliating defeat in 1815 - to constitute an act of war on the part of Russia and England. Louis-Philippe's cabinet maintained their policy of non-intervention within Europe, much to the disdain of the Republican opposition.<sup>85</sup>

This humiliation was widely chronicled by the press and led to a series of very public attacks on the legitimacy of the July Monarchy. The most vehement attack came from Edgar Quinet, a member of the Republican opposition. He published an incendiary political pamphlet with the evocative title, *1815 and 1840* (anticipating Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*). The title itself proposed that the current moment of 1840 was equivalent to 1815, a moment of deep historical shame for France, the point when Bonaparte was defeated at Waterloo and the decades of French military glory came to an end, bringing with it the occupation of France by the Allies and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. For many, 1815 signaled the end of the Revolution and the end of French glory; according

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<sup>85</sup> Collingham, *The July Monarchy, A Political History, 1830-1848*, 221-38.

to Quinet, 1840 was just as awful for France: “France has been thrust anew in this silent solitude that defeat has drawn all around her. As though she had lost the battle a second time, she has found herself yet again at the day after Waterloo.”<sup>86</sup>

Quinet pointed to the humiliation that France suffered in 1840 in the wake of the failed diplomacy and sheepishness to engage in war with other European powers. He argued that the conquest of Algeria was little more than a futile attempt to compete with other European nations: “I see Russia marching to conquer the Bosphorus, England Upper Asia, France in Algeria, for the conquest of the desert. Isn’t there something about this that makes you think?”<sup>87</sup> Quinet accused the government of wasting its time in Algeria, a country that he understood as a desert wasteland. He saw European war as the only path to vindicating France’s international position. Like his contemporaries, Quinet argued that “peace has become as disastrous as war.”<sup>88</sup> He urged his readers to a call to arms: “accept war. Save France! Save the future!”<sup>89</sup>

In a similar vein, Alexis de Tocqueville, who has traditionally been understood as a great supporter of democracy, saw France’s conquest of Algeria as crucial for the success of France’s representative government.<sup>90</sup> For Tocqueville, the French liberal

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<sup>86</sup> Edgar Quinet, *1815 et 1840* (Paris: Chez Paulin, 1840), 14. “La France a été replongée dans cette solitude muette que la défaite a tracée autour d’elle. Comme si elle avait perdu une seconde fois la bataille, elle s’est trouvée de nouveau au lendemain de Waterloo.”

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 5. Je vois la Russie marcher à la conquête du Bosphore, l’Angleterre à celle de la Haute-Asie, la France, par l’Algérie, à la conquête du désert. N’y a-t-il rien dans tout cela qui vous donne à penser ?

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 8. “La paix devient aussi funeste que la guerre.”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 21 accepter la guerre. Sauvez la France ! sauver l’avenir !

<sup>90</sup> The distinction between democracy and representative government is an important one to recognize. Democracy, as it was conceived by political theorists in the nineteenth century, was a system of government much closer to popular sovereignty than representative government. Representative government, as it was practiced during the July Monarchy, maintained that the leaders are alone sovereign through the accord of the people. That is, the people give their consent to be led by those who are the most fit to lead as opposed to directly controlling government through popular vote. For more on this distinction, see Craiutu, “Rethinking Political Power: The Case of the French Doctrinaires.” See also Guizot, *The History of the Origins of Representative Government*, 61-65.

state desperately needed a source of national pride connected to military glory. Writing during the tense times of 1840, Tocqueville argued that the sentiment of national pride served a crucial, unifying purpose: “The best thing that our country has left is national pride, a pride which is often puerile and boastful, but which with all its absurdities and weaknesses is still the greatest sentiment that we have and the strongest tie that holds this nation together.”<sup>91</sup> Tocqueville asserted the importance of glory for maintaining the stability of the modern, liberal state and, more importantly, understood that France’s status as a powerful European nation in the eyes of the rest of the world was not altogether stable. National pride, in the absence of other, more stable institutions or true consensus, would have to suffice.

### **The Scale of Victory: Horace Vernet and the Actuality of Battle**

Just days after the French military captured the nomadic encampment of Abd-el-Kader in 1843, Louis-Philippe wrote to his son, the duc d’Aumale, who had commanded the battle, to congratulate him on his heroic conduct. In an effort to establish his sons as deserving of the throne, Louis-Philippe ordered them to participate in the Algerian campaigns to gain recognition through distinguished military service. The duc d’Aumale participated in the battle and the duc de Nemours, another one of Louis-Philippe’s sons, participated in the Siege of Constantine. Louis-Philippe was acutely aware that the military service of his sons was beneficial for government publicity efforts with regard to the visual

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<sup>91</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Selected Letters on Politics and Society*, ed. Roger Boesche, trans. James Toupin and Roger Boesche (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 144. Cited in Pitts, *A Turn to Empire, The Rise of Imperial Liberalism and Britain and France*, 195. Jennifer Pitts argues that for Tocqueville, the idea of pride was capable of filling the void of strong absolutist institutions of authoritative rule.

representation of feats capable of bolstering national pride: “In truth, I can tell you that the nation and the army are electrified. I am sending you in this letter three newspapers whose articles are the most salient; this time, I’m putting aside my rule of not reading them.”<sup>92</sup>

This revealing letter demonstrates the extent to which Louis-Philippe valued the defeat of Abd-el-Kader in terms of political actuality and the great publicity it would guarantee him. The event even prompted the king to break his rule of not reading the newspapers. Louis-Philippe’s letter went on to draw an equivalence between two very important physical embodiments of government publicity: newspapers and paintings, with the government presiding over the production of both forms.<sup>93</sup> He instructed his son:

I also want you to have made for me some sketches of all of these different places for a big battle painting, and quite a few small ones for all of these different movements and episodes. I hope that *you yourself* will guide the painter. It will probably be Horace Vernet who is expected any moment and the place of the painting has already been selected for the end of the room adjoining Constantine at Versailles.”<sup>94</sup>

As Louis-Philippe recognized, contemporary French victories in Algeria provided subjects for visual representation that could provide stunning testaments to the government’s ability to restore France to its former military glory.

The series of battle paintings that Louis-Philippe commissioned from Horace Vernet to commemorate France’s victories in Algeria were larger than anything the artist had ever painted. The *Siege of Constantine* (1839) and the *Capture of the Smahla* (1845),

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<sup>92</sup> Louis-Philippe, “À S.A.R.M Le Duc d’Aumale, Neuilly 2 juin 1843,” in *Revue rétrospective ; ou, Archives secrètes du dernier gouvernement, recueil non périodique* ed. Jules Antoine Taschereau (Paris: Paulin, 1848), 131. “En vérité, je puis te dire que la nation et l’armée en sont électrisées. Je t’envoie ci-joints trois journaux dont les articles m’ont paru les plus saillants, car cette fois j’ai mis de côté ma règle de ne pas les lire.”

<sup>93</sup> For more on the use of censorship during the July Monarchy, see Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985); and Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth-Century France* .

<sup>94</sup> Louis-Philippe, “À S.A.R.M Le Duc d’Aumale, Neuilly 2 juin 1843,” 131.

first displayed at the Salons of 1839 and 1845 respectively, were painted for specially designed galleries at Versailles known as the *Salles d’Afrique*. The *Siege of Constantine* measures 17 feet tall and 68 feet wide; the *Capture of the Smahla* measures 16 feet tall and 70 feet wide. The epic scale of these two paintings of French contemporary victories reflects the degree of importance that the government attached to the task of representing contemporary battles.

As we have already seen, large-scale battle paintings produced under the July Monarchy for Versailles drew a great deal of negative attention for their grand scale. On the other hand, when it came to the panorama, another large-scale mode of representing war, the critical outcry disappeared. Horace Vernet, an artist with a longstanding penchant for adopting novel modes of artistic production such as lithography and photography, was receptive to the possibilities that the panorama offered to the practice of battle painting and must have been acutely aware of the reputation of Langlois’s battle panoramas, valued for their ability to make war appear disarmingly *real*.

While battle panoramas have traditionally been evaluated apart from the supposedly separate domain of the fine arts, Vernet’s *Siege of Constantine* and the *Smahla* relied upon the visual rhetoric of the panorama in terms of scale, formal devices and narrative content. To heighten spectatorial engagement with representations of contemporary warfare and vivify the critically lambasted genre of battle painting, Horace Vernet deployed a visual language borrowed in part from a mode of visual production outside of the domain of art, the panorama. As we shall see, these two monumental paintings received a much warmer critical reaction than any other of Vernet’s battle paintings made for the Gallery of Battles at Versailles; critics were more forgiving with

Vernet's monumental Algerian battle paintings precisely because they invoked a form of military imagery that was understood to stand apart from the tired clichés of French battle painting epitomized by the battles on view at the historical museum at Versailles.

The *Siege of Constantine* is a triptych (Fig. 4.13) featuring three separate, yet related, episodes from the battle at the walled city. In chronological order, they depict the *Enemy Pushed Back from the Top of Coudiat-Ati (October 10, 1837)*, the *Preparation of the Assault (October 13, 1837)*, and the *Assault (October 13, 1837)*.<sup>95</sup> The second painting is the largest of the three, despite the fact that it represents a moment between two decidedly more dramatic episodes in the siege represented in the other two paintings (17 x 34 ft) (Fig. 4.14). This middle painting displayed parts of a war to which most viewers were not ordinarily privy in a typical battle painting. Horace Vernet's reputation was built upon his penchant for representing war in all of its mundane, quotidian details, something that he took up on a massive scale for the contemporary battle paintings he executed at Versailles.

With such a large amount of surface to work with, Horace Vernet consistently deployed subtle pictorial devices to allow the viewer to enter imaginatively into the space of the painting. The most extraordinary one within the largest, middle painting, *The Columns Prepare for the Assault*, occurs in the middle of the foreground: a destroyed wall has become a makeshift tomb where a barely visible dead French soldier has been placed. At first glance the placement of the corpse in the foreground does not stand out; the body is painted in muted browns and grays and looks more like a pile of rubbish than a human form. Upon closer inspection, the body lies underneath a tent, his feet protrude into the

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<sup>95</sup> Salon critics read the paintings from right to left starting with the *Enemy Pushed Back from the Top of Coudiat-Ati*, and ending with the *Assault*.

foreground, and one can even discern the gold buttons on his navy blue uniform (Fig. 4.15). Even though the subject depicted in this section of the triptych occurred moments before the major assault, the presence of the body instructs the viewer that danger is very present. In a study for the composition (Fig. 4.16), Vernet included the tomb but made it much narrower, whereas in the final painting he created a certain visual drama by opening it out toward the viewer. In the drawing the body is also much more obscured, hidden behind the tall, narrow wall, whereas in the final version, Vernet included the feet, buttons, and contour of the corpse.

The dead soldier also serves as a narrative tie to events that preceded the scene, thereby demonstrating that the battle took place over the course of several days. Vernet included these kinds of markers of the elapsed temporality of the battle throughout the composition. In the middle of the painting, to the left of the tomb, a trumpet player is depicted in the midst of falling backwards into the foreground (Fig. 4.17); his hands are spread outward, clearly taken by surprise, and his head displays a fresh wound: evidence of the violent battle which has already started even in a period of preparation before the start of the real assault. The soldier to his immediate left looks at him, as though he too has been taken by surprise by the fall. Violent episodes such as this one are peppered throughout the painting, all vying for visual attention. To look at *Constantine* is to constantly be in competition with the limits of one's own vision; it is impossible to seize the action in a single look or *coup d'œil*, long the most important criteria for traditional large-scale history painting.

The narrative mode of the *Siege of Constantine* contrasts distinctly with the narrative mode of academic history painting, as employed by David, Gros, and Gérard

during the Empire. Instead of subordinating the episodes to a single pregnant, isolated moment, Vernet represented his battle in terms of spread out episodic action that took place over time and through space.<sup>96</sup> Francois Gérard's *Battle of Austerlitz* (Fig. 4.18), the only battle painting made during the Empire of a battle fought during the Empire that was allowed to hang in the Gallery of Battles at Versailles, is a formidable example of the narrative mode of history painting and serves as an apt contrast to Vernet's *Constantine*. In Gérard's painting, all of the action is subordinated to the exchange between General Rapp and Bonaparte, with a clear hierarchy of narrative pictorial organization. In Vernet's painting, the narrative action is scattered. This was one of the formal qualities observed at the time. In the words of one critic who reviewed *Constantine* for the Salon of 1839, "It is like a flat surface upon which everything slides."<sup>97</sup> Whereas Gérard's composition directs the viewer's vision to the commanding officers, Horace Vernet's viewer must instead seek out the narrative events and place them together. There is no single one that dominates over the others.

Vernet did not invent this mode of narrative organization for battle painting; as we have seen elsewhere, it was used by Louis-François Lejeune during the Empire and

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<sup>96</sup> Michael Marrinan has similarly argued that Vernet's *Constantine* deploys an innovative narrative strategy removed from the traditions of the French academic tradition, likening the triptych to a "comic strip." Marrinan contends that Vernet's paintings displayed in the *Salles d'Afrique* depict a series of effects which encourage a viewing structure that he calls the "simulation of history." Later in the essay, Marrinan identifies the panorama as the precedent for this mode of viewing, positioning it firmly outside of the domain of the fine-arts, as a popular spectacle from which Vernet borrowed. Unlike Marrinan, I understand Vernet's monumental battle paintings at Versailles in the context of critical debates surrounding battle painting and more generally, the political imperatives which drove the proliferation of war imagery during a period when the government actively avoided armed conflicts with its European neighbors. I would like to thank Michael Marrinan for graciously providing me with the original English text of this essay. See Michael Marrinan, "Schæur der Eroberung: Strukturen des Zuschauens und der Simulation in den Nordafrika-Galerien von Versailles," in *Bilder der Macht, Macht der Bilder: Zeitgeschichte in Darstellungen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Stefan Germer and Michael F. Zimmermann (Munich: Klinckschardt und Biermann, 1997), 267-295.

<sup>97</sup> Alfred d'Essarts, "Salon de 1839, 1<sup>e</sup> article." "C'est comme une surface plane sur laquelle tout glisse."



offered viewers an alternative form of visual engagement to the academic mode of history painting. Thus, rather than inaugurating a new way of representing battle, the achievement of Vernet's *Constantine* was to use the episodic mode of battle painting on a monumental scale. Whereas Lejeune confined himself to smaller canvases below the scale of history painting, Vernet went well beyond the scale of history painting to almost panoramic proportions. It is also worth recalling that the narrative organization of a panorama must necessarily rely upon an episodic narrative due to the circular, extended format of the canvas; as in Vernet's *Constantine*, a battle panorama's narrative action was distributed around the canvas, and as we have seen, inside the tunnel that led viewers up to the platform. Vernet's monumental battle paintings shared more with Langlois's battle panoramas than scale alone. Both forms relied on a wide distribution of narrative, dramatic elements to tell the story of the battle without providing a stable narrative hierarchy as in a classical history painting. In the words of one critic who reviewed the Salon of 1839 for the artistic journal *L'Artiste*, Vernet's *Constantine* "let us touch victory with our gaze and transported us into the melee."<sup>98</sup> This critic, and many more, heaped praise on *Constantine* for the painting's ability to make the battle appear as though it were actually in the midst of occurring. This mode of praise, incidentally, recalls the kind used to discuss the positive illusionistic effects of Langlois's battle panoramas.

The narrative organization of Langlois's battle panoramas involved an intricate play of episodes of the battle that were slowly unveiled as one traversed the interior and climbed up to the viewing platform where the circular canvas was displayed; in Vernet's

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<sup>98</sup> "Salon de 1839, 2e article," *L'Artiste*, no. 17 (1839): 228. "Nous faisait toucher nos victoires du regard, qui nous transportait dans la mêlée."

*Constantine*, the drama of the battle unfolded as viewers pieced together the disparate moments. In both cases, viewers participated in a viewing experience that would have been defined by piecing together disparate narrative elements. In the third section of the *Siege of Constantine*, the *Assault* (Fig. 4.19), the preparations that took place in the previous scene are put into action. In the previous painting, soldiers in the foreground fire cannonballs at the walled fortress in the distant background. In the *Assault*, Vernet moved the walled city into the foreground, providing an up-close view of the formerly distant target. In doing so, the artist located an efficient way of connecting these two paintings together as a logical narrative through time and space. The narrative of the battle is also told through the physical marks of violence. In the right middleground, an entire chunk of the brown wall has been torn off (Fig. 4.20); a gray hole in the wall with a cannonball inside, attests to the barrage of cannonballs that were fired at the walled city in the previous painting. The hole in the wall is painted with a rich depth of color and tonal contrast such that the destructive impact of the cannonball finds a material correspondence in paint.

The cannonball hole is just one of many tour de force visual effects that Vernet strategically placed in the composition. The *Assault* is a vertically oriented painting, in contrast with the long horizontality of the *Preparation*. This verticality is emphasized by the narrative situation of the painting: the army must literally scale up the mountain in order to capture the walled fortress of Constantine. Thus, there is a literal, physical equivalence between the task at hand and the format of the painting. Vernet also litters his composition with the tools needed to scale a wall: ladders. The ladder that protrudes out of the right parts of the painting provides a visual bridge between the climbing

soldiers and the engaged viewer (Fig. 4.21). As they climb up the hill, the ladder invites the viewer to do the same. Visual bridges abound. A figure in the middle foreground turns around and raises his sword, staring deliberately into the space of the viewer (Fig. 4.22). He provides yet another invitation to visually participate in the climb up the hill.

The visual devices used by Vernet created a new kind of pictorial space that actively encourages spectatorial engagement. The various objects that protrude towards the edge of the painting and the figures that beckon out and engage with an imagined viewer all provide the ideal conditions for a participatory viewing experience. The creation of these conditions of engaged spectatorship borrowed heavily from Langlois' battle panoramas. Moreover, Vernet included passages of *Constantine* where the illusionistic qualities of paint are made to masquerade as material objects such as dirt and crumbling rock. This confusion between registers of illusion, between paint and its referent, was an important part of the illusions produced by Langlois' battle panoramas. For example, contemporary reviews mention that in the below-deck portion of Langlois' *Battle of Navarino*, the artist used red paint to double as the blood of a wounded sailor. In *Constantine*, Vernet mobilized the mimetic qualities of paint in a similar fashion. The boots of a soldier are covered with a grimy, dirty, brown paint (Fig. 4.23). These brown, scratchy spots do not read as a smooth continuation of the soldier's boots, but rather as a dirty addition on top of the boots. Boots with "dirt" abound within *Constantine*. For both Langlois and Horace Vernet, mundane objects were accorded an important role in narrating the story of battle. Another similar passage appears in the *Assault*, a painting which depicts the army's climb up the rocky hill. To represent the rock, Vernet relied on a thick impasto. (Fig. 4.24). The swirling, heavy use of brown, white, and ochre provided an analogue to the

referent of the rock. While Vernet did not have recourse to the three-dimensional false terrain that Langlois did for his panoramas, he made use of a visual vocabulary which sought to heighten the objectness of his depicted objects and bolster the illusion of the materiality of warfare.

The similarity between Vernet's large-scale *Constantine* and Langlois' panoramas was not lost on contemporary viewers. In another monumental painting of a contemporary Algerian victory, the *Capture of the Smahla* (1845), Vernet used an even more panoramic format. The painting consists of a 74-foot horizontal band that stretches across the entirety of a room in Versailles, the *Salle de la Smahla*. (Fig. 4.25) It depicts the moment when the French army, led by Louis-Philippe's son, the duc d'Aumale, surprises the encampment of the Algerian general Abd-el-Kader. The left part of the painting features the arrival of the French army, and the right side depicts the reaction of the men, women, children, and animals within the camp. The entire background consists of a continuous desert landscape punctuated by hills, rocks, and patches of translucent smoke. The viewer is positioned within the encampment, in the middle of the chaos, with the French army charging forward.

The *Capture of the Smahla* used a horizontal format reminiscent of the panorama, something that many critics remarked upon. The art critic Etienne-Jean Delécluze, whose ambivalence towards Horace Vernet had begun during the Bourbon Restoration and continued throughout the July Monarchy, changed his tone when he reviewed Vernet's *Smahla* for the Salon of 1845, where it was displayed prominently in the Salon Carré:

M. H. Vernet has made the ensemble of this vast scene submit to many points of view as in a panorama, and the only way to truly see and seize all of the rich details is to precede as though in front of a frieze and to stop at two or three different points. I observed that by starting from left to right, or from right to left, that the sensations one receives are reversed; they do not, however, destroy the clarity or the unity of the subject. One only goes from the cause to the effects, or one can go

from the effects to the cause, and in both cases, the talent of the artist makes you go on this voyage with great pleasure for the eyes as well as the intellect.<sup>99</sup>

Delécluze, as a partisan of the French classical tradition, admired the *Smahla* because it maintained the unity of the subject despite its extended, horizontal format. The critic marveled at Vernet's ability to make the narrative remain intact whichever way it was viewed, just like in a panorama. For Delécluze, the *Smahla* behaved like a panorama, a visual form understood to be outside of the domain of fine art. In 1831 the critic had worried that Langlois' battle panoramas would displace the art of "flat painting" because of the panorama's ability to trick the eye and surround it with a total illusion of battle in the midst of occurring.<sup>100</sup> But in 1845, Delécluze argued that the merit of the *Smahla* rested in its ability to depict a battle in the same way that a battle panorama did. Vernet's triumph consisted in unifying the powerful impressions that a panorama provided with the unity of subject that a solid historical painting demanded. By 1845, the effect of a panoramic representation of war was now more than acceptable, it was commendable. The curious evolution of Delécluze's opinion is related to the important shift that took place during the July Monarchy with regard to large-scale battle paintings. Vernet's choice of a panoramic format for his *Smahla* mobilized the set of cultural associations between battle panoramas and a dramatic, participatory mode of representing war as though it were a contemporary event which occurred before one's eyes.

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<sup>99</sup> Etienne Jean Delécluze, "Salon de 1845, 1e article," *Journal des Débats, Politiques, et Littéraires*, 18 Mars 1845, 2. "M. H. Vernet a donc soumis l'ensemble de sa vaste scène a plusieurs points de vue comme un panorama, et le seul moyen, pour la bien voir et en saisir tous les riches détails, est de précéder comme devant une frise, et de faire deux ou trois stations. J'ai observé qu'en commençant de gauche à droite, ou de droite à gauche, et les sensations que l'on éprouvé sont inverses, elles ne détruisent cependant pas la clarté ni l'unité du sujet. Seulement on va de la cause aux effets, ou l'on remonte des effets à la cause, et dans l'on comme dans l'autre cas, le talent de l'artiste fait faire ce voyage avec grand plaisir aux yeux comme à l'intelligence."

<sup>100</sup> Delécluze, "Beaux-arts, Ouverture du Salon."

## Horace Vernet's "Panoramic" Paintings and the Problem of Contemporary Commemoration

The majority of critics writing about *Constantine* and the *Smahla* praised the paintings for their picturing of distinctly contemporary battles. For many, these paintings provided fresh evidence of France's renewed military prowess. As one critic mused,

It is surely the duty of painting to bend itself to the thousand metamorphoses of this chameleon of the present time, of occasion and success, that we call *actuality*... What could be more moving, at the moment when we write this, for the curious squeezed into the Salon of the Louvre, than the national question of Algeria? Is it not in Algeria that Europe, and the world has their eyes fixed upon us?<sup>101</sup>

It is hardly a coincidence that the word "actuality" came into prevalent use during the later part of the July Monarchy.<sup>102</sup> To be of one's own time later became one of the cornerstones of the concept of modernity; but here, "actuality" is presented as a chameleon, an entity that cannot be controlled, contained, or harnessed. Though this critic thought that Vernet's immense, battle paintings of Algeria fulfilled their task of representing contemporary war, he also recognized that in order to do so, the paintings had to "bend" themselves to the contingencies of politics.

Horace Vernet's *Siege of Constantine* and the *Capture of the Smahla* revisited and renewed a longstanding problem of representing contemporary warfare on the scale of history painting. Whereas "actuality" was fleeting, the traditional subjects of large-scale history painting were supposed to be immutable; their meanings were intended to

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<sup>101</sup> "Salon de 1845, 2e article," *Moniteur des arts, de la littérature et de toutes les industries relatives à l'art*, 23 mars 1845, 57. "C'est assurément le devoir de la peinture de se plier elle même aux mille métamorphoses de ce protégé de l'heure, de l'occasion et du succès, qu'on nomme l'*actualité*... Quoi de plus émouvante, à l'heure où nous écrivons, pour les curieux qui se pressent dans le grand salon du Louvre, que la question nationale de l'Algérie ? N'est ce pas effectivement en Algérie que l'Europe, que le monde a les yeux fixés sur nous?"

<sup>102</sup> *Trésor de la langue française*, online edition, s.v. "actualité," <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/actualite> (accessed March 26, 2010).

transcend historical change and especially politics. History painting easily accommodated historical battles, such as Charles Lebrun's *Battle of Alexander* (1665) series which suggested an analogy between Alexander the Great and Louis XIV, but avoided any overt reference to seventeenth century battles. Later, under political pressure to commemorate Napoleon Bonaparte's contemporary military encounters, history painters were given commissions to represent battles on a scale formerly reserved for ancient history. The controversy surrounding the Prix Décennaux, Napoleon's competition for the best works of art made during his first ten years of rule, reflected this unresolved ambivalence between the genre of history painting and the political imperative of representing contemporary events on a grand scale.<sup>103</sup>

Charles Blanc, reviewing the Salon of 1839, argued that the panorama was a more acceptable mode of representing contemporary warfare than large-scale battle painting.

Specifically addressing *Constantine*, he offered Vernet some advice:

If you have any scruples, you need to count the stones and do what M. Langlois has done with his panorama, in an intention otherwise quite commendable. Posterity will not have a guidebook to recall this date in the month of October: she will think that this is an episode from the wars with Russia. Art should always attach itself to the dominant character of the objects, and not to their incidental physiognomy. It seems to us that one should consider things in a manner a bit higher than this.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> For more on the Prix Décennaux, see Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Classicism, Nationalism and History: The *Prix Décennaux* of 1810 and the Politics of Art under Post-Revolutionary Empire," (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1995); and Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "The First Painter and the Prix Décennaux of 1810," in *David after David: Essays on the Later Work*, ed. Mark Ledbury (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 18-37.

<sup>104</sup> Charles Blanc, "Salon de 1839, 2e article," *Revue du Progrès, Politique, Sociale et Littéraire* (1839): 348. "Si vous avez tant de scrupules, il faut alors compter les pierres et faire ce qu'a fait M. Langlois au Panorama, dans une intention bien autrement louable. La postérité n'aura pas un livret pour lui rappeler cette date du mois d'octobre : elle croira qu'il s'agit d'un épisode des guerres de Russie. L'art doit s'attacher toujours au caractère dominant des objets, et non à leur physionomie accidentelle. Il faut, ce nous semble, considérer les choses d'un peu plus haut."

Blanc's criticism of Vernet's *Constantine* directly implicated the painting's focus on the immediate materiality of battle. If Vernet wanted to show a battle in terms of its "incidental physiognomy," then he was better off making a panorama in the mode of his student, Langlois. Blanc felt that *Constantine* could be any battle and that it did not go far enough in terms of memorializing the event; the mundane details minimized the historical significance of the battle and prevented Blanc from being able to understand *Constantine* as a specifically Algerian battle.

Whereas Langlois's battle panoramas staged the physical illusion of a battle in a rotunda for a paying audience, Vernet's monumental paintings of the *Siege of Constantine* and the *Capture of the Smahla* hung in the Louvre and later in a dedicated gallery at Versailles. As Blanc would have known, Langlois's battle panoramas were ephemeral, displayed only as long as there were a steady stream of customers willing to pay for the visual experience of battle; afterwards, they were taken down and discarded. Conversely, history paintings were, at least in theory, made to endure. Blanc's analogy between Vernet's painting and Langlois's panoramas implied that the contemporary battle of Constantine was little more than a current event, hardly the kind of monumental example of French heroism that the painting was intended to demonstrate.

Vernet's paintings of the *Siege of Constantine* and the *Capture of the Smahla* used grand scale and panoramic format as a way of visually bolstering the heroism and grandness of the French conquest of Algeria for the political benefit of Louis-Philippe. But for many, the battles that took place in Algeria were not as grand as their visual representation by Horace Vernet made them seem. In fact, the monumental scale of the



paintings served only to demonstrate the relative lack of importance of the subjects they represented. In other words, the incongruity between the subject and scale was powerfully apparent:

Who has not already forgotten the episode of the African wars, and who would have ever remembered it without the immense canvas of Horace Vernet?...But we ask if one can really remember these brilliant skirmishes when our country's history contains so many glorious victories? And we also ask the artist, if he really had to cover canvases of sixty-four feet with our warriors, before looking for a dimension proportional to the importance of the capture of the Smahla in a frame of two meters. However, we admire the talent of the painter, who was able to vividly embroider such a thankless subject into a history of such length.<sup>105</sup>

The wars in Algeria, according to this critic, were hardly memorable, especially if one took into account the more glorious military past that preceded them. Like the newspaper articles that covered the latest event in the Algerian conquest, the battle paintings that represented the French army's victories in Algeria were yesterday's news and therefore disposable; the implication was that they hardly merited the massive scale used by Vernet.

The contemporariness of the subject and the overly ambitious scale of the painting drew attention to the way that contemporary war during the July Monarchy failed to signify as glorious when compared to the wars of Bonaparte. While the battle paintings made by Gros and Gérard during the Napoleonic Empire also represented contemporary wars, they did so at a time when France's military power was at the core of the national

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<sup>105</sup> Alphonse de Calonne, "Salon de 1845, 3e article," *La Sylphide, revue parisienne, littérature, beaux-arts, modes* 2 (1845): 207. "Qui n'avait oublié déjà cet épisode des guerres d'Afrique, et qui se le serait jamais rappelé, sans l'immense toile de M. H. Vernet?...Nous le demandons, peut-on bien se souvenir de ces brillantes escarmouches, lorsque l'on a dans l'histoire de son pays tant de glorieuses victoires à compter? Et lui aussi, l'artiste, aurait bien des toiles de soixante-quatre pieds à couvrir de nos guerriers, avant de chercher dans un cadre de deux mètres une dimension proportionnée à l'importance d'une prise de la Smahla. Aussi admirons-nous le talent du peintre, qui a pu broder avec éclat, sur cet ingrat sujet, une histoire d'une pareille longueur."

and international imaginary. But under the July Monarchy, military grandeur was often perceived in terms of its absence from contemporary French life. Horace Vernet's monumental paintings of French military victories served as material responses to this perceived void within French civic life.

## **Conclusion**

In an effort to revivify what most critics considered the tired pictorial language of post-Waterloo battle painting, Horace Vernet relied on a series of attention-grabbing visual tricks in his large-scale, "panoramic" battle paintings to give the illusion of battles in the process of occurring. The artist attempted to push battle painting to its illusionistic limits and make France's contemporary military encounters in Algeria appear as thrilling national events. His large-scale Algerian battle paintings corresponded to King Louis-Philippe's political agenda of using visual representations of war as a means of creating affective bonds between viewers and the French government by way of the heroic deeds of the French army. But in one illuminating example, these same tour-de-force visual devices that Vernet used in his paintings of contemporary Algerian battles appeared to a very different effect in a large-scale painting that the artist made for his most important patron, King Louis-Philippe.

Much like the way that the material proliferation of official war imagery often pointed to the absence of contemporary military glory during the July Monarchy, the last work that Vernet produced for King Louis-Philippe during his reign unwittingly hinted at the monarch's inefficacy and lack of authority. At the Salon of 1847, the last one of the July Monarchy, Vernet exhibited two paintings: *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, which

Gustave Planche deemed “the most deplorable work that Vernet has ever signed his name upon,” and a large-scale group equestrian portrait of the king surrounded by his sons (Fig. 4.26), which received mixed reviews.<sup>106</sup> The group portrait depicts the monarch and his five sons in front of the gate of Versailles, a building that contained the historical museum and Vernet’s many battle paintings within its galleries. The royals are represented in a horizontal row with the gate above their heads and the chateau in the background. The space between the group in the foreground and the background is compressed, making the chateau seem as though it were right behind them, when it is actually hundreds of meters away – this promotes the illusion that the group of riders is in the midst of entering into the space of the foreground, something that Horace Vernet was particularly adept at achieving.

One of the remarkable features of this official portrait is the incongruity of Vernet’s treatment between the horses and their riders. While the king commissioned this portrait to represent the stability of his reign and to project a strong image of his dynastic aspirations, the attention that Vernet gave to the horses made the riders appear as dull and impotent figures of authority. Louis-Philippe, the human figure in the middle of the composition, glances slightly to his right with a reserved gaze. Neither he nor any of his sons make eye contact with the viewer - this runs contrary to the French tradition of equestrian portraiture where rulers often look directly out at the viewer, as in Jacques-Louis David’s *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps*, painted in 1804 (Fig. 4.27). In Vernet’s equestrian portrait, the horses are given a higher degree of psychological complexity than

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<sup>106</sup> Gustave Planche, *Etudes sur l'école française (1831-1852)*, vol. 2 (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1855), 243. “La *Judith* de cette année est assurément l'ouvrage le plus déplorable que M. Vernet ait signé de son nom. La couleur, le dessin, la pantomime, tout est de la même force. Avec la meilleure volonté du monde, il est impossible de trouver dans cette toile quelque chose à louer.”

their riders. The equines are depicted as active subjects and all, except for one, gaze out at the viewer (the exception is the horse ridden by the Prince Royal, who died in a tragic accident in 1842; the horse's closed eyes underscore his sitter's early death). A comparison between the heads of Louis-Philippe and his white horse underscores the unsettling reversal in modes of address between the hoofed and the footed (Fig. 4.28). The horse addresses us with a penetrating gaze. His dandyish locks of golden hair, combined with Vernet's adept foreshortening of his head and body, make him burst out into the foreground, anchoring him in time and space. This treatment contrasts rather starkly with the handling of Louis-Philippe, who is comparatively flatter both in terms of his modeling and mental interiority as a subject. The discrepancy between the two, while certainly humorous, was also no laughing matter in a time of increasing instability for the French government.

There can be little doubt that the visual prioritization of equine subjectivity was an unintended consequence of Vernet's verisimilitude as a painter and fit into a long romantic tradition of displacing human emotions onto animals. Some critics nevertheless took notice and commented upon the fact that the horses outshined their riders. "The five portraits are lifelike and are posed naturally and with remarkable truth," wrote Alphonse Karr, "but the horses are quite simply alive. The white horse of the king is outside of the frame and the canvas and, when you look at him for a bit of time, you see his nostrils breathing and snorting."<sup>107</sup> Another critic completely neglected to speak about the appearance of the king and instead gave all his attention to the horses: "His six horses are

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<sup>107</sup> Alphonse Karr, "Monsieur Vernet et son portier," *Les guêpes* (mars 1847). "Les cinq portraits sont ressemblants et posés avec un naturel et une vérité remarquables; mais les chevaux sont tout simplement vivants. Le cheval blanc du roi est hors du cadre et de la toile, et, quand on le regarde un peu de temps, on voit ses naseaux respirer et fumer."

seen from the front, they seem to have left the canvas; I do not think I have ever seen anything so alive; the king's white horse, and especially the black horse to his left, are masterpieces."<sup>108</sup> While I make no claims that this portrait played a role in the turn of Louis-Philippe's political fortunes in 1848, it vividly illustrates a tension between Vernet's tour-de-force visual effects and the honorific political function of his official paintings. In the end, Louis-Philippe discovered that a proliferation of officially commissioned imagery could not save him from growing discontent with his regime over its treatment of the nation's poor, its aggressive press censorship, and an economic downturn. The Revolution of 1848 marked the end of Louis-Philippe's reign and with it, Vernet's most reliable patron.

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<sup>108</sup> The only mention any of the royal figures is of the strange appearance of the national guard soldier behind the duc d'Aumale. L. Van Roy, "Salon de Paris," *Revue de Belgique: littérature et beaux-arts* 2 (mai 1847): 186. "Les six chevaux sont vus de face, ils semblent sortir de la toile; je ne me souviens pas d'avoir rien vu d'aussi vivant ; le cheval blanc du roi, et surtout le cheval noir qui est à sa gauche, sont des chefs d'œuvre. Je ne vous parle pas des immenses difficultés de raccourci admirablement vaincues; le peintre est Horace Vernet."

## **Chapter 5: Problems of Proliferation in the Visual Culture of the Crimean War**

### **Introduction**

After an extended period of critical fatigue with large-scale battle painting during the 1830s and 1840s, a new set of representational strategies emerged during the 1850s that would transform the representation of contemporary war in the age of high industrial capitalism. From 1854 to 1856, a large-scale multinational armed conflict erupted, the Crimean War, the first such war since the Napoleonic Wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This chapter will argue that through an unprecedented intermingling of nascent and established media, a predominantly middle class public wary of armed conflict between European nations was provided with a compelling set of reasons to engage with the war apart from merely nationalistic or propagandistic ones. The two and a half year war provided the first sustained opportunity for image makers to depict the event with a new set of technologies of visual reproduction which had come into social use just years earlier, including photographic modes of visual reproduction and the illustrated press.

Representations of the Crimean War in these emergent modes of visual production brought to the fore a series of pictorial and material problems that more

established modes of visual representation of war, including battle painting, had previously only hinted at. In contrast to the practice of battle painting which sought to conjure an illusion of an entire battle (or at least its heroic center), woodblock prints that appeared in illustrated newspapers and photographs prioritized fragmentary, isolated parts of larger military events. These emergent reproductive technologies were especially suited to depicting the Crimean War, which in comparison with previous wars of similar scale was more drawn-out and lacked the kinds of decisive military events that were the traditional subject matter of battle painting. As a visual mode, fragmentation was both a material consequence of these emergent media as well as their formal affect. In the pages that follow, I will examine the problem of war fatigue just after the Revolution of 1848. Then, I will show how newly available forms of visual reproduction exposed a pictorial tension that was at the heart of modern battle painting, between the endless constitutive parts of a military event and its totalizing whole. In the first part of this chapter, I will attend to the effects of this fragmentary mode for spectators and explore how it encouraged a novel form of visual participation with technologically-figured images of contemporary war. Next, I will interrogate how battle painters engaged with the visual problem of the fragmentary as part of a larger elusive totality, both in terms of the consequences for the production and reproduction of their depictions of the Crimean War. Lastly, this chapter will examine the confluence between the discursive value of reproducibility and the production, reproduction and reception of war imagery.

## War Fatigue and the Crimean War

The Salon of 1852, the first to be held in the wake of Louis-Napoleon's proclamation of the Second Empire, featured a single monumental battle painting from the most popular battle painter of the time, Horace Vernet. Entitled *The Siege of Rome*, (Fig. 5.1) the painting represented a key moment in the first major inter-European armed engagement in which the French army had taken part since the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. In 1849, only one year after the bloody revolution of 1848, where thousands of working-class French citizens were massacred in the name of maintaining the stability of the newly formed Second Republic government, French troops marched into Rome to restore the papacy of Pope Pius IX. Roman revolutionaries led by Garibaldi had declared a Roman republic and had forced the ruling pope out of Rome. The pope called upon the French government to help put down a revolution that inconveniently paralleled the one that had put the government of the Second Republic into power only a year earlier.

In 1850, the French government had asked Vernet to paint three different episodes from the siege. He was allowed to determine the dimensions of the three paintings and decided that they would hang on the wall opposite the *Capture of the Smahla* at Versailles and take up the entire wall space. But in the short span of two years, support had withered for the production of the kind of monumental battle paintings that Vernet had produced during the July Monarchy for King Louis-Philippe. In the end, the *Siege of Rome* was downsized into a single painting. The shift from the original commission to its final realization reveals that a miscalculation took place sometime between 1850 and 1852 on the part of the government, Vernet or perhaps by both parties. As this dissertation has argued, the reception of a battle painting during the nineteenth century



revolved to a large extent around the broader political climate and contemporary attitudes toward armed conflict. In keeping with this pattern, the issues that impacted the production of Vernet's painting were directly related to the recent revolution of 1848, in which the French army had violently put down massive uprisings in what had amounted to a civil war within France's own borders.

After 1848, war mongering became a political liability. More problematically for Vernet and the government that had commissioned the *Siege of Rome*, the French military intervention in Rome, which quashed a social movement with many parallels to the revolution of 1848, found little public support. This lack of enthusiasm for the French army's actions in Rome caused Vernet to fear that his paintings would be destroyed, a thought that would have been anathema during the July Monarchy.<sup>1</sup> The change in political and social circumstances following the revolution of 1848 meant that Vernet's large-scale *Siege of Rome* risked becoming an emblem of an outdated celebration of war.

His unease with the regime change and the impact it would have on his career in the wake of the revolution of 1848 and the exile of his most important patron, Louis-Philippe, reportedly led the aging artist to sell many of his belongings and take up residence in a small apartment at the Institute.<sup>2</sup> Before the establishment of the Second Empire in 1852, Vernet's displeasure with the political events of 1848 led him to paint *The Scourges of the Nineteenth Century: Cholera and Socialism* (now lost), which he

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<sup>1</sup> Claudine Renaudeau, "Horace Vernet (1789 - 1863): catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre peint," (Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris IV, 1999), 489. In a letter held in the private Delaroche-Vernet archives, Vernet wrote to Delaroche that "malgré les menaces de destruction de mon œuvre que je trouve dans quelques journaux, je n'en ferais moins mon tableau...Le premier tableau dont je m'occuperai sera la prise du Bastion n. 8."

<sup>2</sup> Janet Emily Meugens Rutz-Rees, *Horace Vernet* (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1880), 34.

shied away from exhibiting at the urging of friends.<sup>3</sup> The painter who had staked his career on large-scale battle painting could no longer be assured of a steady stream of government patronage under the changed political circumstances.

Critics were not kind to Horace Vernet's painting. The vast majority noted that the *Siege of Rome* lacked a sense of unity and found that it failed to come together to form a clear picture of French military achievement:

There are details, many details. I do not see a whole. M. Horace Vernet has covered an immense canvas: with three such submissions, he would fill a Salon all by himself. It is panorama painting that is extended as long as one likes – continued in the next...panel. It's a series of episodes, following one another from right to left, without any relation ... There are partial combats, there is no vigorous melee where one feels the shiver, the anger and the enemy souls of two clashing peoples. The painting lacks depth, and after various actions expressed lively enough in the foreground, there is no longer any life or interest ... With this one makes articles [*feuilletons*] and not books; with this, one goes to the museum at Versailles, but not to the Louvre museum!<sup>4</sup>

The painting's failure to picture the grandeur and elevated seriousness of armed combat was not due to a shortage of heroic episodes - Vernet had literally filled the composition with them - it was because there were too many. Another critic writing for the conservative *L'ami de la religion* also found the painting disappointing: "It is surprising how little interest is attached to the grand scene that he represents. The eye, attracted all over this immense surface, does not know what to fix itself upon and prevents

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<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Weisberg, "Cholera as Plague and Pestilence in Nineteenth-Century Art," in *In Sickness and in Health: Disease as Metaphor in Art and Popular Wisdom*, ed. Gabriel Weisberg and Laurinda S. Dixon (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 92.

<sup>4</sup> G.M., *Salon de 1852* (Caen: Imprimerie E. Poisson, 1852), 145, 10-13. "Il y a des détails, beaucoup de détails ; je ne vois pas un tout. M. Horace Vernet a couvert une toile immense : avec trois envois pareils, il remplirait à lui seul tout un salon. C'est de la peinture de panorama, qu'on allonge autant qu'on veut, - la suite au prochain...panneau...C'est une série d'épisodes, se succédant de droite à gauche, sans aucun lien...Il y a des combats partiels, il n'y a point de ces mêlées vigoureuses, où l'on sent le frémissement, la colère et les âmes ennemies de deux peuples qui se choquent. Le tableau manque de profondeur, et après les actions diverses, assez vivement exprimées, du premier plan, il n'y a plus de vie ni d'intérêt...avec cela on fait des feuilletons et pas des livres ; avec cela on va au musée de Versailles, mais non pas au musée du Louvre!"

concentration upon a principal point. For the spectators, the action remains vague and indecisive.”<sup>5</sup>

Napoleon III, who seized absolute power in a *coup d'état* in 1851 after being elected by popular vote in 1848, sought to associate himself with peacetime prosperity to garner political support. In one the most striking historical paradoxes of the nineteenth century, the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, the ruler most associated with warfare in French history, promoted himself to the French public as a peace-loving man. Having recently been elected *président de la république*, Louis-Napoleon proclaimed his peaceful intentions in a famous speech given in Bordeaux that immediately preceded his *coup d'état*, in which he also formally declared his desire to proclaim an empire. In keeping with the new war-weary political culture, he couched his announcement in the rhetoric of peace and economic prosperity:

There is nevertheless a fear that I must respond to. In the spirit of defiance, certain people say: the Empire means war. I say: the Empire means peace! It means peace because France wants it, and when France is satisfied the world is tranquil. War is not made for pleasure, it is made out of necessity...I admit nevertheless that as Emperor I will have quite some conquests to make...We have immense uncultivated territories to clear, roads to open, ports to dig, rivers to make navigable, canals to finish, our network of railroads to complete...Everywhere, we have ruins to rebuild, false gods to bring down and truths to conquer.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> E de Valette, “Variétés. Salon de 1852,” *L'ami de la religion* 20 mai 1852. “On est frappé du peu d'intérêt qui s'attache à la grande scène qu'il reproduit. L'œil, attiré partout sur cette surface immense, ne sait où se fixer ; et faute de se concentrer sur un point principal, l'action reste, pour le spectateur, vague et indécise.”

<sup>6</sup> Guillaumin, “Chronique économique,” *Journal des économistes. Revue de la science économique* 33 (1852): 199. “Il est néanmoins une crainte à laquelle je dois répondre. Par esprit de défiance, certaines personnes se disent : l'Empire, c'est la guerre. Moi je dis : l'Empire, c'est la paix ! C'est la paix, car la France la désire, et quand la France est satisfaite, le monde est tranquille. La guerre ne se fait pas par plaisir, elle se fait par nécessité...J'en conviens, et cependant j'ai, comme l'Empereur, bien des conquêtes à faire...Nous avons d'immenses territoires incultes à défricher, des routes à ouvrir, des ports à creuser, des rivières à rendre navigables, des canaux à terminer, notre réseau de chemins de fer à compléter...Nous avons partout des ruines à relever, de faux dieux à abattre, des vérités à faire triompher.”

Louis-Napoleon assured the public that whereas his uncle conquered countries, his conquests would be of the economic variety. Indeed, as he announced in his speech, and thanks to state subsidies, the 1850s became a watershed decade for industrial development in France, accompanied by a growth in the centralization of state power.<sup>7</sup> With the institutions of government surveillance under Louis-Napoleon's control, dissent was viciously crushed. Over 26,000 arrests made in the 1850s alone.<sup>8</sup> Those who disagreed with the regime, such as Victor Hugo, went into exile; speeches he gave while in exile burn with vociferous condemnation of the regime.<sup>9</sup> The projects that Louis-Napoleon referred to in his speech all pertained to massive public projects that would make the land fit for industrial development and aid the process of primitive accumulation of primary materials essential for the production of goods and the enrichment of national coffers. This promised increase in France's productive development, which was the focus of the speech, rhetorically justified the need for more government power. It helps to explain why the speech was delivered on the eve of the proclamation of the Second Empire.

Louis-Napoleon's dedication to peace and prosperity did not prevent him from instigating a war with Russia, however, which eventually led to the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854. The conflict erupted when, in a bid to shore up support among Catholics after his *coup d'état*, Louis Napoleon sought to have France control Christian sites in the Holy Land, which the Ottomans had allowed the Russian Orthodox church to

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<sup>7</sup> C.A Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 176.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>9</sup> For the speeches Hugo gave while in exile, see Victor Hugo, *Actes et paroles. Avant l'exil (1841-1851). Pendant l'exil (1852-1870)*, ed. Jean Louis Cornuz, vol. 31, *Oeuvres complètes de Victor Hugo* (Paris: Editions Rencontre, 1968).

control since the fifteenth century. The French, acting as defenders of the Roman Catholic church, obtained authority from the Ottomans to guard these sites. To back up this claim with a show of force, Louis-Napoleon sent a ninety-gun steamship called the *Charlemagne* through the Dardanelles.<sup>10</sup> The forthcoming agreement between the crumbling Ottoman Empire and France amounted to a blunt reproach to the Russians who, having lost control of important religious sites in the Middle East, were internationally humiliated. A series of escalating actions in 1853, such as Russia sending warships to Constantinople and France sending a fleet of ships in response, brought Europe once again into diplomatic and military conflict. Unlike the wars of the Napoleonic Empire, which had been wars of conquest, the Crimean War can best be characterized as a war over the contested strategic influence of Russia and France. As the conflict intensified, France secured valuable alliances with Turkey and England.

In the words of the French historian Alain Gouttman, “the Crimean was, in fact, an abstract war.”<sup>11</sup> That is, the objectives of the Crimean war were not to conquer the port cities in the Crimea but rather to prevent Russia from exerting too much control over the crumbling Ottoman Empire and protect French and English shipping routes, upon which their trade and colonial expansion depended.<sup>12</sup> The war would last until 1856, far longer than initially hoped. Approximately 675,000 people were killed during the conflict, 180,000 of them French, 45,000 British, and 450,000 Russian.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Trevor Royle, *Crimea. The Great Crimean War, 1854-1856* (London: Little Brown, 2000), 19.

<sup>11</sup> Alain Gouttman, “Guerre de Crimée, guerre oubliée?,” in *Napoléon III et l'Europe. 1856: le congrès de Paris* (Paris: Editions Artlys, 2006), 20.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> J.A.S. Grenville, *Europe Reshaped. 1848-1878* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1976), 203. As Grenville points out, the death toll from the Crimean War is comparable to that of the American Civil War. The Napoleonic Wars resulted in over one million French casualties from 1803 – 1815. For more precise

The outbreak of the Crimean War was widely understood as anachronistic to the steady march of industrial progress in Western Europe. It thus also threatened Louis-Napoleon's assertion that the Empire meant peace. As one of the government's regional procurers in Bordeaux noted in an 1854 report,

the prolongation of the war nevertheless begins, I must not conceal, to cause a certain weariness to appear in one part of the population. But it is noticeable that it is neither the agricultural nor laboring classes which seem to feel it so much. It is rather the business and leisure classes which are troubled by it in their transactions and speculations and which hope most devoutly for a return of peace as a vital factor in their prosperity.<sup>14</sup>

These "business and leisure classes" were crucial for maintaining the stability of Louis-Napoleon's regime. They were the same parts of the French population which had profited under Louis-Philippe's reign and did not want a war to interfere with the economy. In 1854, well before the most violent phases of the war, one author pondered the damage that the conflict might inflict upon Europe: "After thirty-eight years of relative prosperity, the old world sees its grandest powers engaging in a struggle that will only perhaps end with a reshuffling of territorial boundaries, by a shift in equilibrium and in influences which will surely compromise interests."<sup>15</sup> France and England officially entered the war in March 1854 with French public opinion on the matter sharply divided.<sup>16</sup>

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casualty figures for the Napoleonic Wars, see Owen Connelly, *The French Revolution and Napoleonic Empire* (New York: Harcourt, 1999), 223.

<sup>14</sup> Lynn Case, *French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 38.

<sup>15</sup> A Fouquier, *Annuaire historique universel ou histoire politique pour 1854* (Paris: Lebrun et Compagnie Frères, 1855), 1-2. "A une paix longue et féconde, va succéder une guerre incertaine. Après trente-huit ans de prospérité relative, le vieux monde voit s'engager entre ses plus grandes puissances une lutte qui ne finira peut-être que par un remaniement général des grandes circonscriptions territoriales, par un déplacement d'équilibre et d'influences, qui, à coup sur, compromettra bien des intérêts."

<sup>16</sup> Case, *French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire*, 15-23.

As the first major international conflict waged among European nations since the Napoleonic wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Crimean War was the first to be fought in the industrial age: the steamship, railroad and telegraph all played major roles in warfare for the first time. The use of these new technologies of transport and communication was mirrored by a new configuration of nascent modes of visual reproduction, including photography and the illustrated mass press, that were for the first time at the disposal of image makers for the representation of a major contemporary armed engagement. This proliferation of visual products of the Crimean War, in nascent and traditional media, engendered a powerful set of political illusions pertaining to transparency, stability, harmonious class relations and military might.

### **Seeing the Whole War in Fragments: Illustrated Newspaper “Reportage”**

In a 1861 letter to Jean-Gilbert Fialin, duc de Persigny, a personal friend of Emperor Louis-Napoleon, Charles Baudelaire attempted to secure a pension for his friend Constantin Guys, an illustrator who had worked for the *Illustrated London News* during the Crimean War. Guys had trouble finding steady work after the end of the Crimean War but could still count on an occasional assignment from the *Illustrated London News* thanks to the generosity of its founder Herbert Ingram. But after Ingram drowned in Lake Michigan in 1860 while touring the United States, Guys’ prospects for employment with the newspaper ended.<sup>17</sup> Two years after his appeal, Baudelaire published his seminal essay, “The Painter of Modern Life” in *Le Figaro*, identifying Constantin Guys

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<sup>17</sup> Pierre Duflo, *Constantin Guys. Fou de dessin, grand reporter (1802-1892)*, vol. 2 (Paris: Editions Arnaud Seydoux, 1988), 101.

as the artist who most adeptly captured the transitory essence of modernity. In an 1861 letter, Baudelaire counted Guys' talent for representing war as one of the accomplishments that entitled the artist to French government support: "I have seen the *entire* Crimean campaign drawn by him, from one day until the next, when he followed the expedition after the English army, all of his drawings accompanied by the most curious of notes."<sup>18</sup>

Baudelaire was referring to a series of original sketches that Constantin Guys had made while he worked as a correspondent in the theater of war for the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>19</sup> Notoriously critical of newspapers, Baudelaire's encounter with Guys' original ink wash sketches, and not their reproductions, was a privileged one. He once asserted that "I do not understand how a pure hand could touch a newspaper without a convulsion of disgust."<sup>20</sup> He bypassed the drawings' mode of mass diffusion as wood block engravings in the *Illustrated London News* and wrote about the original sketches. In the section of the "Painter of Modern Life" where Baudelaire wrote about these sketches, entitled "The Annals of War," he praised Guys: "I can affirm that no newspaper, no written account, no book can better express the grand epic of the Crimean War in all of its painful details and sinister scope."<sup>21</sup> As we shall see, the tension implied here between

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<sup>18</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Nouvelles lettres*, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2000), 36. "J'ai vu *toute* la campagne de Crimée dessinée par lui, au jour le jour pendant qu'il suivait l'expédition à la suite de l'armée anglaise, chacun de ses dessins accompagné des notes les plus curieuses."

<sup>19</sup> Many of Constantin Guys' sketches were owned by Baudelaire's friend Nadar who purchased them directly from the artist. As Claude Pichois has asserted in the notes to the annotated edition of Baudelaire's writings on art, Baudelaire "a sous les yeux les originaux." Keeping in mind his professed dislike of newspapers and his friendship with Nadar, it seems likely that his understanding of Guys' Crimean War *oeuvre* would have been based exclusively on the original drawings. See Baudelaire, *Critique d'art*, 652.

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* "Je ne comprends pas qu'une main pure puisse toucher un journal sans une convulsion de dégoût."

<sup>21</sup> Baudelaire, *Critique d'art*, 360-61. "Je puis affirmer que nul journal, nul récit écrit, nul livre, n'exprime aussi bien, dans tous ses détails douloureux et dans sa sinistre ampleur, cette grande épopée de la guerre de Crimée."



the representation of the war's plentiful details and its overarching ensemble is at the heart of the visual culture of the Crimean War.

Baudelaire interpreted the sketches as series of eyewitness encounters with war: their facture, made in quick, autographic lines, signified having been made in the heat of battle. This technical sign of improvisation was anathema to the predictable battle paintings of Horace Vernet with their careful attention to military costume and other denotative details. Baudelaire once derided Vernet as a “veritable newspaper writer instead of a real painter” and was one of his most vocal detractors in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>22</sup> Guys sketched the charge of the light brigade made famous by Lord Alfred Tennyson's poem of the same name (1864) (Fig. 5.2). The episode caused a firestorm of negative public opinion in England after newspaper reports exposed the incompetent English generals who were responsible for leading a cavalry charge against blankets of Russian artillery fire. In Guys' drawing, a flurry of ink at the top of the composition depicts the swirling chaos of artillery fire and smoke. Below, small flecks of ink denote soldiers charging toward their certain deaths. For Baudelaire, the unevenly covered surface riddled with hastily-made brushstrokes, “upon which the tears and spots speak to the trouble and tumult in the middle of which the artist put down his daily memories,” functioned as a material indicator of its status as an eyewitness transcription of war.<sup>23</sup> The immediacy of experience of war that Baudelaire felt privy to in Guys' drawings depended on the epistemological authority of the eyewitness, something that illustrated newspapers learned to exploit during the Crimean War to sell the news.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. , 361. “Véritable gazetier plutôt que peintre essentiel.”

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 362-63. “...dont les maculatures et les déchirures disent, à leur manière, le trouble et le tumulte au milieu desquels l'artiste y déposait ses souvenirs de la journée.”

Coverage of the Crimean War in illustrated newspapers commercialized eyewitness experience for the sake of producing a new kind of news commodity with a novel technological allure. The first illustrated newspaper of its kind, the *Illustrated London News*, was founded in 1842 and was quickly emulated in France one year later by *L'Illustration*. The historian Jean-Noel Marchandiau has estimated that by 1854, the year in which France officially entered the Crimean War, *L'Illustration* had over 14,000 subscribers. By 1855, that number had risen to 24,000, which suggests that coverage of the Crimean War was an economically lucrative undertaking.<sup>24</sup> During the Crimean War, *L'Illustration* and the *Illustrated London News* printed weekly illustrated dispatches from the warfront. These featured woodblock engravings made after drawings by correspondents who sent these visual and textual dispatches from the theater of war. This unprecedented immediacy of pictured reporting had an ideological effect. By combining textual narration with visual representations of important events, these two newspapers marketed the illusion of making the *entire* war representable through a series of episodic occurrences. The following pages focus on the visual and textual strategies adopted by the French paper, *L'Illustration*, during the Crimean War to present itself as a technologically alluring and indispensable news commodity.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Jean-Noel Marchandiau, *L'Illustration, vie et mort d'un journal, 1843-1944* (Paris: Bibliothèque historique Privat, 1987), 27

<sup>25</sup> While the *Illustrated London News* has been treated extensively by scholars, the French counterpart has received comparatively little attention. For studies that treat the *Illustrated London News* see Keller, *Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War*; see also Matthew Lalumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984). Just as the English *Illustrated London News* has received more scholarly attention than *L'Illustration*, so too has the visual culture of the Crimean War in England as a whole. Ulrich Keller, in a catalogue essay for an exhibition at the Jeu de Paume in 2007, attempted to remedy this situation with a comparison between the visual production of France and England during the war: Ulrich Keller, "La guerre de Crimée en images: regards croisés France/Angleterre," in *L'Événement, les images comme acteurs de l'histoire* (Paris: Editions Hazan/ Editions Jeu de Paume, 2007), 28-49.

The authority of the Crimean War coverage in *L'Illustration* depended upon the values attached to the *témoign oculaire*, or visual eyewitness, a category of witnessing that, as discussed in an earlier chapter, had evolved out of early modern juridical contexts.<sup>26</sup> With regard to the representation of military events, the *témoign oculaire* was understood as the emblematic source for representing war accurately and objectively. This authoritative form of subjective vision was the primary source upon which secondary knowledge of a more interpretative kind could be based.<sup>27</sup> From the early years of the French First Republic up through the Second Empire, eyewitness vision trumped all other retrospective forms of war narration. The enterprising editors of *L'Illustration*, in marketing their own eyewitness representations of the Crimean War, were well aware of the historical authority of the *témoign oculaire* as the basis for constructing believable accounts of military events. The newspaper took advantage of a preexisting valorization of the expert opinions of visual eyewitnesses (*témoins oculaires*) to sell itself as an indispensable source for authoritative news from the theater of war.

The Crimean War is widely understood as the originary moment of “reportage,” owing to the use of eyewitness correspondents by newspapers such as the *Illustrated London News*, *The Times* and *L'Illustration*, as well as to the availability of technologies

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<sup>26</sup> Chapter 1 of this dissertation treats the emergence of the *témoign oculaire* in relationship to the popularization of topographical engravings of battles and episodic battle painting. Andrea Frisch’s account of the emergence of the epistemological category of the eyewitness has shaped my understanding of the role it played during the First Empire and the Crimean War. See Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France*.

<sup>27</sup> Eyewitness battle accounts constituted a genre of writing that flourished throughout the period that this dissertation covers (1804-1856) and have continued to flourish to this day.

such as the telegraph which sped up the communication of news across continents.<sup>28</sup> The discursive development of what has come to be known as “reportage” was deeply rooted in the tradition of the *témoign oculaire*. Far from an objective reporting of eyewitness information from warfront to home front, the modern discourse of “reportage” can be more accurately described as a construction by a reading subject that is based on a set of claims promoted for the sake of commercial gain by the press. The imperative of the mass press during the Crimean War was to convince readers that they were, in effect, privy to a totalizing, comprehensive account based on truthful information. “Reportage” enticed and continues to entice the reading subject to believe in the authority of the reported news by claiming to depict the war with insider information not available anywhere else, and offers this information for a price.

Whereas the Napoleonic battle accounts written by eyewitnesses during the First Empire took the form of bound books such as General Alexandre Berthier’s *Relation de la bataille de Marengo* (1805) that exuded permanence, illustrated newspapers required that their eyewitness information be ephemeral and constantly subject to change like the news itself. It is therefore the military bulletins produced by Napoleon Bonaparte during the First Empire which are more in line with the ephemeral logic of the illustrated

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<sup>28</sup> Ulrich Keller’s conception of eyewitness authority is quite different from my own. Whereas I understand the authority of illustrated newspapers within the historical epistemology of the *témoign oculaire*, Keller argues for the primacy of the modern illustrated newspaper as the guarantee of “authenticity”: “it was not camera exposures, but newspaper illustrations which first manifested the novel quality of ‘authenticity’ to the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century public. This quality was guaranteed not by the quite traditional woodcut medium as such, but by the particular mode of its contextualization.” (Keller, *Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War*, 71). As my research has demonstrated, “authenticity” was an integral component of earlier forms of war imagery produced after the French Revolution, largely in response to the new bonds between the new French ‘nation’ and warfare. While I disagree with Keller on this point, I am indebted to his important study of English visual representations of the Crimean War and his exacting analysis of the conditions under which these images were produced.

newspaper.<sup>29</sup> Both Napoleon's military bulletins, which were circulated between 1805 and 1812, and illustrated newspaper "reportage" shared a common goal, namely, the consolidation of power. In the case of the bulletins, the speedy dissemination of information pertaining to the French army's activities was intended to bolster Bonaparte's political power by maintaining a level of control over the spread of knowledge about his campaigns. For the illustrated newspaper, the imperative of commercial gain dictated the modalities of disseminating news about the Crimean War.

As Richard Terdiman has argued, "the daily paper was arguably the *first* consumer commodity; made to be perishable, purchased to be thrown away...it sold itself first of all."<sup>30</sup> In the particular case of illustrated newspapers, the quality of ephemerality adheres to the logic of depicting a narrative of war extended over a period of several years: *L'Illustration* frequently laid bare the questionable veracity of their own eyewitness sources in order to alert readers that more authoritative drawings or written accounts would appear in the next issue. While such an editorial strategy seems to contradict the logic of authoritative objectivity of the news that the paper wanted to impart, it actually worked to ensure that readers would consult next week's edition where the new information would appear.

In the summer of 1855, which coincided with the Universal Exposition in Paris, Jean-Baptiste Alexandre Paulin, the editor in chief of *L'Illustration*, expressed his exasperation with the lack of spectacular, definitive battles in the text of his own paper: "The news from Crimea is more worthless than ever. This grave calm that preoccupies

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<sup>29</sup> For more on the production and dissemination of Napoleon's military bulletins, see Joseph J. Matthews, "Napoleon's Military Bulletins," *The Journal of Modern History* 22, no. 2 (June, 1950).

<sup>30</sup> Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, 120.

everybody, resembles the tranquil weight of the atmosphere and of the elements just before a dreadful new world storm.”<sup>31</sup> Despite frequent protests issued by the editors at the lack of dynamic military events between 1854 and 1856, the Crimean war provided the nascent illustrated mass press with an opportunity to transform a slow war into a sellable news event. Small news fluctuations became salient, sellable events that were packaged as indispensable knowledge, even if there was nothing especially new to report.

With no shortage of other newspapers available in France during the Crimean war, the editors of *L'Illustration* had to provide solid justification as to why their news was the most accurate and informed available. This was often accomplished by lamenting the problematic accuracy of telegraphic dispatches. As a new technology of communication, the telegraph provided information about the war quickly but the veracity of the information was thought to depend upon the national allegiances of the telegraph operator. Early on in the war, *L'Illustration* and other newspapers such as the *Journal des débats* voiced doubts over telegraphic dispatches from Vienna, owing to the neutrality of Austria in the Crimean War; the country's refusal to take sides was understood at the time to undermine the authority of the information sent to France and England. As the war progressed, the accuracy of the updates received via telegraph was increasingly cast into doubt.

In January 1855, *L'Illustration* published an excerpt from the *Journal des débats* that explained its refusal to publish news deemed to be untrue. Several French and English papers had reported that Russians had crossed the Danube and that French and

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<sup>31</sup> Jean-Baptiste Alexandre Paulin, “Histoire de la semaine,” *L'Illustration*, 18 août 1855. “Les nouvelles de Crimée sont plus nulles que jamais. Ce calme pesant, qui préoccupe tant les esprits, ressemble à la lourdeur tranquille de l'atmosphère et des éléments avant une tempête effroyable du nouveau monde.”

English forces had begun to attack Sebastopol. These telegraphed reports, according to the *Journal des débats*, were incorrect and the consequences of such erroneous reports were multiplied by the unscrupulous editors of newspapers that chose to publish them. *L'Illustration* included the excerpt in its leading article. The editors at the *Journal des débats* had reached a point of exasperation with the dubious authority of telegraphic dispatches:

We already tried many times to protect the public against the dangers that can result from the use of the electric telegraph and the ease with which it can be put at the disposition of everybody... We do not know, apparently, how to repeat more often to our readers that if they must congratulate themselves to see such a powerful instrument function for themselves, it is necessary to know how to make use of it. In the past, the telegraphic dispatch had an official character; today it only has as much worth as the intelligence of the person who sent it... In the end, interest in circumstances excites a very legitimate curiosity, but this singularly facilitates the propagation of error; to this end, we call upon the shrewdness and prudence of the reader.<sup>32</sup>

Though it was a modern, technological marvel, the electric telegraph could not be trusted. Since its invention and subsequent application as a communications technology in the 1840s, it devolved from an official organ of information into a highly subjective one, dependent on individual operators who could well be under the influence of the enemy. While the telegraph promised to deliver the news quickly, such speed also opened the machine up to the possibility of multiplying false information across the European continent. At the time, periodicals such as the *Journal des débats* and *L'Illustration*

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 20 janvier. "Nous avons essayé plusieurs fois déjà de prémunir le public contre les dangers qui pouvaient résulter de l'emploi du télégraphe électrique et de la facilité avec laquelle il a été mis à la disposition de tout le monde... nous ne saurions, à ce qu'il paraît, répéter plus souvent à nos lecteurs que s'ils doivent se féliciter de voir un instrument aussi puissant fonctionner pour leur compte, il faut aussi savoir s'en servir. Autrefois la dépêche télégraphique avait un caractère officiel ; aujourd'hui elle ne mérite pas plus de crédit qu'il n'en faut accorder à l'intelligence de celui qui l'a expédiée... En définitive, l'intérêt des circonstances excite une curiosité bien légitime, mais qui facilite singulièrement la propagation de l'erreur ; nous en appelons sur ce point à la sagacité et à la prudence du lecteur."

affirmed the dependability of their sources against what they saw as the unscrupulous financial motivations of other international press outlets.

It might at first appear curious that the editors of *L'Illustration* should have wanted to include a lengthy excerpt from a rival newspaper that inveighed against the problematic accuracy of telegraphic dispatches, since both newspapers relied upon them to supply the news. But for *L'Illustration*, it was a savvy tactic that allowed the paper to assert that eyewitness visual reports were more reliable than the telegraph, which was the dominant technology for supplying up-to-the-minute news. This only increased the value of the eyewitness visual sources unique to the illustrated press and set such papers apart from other non-illustrated rivals in the marketplace. Modern telegraphic technology was certainly fast, but it was no substitute for the visual witness personal testimony of the *témoin oculaire*. In contrast to the unfamiliar disembodied information conveyed through the telegraph, the woodblock engravings translated from original drawings made in the theater of war asserted the presence of an authorial subject with which readers would have been more familiar in both epistemological and material terms.

*L'Illustration* often used eyewitness drawings supplied by its correspondents to corroborate official written dispatches supplied by the government. At a particularly low point in the war when hopes of taking the Russian fort of Sebastopol had been dashed yet again, the pages of *L'Illustration* confided in its readers that

the details published up until now on the operations of the siege are, like all the rest, far from having an authentic character; the accounts from St. Petersburg have little to do with the ones in London and Paris. The rapport of General Canrobert, published in this edition, gives the exact state of things for the date of April 16. With regard to the telegraphic dispatches that have come across Germany, in their contradictions one can begin to see the game of speculators who have dictated to it everything that adheres to the interests of the stock exchanges of Vienna,



Frankfurt, Paris and London. It is perhaps time to think about which hands and under which influences the European press has found itself today.<sup>33</sup>

General Canrobert's report was printed in the newspaper as a thin horizontal band of text set between two larger engravings based on drawings sent from the front that corroborated the textual account. The complete story of this particular event of the war was therefore made possible through a doubling of information, textual and visual (Fig. 5.3). The artist who made the drawings, Durand-Brager, had received a personal audience with Napoleon III just a month prior, a political recognition that further bolstered his authority as a competent eyewitness.<sup>34</sup>

On May 13, 1854, just after the bombing of Odessa, the newspaper claimed that it had received several reports, ranging from ones published in German and Belgian newspapers to an official report written by a French naval officer, Admiral Hamelin, that had appeared in the French government newspaper *Le Moniteur universel*. The editors of *L'Illustration* evaluated these written accounts in terms of each other and then in terms of a series of drawings they had received with Hamelin's report and that differed somewhat from his written accounts. The conclusion was that the difference between the written and visual account posed no problem.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 5 mai. "Les détails publiés jusqu'ici sur les opérations du siège sont, comme tout le reste, loin d'avoir un caractère authentique ; les récits de Saint-Pétersbourg ne s'accordent guère avec ceux de Londres et de Paris. Le rapport du général Canrobert, publié dans ce numéro, donne l'état exact des choses à la date du 16 avril. Quant aux dépêches télégraphiques venues à travers l'Allemagne, on commence à voir dans leurs contradictions le jeu des spéculateurs qui font dire à ce merveilleux courrier tout ce qui convient aux intérêts des bourses de Vienne, de Francfort, de Paris, et de Londres. Il est peut être temps de penser en quelles mains et sous quelles influences se trouve aujourd'hui la presse dans toute l'Europe."

<sup>34</sup> Paulin, "Histoire de la semaine," *L'Illustration*, 24 mars. "Avant son départ, M. H. Durand-Brager a eu l'honneur d'être appelé dimanche soir et reçu en petit comité par Leurs Majestés l'Empereur et l'Impératrice, qui ont bien voulu examiner avec le plus vif intérêt les dessins si consciencieux et si vrais exécutés à Sébastopol, et jusque sous le feu de l'ennemi, par notre laborieux collaborateur. Leurs Majestés ont paru apporter la plus grande attention à l'examen de ses travaux, et ont témoigné à cet artiste distingué toute leur haute et bienveillante satisfaction, ainsi que les encouragements les plus flatteurs pour la continuation de ce long et périlleux travail."

It must be recognized that the point of the view of the draftsman, and the moment when he captured a scene as mobile as this one, sufficiently accounts for this difference. Whatever the case, we did not want to deprive our readers of these sketches, received on Wednesday, copied on wood, engraved, and put to press Thursday, at the moment when we received other drawings of the same kind, more detailed, and by consequence, more complete. The official report of Admiral Hamelin will supply what is lacking in these engravings.<sup>35</sup>

The visual accounts were taken as primary in their authority over the multiple written accounts. Readers were assured that the information they were receiving on that day's issue of the paper was as accurate and as recent as possible. The process of transforming the drawings into engravings demanded a great deal of labor by the engravers, who worked around the clock to produce several engravings for each issue of the paper. The speed with which engravings were produced ensured the newspaper's value as a superlative source of up-to-date information.<sup>36</sup> The editor's insistence on the incredible speed with which the drawings were received and translated into woodblock engravings hinted at the temporality of visual news production. The reader was promised that the visual information contained in the drawings was as new as possible. But in a move to spur readers' curiosity, the editor disclosed that brand new *better* drawings were received at press time, which could not be included in the current issue. What other choice did an inquisitive reader have than to purchase the next issue to view these new and allegedly "more detailed" drawings? Participation in the narrative of war relayed by the newspaper was rhetorically figured as under the reader's control. At the same time the newspaper

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<sup>35</sup> *L'Illustration*, 13 mai, 1854, 1. "Il faut reconnaître que le point de vue du dessinateur, et le moment où il saisit une scène aussi mobile que l'est celle-ci, expliquent suffisamment cette différence. Quoi qu'il en soit, nous n'avons pas voulu priver nos lecteurs de ces esquisses reçues mercredi, copiées sur bois, gravées, et mises sous presse jeudi, au moment où nous recevions d'autres dessins du même genre plus détaillés et par conséquent plus complets. Le rapport officiel de l'amiral Hamelin suppléera d'ailleurs à ce qui manque dans ces gravures."

<sup>36</sup> Marchandiau, *L'Illustration, vie et mort d'un journal, 1843-1944*, 30-31. One wood engraving required at least 48 hours to produce.

left the narrative intentionally open-ended and inconclusive so as to encourage readers to peruse the next issue.

*L'Illustration* achieved this illusion of the participation of readers at home through a mix of editorial savvy and technological affect. The editorial strategy of signaling better and more complete news to come must be understood as part of the logic of “reportage,” which claimed to cover the *whole* event through a series of constantly updated visual and textual reports that were gleaned from specialized “eyewitness” sources. Wartime coverage consisted of an unending succession of better and more complete news to come, a perpetual future of news about the war. The fragmentary nature of news production provided a convenient marketing ploy: readers had to purchase these weekly news “fragments” continuously so as to follow the war, such that the more one read, the more complete the narrative could become. In this way, the discourse of “reportage” describes a mode of commodity consumption just as much as it names a technologically and commercially figured rhetoric of eyewitness authority imparted by the producers of the news.

### **Mission Impossible: The Early Aspirations of Military Photography**

*L'Illustration's* Crimean War coverage depended on the continuous production of eyewitness visual and textual fragments that reader/viewers were encouraged to believe would eventually cohere into a seamless and authoritative account of the war. The same impulse toward a complete and authoritative representation of the war lies at the heart of the discourse surrounding the military uses of photography during the same period. In the years between the announcement of the “invention” of the daguerreotype in 1839 by

Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre and the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, the nascent medium of photography rapidly evolved. Exposure times were reduced, glass and paper negatives replaced the metal plate of the daguerreotype, and new printing techniques abounded. The Crimean War, though not the first war to be photographed, was the first international conflict to be photographed on a relatively wide scale, resulting in the production of several photographic albums and widespread discussion about the merits of war photography in the press.

The following sections examine early theories of military photography in relationship to the photographs taken of the Crimean War by French artists for the purpose of creating battle paintings. As we shall see, it was imagined that the new medium would picture war in all of its elusive totality by collecting and compiling exhaustive eyewitness accounts. It was hoped that through a material accumulation of imagery, a more complete picture of war could be achieved than had ever been possible. Such aspirations for totality contrasted sharply with the practice of taking photographs of the Crimean War and posed a new set of challenges for artists who wanted to use them as source material with which to produce battle paintings. Photographs not only eroded traditional notions of pictorial unity in depicting war as a series of isolated details of a larger event but more importantly held out the promise of a totalizing image of war that could never be fulfilled.

There were at least five separate photographic expeditions to the Crimea during and immediately after the war, resulting in hundreds of photographs that were sold as albums and publicly exhibited in London, Paris and elsewhere. The Universal Exhibition of 1855 was the first to include photography under the category of the industrial arts: the

photographs displayed there were taken by the Englishman Roger Fenton and the Romanian Charles Szathmari, whose work has been lost. Charles Lacan, the founder of the photography journal *La Lumière*, published a pamphlet that reviewed the photographs on view at the Universal Exhibition and featured an entire section dedicated to the Crimean War photography of Szathmari and Fenton.

As soon as France entered the Crimean War in 1854, photography periodicals speculated that the medium would transform the ways in which this new, modern war could be represented. In April 1854, the journal of the Société française de photographie, *La Lumière*, published an excerpt from the English *Journal of the Society of Arts* announcing that the English government had decided to send an official photographer to the warfront. After the article, a French editor commented that the French government was also planning to send a photographer to the war, something that never materialized. The author then let his imagination run wild with the ways that photography would revolutionize the pictorial representation of war:

A dispatch, accompanied by photographic views, will give much more precise information than a simple written document, however voluminous and detailed it may be. One can, with a lens, instantaneously reproduce promontories, coasts, forts, dispositions of fleets, armies, military positions, and if the stereoscope can be used, nothing could be compared to the results that will be obtained.<sup>37</sup>

Photography promised to represent and disseminate military information instantly and with greater precision than ever before. The author envisioned a new era of technological progress where war would be represented far more efficiently with photographic images

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<sup>37</sup> “La photographie et la guerre,” *La Lumière*, 15 avril 1854, 15. “Une dépêche, accompagnée de vues photographiques, donnera des renseignements bien plus précis qu’un simple document écrit, si volumineux et si détaillé qu’il puisse être. On peut, avec un objectif, reproduire instantanément des promontoires, des côtes, des forts, des dispositions de flottes, des armées, des positions militaires, et si le stéréoscope peut être employé, rien ne saurait être comparé aux résultats qu’on obtiendra”

than with antiquated and imprecise words. Crisp, instantaneous photographs, in the service of representing war, would eventually transform its dominant representational syntax from the verbal to the visual and could finally deliver a true and all encompassing representation of war.

In 1861, five years after the Crimean war ended in victory for France and England, an important article appeared in the military periodical *Le Spectateur militaire*. Titled “On the Usage of Photography in the Army,” the article outlined the potential importance of photography for the French military. Eugène Disdéri, the famous portrait photographer and one of the most successful men in the business of photography in France, had just had a proposal accepted by the Minister of War to integrate the technology of photography into the “corps of troops” of the French military.<sup>38</sup> Within the context of the representation of armed combat, photography would act as a boon to military knowledge, organizing it and correcting it: “For the writer who will want to recall the splendors of war for posterity, photography will limit laborious research, problematic opinions, and will imprint accounts with the sanction of exactitude.”<sup>39</sup> While maps and charts often accompanied the written text of military histories, photography was envisioned as an originary form of evidence, outdoing all other types with its exact visual information.

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<sup>38</sup> The article states that M. Disdéri’s project “fut soumis, dès le commencement de 1860, à son Exc. le ministre de la guerre, qui le prit en considération, et, par décision du 19 février 1861, appela M. Disdéri à le mettre à exécution dans les corps de troupes.” The article does not specify exactly how photography would be integrated into the military. See Ferdinand de Lacombe, “De l’usage de la photographie dans l’armée,” *Le spectateur militaire* 35 (1861): 145. For more on Disdéri’s dealings with the Dépôt de la guerre, see Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte de Visite Portrait Photograph* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 51-52.

<sup>39</sup> Lacombe, “De l’usage de la photographie dans l’armée,” 146. “A l’écrivain qui voudra rappeler à la postérité les fastes de la guerre, elle évitera donc les recherches laborieuses, les appréciations problématiques, et imprimera à son récit la sanction de l’exactitude.”

The same faith in war photography's potential to do what no previous medium had been capable of pervaded an 1862 book on photography written by Eugène Disdéri. He reiterated much of what had been written in the article in the *Spectateur militaire* and promoted the benefits of photographic images for the military's information gathering needs, from which he stood to gain substantial financial profit:

With the help of photography, it would always be possible to recognize, at a distance, all nature of preparations necessary for a siege in the process of execution, the placement of battle fields and the thousands of essential details that the general needs to know and would corroborate the reports with visible traits he would have ordered or could be ordered. One glance suffices to understand instantly that which is long and difficult to explain with words.<sup>40</sup>

Like the previous authors, Disdéri understood photography as a medium without mediation, a veritable window on the world of armed combat, capable of representing all the aspects of war that could only be imprecisely depicted in the past. Photography did not itself give rise to this desire to see a complete, immediate and detailed picture of war but it became the site of such lofty aspirations in the 1850s, a period that coincides with the rapid commodification of the medium and its concomitant rise as an industrial technology of reproduction.

Unlike the written word, which needed to be read and interpreted, these commentators hoped and assumed that photographs of war would be completely denotative, requiring no interpretation on the part of the viewer. This understanding of photography's instantly intelligible signifying power is consistent with that of another

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<sup>40</sup> Eugène Disdéri, *L'Art de la photographie* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1862), 152. "A l'aide de la photographie, il serait toujours possible de se rendre compte, à distance, des travaux de toute nature ordonnés pendant un siège et en voie d'exécution, de la disposition des champs de bataille et des mille détails essentiels que le général a intérêt à connaître et qui viendraient corroborer par des traits visibles les rapports qu'il demande, ou qui, dans bien des cas, pourraient en tenir lieu. Un coup d'œil suffit pour comprendre en un instant ce qui est long et difficile à expliquer par des mots."

source of objective representation of war, that of the *témoin oculaire* or eyewitness.

These early speculations about the military applications of photography equate the medium's role with that of an eyewitness, mechanically substituting the authority of the human *témoin oculaire* with the black-and-white testimony of the photograph.

Disdéri took the idea a step further and argued that these eyewitness photographs would in effect transfer this superior form of vision to anyone who viewed them. In the same way that illustrated newspapers promised new forms of visual participation in the reporting of contemporary war, so did photography. Viewers would participate in military events as eyewitnesses thanks to the medium's immediate intelligibility:

Next to these grand military struggles, the Magentas and the Solferinos, reproduced in their ensemble and in their episodes, will be placed the triumphant entry of our soldiers in the Italian cities; we will take part, so to speak, in the combats undertaken in China, the capture of Peking, in the thousands of military events of the Crimean war, from the landing of our troops up until the supreme assault on Malakoff.<sup>41</sup>

In this passage, Disdéri affirmed that to view a photographic representation of a military event was to experience it as an eyewitness. He argued that photographs of war would permit viewers to "take part" in the nation's illustrious military achievements because the camera had recorded them both "in their ensemble and in their episodes." No part of the conflict would be left unrepresented. Enchanted by the possibilities of the new medium (and the profits that his collaboration with the French military could generate from it), the photographer abandoned himself to photography's seemingly endless potentialities.

Whereas illustrated newspaper coverage of the Crimean War enacted a form of

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. , 150-51. "A côté des grandes luttes militaires, des Magenta et des Solferino, reproduites dans leur ensemble et dans leurs épisodes, se placerait l'entrée triomphale de nos soldats dans les villes italiennes; nous assisterions, pour ainsi dire, aux combats soutenus en Chine, à la prise de Pékin, aux mille faits d'armes de la guerre de Crimée, depuis le débarquement de nos troupes jusqu'au suprême assaut de Malakoff."



reader/viewer participation around an ever-elusive quest for completeness and accuracy, the camera, acting as a mechanical eyewitness, would enable the participation of viewers in this form of an omniscient vision of war.

Though it would be tempting to ascribe Disdéri's vision for war photography to the special properties of the nascent medium, his assertion that viewers "take part" in war through photographic representation needs to be seen in the longer perspective of the valorization of eyewitness vision that had long dominated critical expectations surrounding representations of war in altogether different contexts, from battle painting and battle panoramas to the illustrated press. This dissertation has argued that the possibility of experiencing a military event through viewing visual representations of it pervaded the critical writing on war imagery, especially battle paintings and battle panoramas, during the first half of the nineteenth century in France. The exaggerated claim that viewers could in effect watch armed combat through its representation was a feature of the Salon criticism of the battle paintings of Louis-François Lejeune and Horace Vernet, among others, and dominated contemporary accounts of the battle panoramas of Jean-Charles Langlois. The illusion, which was celebrated by the artistic press from the early years of the First Empire through the Crimean War, maintained that to view an image of a military encounter was to become an eyewitness of the depicted event. This visual magic effected by some representations of war constituted a powerful political illusion that purported to transform the multivalent political event called "war" into a series of contained and therefore seemingly knowable experiences. In reflecting upon the potential uses of military photography, Disdéri and others adapted this

expectation of war imagery from more traditional media to the nascent medium of photography.

Within this discourse of the potential uses of war photography, the eyewitness participation of viewers hinged on the medium's ability to produce a complete picture of war, one that provided minute details as well as a broad and "true" overview. In the passage quoted above, Disdéri paradoxically advocated that photography depict battles "in their ensembles and their episodes," arguing that the medium would represent the constituent parts of a battle as well as its totalizing whole. This ultimate nineteenth-century representation of war was pictorially impossible to produce. Yet it was seductive as an ideology: any attempt to represent photographically an *entire* battle as the sum of its parts would materially overwhelm any archive and would confound attempts to organize the indexical details of the event into a coherent system of knowledge.

The mechanical nature of the medium gave these early commentators license to imagine the possibility of achieving a totalizing photographic representation of armed combat through a potentially infinite proliferation of images. In contrast to the laborious process of sketching the battlefield by hand with the aid of perspectival devices, photography would allow the military to represent territory quickly and without burden.

The medium's utility for war was likened to a weapon:

Nothing would have escaped the speed of photographic methods, not even the appearance of the countries traveled through, of which the artist could assure the reproduction with the same kind of liberty and ease that comes with artillery fire...Military photography can trace its own annals.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Lacombe, "De l'usage de la photographie dans l'armée," 146. "Rien n'eût échappé à la rapidité des procédés photographiques, pas même l'aspect des pays parcourus, dont l'artiste peut s'assurer la reproduction avec une liberté et une aisance analogues à celles qui accompagnent le jeu de l'artillerie...La photographie militaire peut tracer elle-même ses annales."

The author implied that the camera would be as easy to manipulate as a rifle, a reference that would not have been lost on the readers of this military periodical. But beyond photography's speed, the author also inferred that the medium could represent its referents without human labor as a self-acting mechanical tool. As Steve Edwards has forcefully argued with regard to English photography in the Victorian era, the autogenic potential of photography was frequently touted as the medium's greatest quality. The dream of autogenesis "unleashes the possibility of a frenzy of making," and simultaneously substitutes the agency of the mechanical device for human labor in the production process.<sup>43</sup> This is precisely what occurs in these texts: the authors envisioned a constantly expanding set of visual images of war with the help of the camera.

Photographs would accomplish what no soldiers or army engineers could ever hope to achieve: a military event in all of its multifarious parts as well as its glorious "ensemble."

Nowhere do these authors pause to take stock of the material consequences of autogenesis: it is regarded positively, as a fantasy of endless production. Placing a positive valuation on the limitless production of material goods was in line with attitudes toward industrial production that dominated the period and helped to ensure a political consensus for Louis-Napoleon. The process of gathering these photographs would have to be in keeping with the vision of limitless proliferation. The author of "On the Usage of Photography in the Army" signaled exactly this kind of strategy for harnessing the medium: "First of all, [Disderi] wants the photographers to be numerous, always present everywhere, distributed over the entire line of battle or siege, constantly ready to collect

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<sup>43</sup> Edwards, *The Making of English Photography - Allegories*, 42-44.

everything that interests them in the spectacles that strike their gazes.”<sup>44</sup> Though photography was supposed to “trace its own annals,” the author recognized that human labor would be required. Paradoxically, the autogenic quality of photography to represent military history all by itself must first be set off by the figure of the idealized war photographer. Photography’s self-acting powers would be made possible by photographers “always present everywhere,” photographing “everything.” Disdéri planned to blanket the entire field of combat with photographers in order to fulfill the directive of covering all aspects of a campaign. The unending flow of photographs, taken by an unending flow of photographers, would finally produce the perfect picture of war, as the sum total of all of its multifarious, and potentially infinite, details. It goes without saying that this fantasy, of a totalizing summary image of war, was well beyond the bounds of representation. It was precisely what the photographic historian John Tagg has identified as the “phantasy of something more.”<sup>45</sup>

Photography would produce a new and enlightened viewer who would have the benefit of instant access to a broad visual overview of the combat as well as its manifold parts. This illusion of a totalizing, yet detailed, photographic representation of war contrasted with the actual technological capabilities of the medium at the time, which permitted little more than landscapes and portraits to be made. Despite these limitations, the utopian claims made on photography’s behalf remain significant in terms of the

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<sup>44</sup> Lacombe, “De l’usage de la photographie dans l’armée,” 147. “Il veut d’abord que les photographes soient nombreux, toujours présents partout, répartis sur toute la ligne de bataille ou de siège, prêts à recueillir sans cesse tout ce qui intéresse dans les spectacles qui frappent les regards.”

<sup>45</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation, Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 4.

assertion that the complex political operations of war could, through its use, be made visible, intelligible and accessible.

### **French Photography Expeditions to the Theater of War**

Despite the excitement about integrating photographers into the ranks of the army that were articulated as early as 1854, no official French government photographers were sent to the warfront. Unlike the English, who sent official photographers, of whom Roger Fenton was the most successful and best known, the two French photographers who went were on private expeditions unaffiliated with the government.<sup>46</sup> In contrast to Fenton, who traveled to the warfront for the express purpose of taking photographs, the two French photographic expeditions were undertaken by artists who were already present in the theater of war for other reasons, which will soon become clear. The resulting photographs taken by these two Frenchmen were accordingly used as documents for representations of the Crimean war in other media, notably for the production of two very different kinds of painted battle panoramas.

Jean-Baptiste Henri Durand-Brager, an eyewitness correspondent for *L'Illustration* whose letters and images were briefly discussed earlier, and Jean-Charles Langlois, the panorama painter, both undertook photography expeditions during the last months of the Crimean War. Neither man had been trained in photography and so hired

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<sup>46</sup> The English government sent three separate photographers to the front but only the photographs taken by Roger Fenton have survived to this day. The first photographer, Richard Nicklin, along with his crew and all the photographs they had taken during their time in the Crimea, were lost at sea after a shipwreck. The photographs brought back to England after the second government-sponsored expedition led by ensigns Brandon and Dawson had faded by 1869 and were expunged from government files. See John Hannavy, *The Camera goes to War. Photographs from the Crimean War 1854-1856* (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council, 1977), 8-9.

assistants to take photographs for them. Unlike Roger Fenton, the English photographer whose work has garnered the majority of scholarly attention on photographic representations of the Crimean War, the photographs of Langlois have received comparably less, and those of Durand-Brager practically none at all. This is partly due to the failure of their photographs to achieve any notable commercial or artistic success, and to their relatively late date, taken in 1856 after the major hostilities had ceased. But the critical factor is the status of their work as documents, for both photographers put their photographs to work as documents for paintings. This not only diminished the photographers' role as authors, but relegated their work to preparatory material for an altogether different final product.<sup>47</sup>

The French photographic expedition to the warfront conducted by Durand-Brager and his assistant was accompanied by an advertising scheme. In May 1856, an article appeared in the *Revue photographique*, one of many new journals dedicated to photography, titled "French Photography Expedition in the Crimea." Written by the photographer Lassimonne, the article was sent to the journal and published, according to the editors, in its entirety. Lassimonne stated in the article that he and Henri Durand-Brager were partners in a photographic expedition in the theater of the Crimea war. The evidence of their photographic expedition is the article, thirty photographs and few comments in letters written by other artists working there at the time. The nature of the collaboration remains a mystery, but it is probable that Lassimonne supplied the technical

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<sup>47</sup> Molly Nesbit's pioneering work on Atget and the problem of the document underpins my analysis of the photographs of Durand-Brager and Jean-Charles Langlois. She argues that the document "functioned in a part of visual culture that had few aspirations to greatness or avant-garde revolution; it issued from the depths of bourgeois culture; it was the aesthetic Other." Molly Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 9

knowledge and Durand-Brager dictated the point from which the views were taken, having already spent years in the area reporting on the war for *L'Illustration*. Likewise, we know very little about Monsieur Lassimonne other than his identity as Durand-Brager's assistant on this expedition. Like many of the budding amateur photographers who worked in the 1850s, his name was often cited in connection with technical innovations in the burgeoning photographic press. But his name has since disappeared from the history of nineteenth-century photography.<sup>48</sup> Since photographers needed to fabricate their own chemical solutions to process their photographs, they often announced their discoveries in photographic journals, as Lassimonne did.

Lassimonne and Durand-Brager formed just one of several groups of photographers who hoped to profit from photographic representations of the Crimean War. Roger Fenton's photographic expedition to the warfront received a great deal of attention at the time in the English and French photographic press and his album was displayed at the Universal Exposition in 1855. When Fenton returned from the war, he famously published an account of his time there in which he complained of the many hardships he faced. In his account, he took great pains to detail the obstacles he had encountered at just about every point in his journey. After a series of painstaking and laborious preparations, Fenton could finally begin to make photographs. The difficulty of the endeavor was almost too overwhelming to describe: "I need not speak of the physical exhaustion which I experienced in work in my van at this period...As soon as the door was closed to commence the preparation of a plate, perspiration started from every pore...I should not forget to state that it was at this time that the plague of flies

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<sup>48</sup> For example, see M. Lassimonne, "Emploi de l'acide tannique en photographie," *Bulletin de la société française de la photographie* 3 (1857).

commenced.”<sup>49</sup> Here, hardship functions like a badge of honor. The narrative of difficulties faced by the photographer made the results of his work all the more impressive. Fenton’s account, published widely in France, reaffirmed his status as illustrious author of a body of work - the resulting photographs were made possible through the toil of their author and not merely through mechanical processes.

The account published four months later by Lassimonne in the *Revue photographique* was a direct response to Fenton’s. Lassimonne began by admonishing the journal, in which the translation of Fenton’s account appeared, for scaring away potential photographers with such tales of hardship: “Fearing that you have terrified the photography amateurs subscribing to your journal by the account of the things that Mr. Fenton had to resort to during his time in the Crimea to avoid being condemned to a grievous immobility, we would like to invite them to be reassured by giving them the details of our winter expedition in the same place.”<sup>50</sup> Lassimonne described the relative ease with which the two men carried out their expedition: “We departed, M. Durand-Brager and myself, only carrying one very small bag, that could rest on the back of a man during our excursions. We did not have a tent, nor a mobile laboratory; we found corners and shelters everywhere where we could prepare our plates away from light. Failing that, the dry plate collodion would relieve us this difficulty.”<sup>51</sup> In contrast to Fenton’s

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<sup>49</sup> Roger Fenton, “Narrative of a Photographic Trip to the Seat of War in the Crimea,” *Journal of the Photographic Society of London*, January 21 1856, 289.

<sup>50</sup> M. Lassimone, “Campagne française de photographie en Crimée” *La revue photographique*, 5 mai 1856. “Craignant que vous n’ayez épouvanté les amateurs de photographie, abonnés à votre journal, par le récit des moyens auxquels M. Fenton a dû recourir pendant son séjour en Crimée pour ne pas se voir condamné à une désolante immobilité, nous venons vous inviter à les rassurer en leur donnant les détails de notre campagne d’hiver dans le même lieu.”

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-100. “Nous sommes parties, M. Durand-Brager et moi, n’emportant qu’un bagage très restreint, qui pouvait, pendant nos excursions, être installé sur le dos d’un homme. Nous n’avions ni tente, ni



notoriously immobile mobile laboratory and heavy equipment, Lassimonne touted the ease with which he and his partner prepared the plates with very little equipment and practically no shelter. He explained that during the expedition, they lacked distilled water, “an agent considered by a great number of photographers to be completely indispensable” but were still able to prepare wet collodion glass plate negatives.<sup>52</sup> Lassimonne’s focus on overcoming the material deprivations he and Durand-Brager faced during the expedition allowed him to draw a powerful contrast between their ingenuity and Fenton’s lack thereof. Whereas Fenton suffered under such conditions, the Frenchmen flourished.<sup>53</sup>

The rivalry evident in Lassimone’s text underscores the broader historical rivalry that existed between England and France. After a fractious history, including defeat at Waterloo in 1815 and the subsequent occupation of Paris by allied forces, the Crimean War was the first time in the modern world that the two empires became allies. But mistrust on both sides still ran high. Anti-English sentiment remained in the French press, despite the fact that Queen Victoria traveled to France and Louis-Napoleon to England during the course of the war, the first time in over one thousand years that such state visits had taken place. This national rivalry between France and England, which grew out of competition for economic dominance, extended into nearly every domain of industry, including photography.

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laboratoire ambulant ; nous avons trouvé partout des coins et des abris où nous pouvions préparer nos glaces à l’abri de la lumière ; s’ils nous avaient manqué, le collodion sec venait nous tirer d’embarras.”

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 100. “agent considéré par un grand nombre de photographes comme tout à fait indispensable.”

<sup>53</sup> It is unlikely that Lassimone and Durand-Brager would have been able to produce wet plate collodion photographs without some kind of portable laboratory; the process was notoriously difficult to employ owing to the fact that the prepared glass negatives had to be used immediately while they were still wet. Lassimone’s account is undoubtedly a rather outlandish exaggeration meant to encourage public curiosity in their expedition.

Beyond the subtext of national and commercial rivalry, Lassimone's published account in the *Revue photographique* was a thinly veiled attempt to garner a bit of advance publicity for the publication of the photographs. At the end of his text, he announced that "in a few days our collection will be delivered to the public and everyone will see that without taking with us the enormous bazaar that Mr. Fenton did, we have been able to gather an ample and beautiful harvest."<sup>54</sup> The photographs were published by Lemer cier, one of the largest publishing houses in Paris, which was rivaled only by Goupil.<sup>55</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that the photographs were taken with the support of the state and every indication points to their having been taken purely for commercial profit. Durand-Brager and Lassimonne, along with other photographers and publishers such as Lemer cier, evidently believed that photographs of the Crimean War would be profitable.

Much to their disappointment, photographs of the Crimean War were anything but profitable, largely because the market quickly became saturated. Though Roger Fenton's photographs were some of the first of the war to be publicly exhibited, they were by no means the only ones available after 1855, nor did they achieve much success commercially. After returning from the war in the summer of 1855, Fenton received audiences with the Queen as well as with Louis-Napoleon, both of whom were said to delight in his photographs. Fenton exhibited his Crimean War photographs in the English photography section (considered a branch of industry) at the Universal Exposition of

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<sup>54</sup> Lassimone, "Campagne française de photographie en Crimée ". "Sous peu de jours notre collection sera livrée au public, et chacun alors verra que, sans emporter l'immense bazar de M. Fenton, nous avons pu recueillir une ample et belle moisson."

<sup>55</sup> For more on Lemer cier see: Corinne Bouquin, "Recherches sur l'imprimerie lithographique à Paris au XIXe siècle. L'imprimeur Lemer cier (1803-1901)," (PhD Dissertation, Université de Paris I: Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1993).

1855 and in three separate exhibitions in England. With all of this publicity, Fenton's photographs still failed to sell and his negatives were auctioned at the end of 1856.<sup>56</sup> The negatives of the other English photographer who undertook an expedition in the Crimea, James Robertson, suffered a similar fate. After being exhibited all over England in 1855 and 1856, his negatives were also sold at auction along with those of Fenton.<sup>57</sup>

While information on Durand-Brager and Lassimonne's photographic expedition is scant, the purpose of Jean-Charles Langlois' photographic expedition was much clearer. He was there to prepare studies for his panorama of Sebastopol which opened in 1860 in a new rotunda, built with funds supplied by the French government. Despite the fact that there is no evidence to suggest that Langlois hoped to profit personally from the photographic expedition, the purpose of his voyage was nevertheless essentially commercial in nature as panoramas were built to attract an audience willing to pay for the chance to encounter a representation of a contemporary battle. The photographs that Langlois intended to use as documents for his panorama are therefore equally implicated in the logic of commercial profit that was an integral factor in the production of Crimean War photography.

Langlois treated his preparatory photographs as valuable property and protected them for exclusive use in the construction of his panorama. His assistant Léon Méhédin hoped to sell many of the photographs that he took, and entered into an agreement with Langlois to separate the instrumental, documentary views from the "picturesque" views,

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<sup>56</sup> Sarah Greenhough, "A New Starting Point: Roger Fenton's Life," in *All the Mighty World. The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852-1860*, ed. Malcolm Daniel Gordon Baldwin, and Sarah Greenhough (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 24.

<sup>57</sup> B.A. and H.K. Hensch, "James Robertson and his Crimean War Campaign," *History of Photography* 26, no. 4 (2002): 264-65.

of which Méhédin would be the sole proprietor.<sup>58</sup> Their relationship deteriorated over the course of the expedition and ended with Méhédin leaving Crimea with a written contract leaving all of the “military” views to Langlois and taking all of the “picturesque” ones for himself. Writing to his wife just after Méhédin’s departure, Langlois viewed his former assistant as a greedy schemer: “His nature is so abrupt, so outside of even the most common upbringing, that I do not even want to do a minor publication with him, neither for gold nor money. He has, I think, an inextinguishable thirst for riches.”<sup>59</sup> Langlois proceeded to threaten legal action against Méhédin if he dared to publish any photograph that was to be used for the panorama. The famed panorama entrepreneur understood his photographs as a unique source of information to which other artists were not privy; they were the building blocks of his panorama’s landscape, and needed to be protected from careless dissemination by unscrupulous photographers like Méhédin. Any publication, he believed, would limit the public’s interest in his panorama. His photographs were akin to preparatory drawings. Langlois’ use of a medium that was inherently reproductive for the purpose of producing “studies” only bolstered his defensiveness over keeping them private.

Langlois kept up a running correspondence with his wife while he was on his expedition. One letter in particular, written by Madame Langlois, warned her husband of

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<sup>58</sup> For more on the détails of this distinction see the essay by François Robichon, “Langlois, photographie et panoramiste,” in *Jean-Charles Langlois; la photographie, la peinture, la guerre*, ed. François Robichon and André Rouillé (Nîmes: Editions Jacqueline Chambon, 1992), 24-26.

<sup>59</sup> Jean-Charles Langlois, *Jean-Charles Langlois. La photographie, la peinture, la guerre. Correspondance inédit de Crimée (1855-1856)*, ed. François Robichon and André Rouillé (Nîmes: Editions Jacqueline Chambon, 1992), 210. “Sa nature est tellement abrupte, tellement en dehors de l’éducation la plus vulgaire que je ne voudrais pas faire avec lui la moindre publication, ni pour or ni pour argent. Il a, je crois, pour les richesses une soif inextinguible.”

the pitiful market for photographs in Paris. She was well informed about the status of the market because she frequented photographic supply stores in Paris where she purchased materials to send to her husband in the Crimea. Her letter provided specific examples of the poor commercial performance of Crimean War photography and offered a compelling theory to explain it, namely, that the market was completely glutted:

There are no delightful views of Sebastopol that you could do that haven't probably already been explored and reproduced by many artists. Three months ago, when I inquired over a young photographer going to Sebastopol, MM. Rittner and Goupil told me that they were inundated with views of this country. You will also remember that Englishman [presumably Fenton] who, it was said, presented the most curious things to the Emperor and found little success. Others have since come in, and in my last letter I told you about having seen the marvelous photographs of Robertson of Sebastopol and of Malakoff. He had sent them as samples to see if they could be put into circulation [*jeter dans le commerce*] with the hope of selling them, and the response was nearly negative.<sup>60</sup>

Madame Langlois informed her husband, who was thousands of kilometers away from the Parisian market for Crimean War photographs, that he had little hope of selling his photographs, even if he had wanted to.

It is worth pausing here to consider the contrast between this evocation of the oversaturated Crimean War photograph market and the idealized notion of endless proliferation promoted by war photography's early supporters. Photography was supposed to enable a complete and exact representation of war through an accumulation of photographic images but could only exist outside of the material conditions of market

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. , 266. "Il n'y pas de vues charmantes de Sébastopol que vous puissiez faire qui n'aient probablement déjà été explorées et reproduites par beaucoup d'artistes. Il y a trois mois, lorsque je m'informais chez MM. Rittner et Goupil d'un jeune photographe pour aller à Sébastopol, ils me disaient qu'ils étaient inondés de vues de ce pays. Tu te rappelles aussi cet Anglais qui, dit-on, avaient présenté à l'Empereur les choses les plus curieuses et avaient eu peu de succès. D'autres sont encore venus depuis, et dans ma dernière lettre je te racontais avoir vu de merveilleuses photographies de Robertson de Sébastopol et de Malakoff, et il les envoyait comme spécimen pour savoir si on pouvait les jeter dans le commerce avec espérance de les vendre, et la réponse était presque négative."

capitalism. As the theorists maintained, this limitless photographic archive of war would serve the interests of the state and required no buyers; however, the photographers who actually photographed the Crimean War were subject to the pressures of the marketplace. As Madame Langlois' letter made painfully clear to her husband, there was simply not enough demand for Crimean War photographs to make them profitable. Moreover, photographs were not cheap to purchase. According to Madame Langlois' letters, the photographs of Roger Fenton sold at Bisson Frères and at Goupil for prices ranging from 12 to 25 francs.<sup>61</sup> To put this figure in perspective, the average worker's daily wage hovered between 3 and 5 francs during the Second Empire, making these photographs unaffordable for the vast majority of the public.<sup>62</sup>

Another factor conditioning the reception of Crimean War photographs was their inability to provide an acceptable illusion of a complete picture of war that dominated expectations for other forms of war imagery, such as battle paintings and panoramas. Whereas painted panoramic battle paintings such as Horace Vernet's *Smahla* (1845) and Jean-Charles Langlois' panoramas relied on established conventions which allowed salient episodes to provide the illusion of a comprehensive summary of action, photographs of the Crimean War could only show isolated and inanimate details of the war, or at best views of the battlefield or strategically important parcels of land. Despite

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 270. In a letter dated February 22, 1856, she wrote "Il n'y en a encore de publiées sur la Crimée et Sébastopol que par un Anglais nommé Felton [*sic*]. J'ai été chez chez Goupil et chez Bisson pour les voir. Elles sont assez jolies ; ce sont des scènes de bivouac, des intérieurs de tentes, des troupes en marche, des soldats jouant, enfin des scènes de la vie du camp plutôt que des vues pittoresques ; leur prix est élevé...., on les vend de 12 à 25 francs." Madame Langlois went on to mention that the photography dealers were abuzz with excitement over the impending arrival of Robertson's photographs. This contradicts her earlier statement about the market being glutted with photographs. It is likely that the market was indeed glutted but that these merchants were trying to stir up excitement over Robertson's work.

<sup>62</sup> Emile Levasseur, *Histoire des classes ouvrières et de l'industrie en France de 1789 à 1870*, vol. 2 (Paris: A. Rousseau, 1904), 710-12

the best efforts of their authors, they were fragmentary. As we have already seen, early commentators on military photography imagined that an accumulation of photographic details would add up to an “ensemble” of the entire conflict but neglected the very real problem of how all of these indexical photographic fragments could achieve this “ensemble” effect. The photographers who represented the Crimean War had no choice but to engage with this representational problem.

A series of three photographs taken by Durand-Brager and Lassimonne depicts Fort Nicolas before, during and after its destruction (Fig. 5.4, Fig. 5.5, Fig. 5.6). The series of photographs speaks to the difficulty, if not impossibility, of representing historical events with the nascent medium. The fort, which appears as a long white building in the background of the images, was a naval fortress held by the Turks since the early days of the war. At the end of the war, when Durand-Brager and Lassimonne were taking photographs, the French ordered the fort destroyed so that it could not be used by the Russians. Like many other photographs of the Crimean war, such as those taken by Langlois and Robertson, the series of photographs taken by Durand-Brager and Lassimonne represent an after-event of war.

The first photograph of the Fort Nicolas series establishes a temporal baseline, depicting the fort as it had stood during the war (Fig. 5.4). It sets up a sequence through which the passage of time and the impact of an explosion can be tracked. Puffs of white smoke set the second photograph apart from the preceding establishing shot. The white smoke in the second image (Fig. 5.5) bears witness to the occurrence of an explosion and depicts it in the process of occurring. Absent the white smoke, the second image is no different from the first. The third image taken after the explosion (Fig. 5.6) helps the

explosion to signify more fully as an event. Placed between before and after images, the explosion is given a temporal location, a place in a narration of events, giving the destruction of the fort a sense of having *happened*. In the absence of other visual indicies of war, the white smoke functioned as a powerful reminder that this was not just a picture of ruins but rather a site of explosive conflict, the closest that the camera could get to representing events. Its role as a form of signification hinted at the representational limitations of the medium, which went unacknowledged in the lively discourse surrounding photography during and immediately after the Crimean War.

### **Henri Durand-Brager: Details and Ensembles**

Durand-Brager's experience as a war artist across a range of media provided him with an awareness of the problem of representing a military event in terms of its detailed parts and its overarching whole. It is likely that his exposure to different genres and techniques of representation as diverse as the illustrated newspaper, photography and marine painting permitted him to approach battle painting with a fresh perspective, unparalleled by other battle painters working at the time. For example, the use of white smoke to signify the occurrence of a dramatic event in his photographs contrasted to his experience making drawings as a war correspondent for *L'Illustration* (Fig. 5.7). In the January 13, 1855 edition of *L'Illustration*, he reasoned that the inclusion of white smoke would only serve to obscure the scene that he wanted to represent : "I have excused myself from placing canon smoke here for the reason that it can be done easily enough but hides details. Those of your readers who value these details will want to pay special attention that, on drawings done like this, one must manage the space well and leave it all



for details.”<sup>63</sup> According to this logic, within the context of an illustrated newspaper woodblock engraving, puffs of smoke would prevent readers from fully grasping the events depicted in the landscape. Durand-Brager took care to signal to his editors that topographical accuracy should be prioritized over any other consideration and admonished his editors to publish the drawings exactly as he had made them: “I strongly recommend the view of the camps; it is very exact and must be copied exactly. Believe me, do not try to shorten it; publish it as it is, one band over the other. You have no idea how many army officers have begged me to do this work so that their families can understand the place where they are.”<sup>64</sup> Durand-Brager objected to the inclusion of white smoke because he worried that it would hide important details that he believed would compromise the image’s ability to picture a unified ensemble. His experience with the banal element of white smoke demonstrates how the artist adapted his representational strategies to the particularities of the media he used to depict the Crimean War.

His submission to the Salon of 1857, a “panorama” comprised of twenty-one individual rectilinear canvases, entitled *The Siege of Sebastopol*, transformed representational problems from other media (photography and the illustrated newspaper) into pictorial solutions for the painted representation of a contemporary military event.

Though Durand-Brager has been practically erased from the art historical record, his

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<sup>63</sup> Henri Durand-Brager, “Correspondance de Crimée,” *L’Illustration*, 13 janvier 1855, 26. “Je me dispense de mettre dans tout cela de la *fumée de canon*, par la raison que cela peut faire très bien, mais cache les détails. Ceux de vos lecteurs qui y tiendraient voudront bien faire attention que, sur des dessins ainsi jetés, il faut ménager l’espace et tout laisser au détail.”

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. “Je vous recommande bien la vue des camps, elle est très exacte ; il faut qu’elle soit copiée bien exactement. Croyez-moi, ne cherchez pas à la raccourcir ; publiez-la telle quelle, les bandes les unes au dessous des autres. Vous ne sauriez croire la quantité d’officiers de l’armée qui m’ont prié de faire ce travail : que leurs familles puissent se rendre compte de l’endroit où ils sont.” A week later, on January 20, 1855, Durand-Brager again referred to his choice to leave out the smoke: “Je me suis abstenu de faire des fumées de coups de canon ; je pense que vos lecteurs ne m’en voudront pas d’avoir supprimé ce détail, qui ne sert qu’à cacher les lignes.”

engagement with multiple levels of artistic production makes him an important figure for examining the new sets of relationships between media that emerged during the 1850s.

At least one of Durand-Brager and Lassimone's photographs made its way into a painting exhibited in the Salon of 1857. *The View of Kamiesch Taken from the Port* (Fig. 5.8) corresponds almost exactly to a photograph entitled *Kamiesch, Panorama of the Port and the City* (Fig. 5.9). One curious set of details was transferred from the photograph to the painting: two people standing on a dock and a small hut a little distance to the right of them (Fig. 5.10 and Fig. 5.11). In another section of the painting, the flow of the water and the lines that delineate the coast also correspond closely to the photograph. Durand-Brager's direct formal borrowing from the photograph demonstrates that he worked easily between media.

Durand-Brager's twenty-one canvases depicted the most important and drawn-out event of the war, the Siege of Sebastopol. While no documentation exists that describes how the ensemble of canvases were displayed at the Salon of 1857, it is probable that they were organized in one expansive horizontal band to emphasize the panoramic aspect of the ensemble. Two of the twenty-one canvases are much larger than the other nineteen. Each of these larger two canvases measured 56 x 270 cm, about three times the length of the other 19 paintings. The two wide paintings (Fig. 5.12, Fig. 5.13) anchored the entire series and provided a broad topographical overview of the port of Sebastopol from different points of view, ostensibly providing a complete view of the entire set of French fortifications along the coast (Fig. 5.14). The other nineteen paintings represented various locations of strategic importance along the Sebastopol coast, which are pictured in the two large canvases as barely visible details along the coast line. The two large

horizontal canvases therefore depict the coastline as a broad ensemble view that contains the details represented in the smaller canvases.

The smaller component parts are represented in the larger canvases but are not intelligible to the eye. They therefore provide a “zoom-in” effect vis-à-vis the panoramic topographical paintings and allow the viewer to take in the smaller parts that comprise the larger totality of the siege of Sebastopol. For example, two of the small paintings, *The Battery of the Quarantine* (Fig. 5.15) and the *Clocheton* (Fig. 5.16) depict strategic locations that are otherwise not visible in the two large canvases. The *Battery of the Quarantine* was located just outside of the town of Sebastopol, slightly inland from the harbor visible in the two large panoramic paintings. Durand-Brager depicted the *Battery* from the ground-level and emphasized its position within a small valley – information to which viewers are not privy in the large panoramas. Whereas the *Battery of the Quarantine* provides up-close details about topography, the *Clocheton* focuses upon the activities surrounding a military hospital. The *Clocheton* was the base of the trench ambulance during the first few months of the siege but was later relocated since it was within the range of Russian guns.<sup>65</sup> In addition to showing soldiers removing the dead on stretchers (Fig. 5.17), the painting depicts two soldiers in the far-right corner running for cover from Russian bullets (Fig. 5.18). Durand-Brager thus dramatizes the relationship between the dead soldiers being carried out of the hospital and those who run for their lives. In relation to the two larger panoramic landscapes of Sebastopol, this unsentimental image of danger and death reminds the viewer of the human drama unfolding within the otherwise picturesque large landscape paintings.

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<sup>65</sup> Jean-Baptiste Lucien Baudens, *La guerre de Crimée* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1858), 92.

Two lengthy and important articles appeared in the press in the months before Durand-Brager's *Panorama of Sebastopol* was shown at the Salon of 1857, foreshadowing the critical interest that the series of painting generated during their public exhibition. Théophile Gautier's article appeared in *L'Artiste* one month before the opening of the Salon of 1857. Galoppe d'Onquaire's article appeared in the March issue of *Revue des beaux-arts*. In the absence of documentation about the display of the twenty-one paintings, these texts provide insight into how these paintings may have been viewed as group. The author of the article in the *Revue des beaux-arts* examined the paintings in Durand-Brager's studio, well before their completion. In fact, the author noted the presence of only one large panoramic painting, not two. He nevertheless proposed a mode of viewing the series that corresponded to Durand-Brager's paradoxical attempt to represent the siege as a combination of disparate parts as well as a totalizing whole:

On a large canvas, the artist painted an immense panorama of the Sebastopol harbor. It is the entire left side attack seen in its ensemble from headquarters; it's a sort of synoptic painting, of the general map of the siege and of the lines of defense. But one understands that in a work so spread out, the eye cannot seize upon the thousand individual details of the coast, also, the painter, in dividing his mother panorama, has made a series of paintings where each point of view is repeated in larger format.<sup>66</sup>

The writer's recourse to the term "mother panorama" assumes a logic of reproduction, whereby the smaller paintings are generated by, or contained within, the

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<sup>66</sup> Galoppe d'Onquaire, "Promenade à travers les ateliers II," *Revue des beaux-arts* 8 (1857): 47. "Sur une grande toile, l'artiste a peint un immense panorama de la rade de Sébastopol. C'est toute l'attaque du côté gauche de la place vue dans son ensemble ; c'est une sorte de tableau synoptique, de plan général du siège et de la défense. Mais on comprend que, dans une œuvre aussi disséminée, l'œil ne puisse saisir les mille détails particuliers de la côte, aussi, le peintre divisant son panorama-mère, a fait une série de tableaux où chaque point de vue est répété en grand."

larger “mother” canvas. Each of the “thousand individual details” barely visible in the “mother panorama” was reproduced as small individual paintings. The writer directly addressed the recurring problem of war imagery during the period, that is, the tension between the proliferation of individual details and a visible, totalizing ensemble. He also claimed that no fewer than 130 paintings “will form the ensemble of this gigantic work,” thereby invoking the seductive power of an abundance episodic details to secure the truth value of the ensemble, as if abundance guaranteed exactitude.<sup>67</sup> This positive valuation of material accumulation has been at the heart of image production of the Crimean War and, as we have seen, was not limited to one medium in particular. It was a concept that cuts laterally across discourses, audiences and media that should be reinstated in interpretations of visual material from this period.

While the illustrated newspaper and photographs excelled at representing and multiplying details, they were materially incapable of producing a summary image, something that battle painting was still charged with doing. In painting his *Siege of Sebastopol*, Durand-Brager carved out a solution where he could represent war through a synoptic singular view (the two large paintings) as well as through its fragmented details (the nineteen small paintings), thus acknowledging the importance of the ensemble as well as the details that comprised it. The artist’s engagement with this problem of historical (and not optical) vision coincided with the rise of new modes of visual

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 48.

production that were put into the service of producing war imagery during the Crimean War by none other than the artist himself.<sup>68</sup>

Théophile Gautier, who must have seen the work close to its completed state, understood the two large canvases as anchors of the entire series:

He starts his campaign with two panoramic views of Sebastopol, long transversal canvases that fit together and continue: the form and the elevation of the hills, the position of the forts, the look of the town and the harbor, all is expressed with a singular precision; no stroke of the brush is done at random; each white mark indicates a house, a fort, a bastion...and yet, if you had not been warned, you would believe that you had in front of you a simple picturesque view.<sup>69</sup>

The notion that Durand-Brager's panoramas of Sebastopol differed little from standard landscapes is significant. They are so broadly rendered that far-ranging topography takes precedence over the historical specificity of the event. Both lateral paintings do not, at first sight, seem to contain obvious signs of battle. In the *Panorama of the Left Attacks Seen from the Observatory of Marshal Canrobert* (Fig. 5.12), Durand-Brager's training as a marine painter shines through. The contours of the harbor of Sebastopol are delineated with water and bits of smoke clouds are barely perceptible, hinting gently at the subject at hand (Fig. 5.19 and Fig. 5.20). He also included one more mid-sized landscape, *View Taken from the Sea* (Fig. 5.21) in which a small cloud of smoke in the background and the fortifications along the coast are the only indications of a conflict taking place. Otherwise, the azure sea remains calm. These large landscapes resemble in

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<sup>68</sup> I borrow the theoretical insight that vision is historically conditioned from Jonathan Crary's important work on nineteenth-century modes of viewing. See Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

<sup>69</sup> Théophile Gautier, "Le Siège de Sébastopol, tableaux de M. Durand-Brager," *L'Artiste*, 26 Avril 1857, 61. "Il commence sa campagne par deux vues panoramiques de Sébastopol, longues toiles transversales qui s'ajustent et se continuent : la forme et la hauteur des collines, la position des forts, l'aspect de la ville et de la rade, tout est exprimé avec une précision singulière ; pas un coup de pinceau n'est donné au hasard ; chaque touche blanche indiquant une maison, un fortin, un bastion...et cependant si vous n'étiez prévenu, vous croiriez avoir devant les yeux une simple vue pittoresque."

the ambiguity of their scenes several of the panoramic landscape photographs taken by Lassimonne and Durand-Brager: without the captions, it is impossible to tell that the landscapes are ones where a bloody armed conflict took place. The nineteen smaller paintings, however, make it clear that the subject matter has little to do with picturesque landscapes.

Durand-Brager's paintings exemplified the new character of modern warfare as it became evident during the Crimean War, the first conflict in which new industrial advances in artillery and small arms played a decisive, and deadly, role. While the Russians used outdated smoothbore muskets, the French and the English were equipped with state of the art Minié rifles which could project up to 1200 meters and be fired with more precision.<sup>70</sup> The war was also the first in which both sides used large numbers of rockets.<sup>71</sup> Artillery was fired from large guns positioned in batteries at unprecedented rates.<sup>72</sup> According to a French government report, the French fired over 1,100,000 canon shots and used over three million kilograms of gun powder.<sup>73</sup> Nineteenth-century and contemporary commentators have noted that the Crimean War differed from wars of the

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<sup>70</sup> For more on the the way a Minié rifle functions and on its impact on the Crimean War, see Jeremy Black, *Western Warfare, 1775-1882* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2001), 122-24 and J.B.A. Major General Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 188-89. The Minié rifle was exhibited at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris. A guide to the exhibition of firearms noted that the Minié rifle "est devenue la terreur des Russes, par la justesse et la portée de son tir." See Henri Edouard Tresca, *Visite à l'exposition universelle de Paris, en 1855* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1855), 558.

<sup>71</sup> Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower*, 190.

<sup>72</sup> According to the military historian John Terraine, "In Sebastopol itself, the Russians has some 3,000 pieces of heavy artillery – far more than they could mount or man, but guaranteeing constant replacement of losses. By the time of the fourth bombardment (17 June 1855), they had 10,697 artillery men in the fortress (compared with 43,000 infantry). The Allies deployed 588 siege guns for this occasion; for the final bombardment (5-8 September), this number had risen to over 800 of which 183, including the heaviest and most powerful, were British – 57 supplied by the Royal Navy. These batteries produced the greatest bombardments the world had yet seen." See John Terraine, *White Heat. The New Warfare, 1914-1918* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1982), 10.

<sup>73</sup> The report noted that these high figures were "without any example in history." See Jean-Baptiste Philibert Maréchal Vaillant, "Report on the French Troops and Material Sent to the Crimea in 1854 and 1856," *Papers on Subjects Connected with the Duties of the Royal Corps of Engineers* 6 (1857): 69.

past. The defining event of this new kind of war was the siege of Sebastopol. Unlike a military charge or a conventional battle between armies, the siege became a long, drawn-out series of events with both sides firing blankets of long-range artillery at one another. According to the military historian Bruce Watson, the siege set an ominous precedent for future wars of attrition and “tactical stagnation,” including World War I.<sup>74</sup> As we shall see, the consequences for visual representation were just as notable.

The Russians dug into the city of Sebastopol and concentrated their defenses at the Malakoff tower. The siege lasted one year, from September 1854 through September 1855, and resulted in heavy losses for all sides. This agonizingly slow military event posed new problems in terms of its representability: how to represent a historical event with no particular center of action, neither temporal nor spatial? The problem was noted by one critic at the Salon of 1857, who doubted whether such an event could ever be painted:

Is this a battle? Yes, says the historian, and the strategist sees in it a conflict of the first order. The attacker lost 9,000 men. Yes, this supreme effort is truly a battle...But, for the painter, where is this battle? From where will it be taken? At Tchorgoun? At Traktir? These are episodes, bridge crossings, outpost affairs. It is really just a matter of artillery...so show me an artillery event on the canvas.<sup>75</sup>

Just as Durand-Brager’s paintings represented war as a series of scattered episodes, mimicking the visual idiom of illustrated newspaper reportage and photography’s fragmentary but plentiful details, the new character of warfare lacked a definable center

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<sup>74</sup> Bruce Watson, *Sieges: A Comparative Study* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1993), 81

<sup>75</sup> Bois-Robert, “La Guerre au Salon de 1857,” *Musée Universel*, no. 14 (1857): 111. “Est-ce que là une bataille? Oui, dit l’historien, et le stratège y voit une action de premier ordre; l’assaillant y a perdu au moins 9,000 hommes. Oui, c’est bien une bataille que cet effort suprême...Mais, pour le peintre, où est-elle cette bataille ? où la prendra-t-il ? à Tchorgoun ? à Traktir ? ce seront là des épisodes, des passages de pont, des affaires d’avant-postes ? Ce fut surtout une affaire d’artillerie...montrez-moi donc sur la toile une affaire d’artillerie.”



of action. The critic challenged his audience to tell him how to represent in a battle painting the barrage of gunpowder explosions volleyed from a distant location. *The Panorama of the Siege of Sebastopol* contends with this new kind of artillery war. The artist, having personally experienced barrages of artillery fire during the two years he spent working as a naval officer and correspondent for *L'Illustration*, understood that the shortage of definable heroic events required a new kind of representational strategy.

Théophile Gautier believed that Durand-Brager's series of paintings were the first to represent the new modern condition of warfare:

A hero nowadays is made up of 2,500 men and is called the 24th line or the 32nd demi-brigade, and seen on the battlefield from the top of the hill where the general stands spyglass in hand, produces the effect of small red and blue stripes. Death, managed through scientific means, happens to the soldier from afar, anonymous like him, through the haze [*flocons*] of smoke.<sup>76</sup>

Gautier emphasized the de-centralized aspect of artillery war, with the general directing action from afar. The “scientific” character of the operations, which Gautier understood to be related to the advances of modern weapons technology, produced a new social relationship between war and individual soldiers that revolved around anonymity and detachment. Modern warfare alienated the soldier from the process of war; it disconnected him from direct combat with his enemy. Such an understanding of the new sets of social relationships ushered in by modern warfare is strikingly similar to the definition of modernity promoted by Baudelaire, and later by Walter Benjamin, that emphasized the deracination and alienation endemic to modern existence.

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<sup>76</sup> Gautier, “Le Siège de Sébastopol, tableaux de M. Durand-Brager,” 61. “Un héros maintenant est composé de deux mille cinq cents hommes et s’appelle le vingt-quatrième de ligne ou la trente-deuxième demi-brigade, et sur le champ de bataille, du haut du monticule où se tient le général en chef, la lorgnette à la main, il produit l’effet de petites raies rouges et bleues. La mort dirigée par des moyens scientifiques lui arrive de loin, anonyme comme lui, à travers des flocons de fumée.”

Many of the smaller paintings that purported to represent the fragmentary details of the siege are unprecedented within the history of war imagery in the nineteenth century. They represent the terrifying character of artillery warfare emphasized by Gautier. In contrast to the heroic charging armies represented Horace Vernet's battle paintings such as the *Capture of Constantine* (1837) or in most battle paintings from the First Empire, where the army moved as a unified mass of men united in a common goal, Durand-Brager's paintings are devoid of such displays of unity. They represent the parcels of strategically important land from which the French forces waged the war. Instead of focusing on heroic encounters between men, these paintings describe the physical properties of specific areas of land, depicting the impact of artillery-fueled trench warfare on the land. Durand-Brager included human figures in many of these war-torn landscapes but they are miniscule in comparison to the land they inhabit. In the words of Gautier, Durand-Brager "has placed man on the scale of the landscape and the soldier in proportion with war."<sup>77</sup>

In a painting titled *Craters in Front of the Bastion du Mat* (Fig. 5.22), the land has been transformed into a black, craggy wasteland. The painting represents the aftereffects of a Russian artillery bombardment during which the French fired at the Russians, killing a general, but the Russians returned fire and destroyed an entire French magazine and produced the black rocky landscape depicted in the painting. Durand-Brager obliterated any sign of undisturbed nature and traded a horizon line for a line of yellow fire and twisted lumps of destroyed earth. This is hardly a zone capable of supporting human life and yet, the presence of yellow explosions signal that the fight is not yet over. This

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. "Il a mis l'homme à l'échelle du paysage et le soldat en proportion avec la guerre. "

scorched earth landscape recalls the corpus of works done by artists who served in World War I, often understood as the first trench war. The two wars shared much in common. At the time they were fought, each one was understood to be a distinctly modern kind of war fought with new tactics and weapons. George Leroux's *Hell* (1916) (Fig. 5.23) and Otto Dix's *Shell Holes illuminated by Flares near Dontrien* (1924) (Fig. 5.24) with its landscape destroyed by a barrage of artillery, are more akin to Durand-Brager's *Craters* (Fig. 5.22) than to any other image from the nineteenth century. All three of these images announce the destruction of earth's surface by man's own doing, with the help of modern weapons technology, and they were all significantly made by artists who served in the conflicts represented. Their affect comes from a metonymic use of the ravaged landscape to stand in for the human cost of war. All of these images are too dark and scorched to decipher the presence of human bodies.

While it is impossible to see bodies in *Craters*, other paintings depict the human cost of war. In two more of the smaller paintings, *Lunette de Droite of the Bastion Central* (Fig. 5.25) and *Right View of the Bastion du Mat* (Fig. 5.26), small figures are represented that are either dead, running from danger, or trudging through impossible terrain, a far cry from the heroic masses of French soldiers that audiences had come to expect from battle paintings (Fig 5.27). The landscape provides an appropriate setting for this dim human drama to play out. Like the people who occupy it, the land is decimated by modern weaponry. In *Right View of the Bastion du Mat*, dead tree roots mingle with small cannon balls, the debris of the combat that occurred at that site. Durand-Brager discovered a pictorial economy based on the color brown, using its various shades to render the landscape as a devastated, washed-out wasteland.

In Durand-Brager's unprecedented series of blasted-land war paintings, the destruction of the landscape limits our ability to view the destruction of human subjects, which in turn denies a sense of scale and prevents the viewer from negotiating their spatial layout. All that remains in these paintings are torn mounds of earth and horizons of destroyed earth, often illuminated by explosions. In contrast to the broad overview in the larger landscapes (Fig. 5.12, Fig. 5.13, Fig. 5.21), these bleak smaller canvases plunge the viewer into a ground-level view of the horrors of modern warfare. This is radically different from the vantage point of the larger, more picturesque landscapes, which hover above the conflict without disclosing the grisly details unfolding below. The calm detachment of the panoramic landscapes was crucial for containing the disquieting affect of modern artillery warfare in his destroyed-earth paintings.

Durand-Brager's paintings were exceptional for their time because they insisted upon war as an event absent a heroic center. In so doing, they foreshadowed the challenges that future twentieth-century wars would pose for artists relative to the traditional mode of battle painting as practiced by Horace Vernet and others during the nineteenth century. In his *L'art pendant la guerre, 1914-1918*, the art historian Robert de la Sizeranne's description of the difficulties of creating battle paintings of World War

One could just as easily apply to Durand-Brager's *Sebastopol* series:

Even on the battlefield, we find hardly any visible ruins, if only some ruins of plant matter. The shell has made a *tabula rasa*. After several days of bombardment, there is nothing left. It is upon this "nothing" that the modern painter must display the action of his combatants.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Robert de la Sizeranne, *L'art pendant la guerre, 1914-1918* (Paris: Hachette, 1919), 237. "Sur le terrain même de la lutte, nous n'y trouvons guère de ruines visibles, si ce n'est quelques ruines végétales. L'obus a fait table rase. Au bout de quelques jours de pilonnage, il n'y a plus rien. C'est sur ce « rien » que le peintre moderne doit déployer l'action de ses combattants."

## **The Promise of Something More: The *Siege of Sebastopol's* Incredible Expansion**

Given how horrifying these paintings are in their evocation of modern warfare, it is interesting that the critical reaction to Durand-Brager's *Panorama of the Siege of Sebastopol* was overwhelmingly positive. The idiom of reproduction pervaded much of the discourse, with the metaphor of photography used to invoke the paintings' capacity to reproduce the real.<sup>79</sup> But by far, the most pervasive current within the criticism of Durand-Brager's *Siege of Sebastopol* was the idea that the series constituted a complete representation of the siege. Etienne-Jean Delécluze, who had consistently reviewed battle paintings in Salon exhibitions since he began writing criticism in the 1820s, noted that Durand-Brager's series was one of the most popular works of art on view and emphasized its depiction of the siege in its entirety: "One of the parts of the exhibition that has particularly attracted the attention of the public is the one where the twenty [*sic*] panoramas and paintings represent the views of Sebastopol, taken from every side and every accident of its siege."<sup>80</sup> The critical success enjoyed by the *Siege of Sebastopol* has to do with the simultaneous strategies of proliferation on the one hand (the nineteen smaller paintings) and the claim to totality on the other (the two large "panoramas" and the title of the entire work).

Durand-Brager's strategy of representing the siege as an ensemble view and as a series of detailed smaller paintings spurred the critical imagination. Critics recognized the work as representing the siege in its entirety. Many thought that the paintings should

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<sup>79</sup> Victor Fournel, "Mélanges, Salon de 1857" *Le correspondant*, no. 41 (juin 1857): 538.

<sup>80</sup> Etienne-Jean Delécluze, "Feuilleton du Journal des Débats, Exposition de 1857, première article," *Journal des Débats, Politiques, et Littéraires*, 20 Juin 1857, 1. "Un des points de l'exposition qui a particulièrement attiré l'attention du public est celui où se trouvent réunis les vingt panoramas et tableaux représentant les vues de Sébastopol, prises de tous les cotés, et tous les accidents de son siège."

be made on a larger scale outside of the official exhibition space of the Salon. The twenty-one paintings were simply not enough to satisfy the peaked critical expectations suggested by the titillating word “panorama.” One writer claimed that the series should take the form of an elaborate diorama, like the ones made by Daguerre in the 1820s and 1830s:

M. Durand-Brager has just received the authorization to construct an immense diorama near the Palais de l’Industrie that will contain no less than 24 paintings. This building, whose proportions will be relatively immense, will become a permanent theater where the grand events of contemporary history will be shown to spectators. The battles of the Crimean War will inaugurate this new stage, followed by episodes from the war in Kabylie, alternating with various events from our national history.<sup>81</sup>

No diorama was ever built and there is no evidence to suggest that plans for one were drawn up. Yet this author was captivated by the promise of the work’s expansion, like the writer who claimed that Durand-Brager’s series would be composed of over 130 paintings. Instead of increasing the number of paintings, here the paintings would be large enough to fill an “immense” diorama.

By calling his series a “panorama,” as he did in the official Salon guidebook, Durand-Brager invited critics to imagine the *Siege of Sebastopol* as a much larger work, a true panorama. In the context of a Salon exhibition, the word “panorama,” especially when applied to a contemporary military event, carried powerful connotations. As we have already seen, battle panoramas were understood to be the domain of *actualité*, or contemporary events, not fine art. For the price of admission, panoramas provided the

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<sup>81</sup> Pierre Marchandon de la Faye, “Mosaïque,” *Revue des beaux-arts* (1857): 298. “M. Durand-Brager vient d’obtenir l’autorisation de construire, près du palais de l’Industrie, un immense diorama, qui ne contiendra pas moins de vingt-quatre tableaux. Cet édifice, dont les proportions seront relativement immenses, deviendra un théâtre permanent où l’on présentera successivement aux spectateurs tous les grand faits de l’histoire contemporaine. Les batailles de Crimée inaugurent cette scène nouvelle ; puis viendront les épisodes de la guerre de Kabylie, et, tout à tour, les événements divers de notre histoire nationale.”

illusion of war in the process of unfolding and gave spectators license to imagine themselves in the midst of a heroic encounter of national import. The illusion depended upon the large-scale round canvas and its inclusion of an abundance of details from the battle. One critic writing for a newspaper loyal to the government went so far as to claim that plans to transform the series of paintings into a panorama were already underway:

It is said that Durand-Brager, in making an alliance with the colonel Langlois, will build a panorama on the Champs-Élysées, and that we will see the reproduction of his paintings there. All the better. Anything that can rekindle and maintain patriotism suits us, and in this new enterprise, we wish Durand-Brager and the author of the Battle of the Pyramids panorama the best of luck.<sup>82</sup>

The author was not far off. A new panorama rotunda was being built on the Champs-Élysées. But it was built uniquely for Jean-Charles Langlois to replace the one that the government had destroyed after it commandeered the building for the Universal Exposition of 1855. No evidence supports the existence of a Langlois-Durand-Brager alliance. As we shall see, Langlois was protective of his enterprise. He opened his new panorama in August 1860 which represented the capture of the Malakoff tower, the event that ended the siege of Sebastopol.

Gautier, in his article on Durand-Brager, was the third critic to suggest that the series be turned into a panorama. He sardonically linked the building of a new panorama rotunda for Durand-Brager to the contemporary destruction of Paris: “His paintings of Crimea are excellent studies for a panorama of Sebastopol that we would like to see executed in some vast rotunda on the Champs-Élysées or somewhere else. Space is not

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<sup>82</sup> Auguste Jubinal, “IVe Lettre sur Le Salon de 1857,” *L’Abeille Impériale*, 1 Septembre 1857, 521. “On dit que M. Durand Brager, faisant alliance avec le colonel Langlois, va élever un panorama aux Champs-Élysées, et que nous y verrons la reproduction de ses tableaux. Tant mieux. Tout ce que peut réchauffer et entretenir le patriotisme nous convient, et, dans cette entreprise nouvelle, nous souhaitons bonne chance à M. Durand Brager et à l’auteur du panorama de la bataille des Pyramides.”

lacking with all of this land left empty by the demolition of Paris.”<sup>83</sup> But unlike the other two writers who promoted the expansion of Durand-Brager’s *Sebastopol*, Gautier examined the most somber parts of Durand-Brager’s series and highlighted their extraordinary bleakness, characteristics that he thought would have been anathema to a large-scale battle panorama.

Innumerable armies organized according to mathematical schemes attack like formidable engines of collective destruction, under fortifications evacuated out of earth, without towers, dungeons, ramparts...that the canon would destroy in five minutes. – The artist must therefore, under threat of ridiculous falsity, bend himself toward the requirements of modern strategy.<sup>84</sup>

Masses of men in strategic formations, and not individual acts of heroism on the battlefield, should now occupy artists who specialized in representing war. Accordingly, in advocating the expansion of Durand-Brager’s twenty-one paintings into a large-scale panorama, Gautier was aware that the final product would represent this modern, impersonal face of warfare.

Gautier’s vision for Durand-Brager’s *Sebastopol* panorama was more than just a musing. He asserted that the panorama and the degree of totalization it provided was the form that most appropriately conformed to new modes of perception. Whereas

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<sup>83</sup> Gautier, “Le Siècle de Sébastopol, tableaux de M. Durand-Brager,” 63. “Ses tableaux de Crimée sont d’excellentes études pour un panorama de Sébastopol que nous voudrions lui voir exécuter dans quelque vaste rotonde aux Champs-Élysées ou ailleurs. La place ne manquerait pas sur les terrains laissés vides par la démolition de Paris.”

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 62. This is the portion of the article where Gautier examines the three paintings discussed earlier, *Craters*, *Face Droite du Bastion du Mat* and *Lunette de Droite du Bastion Central*. “Des abattis d’arbres se tordent sur le sol comme des cadavres végétaux, mutilés, hachés, retournés, ébranchés, réduits à l’état de squelettes par les volées de l’artillerie et de la mitraille. Boulets, obus, éclats de bombes, jonchent la terre émietlée. – Ce qui s’est dépensé de sang et d’héroïsme pour enlever cette butte blanchâtre, ce tas de gypse blafard, on n’y songe qu’en frémissant...L’intérieur d’un volcan en éruption fournirait une idée assez juste du fourneau de mine esquissé par M. Durand Brager ; c’est un chaos de pierres, de roches, de mottes qui sautent, qui éclatent, qui volent en l’air parmi des fumées et des flammes.” From the previous note : “D’innombrables armées rangées d’après les combinaisons mathématiques s’attaquent au moyen de formidables engins de destruction collective, sous des fortifications à ras de terre, sans tours ni donjons, ni remparts...que le canon raserait en cinq minutes. – L’artiste doit donc se plier sous peine de fausseté ridicule, à ces exigences de la stratégie moderne.”



traditional landscape painting was, according to Gautier, outmoded, the visual language of the panorama emerged from new modern technologies, specifically from locomotion. Steam ships and trains both played a major role in the operations of the Crimean war and radically altered the way that human beings experienced the land.<sup>85</sup>

Gautier argued that these new ways of moving human bodies impacted visual perception to the point that a new visual form, the panorama, became appropriate for representing land:

When rapid and perfected locomotion will permit us to visit all of the corners of the planet, do you think that a frog pond by the woods at Bas-Bréau, a tree near a country hut with a pigeon on the roof, a chicken incidentally perched upon a pile of manure will still be interesting? The public will demand grand points of view, immense horizons, bird's eye views of an entire country, of an entire mountain chain...and the landscape will take the form of the panorama.<sup>86</sup>

The minute details of the picturesque French landscape would be rendered useless in the age of mechanical locomotion. According to Gautier, who was himself an avid travel-writer, the panorama was destined to become the form *par excellence* of a scopic regime characterized by a new demand to see *more*, to picture wider vistas, vaster horizons and greater expanses of land. It delivered the promise of totality in a way that the cabinet-sized, conventional landscape painting could not. With regard to the subject matter of the Crimean War, Gautier's position is unambiguous. Like the thatched huts of the French countryside and the perched chickens, conventional heroic encounters between two armies that had long dominated the painted representation of war were now historically

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<sup>85</sup> For more on this argument see Green, *The Spectacle of Nature, Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* .

<sup>86</sup> Gautier, "Le Siège de Sébastopol, tableaux de M. Durand-Brager," 63. "Lorsque la locomotion rapide et perfectionnée permettra de visiter tous les recoins de la planète, croyez-vous qu'une mare à grenouilles, au dessous de bois au Bas-Bréau, un arbre auprès d'une chaumière avec un pigeon sur le toit, un tas de fumier incidenté d'une poule, seront bien intéressants ? Le public demandera de larges perspectives, d'immenses horizons, des vues à vol d'oiseau de tout un pays, de toute une chaîne de montagnes...et le paysage prendra la forme du panorama."

anachronistic. It was time for a new kind of battle panorama, one that was true to the modern experience of artillery and trench warfare.

Despite the distinct lack of conventional military encounters in Durand-Brager's paintings, the series was purchased by Napoleon III's *liste civile* for the historical museum at Versailles after its exhibition at the Salon of 1857.<sup>87</sup> Reproductive engravings were made by the same firm, Lemercier, that had published Durand-Brager and Lassimonne's photographs. These reproductions were published to coincide with the unveiling of the new *Salle de Crimée* in the historical museum at Versailles, which represented Napoleon III's continuation of Louis-Philippe's didactic museum project. Significantly, the three most somber small paintings were not among those reproduced. Lemercier decided instead to publish the more picturesque reproductions, a decision which implies that Durand-Brager's depressing war-torn images were not good for business.

### **The Crimean War and Problems of Large-Scale Battle Painting**

Lacking a center of decisive action, Durand-Brager's *Siege of Sebastopol* stood firmly outside of the tradition of nineteenth-century battle painting. This was a new manner of battle painting for an unprecedented form of artillery-fueled, siege warfare, with a lack of direct clashes between armies. The warm critical reception that his series met with indicates a willingness on the part of contemporary audiences to accept its illusion of a totalizing depiction of the siege through a summary of its manifold parts. As

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<sup>87</sup> Catherine Granger, *L'empereur & les arts. La liste civile de Napoléon III* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 2005), 513-14. Napoléon paid Durand-Brager 20,000 francs from his *liste-civile*; there is no record of any official commission. From the « budget d'encouragement » by decree on 22 March, 1858.

I have already suggested, the intriguing pictorial and material form that Durand-Brager adopted to represent the siege was indebted to his experience working with emergent technologies of visual reproduction during the Crimean War. As a correspondent for *L'Illustration* and as an amateur photographer in the theater of war, Durand-Brager made use of modes of visual production which held out a new kind of technologically-figured promise of arriving at a totalizing picture of contemporary war through a potentially endless proliferation of parts. His engagement with this possibility through the medium of painting resulted in a form of battle painting that hinted at the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of representing the Crimean War as a large-scale singular image of two clashing armies. At the Salon of 1857, which featured several battle paintings of the traditional kind, this difficulty was explicitly manifested. While the definition of what constituted a complete and successful large-scale battle painting had been hotly debated since the First (Napoleonic) Empire, the question was renewed under the political exigency of producing large-scale paintings from the first “great power” conflict of the modern industrial age.

The Salon of 1857, where Durand-Brager's *Panorama of the Siege of Sebastopol* was exhibited, featured several large-scale battle paintings of the war. Altogether there were sixty-six paintings, engravings and drawings of the war shown at the Salon of 1857. One illustrated guide to the Salon, by the caricaturist Cham, satirized the profusion of Crimean War battle paintings and the prominence of the battle of Sebastopol in particular. In the print (Fig. 5.28), a man pulls his female companion into the gallery.

She asks why he neglected to purchase the guidebook, to which he replies “Why bother? It’s all the same subject this year: the capture of Sebastopol.”<sup>88</sup>

One monumental battle painting elicited the bulk of the critical attention: Adolphe Yvon’s *Capture of the Malakoff Tower* (Fig. 5.29), which depicted the most decisive battle of the Crimean War. The capture of the Malakoff tower marked the end of the drawn-out siege of Sebastopol and signaled to the French public that the war would soon be over. It was one of the few battles of the war which featured direct man-to-man combat; as the historian Geoffrey Wawro has argued, the decision on the part of the French to storm the Malakoff tower was made by Louis-Napoleon, who wanted to produce a spectacular military event “worthy of his uncle.”<sup>89</sup> The subject thus presented the artist with the opportunity to focus on a heroic center of action, something that the siege of Sebastopol did not. At the same Salon, Horace Vernet exhibited an almost universally despised painting of one of the first battles of the Crimean War, the *Battle of Alma* (Fig. 5.30). Compared to Yvon’s *Malakoff*, which measured 600 x 900 cm, Vernet’s *Alma* was much smaller, 190 X 298 cm, well below the scale reserved for history painting and close in size to the series of the battle paintings that Vernet had executed for the duc d’Orléans during the Bourbon Restoration. In terms of the composition, bereft of clashes between opposing armies, the painting hearkened back to the series of works that Vernet had made for the Gallery of Battles at Versailles which focused on the commanding presence of Napoleon Bonaparte instead of the feats of the army. The painting featured a gaping absence of activity in the empty middleground and

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<sup>88</sup> [Amédée de Noé] Cham, *Le salon de 1857* (Paris: Le Charivari 1857).

<sup>89</sup> The choice to surprise the Russians and take Malakoff went against the British strategy of destroying Russia’s naval fleet and the town of Sebastopol with large guns. Geoffrey Wawro, *Warfare and Society in Europe, 1792-1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 57-59.

a proliferation of episodes spread out in the background and left foreground. The *Battle of Alma*'s critical reception was not helped by the fact that the commanding figure of authority in the center of the painting, Louis-Napoleon's cousin, Prince Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, had earned the derisive nicknames "*craint-plomb*" (lead-fearer) and "*César déclassé*" for his reported cowardly conduct during the Crimean War.<sup>90</sup>

The Salon of 1857 marked a generational shift in terms of France's battle painters. Adolphe Yvon was an up and coming history painter, quickly supplanting Horace Vernet as the new darling of the imperial regime. During the course of the Second Empire, he received several official commands from Emperor Napoleon III. It was during this period that Vernet encountered increased critical hostility with a series of poorly received paintings and later, following the Universal Exposition of 1855, a very public feud with Théodore Silvestre in which Vernet appeared as a publicity-hungry sycophant.<sup>91</sup> In an 1852 letter to his son-in-law, Paul Delaroche, Vernet mentioned that the time would soon come to "close up shop" [*fermer la boutique*].<sup>92</sup>

By exhibiting a monumental painting of the most decisive French victory of the Crimean War at the Salon of 1857, Yvon effectively outshone Horace Vernet, who had produced a comparatively diminutive painting of a less important subject. But significantly, Horace Vernet played an important role in this turn of events by having declined Emperor Napoleon's commission for a battle painting of the capture of the

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<sup>90</sup> Charles Virmaître, *Dictionnaire d'argot fin-de-siècle* (Paris: A. Charles, Libraire, 1894), 121. The Prince Napoleon was the cousin of Napoleon III and the son of Jerome, Napoleon Bonaparte's brother. See also, Pierre Malardier, *Un César déclassé à la recherche d'un empire. Lamentables mésaventures politiques et sociales de M. Napoléon-Bonaparte (Jérôme) : fin tragique du héros* (London: Librairie Universelle, 1861).

<sup>91</sup> For more on the trial see Michèle Hannoosh, "Théophile Silvestre's *Histoire des artistes vivants*: Art Criticism and Photography," *The Art Bulletin* LXXXVIII, no. 4 (2006).

<sup>92</sup> Amédee Durande, *Joseph, Carle et Horace Vernet. Correspondance et biographies*. (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1864), 307.

Malakoff tower after he found out that Yvon had been asked to make a battle painting of the same subject. In 1856, Vernet learned that Yvon had been given the command by the *Ministre d'état* and had already traveled to the Crimea to undertake preparatory studies. Vernet subsequently declined Louis-Napoleon's command and discussed the matter with Yvon, incredulous that the government would ask two painters to depict the same subject for the same Salon exhibition.<sup>93</sup> He is reported to have remarked to Yvon, "What do they take us for? Do they think that artists should be put in competition with each other like cinnamon sellers?"<sup>94</sup>

Even though Yvon was the only artist to represent the subject of the capture of the Malakoff at the Salon exhibition of 1857, his ability to produce a successful battle painting of the most pivotal event of the Crimean War was challenged even before he had completed it. Yvon had been sent to the theater of war by the French government to make preparatory studies for his monumental battle painting. His visit coincided with Langlois' own trip to the area as well as with those of the English photographer James Robertson and the war correspondent, photographer and painter Henri Durand-Brager. The importance of the capture of the Malakoff Tower as a subject for visual representation also determined Langlois to use it for the panorama for which he was collecting visual material in the theater of war. Langlois' objections to Yvon's efforts to depict the capture of the tower in the form of a large-scale battle painting provide insight

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<sup>93</sup> Vernet subsequently executed a painting of the Capture of the Malakoff for the village of Autun, the birthplace of the commanding general, Marie Edme Patrice Maurice de McMahon, who would later become the first president of the Third Republic. The painting was not exhibited at the Salon of 1857. For more on this painting and its photographic reproduction by Robert Jefferson Bingham, see Bann, *Parallel Lines, Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, 122-124.

<sup>94</sup> Henri Jouin, "Adolphe Yvon. Souvenirs du maître," *L'artiste*, no. VI (1893): 183. "Pour qui ces gens nous prennent-ils? Se figurent-ils qu'on met des artistes en concurrence comme des marchands de cannelle?"

into the sets of problems, pictorial and material that faced battle painters during the Second Empire.

Langlois dismissed Yvon's pretensions of representing the subject of Malakoff because he felt confident that it was an event so epic that only the panorama could represent it. His criticisms of the young painter primarily revolved around the impossibility of producing anything other than an insignificant fragment of the entire event. In letters to his wife, Langlois consistently derided the younger painter as a dilettante, a battle painter who knew nothing about war. Langlois, it must be recalled, was not only a panorama painter but also a colonel in the army. Speaking from a doubly authoritative position, he possessed a wealth of knowledge about the waging of war, something that he thought made him more qualified to represent the event.

On more than one occasion, Langlois remarked to his wife that there was no need for Yvon to have traveled so far to make useless studies. The battle had already happened and all Yvon could do was sketch the detritus: "Yvon has not been delayed in making many studies that he could have well done in Paris rather than here. But it will always be this way when one makes battles of convention and fantasy, of imitations of little wars with a few injuries and large reinforcements of drummers and trumpeters."<sup>95</sup> Temporarily playing the role of a Salon critic, Langlois rehearsed a common complaint made against battle painters, that their paintings were nothing but a series of tired clichés.

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<sup>95</sup> Langlois, *Jean-Charles Langlois. La photographie, la peinture, la guerre. Correspondance inédit de Crimée (1855-1856)*, 228. "Yvon n'a pas tardé à en faire autant après quelques études qu'il aurait tout aussi bien faites à Paris qu'ici. Mais toujours il en sera ainsi quand on fera des batailles de convention et de fantaisie, des imitations de petite guerre avec plus ou moins d'accidents et grand renfort de tambours et de trompettes. Mais il compte sur Robertson et ses photographies, et il était assez étonné que, sans les avoir vues, je n'en fisse pas grand cas, et que surtout je ne voulusse pas les accepter pour guide en ce qui regardait Malakoff."

If Yvon was going to make such a battle painting, he did not need to travel all the way to Crimea. He could have spent an afternoon at the historical museum at Versailles instead.

To add insult to injury, Yvon had chosen exactly the same point of view as Langlois had for his composition, from the center of the Malakoff tower. In the final painting, General MacMahon is pictured on the summit of the tower. In Langlois' panorama, which he based on the photographs he took, the viewer was placed at this point, looking out over the entire 360 degree panorama and emulating the authoritative gaze of the general. Langlois understood Yvon's choice as a very poor one: the center of the tower would make for an excellent panorama platform for the viewer to experience all sides of attack but the same point of view would make for a pathetic battle painting.

Langlois attributed Yvon's poor choice of location to his lack of knowledge about war:

It is true, I do not assume that a man who does not know war can very well choose the point of view the most suitable for making the forces of the obstacles and the efforts of fighting armies best seen and best understood. M. Yvon will certainly prove this true yet again as the three points that he chose to obtain the best result from were, without a doubt, the worst, and he did not understand the others.<sup>96</sup>

Langlois, who had exhibited several battle paintings at Salons during the Bourbon Restoration and the July Monarchy, relished watching Yvon fail at selecting a suitable point of view for his painting.<sup>97</sup> Importantly, Langlois recognized a crucial divide

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. "Il est vrai que je n'admets pas qu'un homme qui ne connaît pas la guerre puisse bien choisir le point de vue le plus convenable pour le mieux faire voir, mieux faire comprendre les forces des obstacles et les efforts des armées combattantes. M. Yvon en sera certainement une preuve de plus, car de trois points qui se présentaient pour obtenir le meilleur résultat, il a pris sans contredit le plus mauvais et n'a pas compris les autres."

<sup>97</sup> Francois Robichon has aptly characterized Yvon as Langlois' "bête noire." Save for Robichon's brief mention, their rivalry has entirely escaped art historical inquiry. I know of no other occasion when such a conflict between a battle painter and a panorama painter occurred over a contested subject matter. The conflict also helps us to understand the fissures and overlaps of these two practices which were both integral to the production and reception of war imagery in the nineteenth century. See Robichon, "Langlois, photographie et panoramiste," 31.



between battle painting and panorama painting. The two demanded separate subjects, points of view and completely different compositional approaches.

In letters to his wife, Langlois continued to excoriate Yvon. He argued that Yvon's chosen point of view would only exacerbate the inability of battle painting to depict the totality of the armed combat because the viewer would easily detect that other important parts of the battle were being left out of the frame. He asserted his objectivity in assessing the young painter:

I am truly quite impartial with regard to the question since he positioned himself at the same point as I had chosen for the panorama; this is exactly what he is criticized for, because what is a battle painting if not a condensed panorama in the proportions of a single painting. It should be the idealization in a limited frame of this immense ensemble, but for this, another point of view must be chosen, because despite whatever you do, you will only have a very small, totally incomplete part of an immense whole, with less illusion and more shocking discrepancies.<sup>98</sup>

Langlois, like many nineteenth-century observers, consistently asserted that only battle panoramas could successfully depict the totality of battle. The accusation that Yvon could not distinguish between making a panorama and making a battle painting is germane to the critical problem of battle painting's center of action devolving into a series of poorly related incidental details. This problem was all the more acute for the subject of the Malakoff Tower: it was one of the few events of the Crimean War which possessed a heroic center of action and lent itself to the traditional practice of battle painting.

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<sup>98</sup> Langlois, *Jean-Charles Langlois. La photographie, la peinture, la guerre. Correspondance inédit de Crimée (1855-1856)* "Je suis certes bien désintéressé dans la question puis qu'il s'est placé au même point que j'avais choisi pour le panorama ; c'est justement ce qui fait la critique de ce qu'il a fait, car, qu'est-ce qu'un tableau de bataille, c'est un panorama condensé dans les proportions d'un simple tableau. Ce devrait être l'idéalisation dans un cadre restreint de tout cet immense ensemble, mais pour cela il faut choisir un autre point de vue, car du même, vous n'aurez quoi qu'on fasse qu'une très petite partie tout incomplète d'un tout immense avec l'illusion de moins et des disparates choquantes en plus." Italics are for emphasis and are my own.

Langlois was, in effect, pointing out that the isolated parts of Yvon's battle painting would fail to cohere into an acceptable image of its entirety. As a panorama, the capture of the Malakoff Tower would benefit from the powerful illusion produced by the round, monumental canvas, which would have literally surrounded viewers by occupying their entire field of vision. Unlike Langlois' panorama, Yvon's "flat painting" could only mimic but never truly duplicate the visual impact of the round format.<sup>99</sup> His choice of the middle of the tower as the focus of his painting would, according to Langlois, only exacerbate the discrepancy between the part and the whole. Yvon was trying to summon the illusion of panoramic totality into the confines of a framed battle painting, something that would ultimately expose the limitations of the genre. A battle painter needed to make hard choices and reduce the amount of dramatic action to focus on an emblematic moment that could synecdochally depict the dramatic totality of the battle; a partial episode that expressed a larger ideal was the best battle painting could do. More to the point, Langlois' idea that Yvon's *Capture of the Malakoff* was nothing more than a failed and futile attempt at panorama painting was echoed in the actual Salon criticism in 1857, a point to which I now turn.

### **Adolphe Yvon's *Capture of the Malakoff Tower* at the Salon of 1857 and the Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility**

As a panoramist, Langlois' objective was to produce an illusion of a battle in its totality, aided by the physical enclosure of a large, round canvas. It is therefore not surprising that Langlois would have taken issue with the conventions of battle painting

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<sup>99</sup> I borrow the term "flat painting" from Etienne-Jean Delécluze, who used it in an article written in 1831 to discuss Langlois' first panorama, the *Battle of Navarin*. See Delécluze, "Beaux-arts, Ouverture du Salon."

and Yvon's apparent pretension of depicting a summary representation of the capture of the Malakoff Tower in a comparatively limited physical format. But significantly, the gap between the painting's constitutive parts and its status as a coherent "whole" was also taken up by Salon critics who contended that an excessive amount of detail and an overreliance on violent episodes within the compressed compositional space of Yvon's *Capture of the Malakoff Tower* produced a confused and decentered picture of war. Yet, as we shall see, Yvon's work was able to achieve a measure of success apart from the criteria used to determine the aesthetic merit of a painting exhibited at the Salon. As a graphic and photographic reproduction across wide range of media, Yvon's *Malakoff* achieved an alternative form of success as a representation of a contemporary military event the value of which derived not from its status as an exalted history painting, but rather from its availability and visibility outside of the gallery walls.

In Yvon's *Malakoff* (Fig. 5.29), several groups of figures are distributed around the foreground and middleground, engaging in direct combat. Whereas the top half of the painting features a deep horizon and a few soldiers standing on top of the fort, an abundance of figures in the bottom half of painting makes the composition appear overcrowded and spatially uneven. A trench that diagonally cuts across the hill (Fig. 5.31) from the foreground to the middleground is filled with a proliferation of small, almost indistinguishable heads. This signals the presence of a large mass of men without showing their entire bodies, an effect that augments the sense of compression in the painting. In the middleground (Fig. 2.32), General MacMahon stands on top of the summit of the Malakoff tower, ostensibly directing the action unfolding below him. To his left, a zouave holds a tattered French flag near him, an important element within the

picture since it emphasized the contribution of soldiers to the successful capture of the tower. The entire foreground is dominated by direct combat between French and Russian soldiers. Yvon painted two other large canvases for the Salon of 1859 that served as pendants to the *Capture of the Malakoff*. These two paintings, the *Malakoff Gorge* and the *Malakoff Courtine*, represented other actions of the battle from different points of view; all three were eventually exhibited at the historical museum at Versailles in the *Salle de Crimée*. This arrangement of multiple paintings of the same event mimicked the installation of Horace Vernet's *Constantine* series in the *Salle de Constantine*, which was located in the neighboring gallery.<sup>100</sup>

The majority of critics who reviewed Yvon's *Malakoff* focused upon its failed attempt to produce the illusion of panoramic totality, arguing that the artist had not been selective enough in composing his painting:

The melee has retreated and the panorama has been put up on the canvas. The painter has allowed himself to be conquered by the dispatch... We are on the platform that dominates the old Malakoff tower, half destroyed... This pell-mell has an effect; there is sound in this painting, one is quite agitated, and no detail belies the official reports... Yvon's painting hardly speaks to the imagination. This pell-mell does not capture any reality; this large machine lacks unity, and is without any real grandeur.<sup>101</sup>

The charge that Yvon was merely painting the official military account of the battle was a familiar one within battle painting criticism and, as we have seen, had been frequently leveled against Horace Vernet throughout his lengthy career. But here, as in Langlois'

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<sup>100</sup> Granger, *L'empereur & les arts. La liste civile de Napoléon III*, 352.

<sup>101</sup> Bois-Robert, "La Guerre au Salon de 1857," 105-12. "La mêlée a reculé et le panorama s'est installé sur la toile. Le peintre s'est laissé vaincre par le bulletin... Nous sommes sur la plate-forme qui domine la vieille tour Malakof, à demi rasée... Tout ce pêle-mêle est à effet ; il y a du bruit dans cette toile, on s'y agite beaucoup, et pas un détail ne dément les rapports officiels... la toile de M. Yvon parle peu à l'imagination. Tout ce pêle-mêle est d'une réalité qui ne saisit pas ; cette grande machine manque de l'unité, partant de véritable grandeur."

letter, the critic asserted that Yvon's battle painting was attempting to be something that it was not: a panorama. More troubling than the painting's panoramic aspirations was its failure to achieve the ineffable quality of "grandeur," which can be taken here to mean two different things. On the one hand, this referred to the set of timeless universal values associated with the genre of history painting. On the other hand, the critic's notion of "grandeur" implicated the complex ideological operation through which a bloody battle between opposing armies over a small parcel of land could be interpreted as a noble and virtuous event of national importance.

The failure of Yvon's battle painting to produce either of these related ideas was widely noted. One of the ways that this was seen to have been formally translated was through an overabundance of episodes within the painting. The meaning of the painting, which was ostensibly to represent France's military prowess, buckled under the saturation of episodic detail. "When one's eyes are cast upon the large canvas of M. Yvon, one is tempted to go over to the reverse side [of the canvas] to look there for France's glory... You will find a little bit of everything in Yvon's painting, but this everything is not enough, and one desires something else."<sup>102</sup> Here, the language of having to "walk around" the painting and search on the backside of the canvas is symptomatic of the critics' difficulties with seeing a painting that they found to be overloaded with episodes. Despite Yvon's choice of taking a central viewpoint, as critiqued by Langois, the resulting painting substituted a proliferation of incidents for a heroic center that clearly

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<sup>102</sup> Edmond About, *Nos artistes au salon de 1857* (Paris: Hachette, 1858), 341. "Quand on a promené les yeux sur la grande toile de M. Yvon, l'on est tenté de la retourner sur l'autre face pour y chercher la gloire de la France... Vous trouverez un peu de tout dans le tableau de M. Yvon, mais ce tout n'est pas assez, et l'on y désire autre chose."

pictured the ineffable ideal of French military “grandeur” expected within a large-scale battle painting. The epic quality of the battle was sorely missed:

I want to see the grand figure of the army personified in a mass of men, and I do not find it. A single spirit, a single heart, a single courage incarnated in the thousands of beings who sacrifice themselves for peace within Europe: that is Malakoff. A collection of good enough portraits and intelligent episodes: that is Yvon’s painting.<sup>103</sup>

For the majority of critics, Yvon had made a painting of particulars that did not coalesce into any form of higher meaning; as such *Malakoff* hinted at an incommensurability between the image of French military heroism depicted by Yvon and the widely received, idealized notion of it.

More problematically, many of the episodes were interpreted by critics as excessively violent and only added to the impression of the painting’s disconnect from the larger, universalizing meaning it was supposed to depict. “No primordial thoughts enhance this painting, through none of these episodes can the public see anything other than a horrid melee of victors and vanquished!...Only the generals and captains in the melee give the country, the king, or the emperor` the example of heroic devotion.”<sup>104</sup>

The episode that most critics focused on was in the foreground (Fig. 5.33). It featured a group of three French soldiers firing upon a fleeing Russian soldier. They face the viewer with their weapons still pointed in firing position while the Russian falls out toward the space of the viewer, head down, in mid air. A bloody spot on his back marks the impact

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid. , 341. “Je voudrais voir la grande figure de l’armée personnifiée dans une masse d’hommes, et je ne la trouve pas. Un seul esprit, un seul cœur, un seul courage incarné dans des milliers d’existences qui s’immolent à la paix de l’Europe, voilà Malakoff. Une collection de portraits estimables et d’épisodes ingénieux, voilà le tableau de M. Yvon.”

<sup>104</sup> “Le Salon de 1857,” *L’Art du Dix-neuvième Siècle*, 25 juillet 1857, 121. “Ce tableau n’est relevé par aucune pensée primordiale, par aucun épisode où le public puisse voir autre chose qu’une affreuse mêlée de vainqueurs et de vaincus ! ...il n’y a pas que les généraux et les capitaines qui, dans la mêlée, donnent au pays, au roi, ou à l’empereur, l’exemple d’un dévouement héroïque.”

of the bullet. A group of Russian soldiers to the right of their fallen comrade try to flee, knowing that the battle is already lost, but a Russian officer holds them back to continue fighting. In the words of one critic, “If the attackers only had to fight against fleeing men, what sort of glory could we ever collect from victory?”<sup>105</sup> Yvon appeared to have overstepped the bounds of decorum by including an episode that reeked of too much French pride.

Though Yvon’s painting failed to satisfy Salon critics, it was a resounding success in an altogether different context. As a graphic and photographic reproduction across a startling variety of established and emergent media, Yvon’s *Capture of the Malakoff* fulfilled a different set of expectations that had little in common with the traditional aesthetic criteria that dictated the painting’s critical reception at the Salon of 1857. This dissertation has shown how over the course of the nineteenth century, battle painting came to be associated with mass availability and the genre’s capacity to be disseminated to as broad an audience as possible. This had been the case since the beginning of the century and was especially pertinent to the career of Horace Vernet starting in the 1820s. The 1850s, however, mark a period when the options for reproducing a work of art expanded largely because of the emergence of photomechanical technologies, in addition to the rise of illustrated newspapers which routinely reproduced artwork.<sup>106</sup> In addition

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<sup>105</sup> Charles Perrier, *L’Art français au Salon de 1857* (Paris: Michel Levy Frères, 1857), 167. “Si les assaillants n’avaient eu à combattre que des fuyards, quelle gloire aurions-nous donc recueillie de la victoire?”

<sup>106</sup> Stephen Bann has explored the proximity of the practice of reproductive engraving to that of photography during the 1850s. He demonstrates how the cultural values attached to photography in France were guided by earlier standards established by reproductive engraving. See Chapter 3, “The Inventions of Photography,” in Bann, *Parallel Lines, Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, 88-125. See also Dominique de Font-Réaulx, *The Work of Art and Its Reproduction*, trans. Isabel Ollivier (Paris: Musée d’Orsay, 2006) and Pierre-Lin Renié, “De l’imprimerie photographique à la photographie imprimée,” *Etudes photographiques*, no. 20 (June 2007).

to being reproduced as a lithograph, a woodcut engraving and an etching, emergent photomechanical technologies reproduced Yvon's *Malakoff* as a photogravure and as several photographs by different photographers. Perhaps more than any other battle painting that preceded it, Yvon's *Capture of the Malakoff* became synonymous with the fact of its reproducibility.

In his 1933 essay, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Walter Benjamin distinguished between a work of art that can be reproduced and a work of art the defining quality of which is its relationship to the process of its reproduction in the age of high industrial capitalism. Benjamin's essay, recently translated as "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," is especially germane to the sets of expectations that became attached to battle painting during the nineteenth century. As a form of visual production, the ideological value of battle painting derived not from its status as a unique form of fine art, but rather from its ability to circulate in abundance through reproductions.

No artist did more to bolster expectations of battle painting's reproducibility than Horace Vernet. He was the crucial precedent in this respect for Yvon. Over the span of his career, Horace Vernet's reputation became equated with the reproduction of his work, as though two sides of the same coin. In an appraisal of Vernet just after the artist's death in 1863, Henri Delaborde contended that while his contemporaries reserved their best work for reproduction, Vernet was not as selective. "The minor compositions of the painter of the *Smahla*, reproduced as best as they could be as soon as they came out of his studio, proceeded to spread the fame of this extravagant talent or rather constantly maintained a reputation that had long since become familiar in country huts as well as



palaces.”<sup>107</sup> Significantly, the widespread dissemination of Vernet’s work was made possible by a form of printmaking that the artist consistently employed to reproduce his paintings, the aquatint.

Unlike his contemporaries, Horace Vernet eschewed the esteemed art of reproductive burin engraving for the comparatively less prestigious and more expedient method of aquatint, a form of etching.<sup>108</sup> Vernet’s nearly life-long collaboration with Jean-Pierre Marie Jazet, a prolific aquatint printmaker, suggests that the painter was more concerned with his work’s rapid dissemination than with its aesthetic canonization through the rarefied medium of burin engraving. As Stephen Bann has argued, burin engraving’s value within the French academic tradition grew in importance during the nineteenth century.<sup>109</sup>

In the words of the nineteenth-century print connoisseur and historian Henri Béraldi, Vernet’s recourse to expediency and efficiency for the reproduction of his work

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<sup>107</sup> Henri Delaborde, “Horace Vernet. Ses oeuvres et sa manière,” *Revue des deux mondes* XLIV (mars 1863): 76. “Tout au contraire les moindres compositions du peintre de la *Smala*, reproduites tant bien que mal à mesure qu’elles sortaient de l’atelier, allaient répandre partout la renommée de ce talent prodigue de lui même ou plutôt incessamment rajeunir une gloire que les chaumières, comme les palais, avaient depuis longtemps appris à connaître.” Delaborde implied that through their reproduction, Vernet’s paintings crossed deep class divisions. He was one of many writers who used class-based language to characterize the popular appeal of Vernet’s work. Baudelaire is one notable example. In his *Salon of 1846*, he wrote : “Tels sont les principes sévères qui conduisent dans la recherche du beau cet artiste éminemment national, dont les compositions décorent la chaumière du pauvre villageois et la mansarde du joyeux étudiant, le salon des maisons de tolérance les plus misérables et les palais de nos rois.” See Baudelaire, *Critique d’art*, 129. These characterizations emphasize Vernet’s reputation as an eminently “national” artist. Vernet’s work was widely recognized as appealing to all classes of French citizens, a fact that polarized opinion of him in the nineteenth century, depending on one’s political position. Vernet’s mass appeal is at the very heart of the kinds of political illusions that this dissertation has interrogated. The seeming ability of his work to cross France’s deep class divisions supported the illusion of a common set of national bonds premised upon the powerful ideology of militarism.

<sup>108</sup> The difference between an aquatint and a burin engraving was vast, both in terms of formal qualities as well as the sets of values attached to each technique during the nineteenth century. Stephen Bann’s work on the ways in which different print media were valued during the nineteenth century has informed my understanding of Vernet’s engagement with the aquatint process. Stephen Bann, “Ingres in Reproduction,” in *Fingering Ingres*, ed. Adrian Rifkin Susan Siegfried (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 56-76.

<sup>109</sup> Bann, *Parallel Lines, Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, 173.

set him apart from other important artists of the period: “In contrast to Ary Scheffer and Paul Delaroche, whose works were engraved by elite burin engravers, Vernet was reproduced only by approximate engravings: second order burins, washes by Jazet, summary plates from [Gavard’s] *Galleries de Versailles* or the mechanical engraving of Burdet.”<sup>110</sup> Vernet’s embrace of less eminent (and more mechanical) forms of reproduction over the art of reproductive burin engraving is crucial for understanding the critical reception of the artist’s work in the nineteenth century. It helps to explain why Vernet gained a reputation for his speed and facility and not for the refinement of his ideas. In contrast to his contemporaries such as Ingres, the elevation of Vernet’s life’s work came through its material proliferation in a variety of reproductive formats of varying quality, not through its labored translation into an esteemed academic form of reproductive printmaking.<sup>111</sup>

Yvon would have known that Vernet’s reputation had been built around the circulation of his monumental battle paintings in print form. It is likely that in accepting the commission from the *Ministre d’état* for the *Capture of the Malakoff*, Yvon would have understood well before he began to work on it that his painting’s value depended just as much on its ability to circulate as a reproduction as it did on its status as an original work of art. It is no mere coincidence that out of the six different techniques used to reproduce Yvon’s *Malakoff*, not a single one of them was burin engraving. By

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<sup>110</sup> Henri Bérardi, *Les graveurs du 19e siècle: guide de l’amateur d’estampes modernes*, vol. 12 (Paris: Librairie L. Conquet, 1892), 223. “A la différence de Paul Delaroche et d’Ary Scheffer, qui ont été gravés par l’élite des burinistes, — il n’a été reproduit que par des gravures à peu près : burins de second ordre, lavis de Jazet, planches sommaires des *Galleries de Versailles*, ou gravure mécanique de Burdet.”

<sup>111</sup> Stephen Bann has argued that Ingres was “mainly seduced by the unequalled prestige of the burin engraving” despite the artist’s occasional use of other nineteenth-century reproductive media – including lithography and photography, both of which failed to produce an acceptable translation of the artist’s original works. See Bann, “Ingres in Reproduction,” 56-75.

following the pattern of dissemination established by Horace Vernet, which prioritized expediency and availability, the circulation of Yvon's *Malakoff* in its varying reproductive forms affirmed a dual ideological role for large-scale battle painting. In addition to the importance of producing an image of the nation's military prowess, the abundance of reproductions of Yvon's monumental battle painting in a variety of emergent and established media demonstrated the strength of France's productive (and reproductive) powers. This affirmation of productive might went against doubts expressed before the outbreak of the Crimean War that the waging of armed conflict would harm France's economic expansion. If anything, the war itself and the energy invested in depicting it were evidence that war and a strong capitalist economy went hand and hand.<sup>112</sup> As Henri Lefebvre has argued in *The Production of Space*, war played a formative role in the historical development of capitalism:

Under the dominion of capitalism and of the world market, [war] assumed an economic role in the accumulation process... We are confronted by the paradoxical fact that the centuries-old space of wars, instead of shrinking into social oblivion, became the rich and thickly populated space that incubated capitalism.<sup>113</sup>

While Lefebvre directly implicated the role of war in the process of primitive accumulation and the opening of channels of trade, he was more broadly concerned with the spatial and material consequences of the close relationship between warfare and the acceleration of the productive capacities of European economies. While Yvon's painting of the *Capture of the Malakoff* may not have made for great Salon art, its circulation in a

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<sup>112</sup> According to the political economist Mehrdad Vahabi, the Crimean War also led directly to the industrialization of warfare in the later nineteenth century. He writes: "Mass production came to Europe's small arms business between 1855 and 1870 as a direct byproduct of the Crimean War." See Mehrdad Vahabi, *The Political Economy of Destructive Power*, ed. Geoffrey M. Hodgson, *New Horizons in Institutional and Evolutionary Economics* (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing), 212.

<sup>113</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 276.

variety of different forms was bound up with contemporary understandings of and hopes for France's emerging industrial economy.

In the years immediately following the painting's debut at the Salon of 1857, three different graphic prints of Yvon's *Malakoff* were made, two etchings and one large format lithograph. The lithograph (Fig. 5.34) was made by the hand of a distinguished reproductive lithographer, Louis-Emmanuel Soulange-Teissier, who also reproduced the two pendants to the *Capture of the Malakoff Tower*. The quality of its translation of Yvon's *Malakoff* earned the lithograph a second class medal at the Salon of 1859. It was the most graphically refined of all of the reproductions, but still well below the level of prestige of a burin engraving. The two etchings were comparatively less refined. The first was published in the periodical *L'Artiste* as the featured reproduction (Fig. 5.35) for the September 5, 1858 issue. The editors claimed that the "exact and fine" reproduction would serve a double duty "for the painter and for the heroes who provided his subject."<sup>114</sup> The print is made up by a series of black hatch marks and gray tones; the drama is equalized: nothing stands out except for the tonal divisions between the parapet and the hill upon which the French officers and the heroic zouave stand.

The second etching (Fig. 5.36), by the virtually unknown Marthe, is quite small, measuring 5.4 x 8.4 cm – akin to the scale of a carte-de-visite. Because of its size and lack of refined tonal detail, this print would have been sold cheaply, ensuring a wide base of diffusion. As one Belgian critic remarked, Marthe's etching was all the more of an achievement because it reduced "the colossal butchery of Yvon's painting," with its dozens of figures, into a diminutive format which still managed to accommodate the

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<sup>114</sup> Edouard Houssaye, "Gravure du numéro: Prise de la tour Malakoff," *L'artiste*, 5 septembre 1858, 16.

monumental original: “With heads no larger than the head of a pin, M. Marthe has able to not only recall but also to maintain the resemblance of the primary characters in Yvon’s painting...Its simple format, its minimal price and above all else, the talent with which it is made will guarantee this print lasting popularity.”<sup>115</sup> Marthe’s print reduced Yvon’s overcrowded painting into manageable proportions and better yet, transformed the original into an inexpensive, portable print which was in keeping with the values of availability associated with contemporary large-scale battle painting.

Unlike any battle painting that had come before it, Yvon’s *Malakoff* was available as three different photomechanical reproductions soon after it was shown at the Salon of 1857. These included a Salon installation view by Pierre-Ambroise Richebourg, a reproductive photograph by Robert Jefferson Bingham that was sold in two different formats (a 27.8 x 42 cm print as well as a carte-de-visite), and finally a *héliogravure* by Charles Nègre based on Bingham’s photograph. In one of a series of photographs that Richebourg took of the Salon of 1857 (Fig. 5.37), Yvon’s *Malakoff* is at the center of the image and dwarfs the other paintings underneath and to the sides of it.<sup>116</sup> While the photograph captures the enormous scale of the painting, it obscures the individual details of the painting. In defiance of its reproductive duties, the photograph merely contextualizes Yvon’s painting in terms of its size, one painted object among many

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<sup>115</sup> “Iconographie,” *Journal des beaux-arts et de la littérature*, no. 9 (15 mai, 1862): 75. “Dans des têtes moins grosses qu’une petite tête d’épingle, M. Marthe a su, non-seulement rappeler, mais encore conserver, la ressemblance des principaux personnages du tableau d’Yvon.... Cette petite gravure aura un succès énorme; son format facile, son prix très minime, et, au-dessus de tout cela, le talent avec lequel elle est traitée, lui garantissent une vogue durable.”

<sup>116</sup> An early practitioner of daguerreotypes, Richebourg took up the reproduction of works of art in late 1840s and photographed the Salons of 1857, 1861 and 1865. See Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *Industrial Madness. Commercial Photography in Paris, 1848-1871* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1994), 282-86, and Quentin Bajac, “Pierre Ambroise Richebourg,” in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy (New York and Oxford, U.K.: Routledge, 2008), 1194-95.

smaller ones. The painting's depicted clash between the French and Russian armies is obscured in the generalized grey of the photographic image. The episode of the three French soldiers shooting a fleeing Russian in the back, which many critics found to be excessively violent, appears in the photograph as a smudge of brown. Even the foreground, thought to be overloaded with detail, is blurred. The photograph indicated the space where a battle painting was displayed but cannot account for the particulars of the composition.

While the focus of Richebourg's photograph was the installation of the *Malakoff* within the space of the Salon, Robert Jefferson Bingham's photograph (Fig. 5.38) was devoted to reproducing the painting.<sup>117</sup> Out of the many reproductions of Yvon's *Malakoff*, Bingham's received the most critical attention. Along with Gustave Le Gray, Bingham was one of the most prominent practitioners of photographic reproduction of art and one of the few to have achieved a measure of commercial success at it in France.<sup>118</sup> Several critics who reviewed Yvon's painting at the Salon of 1857 mentioned Bingham's photograph, confirming that it was in circulation during the course of the Salon exhibition, something which would have contributed to its commercial success. This was the first time that a photographic reproduction of a major contemporary battle painting on

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<sup>117</sup> As Anne McCauley has demonstrated, photographic reproductions of works of art comprised 5.5 percent of all photographs entered into the *depôt légal* in 1853. By 1860, the figure had jumped 28.5 percent. As these statistics show, the trade in reproductions of works of art quickly assimilated itself to the nascent medium of photography. But this by no means rendered established forms of reproduction, such as engraving and lithography, obsolete. Rather, photography competed alongside reproductive engraving and lithography for commercial and artistic eminence. McCauley, *Industrial Madness. Commercial Photography in Paris, 1848-1871*, 270.

<sup>118</sup> For more on Bingham's career in photographic reproductions of art, see Bann, *Parallel Lines, Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, 118-25. Bann is chiefly concerned with the absence of critical expectations governing the judgment of photographic reproductions of art. He examines how one emerged from the pre-existing discourse of reproductive engraving. See also Laure Boyer, "Robert J. Bingham, photographe du monde de l'art sous le Second Empire," *Études photographiques*, no. 12 (novembre 2002): 26-47.

view at the Salon was available for purchase during the course of an exhibition. Critics repeatedly referred to it in their reviews of the painting: “For those who find that they do not have enough information, I will say in addition that the photograph of the painting, the exclusive property of M. Bingham, is for sale at his shop for a modest price, namely twenty francs for civilians, and fifteen francs for the military men.”<sup>119</sup> Bingham apparently discounted the photograph for members of the military, something that the government would force Jean-Charles Langlois to do when he reopened his panorama of Sebastopol on the Champs-Élysées in 1860.

A detail of Bingham’s photograph was also reproduced in an illustrated weekly newspaper, the *Musée des familles*. The paper’s critic adored Yvon’s painting. At the end of the article, the critic paused to consider the implications of the photographic dissemination of Bingham’s photograph:

One guesses that photography has taken possession of M. Yvon’s work. M. Bingham has rendered it with justice of ensemble and a finesse of details which assures the popularity of this national page. One hundred thousand copies will be printed by the sun, and this living bulletin of Malakoff will spread itself throughout the workshops and the country huts.<sup>120</sup>

Much in the same way that the dissemination of Horace Vernet’s work was described in the language of social leveling and mass availability, the reproduction of Yvon’s painting by Bingham’s photograph was described in similar terms. Here, as with the critics who

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<sup>119</sup> Chaud-de-Ton, “Salon de 1857, Lettres de Chaud-de-Ton,” *Les Contemporains*, 14 Juillet 1857, 3. “Pour les personnes qui ne se trouveraient pas suffisamment renseignées, je dirai, de plus, que la photographie du tableau, propriété exclusive de M. Bingham, se vend chez lui à des prix modérés, savoir : vingt francs pour les *pékins*, et quinze francs pour messieurs les militaires.”

<sup>120</sup> “Le tableau de M. Yvon : Prise de Malakoff” *Musée des familles*, octobre 1857, 11. “On devine que la photographie s’est emparée de l’ouvrage de M. Yvon. M. Bingham l’a rendu avec une justesse d’ensemble et une finesse de détails, qui assurent la popularité de cette page nationale. Elle sera tirée par le soleil à cent mille exemplaires, et ce bulletin vivant de Malakoff se répandra jusque dans les ateliers et les chaumières.”

touted the dissemination of Vernet's work across classed-lines, the working class and rural peasants are imagined as the beneficiaries of the "spread" of Bingham's photograph, and by extension, all reaches of French society. It goes without saying that the prohibitive cost of the photograph, twenty francs, would have prevented the groups mentioned by the critic from acquiring it. The invocation of France's poor was therefore a rhetorical device which represented, through class-based language of inclusivity, a form of visual production that would have appealed to class of consumers capable of affording Bingham's photograph, the bourgeoisie. The exaggerated figure of 100,000 copies of the photograph printed "by the sun," and therefore without human labor, emphasized the positive valuation of material proliferation, which as we have already seen was also a feature of the discourse on early military photography.

Yvon's *Malakoff* was also reproduced as a *héliogravure* based on Bingham's photograph. This photomechanical process, invented by Nicéphore Niépce and later perfected by the photographer Charles Nègre, produced intaglio plates obtained from photographic images. In 1856, Nègre received a patent for his process of transforming "printed photographic images into engraved plates."<sup>121</sup> Shortly after receiving his patent, Nègre wrote to Bingham to arrange for the use of his *Malakoff* photograph. By early October, the two men had come to an agreement to share in the profits generated by the *héliogravure*, demonstrating that they both understood the representation of war to be a financially lucrative enterprise.<sup>122</sup> Nègre's reproduction (Fig. 5.39) distributes a fine sandy grain all over the image and resembles the visual syntax of a reproductive etching,

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<sup>121</sup> *La Revue photographique*, 5 août (1858). "transformation des images photographiques plaquées en planches gravées."

<sup>122</sup> Helibrun, *Charles Nègre, Photographe, 1820-1880*, 339.



save for the extreme uniformity of the pattern of the grain, lending something of the syntax of an intaglio print. The photographic press celebrated Nègre's photogravure process as a technical achievement that created a commercially viable way to produce photographs and ensure that they did not fade. Moreover, like Bingham's photograph of *Malakoff*, Nègre's *héliogravure* attracted critical recognition and praise. According to the photography journal *La lumière*, Nègre's *Malakoff* "has already provided 1500 proofs of a very nice effect...Printed with ordinary ink, these prints are moreover indelible."<sup>123</sup>

Nègre's *héliogravure* of *Malakoff*, as one reproduction among many, was yet another indication that the value of contemporary images of war was inseparable from their status as reproducible visual objects. While this kind of value is apparent through the proliferation of Yvon's painting in an astounding variety of reproductive forms, it was made explicit in a photograph taken by Charles Nègre in 1858 (Fig. 5.40). It depicts a figure, who is probably a studio assistant of Nègre's, holding a copy of the *Malakoff héliogravure* at an angle which permits it to come into full view. The photograph stages a chain of viewing relationships through which the viewer beholds the worker beholding the object of his labor, the *Malakoff* print. It is not by mere coincidence that *Malakoff* appears at the center of this self-reflexive image. In this photograph, Nègre attempted to depict, through the medium of photography, the practice of viewing and producing reproducible images at a time when the modalities of such practices were being constantly redefined. Indeed, Nègre's choice to feature his own reproduction of Yvon's

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<sup>123</sup> "Académie des Sciences ; Séance du lundi 1er mars " *Cosmos*, 5 mars 1858, 280. "On admire surtout la planche qui reproduit le tableau de la prise de Malakoff par Yvon, elle est sans retouche aucune, et a donné déjà quinze cents épreuves d'un très bel effet...tirées à l'encre ordinaire, ces épreuves sont en outre indélébiles."

battle painting in the photograph (and not any of the other photogravures of other subjects made in his studio) suggests that by the 1850s, image makers such as Nègre, Bingham, Yvon and Vernet had internalized the idea that representations of war, and especially battle paintings, were, by definition, visual objects produced to be reproduced. Nègre's photograph of a studio assistant handling the print of the *Malakoff* is thus extraordinary for the way that it gives visual form to the discursive value of war imagery's reproducibility and to the idea of war as a productive enterprise.

### **Conclusion: "A Very Complete and Very Beautiful Illusion"**

In "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," Walter Benjamin introduces the concept of the phantasmagoria as a historical method of inquiry that is particularly suited to the nineteenth century:

The new forms of behavior and the new economically and technologically based creations that we owe to the nineteenth century enter the universe of a phantasmagoria. These creations undergo this "illumination" not only in a theoretical manner, by an ideological transposition, but also in the immediacy of their perceptible presence. They are manifest as phantasmagorias.<sup>124</sup>

Benjamin identified the arcades, World Exhibitions and Haussmann's Paris, among others, as expressions of the phantasmagoria. In this space of phenomenological subterfuge, "commodity-producing society" surrounds itself with a system of illusions built around the appearance of material things. The visual representations of war that have been the focus of this chapter functioned both materially and discursively as a form of phantasmagoria which maintained the illusion of war as a heroic endeavor and an

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<sup>124</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century. Exposé <of 1939>," in *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 14.

exalted form of nationalized unity. During the 1850s, this political illusion was bolstered through the proliferation of new modes for representing war, many of them possessed with the allure of technological “progress.” As this chapter has shown, the material abundance of war-related images in a variety of media opened up new possibilities for engaging as a reader/viewer with contemporary war.

The discourse that this chapter has tracked was a hegemonic one: the production and reproduction of war imagery did not contest power but rather supported it. The phantasmagoria of war imagery helped to obscure the moral contradiction between state-sanctioned, permissible violence in war and forms of illegal violence, not permitted by the state, such as revolution (civil war). In an extraordinary piece of writing from 1853, the writer Alphonse Karr called attention to the duplicitous system of political illusions which made such a contradiction possible. Karr’s neighbor happened to be the panorama painter Jean-Charles Langlois, whose panorama of the *Battle of the Pyramids* had opened in March 1853. The panorama remained opened through February 1855, a particularly low point in the Crimean War, when victory was not at all ensured. Karr admired Langlois’ achievements and his status as the nation’s foremost panoramist. He was, however, wary of the deeper meaning of such imagery:

From a certain point of view, grand victorious battles pass for titles of glory for all – those who are scared of them and those who did not partake in them are as proud as others. This aspect maintains the military spirit of a nation, this form of patriotism that consists much more in hate for foreigners than in love of compatriots; this convention which allows ferocious and savage instincts which man only conceals to be satisfied honestly, and allows one to indulge in a love of carnage from time to time that can be called brigandage, a horrible and punishable crime when you kill those who, like you, have red pants, but an honorable, glorious thing admired by all when you cut to pieces, crush and mutilate only those men with white or blue pants... Thus, from an ordinary and patriotic point of view, in the commonly accepted meaning of the word, the *Battle of the Pyramids*

is one of the grand pages of France's history, - and the painting of M. Langlois is a very beautiful and very complete illusion.<sup>125</sup>

The “very beautiful and very complete illusion” produced by Langlois’ panorama was not just pictorial but more importantly, ideological. As a material phenomenon in the nineteenth century, war imagery was capable of propagating a system of belief which guaranteed the state’s monopolization of violence to support its own causes and bolster its grip on power. This problem is not unique to the nineteenth century; it endures well beyond the period covered in this dissertation to the present day.

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<sup>125</sup> Alphonse Karr, “À propos d'une vieille femme qui faisait de la charpie” in *Oeuvres complètes d'Alphonse Karr* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1864), 276-78. “A un certain point de vue, les grandes batailles gagnées passent pour des titres de gloire pour les peuples ; - ceux qui y ont peur, et ceux qui n’y ont pas assisté, en sont à peu près aussi fiers que les autres. – Cet aspect entretient l’esprit militaire chez une nation, cette espèce de patriotisme qui consiste bien plus dans la haine de l’étranger que dans l’amour des compatriotes ; cette convention qui permet de satisfaire honnêtement les instincts féroces et sauvages que l’homme ne fait que dissimuler, de se livrer de temps en temps à l’amour du carnage, qui s’appelle brigandage, crime punissable et horrible, quand ceux que vous tuez ont comme vous des pantalons rouges, mais qui est une chose honorable, glorieuse et admirée de tous, si vous ne sabrez, broyez, mutilez que des hommes à pantalons bleus ou blancs...Donc, au point de vue ordinaire et patriotique, dans l’acception usitée du mot, la bataille des Pyramides est une des grandes pages de l’histoire de France, - et le tableau de M. Langlois est une très belle et très complète illusion.”

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

“The closer we supposedly approach the real or the truth, the further we draw away from them both, since neither one nor the other exists. The closer we approach the real time of the event, the more we fall into the illusion of the virtual. God save us from the illusion of war.”

– Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War: Is It Really Taking Place?*<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation has examined how the meaning of nineteenth-century war imagery depended not only on its particular subject matter but also on its proliferation in a variety of emergent and established media. The visibility of nineteenth-century representations of war enabled them to play a pivotal role in debates about the status of warfare in the post-revolutionary French state, about the relationships between individuals and governing authority and about the representability of armed conflict. In addition to these issues, this dissertation has also shown how the proliferation of war-related imagery encouraged a powerful illusion of mediated participation in national military exploits. Paintings, prints, photographs and panoramas were often celebrated as transparent depictions of armed combat and art critics consistently affirmed that it was

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Baudrillard, “The Gulf War: Is It Really Taking Place?,” in *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995), 48.

possible to experience a battle through viewing its visual representation. The discourse that surrounded nineteenth-century war imagery depended on the suppression of the possibility that, as the literary scholar Jan Mieszkowski has contended, “any war will necessarily be misrepresented, because war is a system of misrepresentation.”<sup>2</sup> The need to make war visible and assert its representability drove the production and reception of war imagery the nineteenth century and thereafter. This sustained resolve to claim war as a stable object of representation continued to grow during the colonial wars and armed conflicts of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which the participation of civilian populations at home became an important strategic component of victory. Over the past two centuries, war has become more spectacular, temporally immediate and widely disseminated as photography, film and television have taken up the representation of armed combat.

The flourishing of the war film as a cinematic genre in the twentieth century is just one sign that the tradition of engaged spectatorship which prevailed in the nineteenth century continues to endure. In keeping with this dissertation’s focus upon the inter-relationships between different forms of media used to represent war, it is worth noting that one of the first war films to be made in France, directed by Geogres Méliès in 1897, was based on a well-known painting of an episode of the Franco-Prussian War by the military painter Alphonse de Neuville. The painting, *The Last Cartridges* (Fig. 6.1), was exhibited at the Salon of 1873 and represents the last stand of a group of French soldiers in the interior of a destroyed home (later turned into the musée de la Maison des

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<sup>2</sup> Jan Mieszkowski, “Watching War,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 124, no. 5 (2009): 1650.

Dernières Cartouches in Bazeilles, France, where the painting is conserved today) who have come under Prussian attack. De Neuville began the painting shortly after France's defeat in 1871 and through its reproduction and circulation in print and photographic media, it became a well-known symbol of the defeat. The short film, just over one minute in length, was shot from the same point of view used by De Neuville, from inside the house. Méliès transformed the frozen temporality of the painting into an extended series of episodic actions and employed a series of special effects to make the battle appear dangerous and compelling. Among other techniques, Méliès depicted a series of explosions through a white powder which falls from above the actors (Fig. 6.2). This invoked the convention of white puffs of smoke that had been associated with the representation of explosions in battle painting for centuries. Other episodic actions in the film, such as a soldier who falls toward the camera as a result of an explosion (Fig. 6.3), recall the kinds of pictorial devices employed by Horace Vernet in his battle paintings.

It is hardly surprising that Georges Méliès looked to the conventions of nineteenth-century war imagery in order to heighten the visual drama of his short film. Though the nascent medium of film allowed for the unfolding of a temporally extended chain of episodic actions, nineteenth-century modes of visual production would have shaped the way that these episodes were understood. As this dissertation has shown, conventions of representation (such as the episode) shaped beliefs in the veracity of a representation of war. Méliès thereby exploited the tradition of engaged spectatorship that late nineteenth-century viewers would have associated with war imagery and applied it to a novel form of visual representation.

Whereas it took several days for Henri Durand-Brager's sketches from the theater of the Crimean War to reach Paris for publication as woodblock engravings in the pages of *L'Illustration*, the speed with which a war can be represented is now instantaneous. This has accordingly enabled the illusion of mediated participation in war to grow stronger over the past 150 years. As Susan Sontag has argued, after the Vietnam War, the first war that was regularly televised,

battles and massacres filmed as they unfold have been a routine ingredient of the ceaseless flow of domestic, small-screen entertainment...The understanding of war among people who have not experienced war is now chiefly the product of the impact of these images...Something becomes real - to those who are elsewhere, following it as "news"- by being photographed.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the capability and availability of digital image technologies to produce images of war on a scale which would have been inconceivable to any artist in the nineteenth century, the relationship between the political and physical activity known as "war" and its representability is more obscure than at any point in the last two hundred years.

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<sup>3</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 21.





Figure 1.1: Charles Nègre, *An Apprentice of Charles Nègre Examining a Proof in the Courtyard of the Studio*, c. 1857. Albumen print, 16 x 11.8 cm. Essonne, Musée français de la photographie.



Figure 1.2: Robert Jefferson Bingham, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*, after Adolphe Yvon, 1857. Albumen print, 27.8 x 42 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 1.3: Adolphe Yvon, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*, 1856-1857. Oil on canvas, 600 x 900 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 2.1 : Villeneuve, *Food for Thought for Crowned Charlatans*, c. 1793. Engraving. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

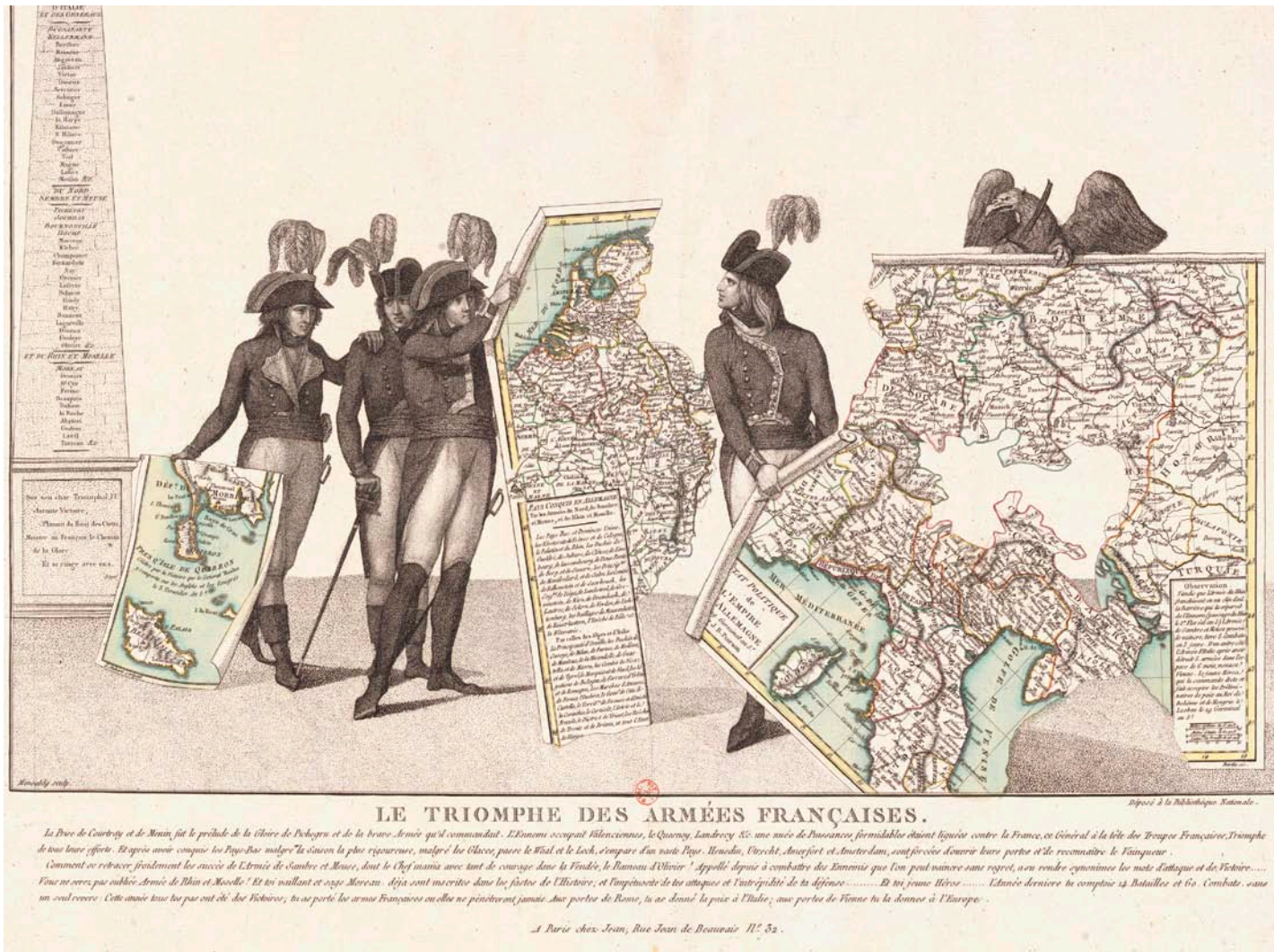


Figure 2.2: Monsaldy, *Triomphe des armées françaises*, 1797. Engraving, 45 x 35 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2.3: Adam-Franz Van der Meulen, *The French Army Crossing the Rhine at Lobith*, c. 1672. Oil on canvas, 103 x 159 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Figure 2.4: Jean-Antoine Constantin, *The Siege of Toulon*, 1794. Pen and ink wash. Vizille, Musée de la révolution française.



Figure 2.5: Anonymous, *The Battle of Gemappe*, c. 1792-1793. Engraving. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France

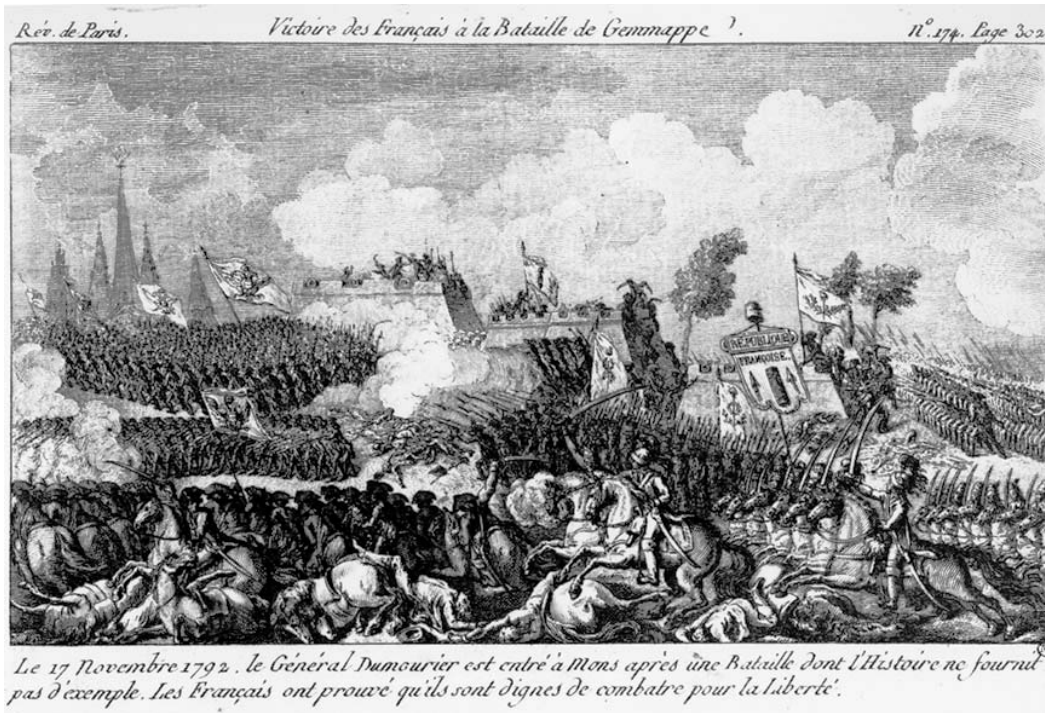


Figure 2.6: Anonymous, *The Victory of the French at the Battle of Gemappe*, c. 1792-1793. Engraving. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



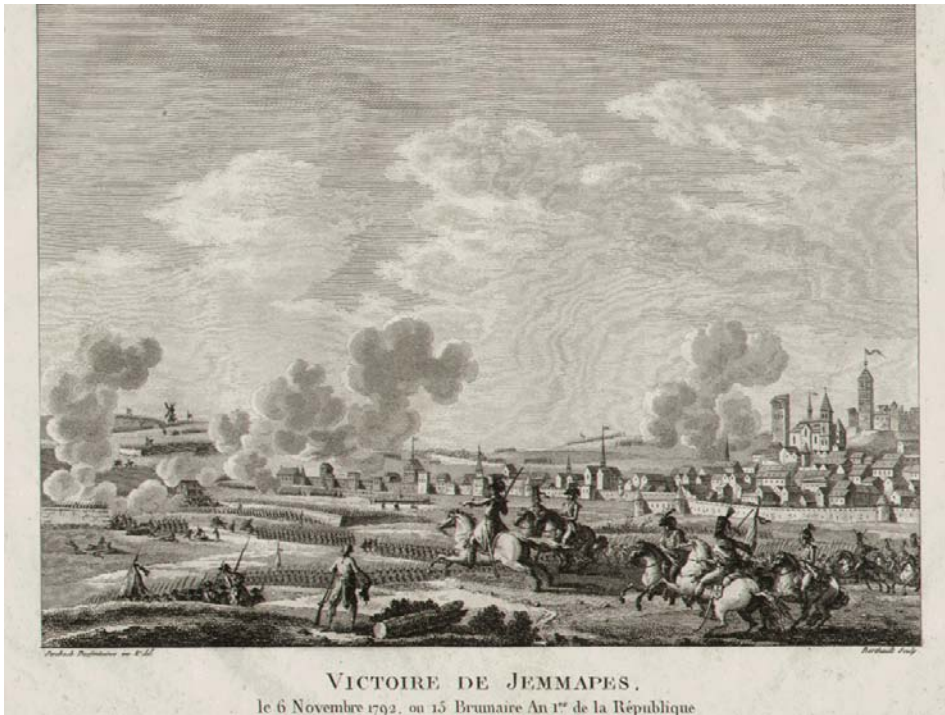


Figure 2.7: Pierre-Gabriel Berthault, *Victory of Jemmapes*, 1797. Engraving after a drawing by Jacques François Joseph Swebach-Desfontaines, 17.7 cm x 24.2 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2.8: Louis-Albert Guislain Bacler d'Albe, frontispiece for the *General Map of Italy*, 1801. Engraving, 66 x 53 cm. Montreal, McGill University Special Collections Library



Figure 2.9: Louis-Albert Guislain Bacler d'Albe, *Passage of the Po at Plaisance*, 1798. Watercolor, 66 x 43.2 cm. Vincennes, Service historique de l'armée de terre.

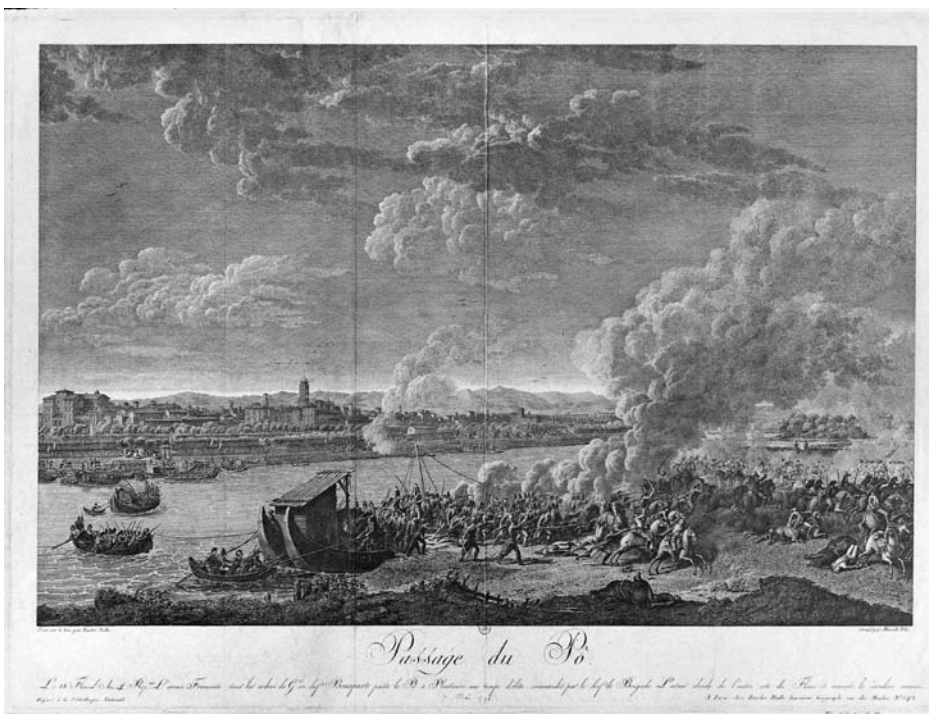


Figure 2.10: Mercoli fils, *Passage of the Po at Plaisance*, after Louis-Albert Guislain Bacler d'Albe, c. 1800-1801. Engraving, 51.5 x 69.5 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

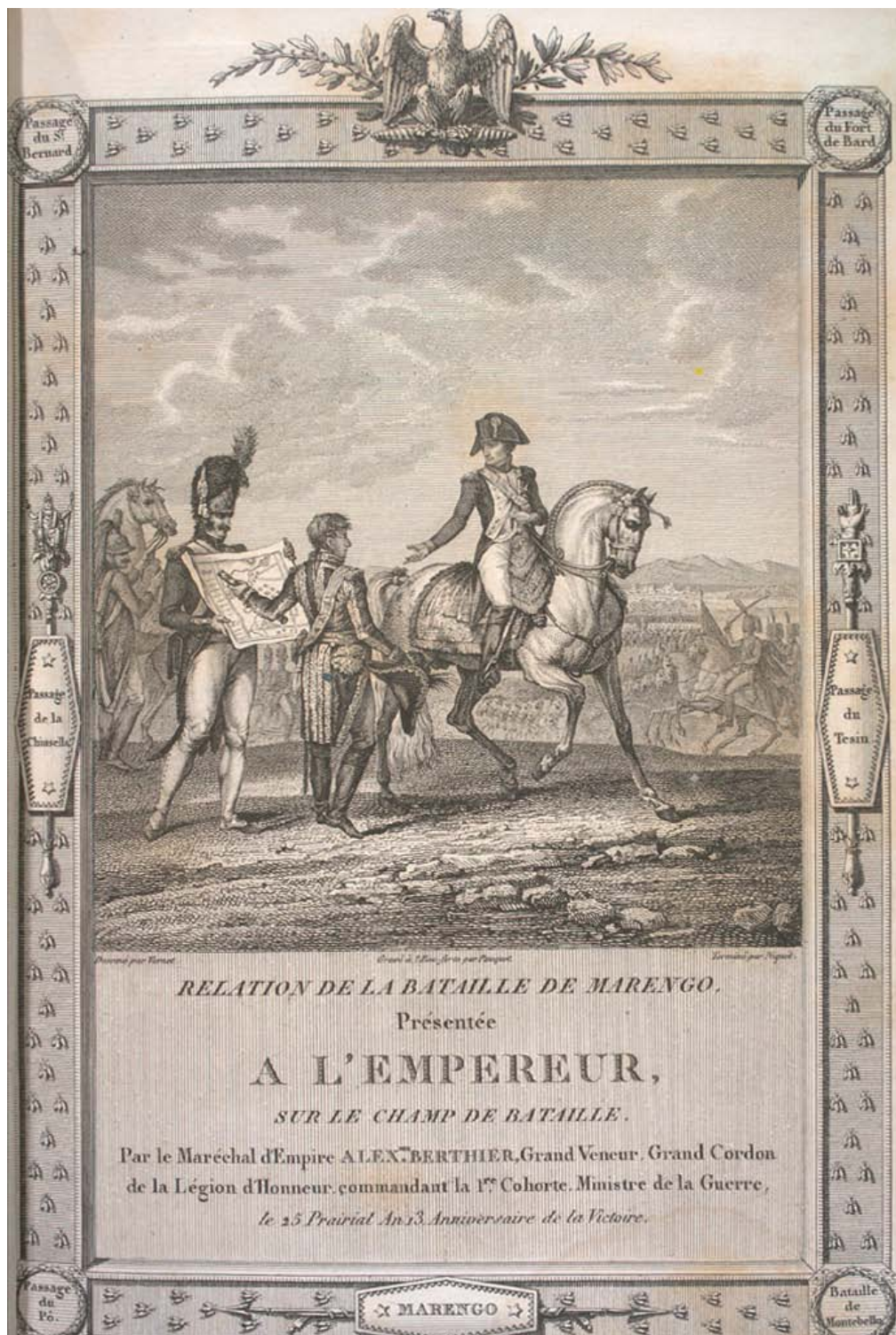


Figure 2.11 : Claude Niquet and Paquet, frontispiece for Général Alexandre Berthier's *Relation de la bataille de Marengo*, 1805. Etching after a watercolor by Carle Vernet, 22 x 15.6 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2.12: Antoine-Jean Gros, *The Battle of Nazareth*, 1800. Oil on canvas, 135 x 195 cm. Nantes, Musée des Beaux-arts



Figure 2.13 : Antoine-Jean Gros, *Plan of the Battlefield of Nazareth*, 1800. Pen, ink, and wash. Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts

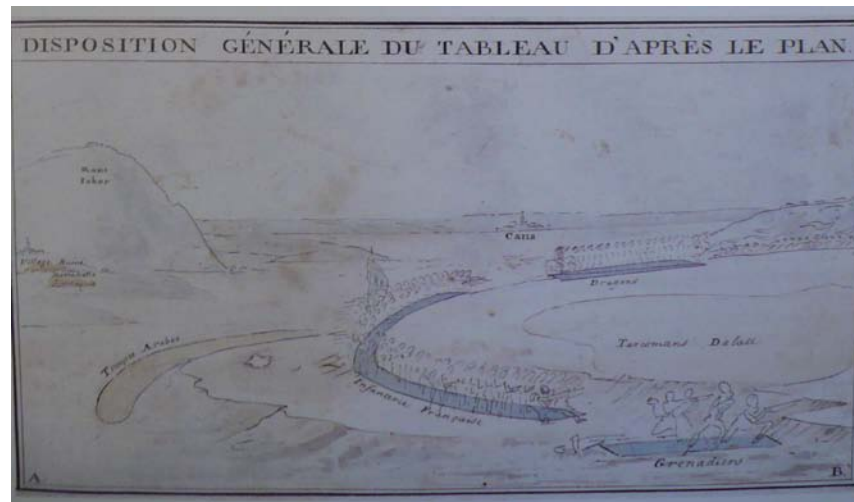


Figure 2.14: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Schematic Drawing of the Battle of Nazareth*, 1800. Pen, ink, and wash. Nantes, Musée des Beaux-arts.



Figure 2.15: Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Marengo*, 1800. Oil on canvas, 180 x 250 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.

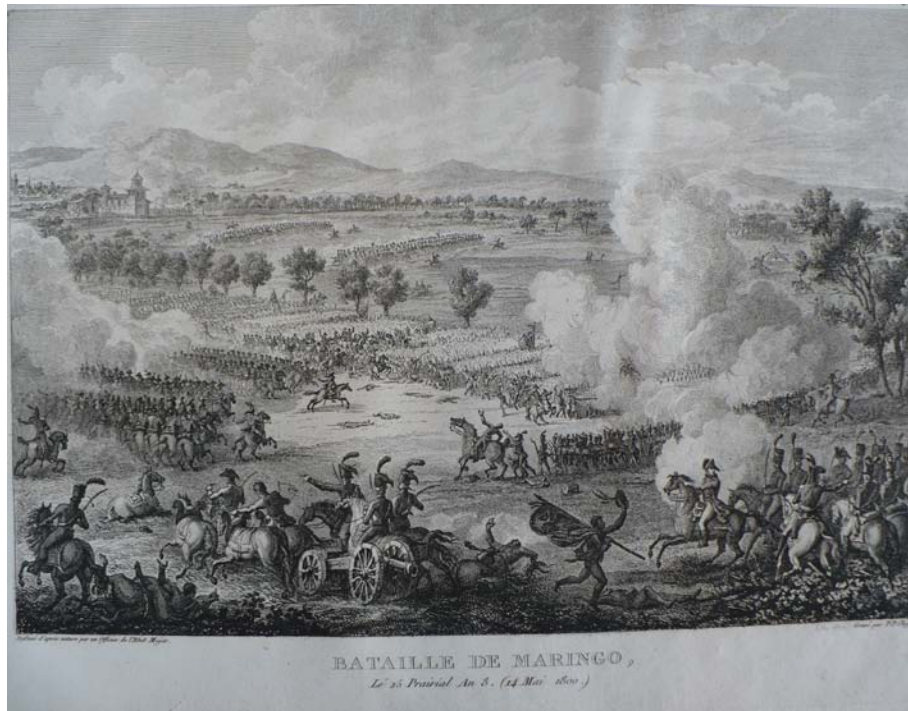


Figure 2.16: Choffard, *The Battle of Marengo*, after Louis-François Lejeune in *Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des françaises en Italie*, c.1800. Engraving. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2.17: François Tardieu, Map of the *Campaign of the Reserve Army in Italy*, after Pierre Lapie, in *Histoire des guerres des gaulois et des français en Italie*, c. 1800. Engraving, 43 x 62 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2.18 : Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Aboukir*, 1804-1805. Oil on canvas, 185 x 255 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.





Figure 2.19 : Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Mont Thabor*, 1804-1805. Oil on canvas, 180 x 260 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 2.20: Louis- François Lejeune, *The Battle of the Pyramids*, 1806. Oil on canvas, 180 x 258 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.

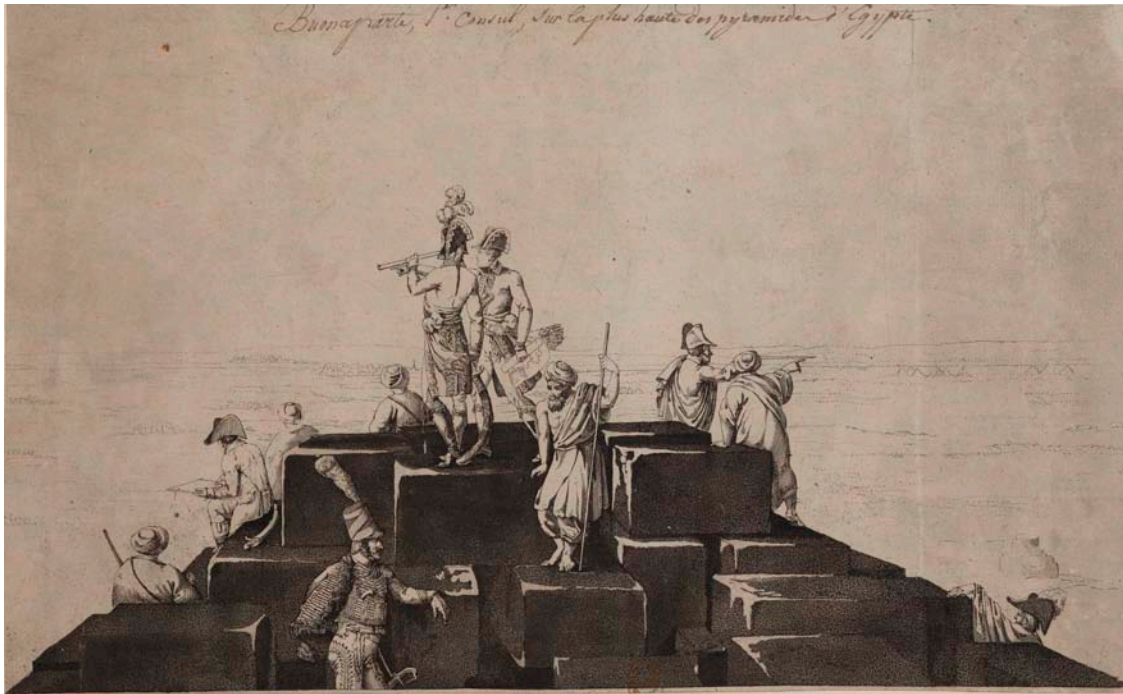


Figure 2.21 : Anonymous, *Bonaparte, 1st Consul and His Captains, on the Tallest Pyramid in Egypt*, c. 1800. Etching. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2.22 : Dominique-Vivant Denon, *Battle Plan for the Battle of Aboukir won by Bonaparte on 7 Thermidor of Year 7* from *Voyage dans la basse et haute Égypte*, 1802. Etching. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'institut national d'histoire de l'art



Figure 2.23 : Dominique-Vivant Denon, *The Peninsula of Aboukir*, from *Voyage dans la basse et haute égypte*, 1802. Etching. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'institut national d'histoire de l'art.

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Figure 2.24 : Detail, Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Aboukir*.



Figure 2.25: Dominique-Vivant Denon, *The Battle of Aboukir*, from *Voyage dans la basse et haute Égypte*, 1802. Etching, 16 x 49.5 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'institut national d'histoire de l'art.

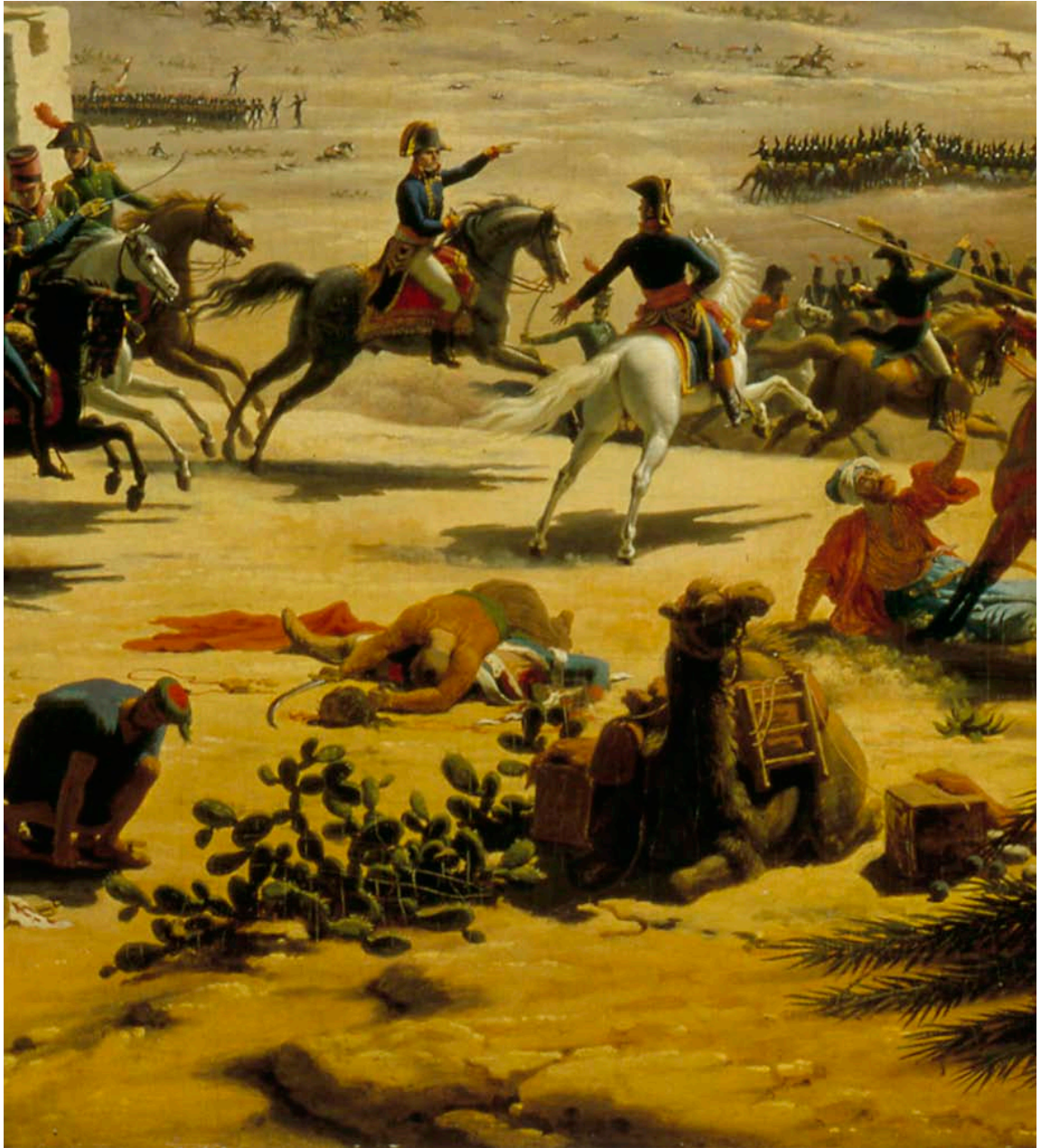


Figure 2.26 : Detail, Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Aboukir*.



Figure 2.27 : Detail, Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Aboukir*



Figure 2.28: Detail, Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Aboukir*.



Figure 2.29: Detail, Louis-François Lejeune, *The Battle of Aboukir*.





Figure 2.30 : Detail, Dessalaux, *The Battle of Aboukir*, after Louis-François Lejeune, 1804. Etching. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2.31 : Lameau and Misbach, *View of the Right of the Russian Battlefield in front of Pressisch-Eylau, Drawn on site by Le Jeune*, c. 1807. Engraving, 41 x 69 cm. Montreal, McGill University Special Collections Library.



Figure 3.1: Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Wounded Soldiers of the Garde Impériale Entering Paris in 1814*, 1814. Ink drawing with grey and brown wash and watercolor and pencil tracing, 50 x 1040 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 3.2: Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Russian Prisoners Marching on the Boulevard Saint Martin in 1814*, 1814. Ink drawing with grey and brown wash and watercolor with pencil tracing, 650 x 350 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 3.3: Detail, Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Wounded Soldiers of the Garde Impériale Entering Paris in 1814*.



Figure 3.4: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1820. Oil on canvas, 90 x 105 cm. Phoenix Art Museum.



Figure 3.5: Louis-François Lejeune, *View of the Monastery and Bulls, antiquites of Guisando, on the banks of the Alberge, in Castille*, 1817. Oil on canvas, 210 x 260. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 3.6: Detail, Louis-François Lejeune, *View of the Monastery and Bulls, antiquities of Guisando*.



Figure 3.7: Louis-Francois Lejeune, *View of the Attack on the Grand Convoy, near Salinas*, 1818-1819. Oil on canvas, 213 x 265 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figures 3.8, 3.9, 3.10: Detail, Louis-François Lejeune, *View of the Attack on the Grand Convoy, near Salinas*.





Figure 3.11: Pauquet and J. Mécou, *Review of the First Consul (Review of Quintidi)* after an original drawing by Eugène Isabey and Carle Vernet, 1800. Engraving, 70 x 92 cm. Montreal, McGill University Library.



Figure 3.12: Horace Vernet, *The Tomb of Napoleon*, 1821. Oil on canvas, 54 x 80 cm. London, Wallace Collection.



Figure 3.13: Horace Vernet, *The Wounded Trumpeter*, 1819. Oil on canvas, 53 x 64 cm. London, Wallace Collection.



Figure 3.14: Horace Vernet, *The Dog of the Regiment Wounded*, 1819. Oil on canvas, 53 x 64 cm. London, Wallace Collection.



Figure 3.15: Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Montmirail*, 1822. Oil on canvas, 178 x 290 cm. London, National Gallery.



Figure 3.16: Horace Vernet, *The Atelier of Horace Vernet*, 1820-1821. Oil on canvas, 55 x 66 cm. Private Collection.



Figure 3.17: Horace Vernet, *Napoleon Crossing the Bridge at Arcole*, 1826-27. Oil on canvas, 260 x 198 cm. Private Collection.



Figure 3.18: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte at the Bridge of Arcole*, 1796. Oil on canvas, 130 x 94 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 3.19: Charles Thévenin, *Augereau on the Arcole Bridge, 15 November 1796*, 1796. Oil on canvas, 362 x 268 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château

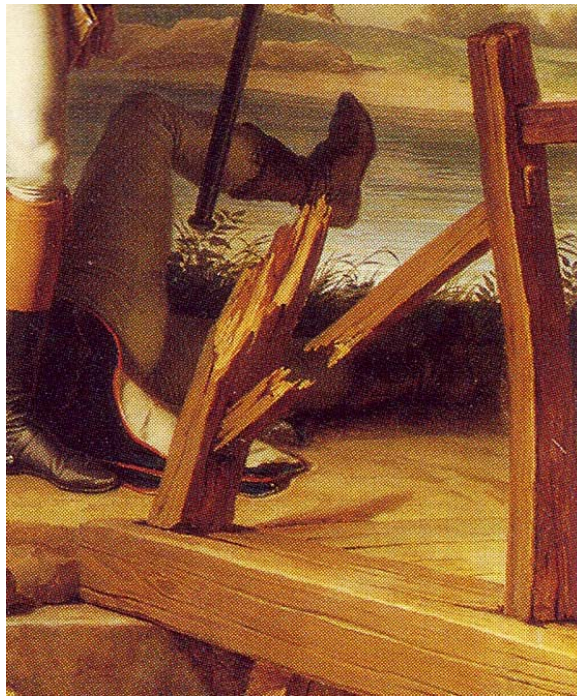


Figure 3.20 : Detail, Charles Thévenin, *Augereau on the Arcole Bridge*.



Figure 3.21: Detail, Horace Vernet, Detail, Horace Vernet, *Napoleon Crossing the Bridge at Arcole*.





Figure 3.22: Detail, Horace Vernet, *Napoleon Crossing the Bridge at Arcole*.



Figure 3.23: Horace Vernet, *The Barrier at Clichy*, 1820. Oil on canvas, 97.5 x 130.5 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

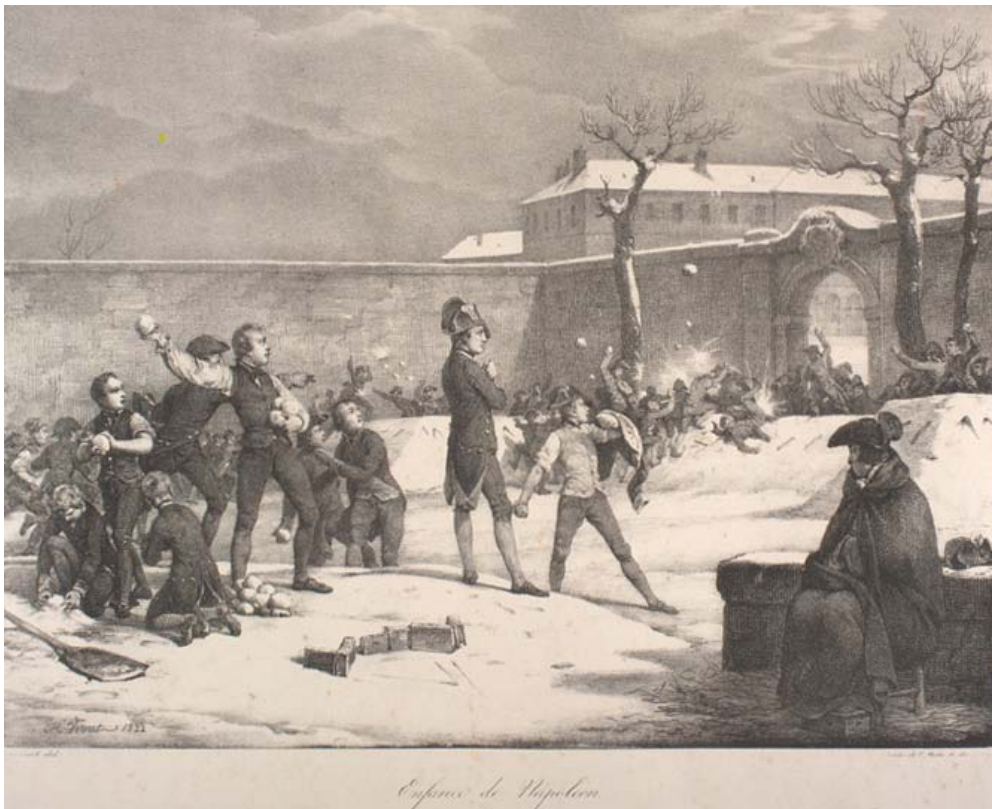


Figure 3.24 : Horace Vernet, *The Childhood of Napoleon* from *Vie Politique et Militaire de Napoléon* (Paris : Émile Babeuf, 1822-1826). Lithograph, 44 x 57 cm. Montreal, McGill University Library



Figure 3.25 : Horace Vernet, *The Bridge at Arcole* from *Vie Politique et Militaire de Napoléon* (Paris : Émile Babeuf, 1822-1826). Lithograph, 44 x 57 cm. Montreal, McGill University Library.



Figure 3.26: Anonymous, *The Bridge at Arcole* from *Précis de Napoléon du Consulat et de l'Empire* (Bruxelles : J.B. Dupon, 1825). Engraving (?). Montreal, McGill University Library.



Figure 3.27: Pierre-Marie Jazet, *Napoleon Crossing the Bridge at Arcole*, after Horace Vernet, 1829. Aquatint, 56 x 66 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 3.28 : Louis-François Charon, *Battle of Arcole*, c. 1828-1830. Mezzotint, 34 x 43 cm. Montreal, McGill University Library.



Figure 3.29: Horace Vernet, *Near a Village Fete*, 1818. Lithograph, 28 x 37 cm. Providence, R.I., Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection.



Figure 3.30: Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, *They Say You Were Born with a Wooden Leg*, 1826. Lithograph. 28 x 36 cm. London, British Museum.



Figure 3.31: Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, *The Merchant of Lithographic Drawings*, c. 1819. Lithograph, 21.6 x 30 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



Figure 3.32: Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, *"Seriez-vous sensible,"* 1823. Lithograph, 17.2 x 18.8 cm. London, British Museum



*Imprimerie Lithographique de F. Delpech*

Figure 3.33: Carle Vernet, *Delpech Lithographic Shop*, 1819. Lithograph, 17 x 24 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.





Figure 4.1: Installation view of the Gallery of Battles, Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 4.2 : Installation shot of Horace Vernet's three battle paintings made for the Gallery of Battles: the *Battle of Iéna*, the *Battle of Friedland*, and the *Battle of Wagram*

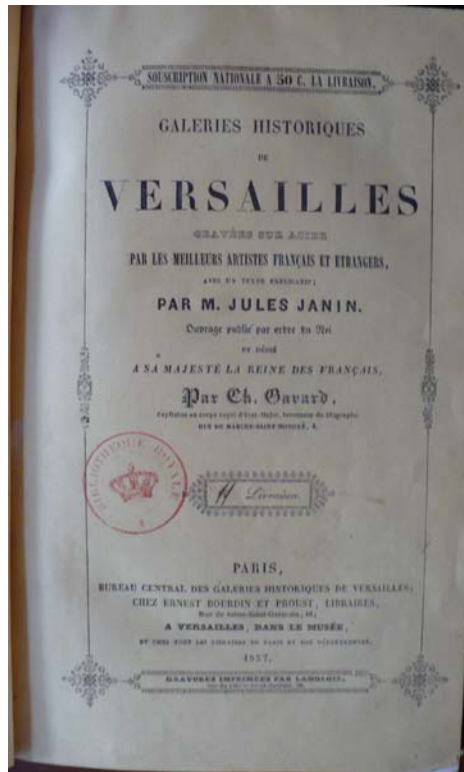


Figure 4.3: Cover of the 11<sup>th</sup> installment of Charles Gavard's *Galerias historiques de Versailles*, 1837, printed book, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Figure 4.4: *How to Use a Diagraph*, 1844. Engraving, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Figure 4.5: *Napoleon Crossing the St. Bernard Pass*, after Jacques-Louis David, published in the 1fr. edition of Charles Gavard's *Galeries historiques de Versailles*, 1837-38. Engraving. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Figure 4.6: *Napoleon Crossing the St. Bernard Pass*, after Jacques-Louis David, published in the 5fr. luxury edition of Gavard's *Galeries historiques de Versailles*, 1837-38. Engraving. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris



Figure 4.7: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Napoleon Haranguing the Army before the Battle of the Pyramids*, 1810. Extensions added in 1835. Oil on canvas, 385 x 511 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.

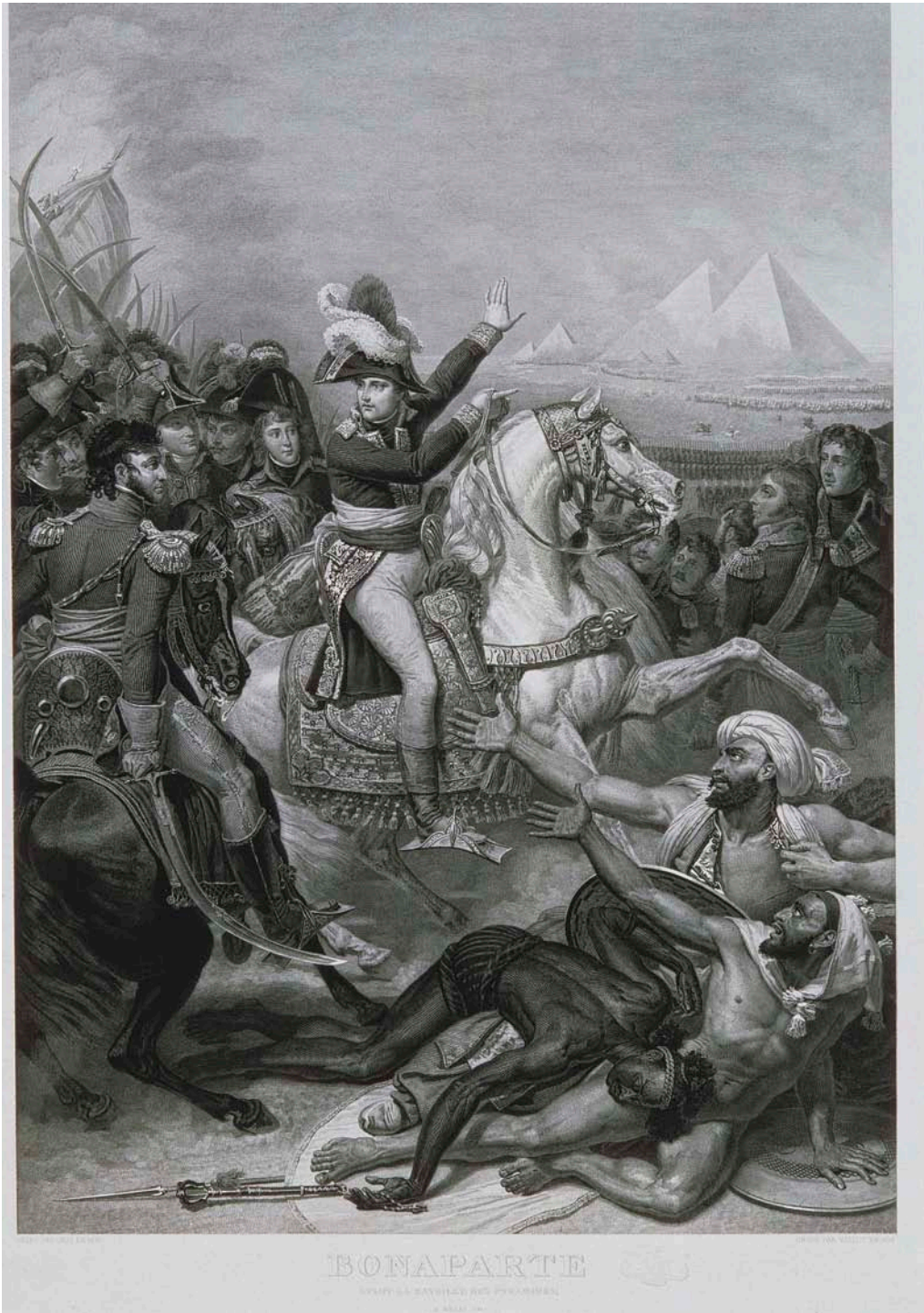


Figure 4.8: Jean-Auguste Philippe Vallot, *The Battle of the Pyramids*, after Antoine-Jean Gros, 1838. Engraving, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Figure 4.9: *The Battle of the Pyramids*, after Antoine-Jean Gros, published in Charles Gavard's *Galeries historiques de Versailles*, c. 1840. Diaphanous engraving, finished by an anonymous engraver. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Figure 4.10: Detail, Comparison between Vallot's engraving (top) with Gavard's engraving (bottom).





Figure 4.11: Bertall, *La Musique, La peinture, et la sculpture*, 1846. Wood engraving. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Figure 4.12 : Jean-Charles Langlois, *Rotunda of the Panorama of the Battle of Navarino*, 1831. Pencil and ink wash on paper, 28 x 33 cm. Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris.



Figure 4.13: Installation view of the *Siege of Constantine*, Versailles, Musée national du Château



Figure 4.14 : Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine, The Columns Prepare for the Assault, October 10, 1837*, 1839, 512 x 1039 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 4.15: Detail. Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine, The Columns Prepare for the Assault, October 13, 1837*.



Figure 4.16 : Horace Vernet, *The Siege of Constantine in October, 1837*, c. 1838. Pencil and ink on paper, 52 x 94 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 4.17 : Detail, Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine, The Columns Prepare for the Assault, October 10, 1837.*



Figure 4.18: François Gérard, *The Battle of Austerlitz*, 1810. Oil on canvas, 510 x 958 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 4.19 Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine, The Assault, October 10, 1837*. 1839. Oil on canvas, 512 x 1039 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 4.20: Detail. Horace Vernet, *The Assault*.





Figure 4.21: Detail. Horace Vernet, *The Assault*



Figure 4.22: Detail. Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine, The Assault, October 10, 1837*



Figure 4.23: Detail, Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine, The Columns Prepare for the Assault, October 10, 1837*.



Figure 4.24: Detail. Horace Vernet, *Siege of Constantine, The Assault, October 10, 1837*.



Figure 4.25: Installation view of the *Capture of the Smahla*. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 4.26: Horace Vernet, *Louis-Philippe and His Sons on Horses in front of the Gate of the Chateau de Versailles*, 1846, 367 x 394 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 4.27 : Jacques-Louis David, Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Grand-Saint-Bernard, 1801. 259 x 202. Musée national des châteaux de Malmaison et Bois-Préau.



Figure 4.28: Detail, Horace Vernet, *Louis-Philippe and His Sons on Horses in front of the Gate of the Chateau de Versailles*.



Figure 5.1: Horace Vernet, *Episode of the Siege of Rome: the Capture of the 8th Bastion at the San Pancrazio Gate, June 30 1849*, 1850-1852, 489 x 997. Versailles, Musée national du Château.





Figure 5.2: Constantin Guys, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, 1855. Pencil, ink, wash and watercolor on paper, 32 x 39.6 cm. Private Collection.



Rapport du général Canrobert

... Mémorial de la bataille, l'artillerie de nos canons...
Après un feu continu pendant le jour...
... le général Canrobert...

... Pendant que ces débris se passaient, le général...
... les canons...

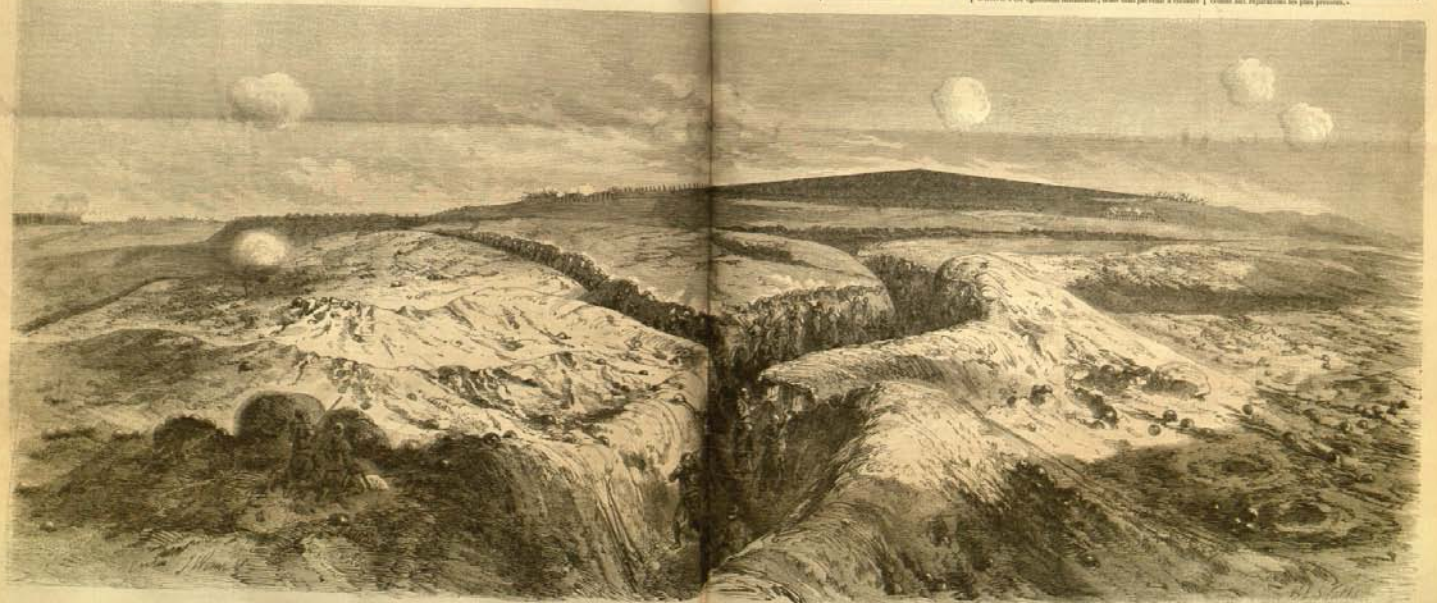
Canrobert devant Sébastopol.



... Les troupes...
... le général...

... Nos canons...
... le général...

... Le général...
... les troupes...



Canrobert d'un bois de France devant Sébastopol. - Rapport du général de M. Canrobert.

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Figure 5.3: L'Illustration, May 5, 1855. Woodblock engraving. Princeton University Library.



Figure 5.4: Henri Durand-Brager and Lassimonne, *Sebastopol: The Fort St. Nicolas*. Albumen print after a glass negative, 21 x 32 cm. Paris, Musée de l'Armée.



Figure 5.5: Henri Durand-Brager and Lassimonne, *Sebastopol: The Fort St. Nicolas During Its Destruction*. Albumen print after a glass negative, 21 x 32 cm. Musée de l'Armée, Paris.



Figure 5.6: Henri Durand-Brager and Lassimonne, *Sebastopol: The Fort St. Nicolas After Its Destruction*. Albumen print after a glass negative, 21 x 32 cm. Musée de l'Armée, Paris.

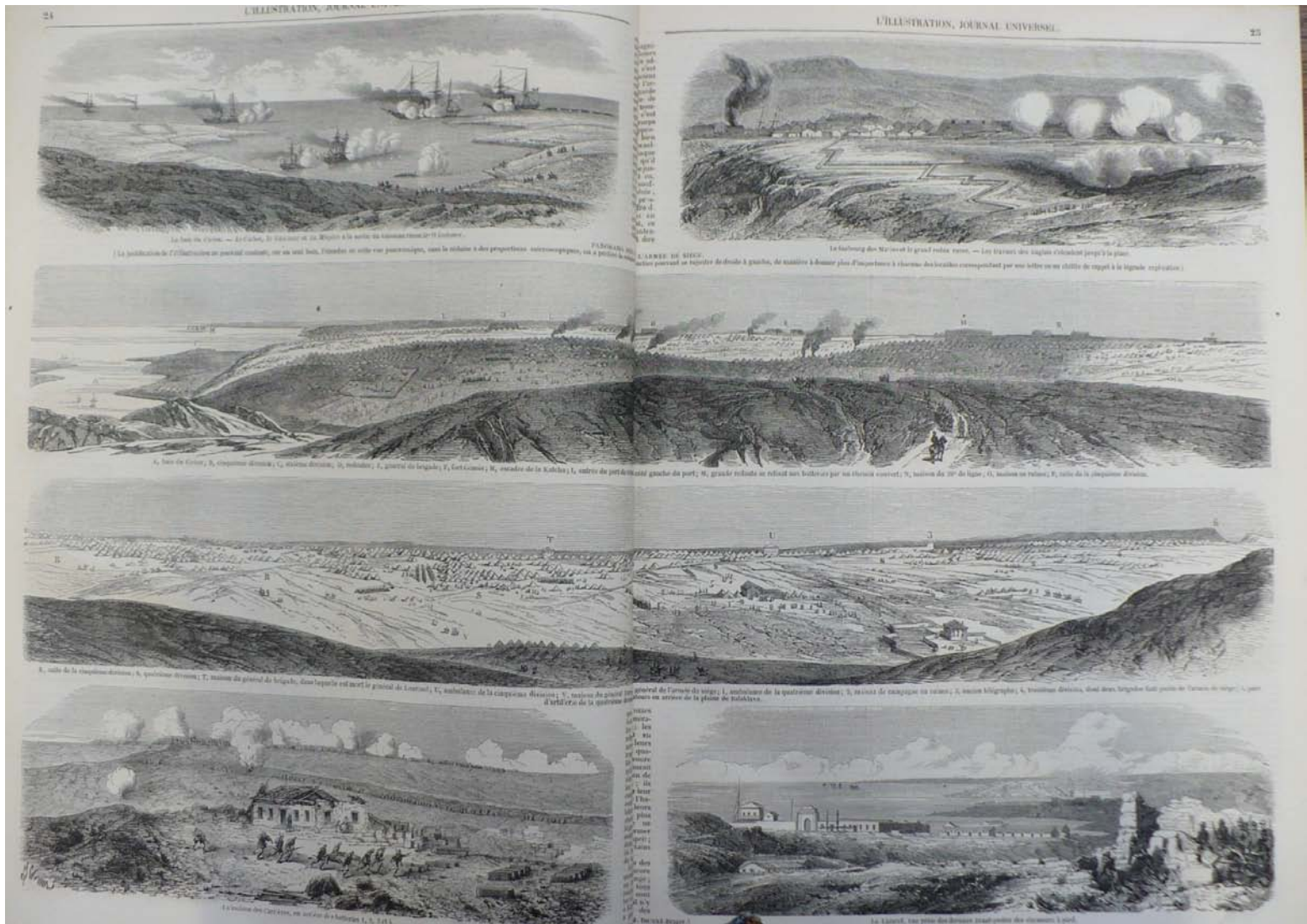


Figure 5.7: *L'Illustration*, January 13, 1855. Woodblock engraving. Princeton University Library.



Figure 5.8: Henri Durand-Brager, *View of Kamiesch Taken from the Port*, 1856-1857. 170 x 173 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 5.9 : Henri Durand-Brager, *Kamiesch : Panorama of the City and of the Port*, 1855-1856. Albumen print after 2 glass negatives, 22.8 x 56.4 cm. Musée de l'Armée, Paris.



Figure 5.10: Detail. Henri Durand-Brager, *View of Kamiesch Taken from the Port and Kamiesch : Panorama of the City and of the Port.*



Figure 5.11: Detail. Henri Durand-Brager, *View of Kamiesch Taken from the Port and Kamiesch : Panorama of the City and of the Port.*





Figure 5.12: Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol. Panorama of the Left Attacks Seen from the Observatory of Marshall Canrobert*, 1856-1857. 56 x 270 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 5.13: Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol. Panorama of the Left Attacks Seen from the Extreme Left*, 1856-1857. 56 x 270 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.

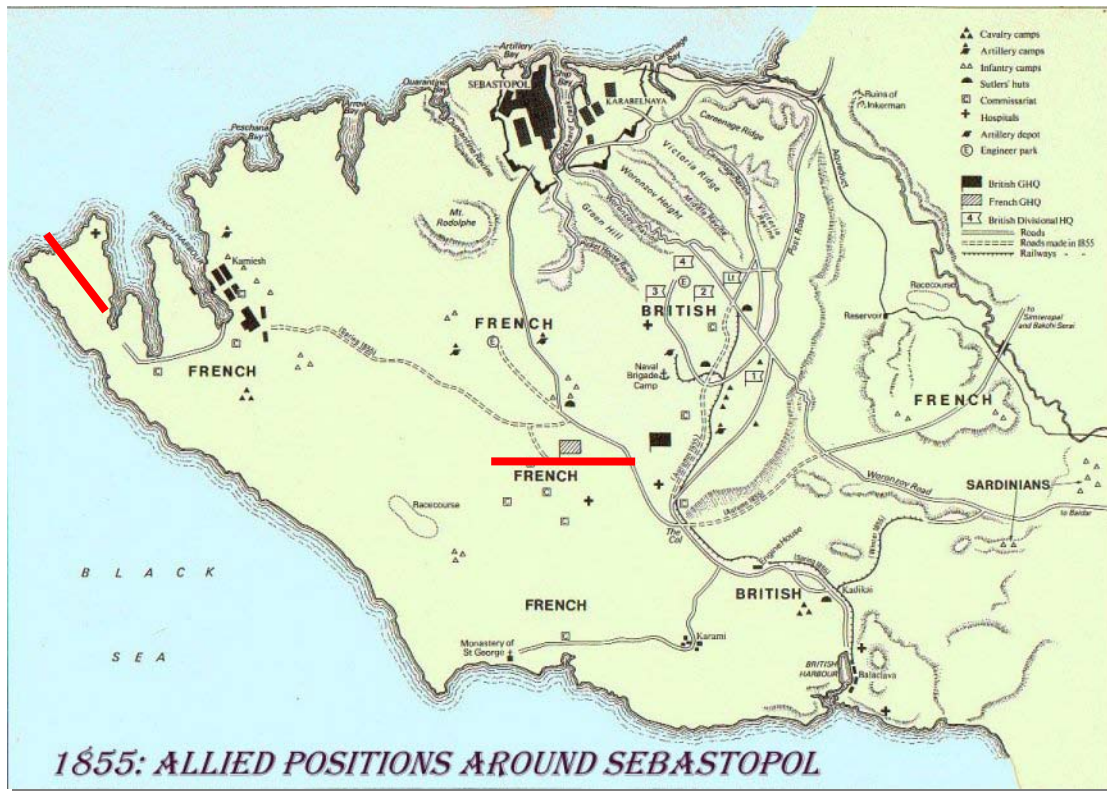


Figure 5.14: Diagram showing the two points from which Henri Durand-Brager painted his two largest panoramic views.



Figure 5.15: Henri Durand-Brager, *Bastion de la Quarantine*. Oil on canvas, 64 x 113 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 5.16: Henri Durand-Brager, *The Clocheton*. Oil on canvas, 56 x 88 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 5.17: Detail. Henri Durand-Brager, *The Clocheton*.



Figure 5.18: Detail. Henri Durand-Brager, *The Clocheton*.



Figure 5.19 : Detail. Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol. Panorama of the Left Attacks Seen from the Observatory of Marshall Canrobert.*



Figure 5.20: Detail. Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol. Panorama of the Left Attacks Seen from the Observatory of Marshall Canrobert.*



Figure 5.21: Henri Durand-Brager, *View Taken from the Sea*. Oil on canvas, 100 x 173 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 5.22: Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol, Craters in Front of the Bastion du Mat*, 1856-1857. 56 x 88 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 5.23 : Georges Leroux, *Hell*, 1916. 114 x 162 cm. London, Imperial War Museum.

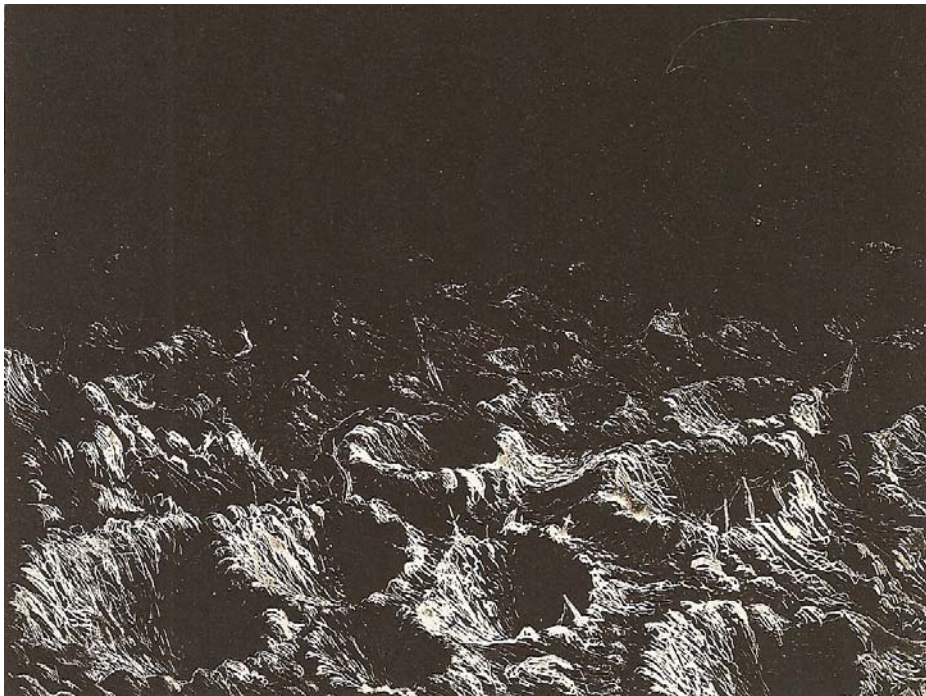


Figure 5.24: Otto Dix, *Shell Holes illuminated by Flares near Dontrien*, from the Portfolio *War*, 1924. Aquatint on Ingres paper, 19 x 25.5 cm. London, The British Museum.





Figure 5.25: Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol. Lunette de Droite of the Bastion Central*, 1856-1857. 56 x 88 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.

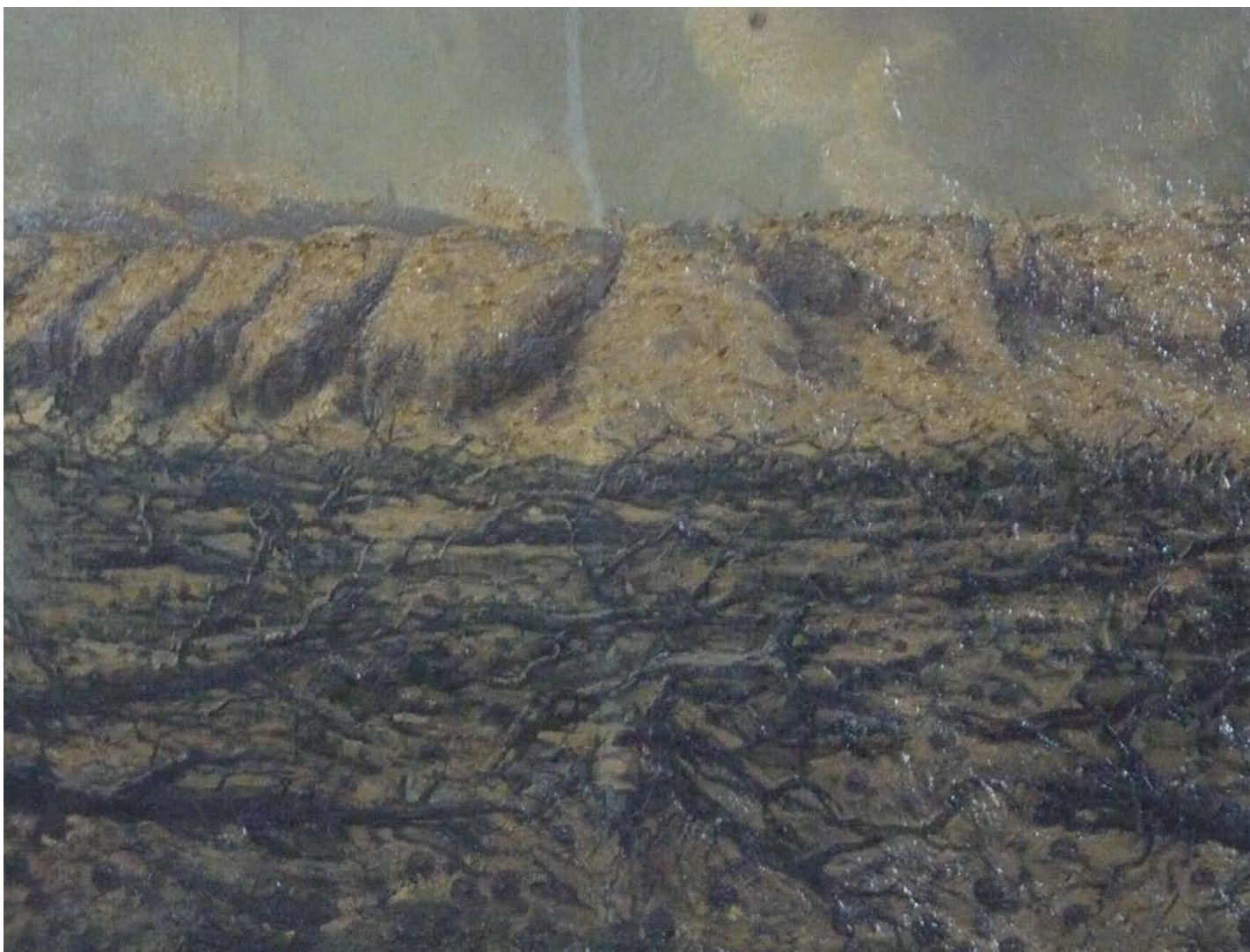


Figure 5.26: Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol. Right View of the Bastion du Mat*, 1856-1857, 56 x 88 cm.  
Versailles, Musée national du Château



Figure 5.27: Detail. Henri Durand-Brager, *Siege of Sebastopol. Lunette de Droite of the Bastion Central.*

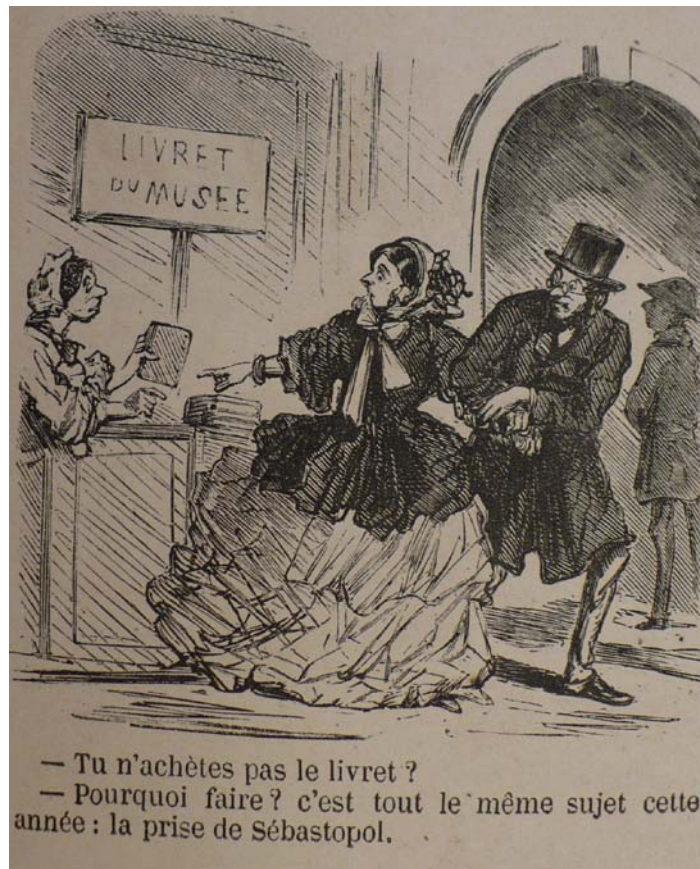


Figure 5.28: Cham, from *The Salon of 1857*, 1857. Lithograph. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Figure 5.29: Adolphe Yvon, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*, 1856-1857. 600 x 900 cm. Versailles, Musée national du Château.



Figure 5.30: Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Alma*, 1856-1857. 190 X 298 cm. Ajaccio, Palais Fesch, Musée des beaux-arts.



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Figure 5.31:Detail. Adolphe Yvon, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*.



Figure 5.32:Detail. Adolphe Yvon, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*.



Figure 5.33:Detail. Adolphe Yvon, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*.



Figure 5.34: Louis-Emmanuel Soulange-Teissier, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower* after Adolphe Yvon, c.1858. Lithograph, 61 x 90.3 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 5.35: Ferdinand Lefman, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*, after Adolphe Yvon, c. 1857. Etching. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.





Figure 5.36: Marthe, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*, after Adolphe Yvon, c. 1857. Etching (??), 8.5 x 5.4 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 5.37: Pierre-Ambroise Richebourg, *View of a Room at the Salon of 1857*, 1857. Albumen print, 22 x 32.5 cm. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



Figure 5.38: Robert Jefferson Bingham, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*, after Adolphe Yvon, 1857. Albumen print, 27.8 x 42 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque national de France.



Figure 5.39: Charles Nègre, *The Capture of the Malakoff Tower*, after Adolphe Yvon, c. 1857. Heliogravure, 28.6 x 41.8 cm. Essonne, Musée français de la photographie.



Figure 5.40: Charles Nègre, *An Apprentice of Charles Nègre Examining a Proof in the Courtyard of the Studio*, c. 1857. Albumen print, 16 x 11.8 cm. Essonne, Musée français de la photographie.



Figure 6.1: Alphonse de Neuville, *The Last Cartridges*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 109 x 165 cm. Bazeilles, musée de la Maison des dernières cartouches.



Figure 6.2: Film still of Georges Méliès, *The Last Cartridges*, 1897.

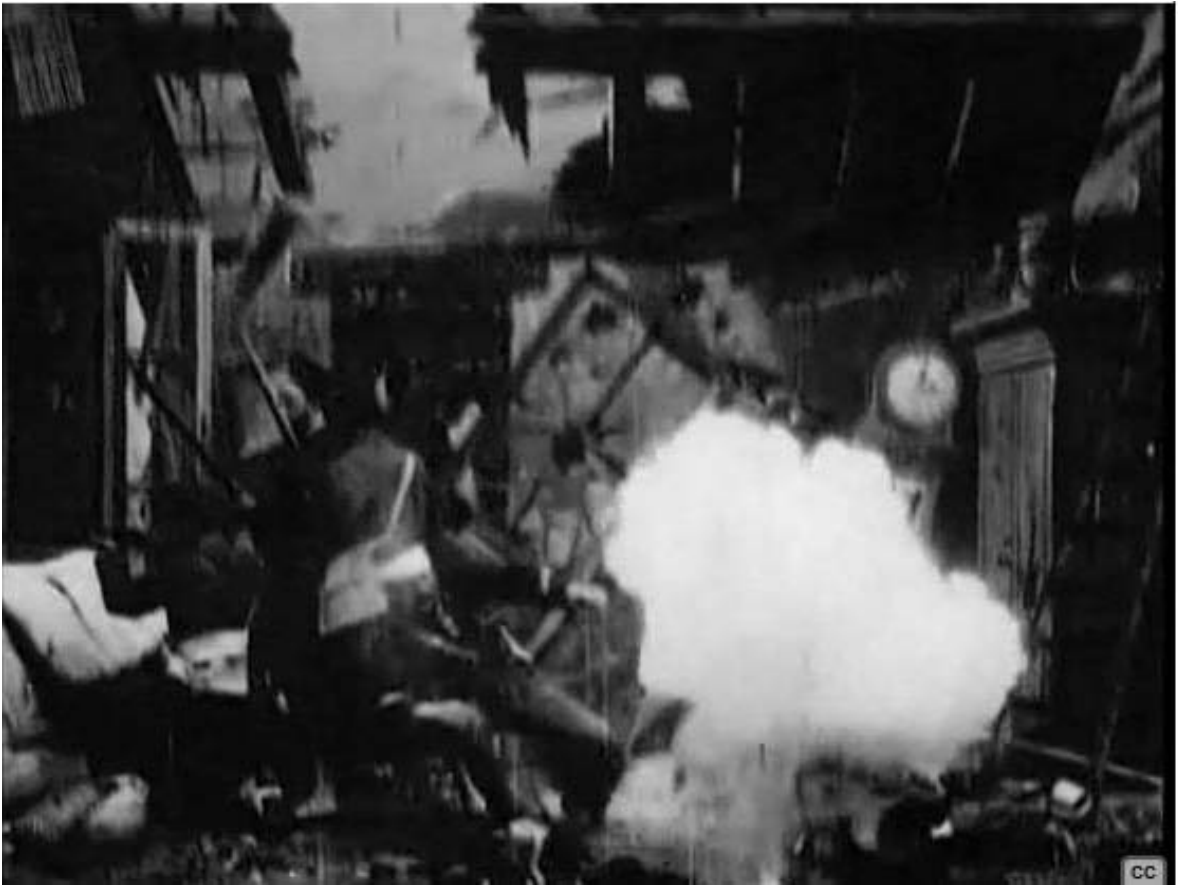


Figure 6.3: Film still, Georges Méliès, *The Last Cartridges*, 1897.

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