Todd Porterfield *The Allure of Empire* (1998)

2

Paintings of the Egyptian Campaign

When Thiers programmed the Place de la Concorde, and when he advocated French expansion in Algeria, he was adopting a project that was laid out at the end of the eighteenth century. Foremost among the Enlightenment thinkers who animated both the Revolution and the Egyptian campaign, C. F. Volney broadcast a model of history that declared that French and European civilization—enlightened, rational, and technologically sophisticated—would spread the world over, leading to the inevitable extinction of all other cultural and political forms, in particular, the Eastern ones that were characterized by despotism, technological inferiority, and the ill-treatment of women. In the 1790s, "civilization" was defined as we know it, and its definition was predicated on an essential and opposed Occident and Orient. Late Enlightenment thinkers thus conceived not only the rationale for the Egyptian campaign but also the ideology that served the Algerian conquest and the entirety of Europe's colonial activities in Islamic lands throughout the nineteenth century.[1]

The dream of French imperial expansion partook of the same universalizing and expansionist spirit as the Revolution. Subsequently, a long tradition has maintained that, accordingly, modern French imperialism in general and the Egyptian campaign in particular, were simply extensions of the Revolution. In practice, however, when Volney and the *philosophes'* theories were put into action in the Egyptian campaign, imperial expansion was a diversion from, not an extension of, the Revolution. Named Commander of the Army of England in 1797, Bonaparte was supposed to extend the liberation of Europe to France's oldest and most implacable rival. But when his Army of England left Brest and turned south for the Mediterranean, rather than north for the Channel, it was an epoch-making turn. Bonaparte's forces at Brest had been perched

on the divide between the continuation of a continental policy that would spread the French Revolution to all the European countries and an imperial policy that would dilute competition among European powers and divert it to distant lands. As Talleyrand told a foreign diplomat, the invasion of Egypt was undertaken "in order to deflect revolutionary ideas from overwhelming the whole of Europe."[2]

Talleyrand and Bonaparte, inspired by Volney and the Ideologues, maneuvered together to engineer the invasion and win the Directory's approval for its execution. Bonaparte dreamed of striking at the Ottoman Empire by conquering its most strategically placed and historically prestigious possession—Egypt. He wrote the Directory in August 1797 recommending such an invasion, reasoning that it would weaken the British by cutting off their access to India. For his part, Talleyrand, as Foreign Minister, submitted a report to the Directory on 14 February 1798 in which he, too, proposed an Egyptian invasion that would take advantage of a collapsing Ottoman Empire, liberate the Egyptians, restore Egypt to its ancient wealth and splendor, recreate the Suez Canal, and gain commercial advantages by severing England's access to India. In words that Thiers would later echo in his July Monarchy adoption of the Directory's imperial blueprint, Talleyrand argued that French influence would spread from Egypt west across the northern coast of Africa and east to the remotest corners of Asia.[3] It turns out that Talleyrand had been secretly cooperating with the English, and that desires for stability and prosperity in Europe and easy victories in far-off lands decided the invasion of Egypt. As early as 5 November 1795, the Directory had declared itself devoted "to restore social order in place of the chaos that is inseparable from revolutions."[4] The path to order, the Directors concluded, ran through Egypt, not England. In choosing imperial expansion in the East in order to quell internal divisions, the Directory set a precedent that would be followed many times in the nineteenth century and it helped fix one of the central attractions in the allure of empire. As for the Egyptian campaign itself, it became the guiding light not for French revolutionary politics but instead for future French imperialism in North Africa, a cornerstone of French foreign policy until the second half of our century and a powerful focus and source of national identity.

The French expedition force left Brest for Toulon, and then Toulon for Egypt on 19 May 1798. They entered Cairo on 24 July, but by 1 August 1798, Britain's Admiral Nelson delivered a devastating blow. Only a week after the taking of Cairo, Nelson annihilated the French fleet at Aboukir Bay.[5] Although Bonaparte tried to extend his conquests by land, hoping to reach Istanbul, he only got as far as Acre, before he was turned back by a combined British-Ottoman force. He left for France while news reports still favored him. His Egyptian victories helped to propel him to power in the

coup of 18 brumaire (November 1799), although the occupational army that he left to govern Egypt surrendered to the British in August 1801.

A loss in military terms, the Egyptian campaign was represented in France, as it still is, as one of the most glorious—and uncontroversial—pages of the Napoleonic epic. Part of this perception is due to the luster of the intellectual wing of the campaign and its collective work, the *Description de l'Egypte.* Along with the military, Bonaparte brought with him to Egypt some 164 of France's finest minds, the cream of the Institut and the Ecole Polytechnique: scientists, mathematicians, astronomers, engineers, linguists, architects, draftsmen, and painters, including Monge, Berthollet, and Fourier. Engineers surveyed, doctors and architects designed military and civilian hospitals, architects and archaeologists drew the sites at Thebes, Luxor, and Karnak. In July 1798, the Institut d'Egypte met and discussed the Rosetta stone, marking the conception, if not the birth, of Egyptology.[6] Originally recruited to make the colony in Egypt profitable, the savants' enduring work is the enormous *Description de l'Egypte.* Publication began in 1809 and did not cease until nineteen years and two Bourbon monarchs later. As it was published mostly during the Restoration, it will be addressed in the following chapter. By the time it first appeared, the most important paintings depicting the Egyptian expedition had already been exhibited.

Even from the battlefields of Egypt, Napoleon had encouraged and commissioned history paintings depicting the Egyptian and Syrian campaigns, and they became a regular offering in Napoleonic Salons. That the actions of a regime would be heroized is something of a given. It is the particular artistic strategies that will concern us. For here is the inaugural presentation in high art of the rationale for French imperialism in the Near East, the foundation of the cultural edifice of France's modern Empire. As we will see in this selected catalogue of paintings of the Egyptian campaign, artists, patrons, and critics developed styles of sponsoring, painting, and receiving accounts of the contemporary Orient, all of which projected the Empire's authority based on its superiority over non-Europeans.[7] The subsequent chapters will show that they coined a currency that was then converted and reused by succeeding and ostensibly opposing regimes, making the Empire's artistic deposit an enduring imperial legacy.

GROS'S *BATTLE OF NAZARETH*, 1801

Antoine-Jean Gros's *Battle of Nazareth* (figure 22) was the initial volley launched in the propaganda campaign orchestrated by Bonaparte and his generals. For the first time in high art, generals and painters advanced the rationale for the modern French

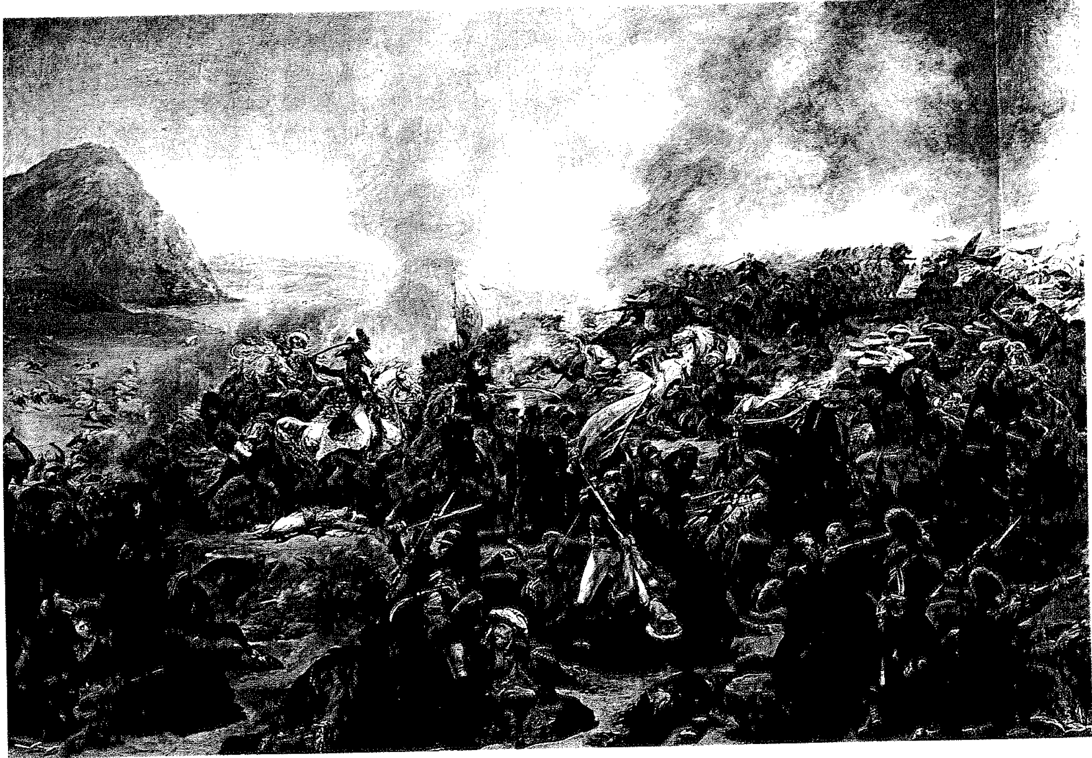

Fig. 22. Antoine-Jean Gros, *The Battle of Nazareth,* 1801. Oil on canvas, 53⅛ x 76¾ in. (134.9 x 195 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes

empire based on three interlocking strategies: historical memories, moral contrasts, and scientific postures. These three strategies would remain decisive in France's cultural arsenal, deployed from this moment and throughout the nineteenth century in the promotion of France's expanding Empire.

The Battle of Nazareth commemorates the most successful episode of the failed Syrian campaign: the rout of 6,000 Turks on 8 April 1799 by General Junot and 500 French troops. In the days following the battle, Bonaparte sent word to France announcing a competition for a monumental history painting of the battle of Nazareth, although the event took place on the plains of Lobiau twelve miles from Nazareth. In April 1801, the second anniversary of the battle, newspaper notices announced "one of the first major artistic projects of the Napoleonic era."[8] Artists were invited to submit oil sketches and were offered an account of the battle, a map of the battle site by the commanding general, Junot, as well as Denon's own drawings from the Egyptian campaign for the study of Eastern costumes. Nine oil sketches were exhibited at the Salon, and when the jury met on 8 December 1801, Gros was declared the winner and asked to execute the painting on a canvas no less than twenty-five feet long.

The first of the artistic strategies in the service of French imperialism in the Near East posited a historical and recurring clash of civilizations. Gros consulted and indeed exhibited with his painting the plan of the battle certified by General Junot (figure 23). From this plan the artist made a somewhat less detailed map of his own, this time reversing the location of Mount Tabor, from the upper right (location B) in the Junot drawing (figure 23) to the left-hand side of the artist's scheme (figure 24). In the oil painting, Gros secured the pictorial and narrative importance of the hill by placing it in the left background, making it a strong anchor in the composition and a looming presence on the battlefield. To underscore the hill's importance, he voided most of the remaining topographical detail provided by the general. Furthermore, the artist switched the placement of Arab and French troops, so that, with Mount Tabor and Cana in the background, the French troops drive the Arabs away from the Christian holy sites. By evoking Nazareth, Mount Tabor, and Cana, Gros evokes the life of Christ, including his miracles at the wedding of Cana, Christian themes that would have been anathema to the Revolution. This historical—in the guise of religious—contrast would be repeated in the subsequent Salon paintings of the Syrian campaign. For instance, Louis-François Lejeune's 1804 *Battle of Mount Tabor* (figure 25) insists on the Christian history and pointedly offers a historical precedent in the Crusades. Lejeune's own description in the Salon booklet underscores the historical conflict: "At the left, Mount Tabor rises, famous for the miracle of the Transfiguration,

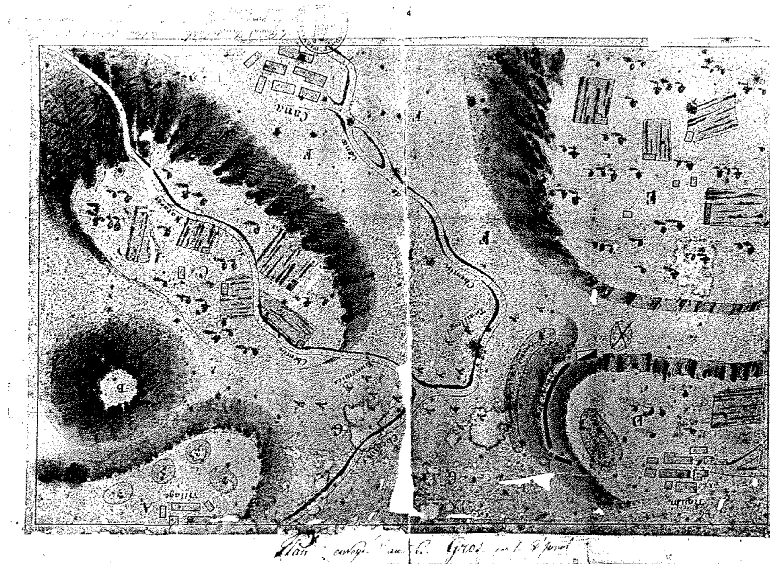

Fig. 23. Plan of the Battle of Nazareth sent to Gros by General Junot, 1801. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes

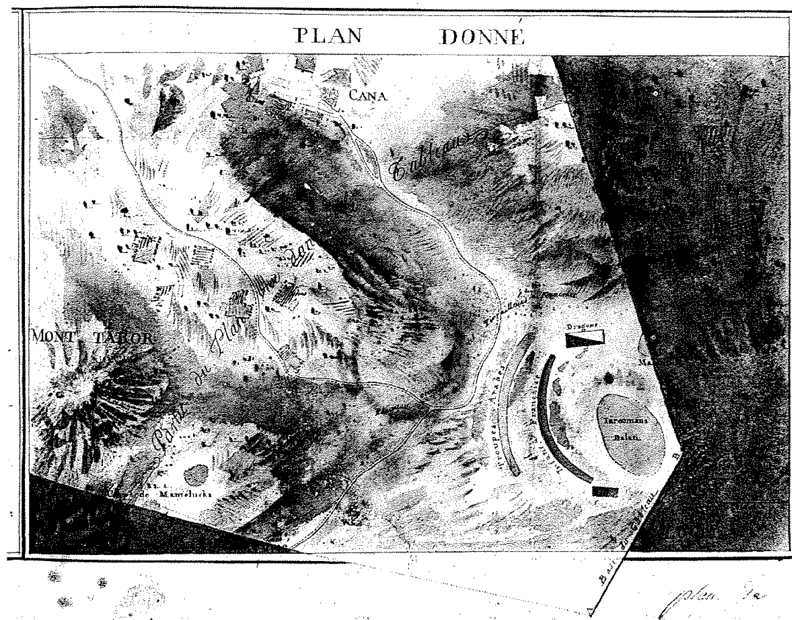

Fig. 24. Antoine-Jean Gros, *Plan of the Battle of Nazareth,* 1801. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes

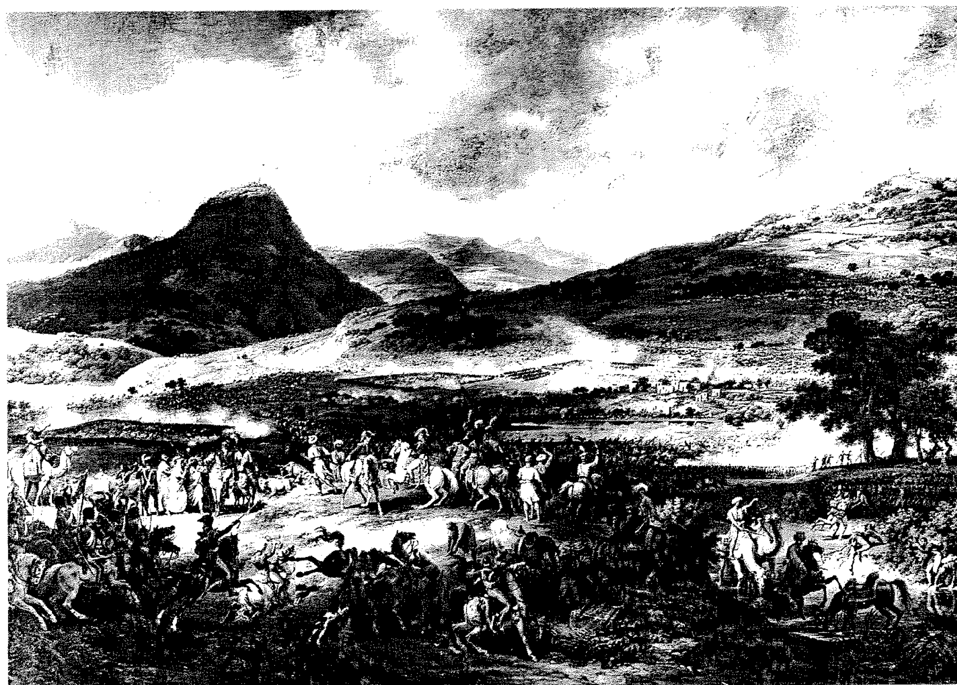

Fig. 25. Louis-François Lejeune, *Battle of Mount Tabor,* 1804. Oil on canvas, 70⅞ x 102⅜ in. (180 x 260 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles

and by its position close to the sites such as Nazareth, Cana, etc., which were the cradle of Christianity." If the tradition of the French role in the Holy Land was not clear enough, the center foreground features, in Lejeune's own words, "an officer [who] discovers a Gothic stone with the arms of France which recall for him"—and now for the viewer—"the Crusades of Louis IX."[9]

The competition and Gros's painting helped construct what became the glorious essence of this battle, the moral contrast between French and Eastern civilizations—and the second of the three imperial artistic strategies. It was delineated by the government, pictured by Gros, and enunciated by the critics. As the writer for *Le Moniteur universel* told it, the French faced overwhelming numeric superiority. Thus, they formed themselves into tight geometrical formations and allowed their opponents to charge them with "typical impetuosity," to which the French responded with "calm and true courage." Even though Gros was criticized for a lack of narrative center in his picture, critics overcame Gros's rendering and identified faceless, disciplined lines of French soldiers in the background in contrast to a ferocious assault by the

Turks. "French valor bore its stamp," the critic concluded, "the calm that characterizes it contrasts with the blind impetuosity of the Muslims."[10]

Critics identified the precise vignettes that Gros had painted, following notes he had made from the official program. These were moral or cultural oppositions that Junot requested in order to "characterize the two nations." At the bottom center of the picture, a French soldier earnestly reaches back to stab the Turk, who struggles wildly despite the superior position of his captor. The Turk defends his flag with furor and fanaticism, which is why he cannot be given French mercy. As asked, Gros depicts "the barbaric custom of the Turks to cut the head of an enemy on the ground" and contrasts it with "French loyalty, which, in this situation, means that he [the French soldier] sees only that a prisoner must be made to respect."[11] Decorously, the artist fulfilled the specifications of the program without actually showing the decapitation of a Frenchman. At the bottom left of the picture, a French soldier has just knifed a Turk who has collapsed on top of him. The hair of the prostrate Frenchman is then seized by a Turk who prepares to decapitate him but is shot by a French dragoon. The intended stabbing of the defenseless French soldier is contrasted with the next group to the right. There a vanquished Turk is merely held to the ground by his French opponent. Gros's and his patron's message was conveyed. The critic for the official *Moniteur universel* repeated the message, noting how differences in soldierly behavior were introduced to typify and contrast the moral character of the two nations: "A little distance from that scene where the barbarism of the Orientals is painted, and by a contrast perfectly understood, a dragoon saves the life of a Turk who gives himself up."[12] To assert French discipline, order, and clemency was an especially urgent task because, in fact, no Turkish prisoners were taken that day; they had all been killed.[13]

Gros did not limit beheadings by Eastern troops to this painting alone. In his entry for his 1806 Salon picture, the *Battle of Aboukir* (figure 26), Gros wrote that the Turks "leave their position to cut the heads of Frenchmen left dead or wounded on the field of battle." Critics noted with relish that these barbarities outraged the French army and precipitated the charge depicted in the painting.[14] In these details of the *Battle of Aboukir,* Chaussard saw what had first appeared in the Salon of 1801: a fundamental clash of civilization and barbarism, as when Homer pitted Europe and Asia beneath the walls of Ilion. Chaussard saw that Gros had contrasted "the calm of superiority, the enlightened valor, [with] the other—the brutal carriage, the stupid ferocity and blind courage; as if he had wanted to indicate the triumph of the enlightened and of civilization over shadows and barbarism."[15] Chaussard helped secure Gros's

Fig. 26. Antoine-Jean Gros, *Battle of Aboukir.* 1806. Oil on canvas, 18 ft. 11½ in. x 31 ft. 9⅛ in. (578 x 968 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles

place as an heir to his Homer, a bard of the Occident in its historical struggle against the East.

The third strategy that recurs in art for French imperialism in the Near East is also requested in the official program—what I call authenticating strategies or a scientific pose. In a striking innovation in exhibition techniques, Gros displayed his sizeable painted sketch above three documents: the map of the battle certified by Junot, Gros's pen and ink sketch after the official plan, and his "Extrait du Programme," in which he synthesized the program requirements and other eyewitness accounts followed in his painting.[16] Through his installation, he thereby attested to the truthfulness of his picture through its proximity to written eyewitness accounts and unartful, quasiscientific representations of the battlefield and battle. The citation of less exalted but more authoritative types of pictures and representations to undergird the truthfulness of the image would become a hallmark habit of art in the service of French imperialism.

As Gros wrote in his synthesis of the government's program, artists were to render authentically their subjects, paint in a scientific style, correctly record the battle movements, and accurately render the light and atmosphere.[17] That authenticity was

one of the official criteria is confirmed by the anonymous critic for the *Moniteur universel,* who began his description of the sketches by saying, "Let us see up to what point the authors came close to the site and the truth of the action."[18] Gros satisfied this critic and the government with what came to be accepted as a convincing evocation of the color, light, atmosphere, and costume associated with the Orient. His brushwork suggested a freedom that connoted uncalculated spontaneity. He executed a tableau redolent with the action and atmosphere of the battlefield.

Hovering over the plain, a great cloud of dirt and smoke thickens and darkens in some areas, then thins and catches light with great nuance. At the lower left a French soldier fires on a Turk; his gun emits a palpable cloud of smoke that engulfs the middle part—but only the middle part—of his right arm, so that his hand is not yet obscured. The passage is as successful in conveying battlefield atmosphere as it is precise in depicting an instant of the conflict. The program requested that the painters show the precise time of battle as well, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Accordingly, critics of the Salon (who among them had been to Syria?) found in Gros's painting a remarkable fidelity to Syrian light at three o'clock in the afternoon. Gros's patrons and critics knew the subject bore the stamp of Bonaparte and his generals, an imprimatur that to this day is accepted as credible.

Art historians have long and properly understood Gros's technical innovations as breaks from the classical structures and formulae of both neoclassical battle paintings and Davidian history paintings.[19] According to many genealogies, this is the beginning of an alternative but equally French tradition, Romanticism. In *The Battle of Nazareth,* Gros risked being accused of "going native," of somehow identifying with the Eastern foe. What with the violent subject, the sensuality of the handling, the lushly applied and distributed colors, and the weakness of the narrative focus—as if Gros lacked the rigorous and lucid thinking demanded by *historia*—*The Battle of Nazareth* might have been labeled Gros's Turkish picture. However—and we will see this dynamic again—Gros's public refused to read it that way.

Even his detractors did not question the truth of the paintings. Instead, partisans of a more classical and less naturalistic style focused on his "overreliance" on the eyewitness accounts. Boutard, the leading neoclassical proponent, admonished Gros for painting "a pantomime" of the battle of Nazareth. He sarcastically suggested that artists such as Gros, who had the courage to follow the program, produced paintings "divided by commas, periods, and paragraphs."[20] From this perspective, *The Battle of Nazareth* was an artless, laconic, prosaic, but, even his detractors agreed, truthful picture. Just as the Egyptian campaign was undertaken to suppress the Revolution,

Gros's *Battle of Nazareth* departed from neoclassical aesthetics and began to institute what would become a new orthodoxy,[21] a series of clichés about French and Eastern civilizations, ways to represent and view them, and habits that would be repeated, adapted, and elaborated to help forge an imperial identity for a new post-Revolutionary regime.

GROS'S *GENERAL BONAPARTE VISITING THE PESTHOUSE AT JAFFA*, 1804

Gros's sizable oil sketch of *The Battle of Nazareth* remained critical to nineteenth-century painting despite the fact that the twenty-five-foot-long version was never executed. The artist had won the competition and been given permission to use the *jeu de paume* at Versailles as a studio. Bonaparte, however, ordered Gros to stop production and paint a different scene from the Syrian campaign: Bonaparte's visit to the plague hospital at Jaffa. Thus, the Nazareth canvas was sacrificed; it was so large that Gros used the canvas for both *General Bonaparte Visiting the Pesthouse at Jaffa* (figure 27) and the *Battle of Aboukir*. New urgencies had intervened since the 1801 exhibition. Bonaparte had become Consul for Life, and negative stories were leaking out about the Syrian campaign.

Like the battle of Nazareth, Gros's new subject concerned the period after prospects for colonization had been dashed, when French sea power was annihilated by Nelson's victory at Aboukir Bay. Bonaparte had still hoped to fulfill his Alexandrian dream of conquering the Orient by land from Cairo to Constantinople. Departing from Cairo on 10 February 1799 and taking El Arich, Gaza, and Jaffa in the next month, the French forces pulled from Acre in failure on 20 May 1799 and retreated to Egypt. Two episodes of the campaign added a public relations disaster to the military defeat.

In the course of the assault on Jaffa, the French had obtained capitulation of the garrison in exchange for the promise to protect the lives of the prisoners. Bonaparte then bucked the agreement and a massacre of 2,500 to 3,000 Turkish prisoners ensued, with French forces plundering the town and terrorizing the civilian population.[22] The French army was also struck by the plague, especially violently on the day after the taking of Jaffa. Bonaparte and René Desgenettes, the chief medical officer of the Syrian campaign, agreed to deny the presence of the sickness in order to prevent further erosion of troop morale.[23] Two months later, on the retreat to Cairo, Bonaparte ordered Desgenettes to poison French plague victims, rather than take them back to Cairo or leave them to the incoming Turks. Desgenettes refused, and large

Fig. 27. Antoine-Jean Gros, *General Bonaparte Visiting the Pesthouse at Jaffa,* 1804. Oil on canvas, 17 ft. 1 7/8 in. x 23 ft. 5 1/2 in. (523 x 715 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris

doses of opium were left for the soldiers to do themselves in. A few soldiers vomited the poison, survived the plague, and told the English who arrived ahead of the Turks. The English press was rife with accounts of the atrocities.[24]

To counter these damaging stories, Gros's painting was meant to commemorate Bonaparte's first visit to the pesthouse. To convince the soldiers of the noncontagiousness of the disease, Bonaparte had visited the plague hospital on 11 March 1799. Although some published accounts maintained that Bonaparte avoided the sick and even lightly kicked infested men with the sole of his boot,[25] Desgenettes's 1802 memoirs describe Bonaparte entering the hospital with his chief of staff and Desgenettes at his side. "Finding themselves in a narrow and very encumbered chamber, he [Bonaparte] helped in lifting the hideous cadaver of a soldier whose shredded clothes were soiled by the opening of an abscessed plague sore."[26] In an oil sketch (figure 28) Gros

Fig. 28. Antoine-Jean Gros, *General Bonaparte Visiting the Pesthouse at Jaffa,* 1804. Oil on canvas, 28½ x 36¼ in. (72.4 x 92.1 cm). New Orleans Museum of Art

represents this moment, but in the final work both the setting and the action are changed. Gros's Bonaparte shows no fear in touching the horrible bulbous sore of a plague victim, thereby inspiring his downtrodden troops and visitors to the Salon. In Girodet's ode to the painting, the admiring artist recognized that "the hero can cure at a glance." Bonaparte touches the sore of the plague victim, in imitation of Christian saints such as Roch and Carlo Borromeo. The gesture gives Bonaparte the king's legendary touch, the "touche des écouelles," which healed scrofulous abscesses and had been a power of French kings since the year 1000. Thus, Napoleon appears as a new "roi thaumaturge," a miracle-working king.[27]

This is only one of Gros's historical references, however. If Egypt was the theater of Napoleon's glory, then the stage set for his healing touch must be acknowledged: the makeshift hospital is a mosque. Although we now know that the hospital was set up in an Armenian monastery,[28] this is not a point that any critic of the day conceded, nor is there any indication that Gros intended to convey this. Gros shows Bonaparte bringing his Christian and French monarchal touch to the Christian Holy Land dominated by Islam since the seventh century.[29] The Christian touch and the Islamic setting denote the historical confrontation that *The Battle of Nazareth* had staged on the battlefield.

In the earlier oil sketch that follows Desgenettes's account, Bonaparte lifts the weakened body of a plague victim. The scene is placed in a rather nondescript box with little Oriental ornamentation (figure 28). Subsequently, when Gros introduces the saintly touch in another preparatory work (figure 29), he also changes the setting. The final picture evinces a distinctly Oriental or Arab context for contemporary critics.[30] Individual architectural elements unmistakably describe an Islamic locale: the horseshoe arches on the left, the early Mameluke crenellation rising above the court's arcade, and the minaret hovering over the right corner of the building. The floor plan evokes the standard Friday mosque with a large open forecourt, surrounded by covered porches, the largest of which houses the main action in the painting.[31] The historical drama acted out before us suggests that France has returned to bring civilization to the Holy Land. On the hill, over Bonaparte's shoulder, the French tricolor flies triumphantly over a Franciscan monastery. The historical cycle is complete.

If in *The Battle of Nazareth,* Gros conjured the essence of French civilization through moral contrasts to France's Muslim foes, here Gros displays science as an attribute of French civilization. By "attribute" I mean not just an essential component but a badge of honor, like the attributes carried by Christian saints in traditional religious painting—signs of martyrdom and, ultimately, of divine favor that justify and insure their eventual triumph. French scientific advancements in medicine were

Fig. 29. Antoine-Jean Gros, *General Bonaparte Visiting the Pesthouse at Jaffa,* 1804. Oil on canvas, 35⅞ x 45¾ in. (91 x 116 cm). Musée Condé, Chantilly

used to demonstrate the rewards of French imperialism in the Near East. As *La Décade Egyptienne,* the journal of the Institut d'Egypte, reported during the occupation, "Knowledgeable Europe would not know how to see with indifference the benefits of the applied sciences to a country where they were brought by the wise army and by the love of humanity, after having been so long exiled by barbarism and religious fury."[32]

In the space between Bonaparte and the distribution of bread, two black men in red tunics carry a stretcher toward a resting camel, an "ambulance volante." The battlefield stretcher itself was a fundamental medical innovation of the Revolutionary army: the immediate on-site treatment of the wounded ended the centuries-old practice of moving casualties after battle to distant hospitals.[33] Outfitted to carry the wounded, the cameline "flying ambulance" was an Egyptian campaign adaptation, described in Dr. D. J. Larrey's campaign memoirs[34] and in the *Description* (figure 30).

In Gros's painting, the camel is not merely an exotic detail, but, like Bonaparte's mastery over the plague, represents a French triumph over the strange diseases and bizarre animals the French associated with the region.

A second reminder of French scientific acumen in the *Pesthouse at Jaffa* is the prominence given to Desgenettes, who is placed between Bonaparte and the plague victim. Desgenettes was a symbol of pride, described by one Salon reviewer as "director of medicine of the army, as famous for his knowledge as for his courage."[35] While Gros stated in the Salon *livret* that Desgenettes implored Bonaparte to cut short his visit, and while some critics concurred,[36] the painting makes more of Desgenettes's appearance. The doctor's presence is underscored by the column behind his head. He does not appear anxious. He knowingly peers out at the viewer. His left arm reaches out to Bonaparte, and his hand comes down on the general's shoulder; Bonaparte in turn touches the plague victim. It is as if Desgenettes is conferring on Bonaparte the healing powers that he himself had developed in his well-publicized achievements in the army's medical services.[37]

So much attention has been paid to Bonaparte's touch that a balance needs to be struck in order to restore the medical/scientific attribute of the painting's theme

Fig. 30. Dominique Larrey, *Ambulance Volante.* Engraving from *Description de l'Egypte* (Paris, 1819), vol. 2 bis, plate 31. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

and execution. In a rare extended study of battle paintings written at the end of the century, Arsène Alexandre, a physician and art historian, wrote that the *Pesthouse at Jaffa* has a clinical appearance, that "in all the different figures, all the phases of the contagious disease" are illustrated.[38] Critics of the 1804 Salon also stated that the depictions of the plague are scientific and central to the painting's meaning. "It is said by art people and those who have had the occasion to observe the effects of the plague," one reviewer wrote, "that the painter has faithfully rendered the symptoms and progress of these diverse maladies."[39] And another noted that "the details of that sickness, the most murderous of all, were frightening, even repulsive, but they were essentially tied to the subject."[40]

Indeed, Gros's *Pesthouse at Jaffa* seems informed by Larrey's report on the diseases encountered during the Egyptian and Syrian campaign, which he published in his 1803 memoirs. Although not every figure is a textbook example of a particular malady or symptom, the different diseases of the campaign and each stage of the plague are clearly, horrifyingly, represented. The two prostrate figures in the immediate foreground recall the typical first stage of the illness. One pulls out his hair with his crossed hands, and "all his limbs contracted announcing the excess of his suffering." Next to him another victim twists his body for a look at Bonaparte, suggesting the restlessness also found in the first stages of the plague.[41] The two seated covered figures to their left demonstrate symptoms of the next stage: they both look very weak; the completely covered figure tries to fend off the shivers, the other falls off to sleep. Behind them, bodies are, as one critic noticed, "attacked by convulsive fits,"[42] thus recalling the delirium that sets in next. In the typical progression that Larrey charts, these symptoms run their course in about four days, and the patient may appear cured but then die. Others go more quickly (figure 31). The frightening symptoms accompanying the less typical and quickest route of the plague seem imprinted on the face of the young doctor at lower right who, while fully in the process of caring for a soldier, succumbs himself. His features slacken, his lips distort, his tongue loosens, his eyes open and become unfixed, and we can next expect that he "contorts on himself, screams lugubriously and dies all of a sudden."[43]

The frightening variety and detail of Gros's plague descriptions lend authenticity to a picture whose central thesis—the godliness of Bonaparte's actions among the French plague victims—sorely needed verifying. Gros meets the standard for accuracy in pictures set in the Orient, as he had in *The Battle of Nazareth.* Moreover, his scientifically informed exactitude made for an artistic display of the same national scientific acumen that the picture celebrated. Larrey's reputation for science bolsters

Fig. 31. Antoine-Jean Gros, *General Bonaparte Visiting the Pesthouse at Jaffa* (detail of fig. 27)

Gros's, as had the three documents that he exhibited below *The Battle of Nazareth* in 1801.

Still, in spite of Bonaparte's and Desgenettes's powers, the viewer of Gros's monumental *Pesthouse at Jaffa* confronts a heap of dead bodies. Gros's rendering of the effects of the plague in the most immediate and accessible areas of the canvas give the viewer a *frisson,* which suspends disbelief and makes convincing and welcome Bonaparte's healing gesture depicted higher on the canvas. At the same time, the body count testifies that neither Bonaparte's saintly touch nor modern French science has succeeded in resuscitating these victims. Redemption for these dead and dying men is instead implied in a progression from right to left, which subtly determines the composition. It is the same progression that leads occasionally to healing but more assuredly to death. In the right part of the picture, soldiers seek healing and contact with Bonaparte. At the center, Bonaparte imparts his healing touch. Yet most of the soldiers die, as shown on the left. Neither Bonaparte nor Desgenettes can save them. We might conclude that Gros's picture is merely a Romantic orgy of death; that would satisfy our placement of this picture in the cadre of the development of Romanticism. In this very successful Salon painting in the tightly controlled and first of Empire Salons, the subsequent development of Romanticism could not have been foreseen; however, the picture's own presentation of the contrast of civilizations was evident. The dying soldiers receive bread, a reference to the Christian sacrament, and are promised burial, the last Christian rite and appropriate recompense for nineteenth-century French crusaders, new claimants to the Holy Land.

LEJEUNE'S *BATTLE OF THE PYRAMIDS,* 1806

Exhibited at the Salon of 1806, Louis-François Lejeune's *Battle of the Pyramids* (figure 32) is a luminous and dynamic picture. At sunset on 21 July 1798, on the plains of the west bank of the Nile, between the Giza Pyramids and the village of Imbaba, the French forces encountered their Mameluke opponents. This battle preceded—and insured—the French occupation of Cairo and the subsequent conquest of Egypt.

Lejeune's picture presents a fundamental contrast. The French troops are depicted as a unified, geometric force that systematically marches across the plains. They are the force of order, driving their wild, chaotic, disorganized enemies into the Nile. Lejeune's own words in the Salon *livret* direct the viewer to understand the political order symbolized by the painting's compositional regimentation. "At the bottom of the plain that the Nile floods each year rises the Pyramids," he wrote. "The squared battalions in the background are those of General Regnier at right and, more to the

Fig. 32. Louis-François Lejeune, *Battle of the Pyramids,* 1806. Oil on canvas, 5 ft. 7½ in. x 13 ft. 7⅞ in. (180 x 425 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles

left, those of General Desaix. . . . The Mamelukes and Arabs are in disorder around these battalions."[44] Critics of the Salon described the picture using the same terms of French order versus Oriental chaos, regardless of their conflicting aesthetic allegiances.

Frédéric de Clarac summarized the action of the painting in which the charges of the Turkish "cavalry dissolve in disorder [when] faced with the French infantry who await them on firm foot."[45] Boutard noted the contrast between France's "three squared battalions" and the "Turks running pell-mell in these vast plains, massacring our wounded."[46] And Pierre Chaussard saw that Lejeune precisely described the lines of the battle, showing the tumult and despair of the Turks and the march of the square French battalions. A staunch supporter of the Napoleonic regime, Chaussard went on to say that some other critics found fault with the order and tranquility of the French troops. They complain, he wrote, that we are witnessing a military parade and not a battle. "The response is easy," Chaussard replied, "the superiority of our Strategy is due to that [tranquility]. . . . Genius, which leads us to Victory gives our Warriors their steely assurance and a kind of impassiveness in the face of extreme peril."[47]

The critic for the liberal *Publiciste* suggested that this French order is a modern, active parallel to the vertically dominating, equally ordering and imposing pyramids in the background:

> *The view of the Pyramids leaves not a trace of a doubt regarding the subject that the painter chose: the symmetry, which most often is harmful to picturesque effects, here lends them new help.*
>
> *The eye promenades with pleasure over these square battalions that are vainly faced by the reckless Mamelukes.*[48]

Heirs to the ancients, the French drive out representatives of the Orient's unfortunate history that separates them from the grandeur of the Pharaohs. Victorious, the French inherit the Pyramids as emblems of their own grandeur.

This model of the evolution of civilization, in which French power and rationality is aligned with Pharaonic Egypt and set off against the East's contemporary rulers, is sounded in many other paintings, where it is contrasted to Oriental chaos. In François-André Vincent's contemporaneous oil sketch of the same subject (figure 33), for instance, lines of faceless French troops advance against the frenzied, chaotic Turks. The scene is set against a background of the order and geometry of the Pyramids.

In Philippe-Auguste Hennequin's 1806 painting of the same subject (figure 34), however, the order of the French troops is less pronounced than in Lejeune's or Vincent's. Hennequin's pyramids are almost lost in the haze of the desert battle. In the

Fig. 33. François-André Vincent, *Battle of the Pyramids,* ca. 1800–1806. Oil on mounted paper, 31½ x 49¼ in. (80 x 125 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris

distance, the troop formations disappear into the landscape. In the foreground, the battle is a tumult. The clarity of opposition is given over to a spectacular death here, a rearing horse there, each plucked out of the chaos, each with its own individual light. This is his error according to Chaussard and other critics. Hennequin failed to delineate sufficiently between France's "admirable order" and the "tumult, terror, rage and despair of the barbarians." Hennequin should have concentrated on this fundamental meeting of opposites, Chaussard dictated.[49] This criticism shows that when the artist did not dedicate his work to the opposition of East and West, critics faulted him for it because they knew that it was there. Hennequin's more chaotic view of war —in which essential traits of opposing civilizations are not visualized—was discouraged, and Lejeune's clear historical and moral contrasts were instated as official and acceptable history.

An arch-neoclassicist like Boutard did not like Lejeune's work, but he could only assent to its accuracy. Virtually everyone agreed with him about Lejeune's pictures in general and about the *Battle of the Pyramids* in particular, which are "not so much picturesque compositions as exact representations of the facts of armies such as

they happened and in most of which the painter had himself participated."[50] Whether that was what artists should do was another question. Lejeune's exactitude in describing the geometry of the French force was credited to (or blamed on) his double role as general and artist, which is underlined in the Salon *livret* where he is listed as: "Lejeune, battalion leader in the imperial corps, student of M. Valenciennes."[51]

One critic, "D. B.," wrote that "it is easy to recognize that he [Lejeune] had the camps for studios and the battlefields for models." This critic admired Lejeune's paintings for the exact description of sites, clarity of action, observation of strategic position, and richness of tones. He granted the artist an important place among battle painters but insisted that Lejeune was not a history painter because he merely copied nature. This argument protected the exalted category of history painting, which demands imagination and intellect and, simultaneously, it fortified the perception of Lejeune's realism.[52] Indeed, Lejeune's detractors neatly argued for the artist's fidelity to nature; that was their objection. Boutard summarized this view. In writing on the 1804 Salon, he denigrated Lejeune's habit of precisely describing battles for he "sacrificed the interests of art to those of history."[53]

Fig. 34. Philippe-Auguste Hennequin, *Battle of the Pyramids,* 1806. Oil on canvas, 10 ft. 7/8 in. x 15 ft. 9¾ in. (307 x 482 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles

Lejeune never aspired to the traditional path of history painters. His early career shows him devoted to naturalist teachers, scientific drawing, and new artistic processes. He studied drawing under the landscape painter Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes and prepared for the Engineering Corps of Bridges and Roads. In 1792, at age 17, Lejeune joined other art students in the Revolutionary Army's Company of the Arts. As General Berthier's chief of staff, he met Senefelder in Munich, who introduced him to lithography; later Lejeune claimed credit for bringing it to France.[54] It was above all his participation in some of the battles that he painted that earned his pictures credibility.

The central impression of Lejeune's work from his day to ours is expressed in a painting of the artist-general by his student and goddaughter, a certain Mme Chassaignac (figure 35). A twentieth-century description of the picture captures Lejeune's reputed bravura and commitment to the eyewitness account:

> *{It}admirably explains Lejeune's oeuvre. The sum of his character exhibits a refined distinction not exempt from research. . . . A vast forehead, which, under hair blown by the wind of bullets, reveals his imagination, his precise and sure spirit. Around the daring artist, the battle grinds on, but his eye is clear, scrutinizing, smiling, and it continues unabated in observing. And the hand draws. In front of this martial and decisive allure, one can tell that he painted as he fought:* à la française.[55]

Lejeune's military training, his bravery, and the arguably limited intelligence that compels him to stop and draw in the middle of a battle lend his paintings a sense of immediacy and credibility. His military hat has a dual function: in the portrait it serves as a drawing board, enabling him to sketch on the battlefield; at the Salon, the same hat gave support to the authenticity of his paintings. From this vantage point of the privileged observer, he advanced an eyewitness posture that became definitive of Orientalist painting and that later informed the work of Horace Vernet and Colonel Langlois, to name just two.

In the context of the *Battle of the Pyramids,* Lejeune's documentary pose had a particularly important and powerful precedent in the work of Dominique-Vivant Denon. Denon's description of himself at the beginning of his *Voyage dans la Basse et Haute Egypte* evokes the same risk-taking, eyewitness position found in the portrait of Lejeune. Following Desaix's division to Upper Egypt and motivated by nothing more and nothing less than transmitting the unvarnished truth, Denon says he sketched constantly, frequently finding himself in the heat of battle without realizing that war was not his vocation. He made his drawings most often on his knee, "or standing, or

Fig. 35. Mme Chassaignac, *Général baron Lejeune,* after Pierre-Narcisse Guérin's 1810 portrait of Louis-François Lejeune. Oil on canvas, 45⅛ x 30¾ (114.5 x 78 cm). Musée de l'Armée, Paris

even on horseback: I never was able to finish a single one of them to my satisfaction."[56] Cool under fire, artists Denon and Lejeune exemplify the same "steely assurance" ascribed to the French troops in the *Battle of the Pyramids.* Authenticity accrues to their pictures through their "impassiveness in the middle of extreme peril," the same quality that guarantees victory over the frenzied and fanatic Oriental. The virtues of this determined rationality justify the injection of pharaonic order in the Oriental political and geographical landscape. For artist, soldier, and society, science is a badge of superiority, power, and truth.

An art historical note needs to be sounded here. Lejeune's *Battle of the Pyramids* and Gros's *Pesthouse at Jaffa,* like the careers of the two artists, cannot and should not be confused, just as we should not elide the careers of Lejeune, Gros, and Denon. At the same time, however, we may lose something if we fetishize their differences. In the evolutionary biology of art history, Lejeune and Gros issued very different species of painters, based on the development by Gros of what Siegfried calls the "affective mode" and by Lejeune of the documentary mode.[57] In the case of the *Pesthouse at Jaffa,* Gros's affective mode, or Romanticism, is recognized by conventions associated with the sensual or irrational; it is found in the physical immediacy of his diseased figures, the exotic architecture, the diverse physiognomies, the palpable atmosphere, and the Venetian palette. In the *Battle of the Pyramids,* Lejeune's high Enlightenment style evinces clarity and rationality, which is conveyed through the artist and viewer's distanced and commanding view of a clean war; through the specificity not of architecture but of topography, not of atmosphere but of crystalline light; and through a palette and surface that are not smokey and textured but

enameled and matte like the landscapes of Joseph Vernet or Lejeune's teacher, Valenciennes. Their different techniques, however, do not serve divergent ideologies. Lejeune's high Enlightenment style does not promote revolutionary egalitarianism any more than Gros's Romanticism promotes the artist's or individual's freedom from the constraints of authority. Instead, each in its own way makes believable, modern, and alluring the rationale for the Egyptian and Syrian campaigns.

GUÉRIN'S *BONAPARTE PARDONING THE REBELS IN CAIRO,* 1808, AND GIRODET'S *REVOLT OF CAIRO,* 1810

Napoleon commissioned Pierre-Narcisse Guérin's *Bonaparte Pardoning the Rebels in Cairo* (figure 37) in 1806, and it was exhibited at the Salon of 1808. The following year he commissioned Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson to paint the *Revolt of Cairo* (figure 36).[58] The paintings concern the uprising in French-occupied Cairo in October 1798. According to Girodet's Salon entry, the French occupation was going smoothly when some uprisings broke out. General Dupuy, commander of the area of the great mosque of El-Azhar, went out to investigate accompanied by a small escort. He was assassinated, and his guards' throats were cut. The Egyptians took refuge in the mosque, and the French "formed themselves into mobile columns."[59] The official story held that after the French quelled the riot, Bonaparte made a public show of clemency. Guérin's subject follows Girodet's, for it shows Bonaparte on the public square El-Bekir pardoning the rebels two days after the riot: the barbarians' violence, which precipitated the action of the first painting, is, in the end, met with Bonaparte's pardon.[60]

At the bottom and center of Girodet's *Revolt of Cairo,* a supine torso spills blood onto its uniform and onto the floor below. The artist has decorously obscured the view of the neck with the soldier's empty helmet. Above and slightly to the right, a black turbaned figure wields a bloody knife in one hand and, with the other, holds the severed head of the French hussar by the hair, a "precious trophy of these barbarians," according to the critic Boutard. "The beauty, the youth, the majesty of the traits," he wrote, "a certain character of sweetness and softness, usual attributes to a prosperous life, must excite regret and pity on a cruel death."[61] For artist and critic, lamenting the butchering of a soldier who led a productive life obscured the real events of that day. For the French had beheaded insurgents, thrown bodies into the Nile, and rolled heads on a public square. The official report, as well as the paintings of Girodet and Guérin, are part of a cover-up, a projection onto the Oriental "other" of the worst actions of the French occupation.[62]

To erase the moral contradictions of an imperialism based on force and domination, Guérin and Girodet's paintings work together to assert French superiority by defining France's peculiar characteristics against an historical, religious, and moral opposite.[63] In the *Revolt of Cairo,* the dignity of the anonymous French soldier is contrasted to the nude slave and dying pasha who represent different corruptions of the East: slavery, voluptuousness, and homosexuality. Cairo's most important mosque, the definitive Islamic setting, serves as a dramatic backdrop to the severed head, Christ-like in its tresses and in its martyrdom. The confrontation was described by one critic as "a popular riot in a conquered city, an enterprise that remained without results, the useless revolt by the sword of the Barbarians."[64] Girodet contrasted the unsuspicious, brave, eventually benevolent, and Christian French against the alternately violent and cowardly Muslim inhabitants of Cairo. That the savagery was so brutal in the Girodet heightens the magnanimity of Bonaparte's pardon depicted by Guérin.

Unlike Girodet, Guérin rendered discernible French portraits rather than anonymous, if heroic, soldiers. Unlike their Oriental counterparts, the French soldiers act in either a casual or a businesslike manner. Murat is in the foreground leaning on a cannon, Napoleon stares down the rebels, and Denon sketches in the background. Guérin's Bonaparte is paternal, expressing simultaneously "firmness and indulgence," whereas the prisoners give thanks or express shame.[65] They plead, beg, and grimace before the General. "Some," Boutard observed, "are still prostrate in the attitude of supplicants and already some raise their hands to the sky, their hands freed from chains."[66] The expressions of the subject figures are grotesque and exaggerated. They fiercely stare at Bonaparte or childishly plead, humiliated and resigned, wild-eyed and crazed. Guérin's description inspired an anonymous reviewer to exclaim that the rebels "wear on their faces expressions of ferocity; vengeance is imprinted in their glance: these are tigers thirsty for blood."[67] Guérin has successfully conveyed French "nobility" faced with Oriental "animality."

Although pendants by virtue of their size and subject, the two pictures differ greatly in composition and technique. Their divergent stylistic approaches support complementary explanations of and justifications for French stewardship in Egypt. Girodet divests the French forces of their actual conduct and instead associates the mosque with darkness, through his highly wrought chiaroscuro, and with irrationality, through the quickly rising and teeming composition. In a strategy analogous to the disowning projection described by Freud,[68] the memories of the murderous actions are projected elsewhere, so that the ego can act against it. As Girodet's painting is part of a larger French project of disowning its actions, in the painted version it is

Fig. 36. Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson, *Revolt of Cairo,* 1810. Oil on canvas,
11 ft. 11¾ in. x 16 ft. 4⅞ in. (365 x 500 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles

Fig. 37. Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, *Bonaparte Pardoning the Rebels in Cairo,* 1808. Oil on canvas, 11 ft. 11¾ in. x 16 ft. 4⅞ in. (365 x 500 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles

the Egyptians, not the French, who are in flight from the sword of French justice. French power is expressed by the force of the great pinwheel figure suspended on tiptoe; he and a few brave Frenchmen drive back hordes of Arabs. The enemy recoils in response to his raised sword. He stops the action of his ferocious opponents in the foreground and sends the others fleeing into the background. Violence is twice displaced, most immediately from the French to the Egyptians, but more remotely, too, from France to Egypt. The decapitations of the El-Bekir square are a result of the Egyptian campaign, the Directoire's flight from the violence of the Place de la Révolution, its search to restore order at home.

If Girodet's picture is a demonstration of French power and Oriental subjugation, Guérin's demonstrates French control and the promise of an eventual Egyptian liberation. At peace, the combatants have come into the light. A guard unties the shackles of the central prisoner on the right. France's moral superiority is demonstrated by Bonaparte and his men's ability to control—and liberate—the vanquished, despite being outnumbered. The French surround and contain the more numerous Arabs. The recitation of a few Frenchmen versus hordes of Arabs highlights the bravery of the French, another aspect of their moral superiority and a theme found before in Gros's *Battle of Nazareth.*

Guérin and Girodet's projected historical fantasies and moral contrasts are authenticated in various ways by the artists. In the *Revolt of Cairo* everything is in the process of happening. The French hussar is on one foot, his sword at the height of its trajectory, his coat flying behind him. Opposite, the young Albanian is being held, but only for the moment. He is too lifeless, too heavy, and too inclined. In an instant he will fall out of the picture space. By this time the nude Arab will have struck at the charging Frenchman, for he eyes his incoming enemy and stretches backwards to insure the greatest power to his blow. But, alas, he may not, for another dragoon has pulled back the Arab's drapery to sink his sword into the enemy's chest. The suspended animation of this picture, its life-size figures, and its violence and horror all physically, emotionally, and sensually engage the viewer in the affective mode of painting.

Guérin's technique is more obviously studied and calmer, more appropriate to the moment of clemency after the rebellion. His use of thin and lucid paint, several critics remarked, was meant to evoke the "brilliant sky" and the "brutality of hot light such that it is in Egypt."[69] Salon critics in 1808 knew Egyptian light, just as the critics in 1801 recognized the Syrian atmosphere that Gros had conjured.

Both artists carefully render a potpourri of physiognomies—Turks, Arabs, Africans, Mamelukes. Boutard notes that each of Girodet's figures is distinguished "according

to his age, his temperament, his profession, his national customs."[70] In contradistinction to the discernible French portraits, Guérin meticulously recorded a variety of physiognomies and costumes amongst the pardoned group. For the older Mameluke seated upright in the foreground, Guérin quoted a plate of physiognomic studies from Denon's *Voyage dans la Basse et Haute Egypte* (figure 38).[71] In so doing, Guérin gains the authority of an eyewitness sketch in a large-scale history painting, helping to authenticate the truthfulness of his historical, moral, and national claims.

Guérin and Girodet's pictures, along with those by Gros and Lejeune, are often placed at the beginning of a modern Orientalist tradition in French painting.[72] The hallmark characteristic is the Western artist's faithful recording of the East, resulting in a valuable document of mores, customs, landscape, or architecture. By positing a genealogy of such documents, however, the traditional view of Orientalist painting cannot sustain its own logic. Rather than being a faithful document of the East, the painting is a repetition of that which is already found in Western representation. This is how the West makes itself.

Guérin's luminous atmosphere and the variety and precision of his faces speak in the language of transparent naturalism. However, by including his source, that is to say, by depicting Denon sketching in the background, Guérin reveals that rather

Fig. 38. Dominique-Vivant Denon, *Local Arabs from Rosetta,* 1801. Engraving from *Voyage dans la Basse et Haute Egypte* (Paris, 1802). Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

than being a firsthand eyewitness account, *Bonaparte Pardoning the Rebels in Cairo* is an exercise in intertextuality. Like the obelisk, this painting's meaning and legitimacy were produced through the citation of antecedent authorities, one of whom was, in both cases, Denon. Guérin cites Denon, and the next generation will cite him, too, as we will see in the next chapter. In each instance the artists will represent a historical truth that was presupposed even before the purported encounter in the Orient. Girodet, for instance, wrote Talleyrand in 1797 and asked for a commission to paint the presentation of the Turkish ambassador to the Directory. It would evoke, he wrote, the "opposition and contrast between Asiatic sumptuousness and the dignity of Constitutional costume."[73] For the demonstration of such truths, the artist's presence in Egypt was no more necessary than was Guérin's when he painted *Bonaparte Pardoning the Rebels in Cairo.* To accept uncritically the scientific and documentary poses of these artists is to recapitulate the historical models of civilization and the moral contrasts that they proffer. Battle painters of the Egyptian campaign characterized, delineated, and differentiated the French and Egyptians in their physical, intellectual, moral, and religious attributes, helping to construct a sense of solidarity in the face of an inferior but menacing Orient.

Gros's *His Majesty Haranguing the Army before the Battle of the Pyramids,* 1810, and Franque's *Allegory of the Condition of France before the Return from Egypt,* 1810

"From these monuments, forty centuries look down upon you." Framed by his soldiers, officers, and captive enemy, Bonaparte pronounces these words.[74] This is Gros's presentation of the dream of the Egyptian campaign that he exhibits in his Salon of 1810 picture, *His Majesty Haranguing the Army before the Battle of the Pyramids* (figure 39). Egypt's ancient grandeur, though long since passed, could be revived by France. Talleyrand had invoked this dream in his argument to launch the campaign. Denon said in his *Voyage* that the mission's goal was to "reanimate the dust of Sesostris"; and the same historical fantasy helped propel the Luxor obelisk to Paris nearly forty years later. In the Egyptian campaign, France's contemporary physical, material, military, and technological presence would smash the degeneracy into which the country had fallen.

The reverse side of the coin is found in another painting from the Salon of 1810, Jean-Pierre Franque's *Allegory of the Condition of France before the Return from Egypt* (figure

Fig. 39. Antoine-Jean Gros, *His Majesty Haranguing the Army before the Battle of the Pyramids,* 1810. Oil on canvas, 12 ft. 9⅛ in. x 16 ft. 9⅛ in. (389 x 511 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles

40). Here Bonaparte is called from the shadows of the Pyramids to save France. He is roused from a dream and beckoned by France, who is surrounded by personifications of Crime and Blind Fury. Plenty and the Altar of Law are overturned; Commerce and Order are in peril. France was in dire condition before Bonaparte's return from Egypt. The inscription on the altar reads, "France, suffering under an unhappy government, summons from the bosom of Egypt the hero on whom her destiny depends."[75] Thus, Bonaparte, in his ascent to power following his return from Egypt in the coup of 18 brumaire, was infused with the glory of the Egyptian campaign and its wondrous monuments.

The historical model, then, cuts both ways. In modern Egypt the grandeur of antiquity was to be restored by the French presence. Modern France could in turn reach out to the banks of the Nile and to its hero of the Egyptian campaign, who could bring pharaonic stability to a convulsed nation. In this way, the allegory of Bonaparte's rise to power reverses the revolutionary origin of the Egyptian campaign. If for Volney and the Ideologues the Egyptian invasion was an extension of the Revolution, by 1810 the Franque allegory shows the value of the Egyptian expedition as having invested Bonaparte with the authority to put an end to the chaos of the Revolution.

Gros and Franque's respective pictures reveal—inadvertently, no doubt—the price of the regeneration of Egypt and the salvation of France. Gros's picture insists on the abject status of contemporary Egyptians, "the vanquished nations in the war of Egypt," as a critic wrote in 1810.[76] And, although Franque's picture suggests that Napoleon's coup resulted in a return to order, Bonaparte's return from Egypt, infused as it may have been with pharaonic grandeur, led undeniably to authoritarian rule.

Casualties and Survivals

We have already seen how Napoleon's regime could benefit from the paintings of the Egyptian campaign. The proclamation of victory and the demonstrations of clemency were intended to obscure quite opposite realities. Military and scientific celebrities were promoted to add luster to the regime. Additionally, specific domestic policies were supported, for instance, by the Syrian campaign pictures that renewed France's ties to Christian and Crusader histories. The Syrian campaign pictures that we have discussed all date from 1800 to 1804. They coincide with the Napoleonic regime's secret reconciliation negotiations with the Vatican, which had begun by September 1800, with the announcement of the Concordat in April 1802, and, finally, with Napoleon's coronation, attended by the pope, in 1804.

Fig. 40. Jean-Pierre Franque, *Allegory of the Condition of France before the Return from Egypt,* 1810. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. 6¾ in. x 10 ft. 8⅜ in. (261 x 326 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris

Furthermore, the rationale for the Egyptian campaign that the Salon paintings put forward could have been reactivated for the support of further military excursions, as Napoleon had not yet abandoned the idea of another Egyptian invasion or an Algerian expedition. As early as 1802, he sent General Sébastiani to Egypt and Syria to make contacts with local leaders. Sébastiani's report of 30 January 1803, published in *Le Moniteur universel,* said that a reconquest of Egypt would require only 6,000 Frenchmen.[77] In 1808, Napoleon sent an advance team to investigate a possible invasion of Algeria. Thus, in the presentation of the Egyptian campaign, the Empire explained—and obfuscated—past events, promoted the rationale behind some of their particular dynastic policies, and began to forge an imperial culture that could be manipulated by other regimes.

During the Restoration, paintings of the Egyptian campaign were among the Napoleonic monuments that were suppressed. It was Napoleon, not the Egyptian campaign per se, that was forbidden. There were exceptions. Lejeune's *Battle of the Pyramids* and Gros's *Battle of Nazareth* and *Pesthouse at Jaffa* were reexhibited in May 1826 at a benefit exhibition for the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire. By recalling glorious Napoleonic episodes and Revolutionary events, the exhibition solicited liberal sympathy for the Greek cause, which was likened to the French Revolution.[78] What is most important for our purposes is that their redeployment also demonstrated how the monuments of the Egyptian campaign had a certain transferability, how they could be enlisted to support other French military actions in the Near East.

After the July Revolution of 1830, the storerooms were unlocked. The luster of these paintings and their subjects only increased while they were out of sight. For Alfred de Musset, the Napoleonic treasures were the object of Romantic longing for a past that was only a couple of decades gone but seemed too distant and too impossibly exalted to repeat. They were, he wrote, "contemporaries of a century which is already very far from us."[79] On an official level, Louis-Philippe resumed and revived Napoleonic monuments in order to manipulate Bonapartist sentiment to his own advantage.[80] Monuments of the Egyptian campaign, as we saw in the case of the obelisk, played no small part in his program. Reliefs on the Arc de Triomphe and, as we will see, painted friezes in the Musée d'Egypte, for instance, paraphrased the Egyptian campaign paintings by Gros, Girodet, and Guérin.

These pictures, although a fraction of the Napoleonic production, were an enormous success and, artistically and ideologically speaking, had a preponderant influence. The first time the Egyptian campaign was played out, in Egypt and Syria, it was a

quick defeat. The second time the Egyptian campaign was conducted—on the walls of the Napoleonic Salons—it looked like a triumph of French civilization. Although Napoleon's name would later be either suppressed or restored to the history of the Egyptian campaign, according to the dynastic politics of the moment, the artistic strategies and imperial program that were sketched out would endure.

59. Champollion-Figeac, *Obélisques Egyptiens de Paris.* Schneider recognized the shift but did not explain it; Schneider, *Jacques-Ignace Hittorff,* 1:404. Granet (*Images de Paris, Place de la Concorde,* 141, note 19) and Humbert ("Les Obélisques de Paris," 28, note 87) cite the shift but do not recognize any meaning in it.

    For the hieroglyphic texts, see Champollion-Figeac, *Obélisque de Louqsor, transporté à Paris,* 59; L'Hôte, *Notice historique sur les Obélisques,* 58–59, 94–95; Salvolini, *Traduction et analyse,* 90.

60. "Il avait l'habitude de dire: *le canon de l'Algérie ne retintit pas en Europe.*" Pierre Guiral, *Adolphe Thiers ou De la nécessité en politique* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 132. See also H. A. C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy: A Political History of France, 1830–1848* (London: Longman, 1988), 222, 246–49.

61. Adolphe Thiers, "Discours sur le budget de l'Algérie, prononcé le 9 juin 1836 à la Chambre des Députés," in *Discours parlementaires de M. Thiers,* ed. M. Calmon, vol. 3 (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1879), 507–8, 512–16. Discussed also in J. P. T. Bury and R. P. Tombs, *Thiers 1797–1877: A Political Life* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 25. See also Thiers, "Discussion du budget d'Alger et des autres possessions françaises," 154–59.

Chapter 2

1. See Henry Laurens, *L'Expédition d'Egypte, 1798–1801* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1989); *Origines intellectuelles de l'expédition;* and *Royaume impossible.*

2. Alain Silvera, "Egypt and the French Revolution: 1798–1801," *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outremer* 69, no. 257 (1982): 311. This fine article cites new documents and pinpoints this exchange of the Revolution for modern imperialism.

    On the Directory's attempt to consign the Revolution to history, see Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, "David's *Sabine Women*: Body, Gender and Republican Culture under the Directory," *Art History* 14, no. 3 (September 1991): 397–430.

3. On the Directory's decision to launch the Egyptian campaign, and on Bonaparte and Talleyrand's use of eighteenth-century histories, travel accounts, and political philosophy, see Laurens, *Expédition d'Egypte,* 11–30, and *Origines intellectuelles de l'expédition.*

    In discussing Bonaparte's Orientalist learning, Said calls his plans "the first in a long series of European encounters with the Orient in which the Orientalist's special expertise was put directly to functional colonial use." Said, *Orientalism,* 80.

4. Quoted in Albert Soboul, *A Short History of the French Revolution, 1789–1799,* trans. Geoffrey Symcox (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 152. Stewart Woolf points out, "If Brumaire marked the end of Revolution, it was that of the political revolution of popular sovereignty and diffusion of power, not the initial ideal of the possibility of cancelling the past and creating a new society, nor the driving conviction of France's mission as the vector of civilization." Stewart Woolf, "The Construction of a European World-View in the Revolutionary-Napoleonic Years," *Past and Present* 137 (November 1992): 95.

5. The day after the occupation of Alexandria, Bonaparte issued a proclamation in Arabic on a

press taken from the Vatican's Office for the Propagation of the Faith. France came as liberator from the Turkish oppressor, protector of commerce, defender and friend of Islam, and facilitator of popular government.

6. Piussi discusses the confusion over the precise number of savants who accompanied Napoleon. Anna Ruth Piussi, "Images of Egypt during the French Expedition (1798–1801): Sketches of a Historical Colony" (Ph.D. diss., St. Antony's College, Oxford University, 1992), 39.

   Because of its combination of military and intellectual endeavors, Said sees the invasion as the "keynote of the relationship . . . for the Near East and Europe . . . [which was] in many ways the very model of a truly scientific appropriation of one culture by another apparently stronger one. For with Napoleon's occupation of Egypt processes were set in motion between East and West that still dominate our contemporary cultural and political perspectives." Said, *Orientalism,* 42.

7. In Max Weber's definition, nationalism is built through fostering a sense of solidarity in opposition to a recognized "other," based on a sense of mission "through the very cultivation of the peculiarity of the group set off as a nation." Weber, "The Nation," 24.

8. Susan Locke Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 2 (June 1993): 242. This excellent article compares Gros's *Battle of Nazareth* to Lejeune's *Battle of Marengo,* detailing the administration of the Nazareth program and the presentation and reception of the pictures in light of changes in battle painting following the Revolution's transformations in military ideology. She identifies Gros's inclusion of a number of discrete incidents in the manner of the Revolutionary *traits de courage et d'humanité,* whose origin and function she outlines. Ibid., 251–54.

   Crow says that most critics were disappointed that Gros won the competition, and that they faulted him for a lack of a clear center of action; one saw Rococo revival in his color. Thomas Crow, *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 242. See also Norman Schlenoff, "Baron Gros and Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign," in *Essays in Honor of Walter Friedlaender* (New York: Institute of Fine Arts, 1965), 162; and Manfred Heinrich Brunner, "Antoine-Jean Gros. Die Napoleonischen Historienbilder" (Ph.D. diss., Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, 1979), 124–25, 355–56.

   As early as 1800, the Consulate's Minister of the Interior had commissioned medals celebrating the victories in Egypt (and Bavaria); these were distributed to generals, officers, and noncommissioned soldiers in the campaign and may have had a wider distribution. For an overview of Napoleonic propaganda, see Robert B. Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 162.

9. "A gauche s'élève le mont Tabor, célèbre par le miracle de la Transfiguration, et par sa position près des lieux tels que Nazareth, Kana, etc., qui furent le berceau du christianisme." "Un officier découvre une pierre gothique aux armes de France, qui rappelle les croisades de Louis IX." Lejeune, "Salon de l'an IX," *La Gazette nationale [ou] Le Moniteur universel* (6 vendémiaire, year X): 21–22; reprinted in H. W. Janson, ed., *Catalogue of the Paris Salon, 1673 to 1881,* 60 vols. (New York: Garland, 1977), 55.

10. "La valeur française y porte son empreinte particulière, le calme qui la caractérise, contraste avec l'aveugle impetuosité des Musulmans." "Salon de l'an IX," 21–22.
11. "Deux ou trois groupes non prescrits donc introduits pour caractériser les deux nations. . . . En opposition la coutume barbare des Turcs de couper la tête d'un ennemi à terre avec la loyauté française qui, dans cette situation, ne voit qu'un prisonnier doit faire respecter." Antoine-Jean Gros, "Extrait du Programme," 1801, AMBAN.
12. "A peu de distance de cette scène où la barbarie des Orientaux est peinte, et par un contraste parfaitement seul, un dragon sauve la vie d'un Turc qui se rend, et que poursuivait un soldat français." From "Salon de l'an IX," 21.
13. C. La Jonquière, *L'Expédition d'Egypte, 1798–1801,* 5 vols. (Paris: H. Charles Lavauzelle, 1899–1907), 4:381. Useful here is White's distinction between the historical discourse that narrates, or rather adopts, a perspective that looks out on the world and reports it, and a discourse that narrativizes, one that "feigns to make the world speak itself and speaks itself a story." Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *On Narrative,* ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 2–3. *The Battle of Nazareth* sets an important precedent for it is read as reportage, while it actually narrativizes, "speaks itself a story."
14. "Les Turcs qui étaient retranchés dans la presqu'île d'Aboukir, avaient repoussé la première attaque des Français, dirigée sur la redoute qui défendait la droite de leur position; ils sortent de leur retranchemens pour couper les têtes des Français restés morts ou blessés sur le champ de bataille." Gros's Salon *livret* text is borrowed directly by Pierre-Jean-Baptiste-Publicole Chaussard, *Le Pausanias Français: Etat des Arts du Dessin en France à l'ouverture du XIXe siècle: Salon de 1806* (Paris: F. Buisson, 1806): 71–72.
15. "Le calme de la supériorité, la valeur éclairée, et de l'autre, le brutal emportement, la férocité stupide et le courage aveugle; comme s'il avait voulu indiquer qu'il s'agissait du triomphe des lumières et de la civilisation sur les ténèbres et la barbarie." Chaussard, *Pausanius Français,* 74.
16. All three are discussed and illustrated in Siegfried, "Naked History," 242–45.
17. Gros, "Extrait du programme," AMBAN.
18. "Voyons jusqu'à quel point les auteurs se sont rapprochés du site et de la vérité de l'action." Lejeune, "Salon de l'an IX," 21. In Gros's sketch, this commentator found the local tone bright but doubted that it was characteristic of the country. However, anecdotalists subsequently told how Gros used refracted light in his studio to simulate the light of that particular day and place. Letter of unknown origin, AMBAN.

    Like *The Battle of Nazareth,* Gros's *Battle of Aboukir* was praised for the same sort of evocation in an 1806 Salon review: "All of the foreground of Gros's picture is admirable regarding color and effect. All of the objects reflect a striking light, which makes recognizable the sun of Egypt, and even the shadows have a transparency that reveals all the details." Chaussard, *Pausanius Français,* 600.
19. Schlenoff, "Baron Gros," 152; Hugh Honour, *Romanticism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979),

47–90; and Walter Friedlaender, *David to Delacroix,* trans. Robert Goldwater (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 63–65, 101, 112. In "Modernism and Imperialism," Jameson proposes a different link between imperialism and modernism, "the dynamic of capitalism proper." Terry Eagelton, Frederic Jameson, and Edward W. Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 43–66.

In Alexandre's late nineteenth-century history of battle paintings, Gros is the greatest military painter of all time and "truly the father of the modern school and of the Romanticism which issued from him." Alexandre's discussion of Gros's superlativeness is dominated by the Near Eastern paintings, *The Battle of Nazareth, The Battle of the Pyramids,* and *Pesthouse at Jaffa,* which, according to this writer, represented "his best painting." Gros broke from classical formulae in the observed and uncalculated appearance of pictures set in the contemporary Orient. His anticlassicism is attributed to his never having won the Prix de Rome, so that he never learned the stilted classics that *Pesthouse at Jaffa* so boldly left behind. Arsène Alexandre, *Histoire de la Peinture Militaire en France* (Paris: Renouard, 1880), 131, 140–46, 158.

One should not overestimate the importance of the Egyptian campaign pictures. Alexandre calls Gros's *Battle of Eylau* the culmination of his reputation. There is, however, a discernable moral difference assigned to the pictures. *Battle of Eylau* is seen as depicting the horrors of war, whereas *Pesthouse at Jaffa* is credited with a moral grandeur. Although the anticlassical character of the picture can be exaggerated, the critical disassociation of these paintings from the classical tradition is very pregnant in the context of paintings of the Egyptian campaign. For there is a connection here between the artistic divergence from the classicizing artistic tradition of the Enlightenment on the one hand, and, on the other, the political purpose of the Egyptian campaign itself: to suspend the Revolution.

Whereas I am examining Gros's *Pesthouse at Jaffa* in the launching and workings of an imperial discourse, Grigsby evaluates the painting as a masterpiece in its "capacity to accommodate the instability of conflicting interpretations," specifically regarding classicism, masculinity, and contagion. Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Rumor, Contagion, and Colonization in Gros's *Plague-Stricken at Jaffa* (1804)," *Representations* 51 (Summer 1995): 4.

20. "L'artiste qui n'a pas le courage de faire justice des trois quarts de la pièce d'éloquence descriptive, produit une esquisse divisée par virgules, points et paragraphes, précisément comme un programme." Jean-Baptiste Boutard, "Salon de l'an IX," *Journal des débats* (2 vendémiaire, year X): 2. Boutard liked Taunay's picture because that artist rejected modern costumes. Siegfried notes that Chaussard was suspicious of the administration of the competition and disliked the fact that none of the competitors had witnessed the battle. Siegfried, "Naked History," 246.
21. In the formation of a new discourse, topoi are forged to convey moral judgements to serve a new era. See Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 2–5.
22. Later a French soldier described the "horrible massacre; the streets were blocked with cadavers;

children, their throats slit, were seen in the arms of their mothers." ("Il y eut un massacre horrible, les rues étaient encombrées de cadavres, on voyait des enfants égorgés dans les bras de leurs mères.") J. Brossollet and H. Mollaret, "A propos des 'Pestiférés de Jaffa' de A. J. Gros," *Koninklijk Museum voor schone Kunsten* (1968): 280.

23. Ibid., 281–83; René N. Desgenettes, *Histoire médicale de l'armée d'Orient* (Paris: Croullebois, 1802), 49. Larrey, who returned to Egypt before reaching Jaffa, said that the soldiers were accustomed to all manner of emotional impact. D. J. Larrey, *Relation historique et chirurgicale de l'expédition de l'armée d'Orient. en Egypte et en Syrie* (Paris: Demonville et Soeurs, 1803), 136.

    Of the 4,500 French men who died during the Egyptian campaign, 4,100 died from illness. Dhombres and Dhombres, *Naissance d'un pouvoir,* 123.
24. Brossollet and Mollaret, "A propos des 'Pestiférés de Jaffa,'" 281.
25. Pierre Lelièvre, "Gros, peintre d'histoire," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (May 1936): 293.
26. "Se trouvant dans une chambre étroite et très encombrée, il aida à soulever le cadavre hideux d'un soldat dont les habits en lambeaux étoient souillés par l'ouverture d'un bubon abscédé." Desgenettes, *Histoire médicale.* 49–50.
27. Walter Friedlaender, "Napoleon as 'Roi Thaumaturge,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 4, nos. 3–4 (April–July 1941): 140.
28. Brossollet and Mollaret, "A propos des 'Pestiférés de Jaffa,'" 292.
29. Religion was always a factor during the Egyptian campaign despite Bonaparte's pronouncement of religious neutrality. Dhombres and Dhombres, *Naissance d'un pouvoir,* 111.
30. D. D., "Salon de l'an XIII," *Nouvelles des Arts* 3 (year XIII): 373; and *Annales des sciences, de la littérature et des arts commencées le 24 juillet 1804,* 330.
31. Brossollet and Mollaret propose one of Denon's plates from a mosque in Alexandria as the source for Gros's architecture. There seem to be, however, many significant differences among the architectural elements. Brossollet and Mollaret, "A propos des 'Pestiférés de Jaffa,'" 292. The pointed arches may recall Denon's recognition of the debt of French Gothic to Islamic architecture incurred during the Crusades, a point of view mentioned in Pierre Lelièvre, *Vivant Denon: Directeur des Beaux-Arts de Napoléon* (Paris: Floury, 1942), 95.
32. "L'Europe savante ne saurait voir avec indifférence la jouissance des sciences appliquées à un pays où elle sont ramenées par la sagesse armée et l'amour de l'humanité, après avoir été longtemps exilées par la barbarie et la fureur religieuse." *La Décade Egyptienne* 1 (year VII): 15; quoted in Dhombres and Dhombres, *Naissance d'un pouvoir,* 114. Dhombres and Dhombres also provide a twenty-entry table of medical memoirs on the Egyptian expedition. Ibid., 819–20.
33. Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 227–31.
34. Larrey, *Relation historique et chirurgicale,* 87. Brossollet and Mollaret identify the camel as a field ambulance but do not interest themselves in the modernity of the inclusion. Brossollet and Mollaret, "A propos des 'Pestiférés de Jaffa,'" 303.

    Other paintings from the campaign champion French medical expertise. In Desfontaine's 1802 *Battle of Mount Tabor,* the artist included the ambulances arriving on the heels of the

army. Larrey is featured in Lejeune's 1804 *Battle of Aboukir* (Versailles, Musée National du Château), and medical paraphernalia is carefully described. And the whole of Desoria's Salon *livret* entry for the *Arrival of the French Army at the Port of Tentoura in Syria* (Salon of 1810) recounts the story that after a triumph, Bonaparte jettisoned the Turkish arms booty, and the army walked in order to provide horses to evacuate the sick and injured: "Not a single Frenchman was left behind."

Said observes that many early English Orientalists were medical men; he quotes Edgar Quinet's aphorism, "Asia has the prophets; Europe has the doctors." See Said, *Orientalism,* 79.

35. "[Desgenettes est] le médecin en chef de l'armée, aussi célèbre pour ses connaissances que pour son courage." Charles Paul Landon, *Annales du Musée,* vol. 1 (Paris: Pillet aîné, 1832): 122. Schlenoff said that perhaps the picture is a tribute to Desgenettes. Schlenoff, "Baron Gros," 159. In a related drawing, Gros sketched Desgenettes innoculating himself against the plague. The vaccine was an invention of the campaign's medical team.
36. For instance, the critic D. D. thought that Desgenettes's gesture and his facial traits suggest inquietude. D. D., "Salon de l'an XIII," 373.
37. Brossollet and Mollaret use the gesture to offer a brief Freemason interpretation of the painting. Brossollet and Mollaret, "A propos des 'Pestiférés de Jaffa,'" 305–7. Schlenoff noted that in 1805 the government insisted on the invention of the vaccine in their ongoing competition with England. Schlenoff, "Baron Gros," 159.
38. "[Gros] avait voulu trop indiquer, trop prouver. Il avait cherché à montrer, dans les différentes figures, toutes les phases de la maladie contagieuse; ce qui pouvait intéresser sans doute les médecins, mais ce que le public n'aurait pas saisi." Alexandre, *Histoire de la Peinture Militaire,* 140. Alexandre notes that Gros's painting interests doctors because of its factual description.
39. "Au dire des gens de l'art et ceux qui ont eu occasion d'observer les effets de la peste le peintre en a rendu fidèlement les symptômes et les progrès dans ces divers malades." Boutard, "Salon de l'an XII," *Journal des débats* (25 September 1804): 3.
40. D. D., "Salon de l'an XIII," 373. Furthermore, Landon wrote, "The artist consecrated the other part of the picture to expressing the symptoms and cruel effects of the plague of the Levant." ("L'artiste a consacré l'autre partie du tableau à exprimer les symptômes et les effets cruels de la peste du Levant.") Landon, *Annales,* 123.
41. "Tous ses membres contractés annoncent l'excès de son souffrances." Ibid., 123. Grasping a column and pulling himself into the picture space, a blindfolded soldier suffers from ophthalmia, which made it impossible to stand bright light; the symptoms are described in Larrey, *Relation historique et chirurgicale,* 19.
42. "[Les corps] attaqués d'accès convulsifs." Boutard, "Salon de l'an XII," (25 September 1804): 3.
43. "Les yeux sont ouverts, semblent sortir de l'orbite et restent fixes. La peau du visage se décolore, l'individu se contourne sur lui-même, jette des cris lugubres, et expire tout-à-coup." Larrey, *Relation historique et chirurgicale,* 126. The figure with the 32nd regiment's indication on his head covering may recall Larrey's description: "I saw a sergeant major of the 32nd half-brigade, aged 23 years, of a robust constitution, die after only six hours of the sickness (J'ai

vu un sergent-major de la 32e demi-brigade, âgé de 23 ans, d'une constitution robuste, périr après six heures de maladie seulement.)" Ibid., 125.

44. "Au fond de la plaine que le Nil inonde tous les ans, s'élèvent les pyramides. . . . Les bataillons carrés du fond, sont celui du général Regnier à droite, celui du général Desaix. . . . Les Mamelouks et Arabes sont en désordre autour de ces bataillons." From the 1806 Salon *livret,* p. 63.
45. "[Les] ruées cavalerie fondent en desordre sur l'infanterie française qui les attend de pied ferme." Frédéric de Clarac, "Lettre sur le Salon de 1806," *Journal des Archives de Littérature, d'Histoire et de Philosophie* 12 (1806): 478; in Bibliothèque Nationale, Collection Deloynes, vol. 38, no. 1047, 247.
46. "Quelques Turcs courent pêle-mêle dans ces vastes plaines, massacrant nos blessés." Jean-Baptiste Boutard, "Salon de l'an 1806," *Journal de l'Empire* (10 October 1806): 3. There are others who write essentially the same thing, including the writer signing himself "C." who says: "We love to see the beautiful order and the tranquil courage of the French army in opposition with the trouble and blind fury of the Turks." C., "Salon de 1806," *Mercure de France* 25 (September 1806): 601.
47. "La réponse est facile: la supériorité de notre Tactique tient à cela même. Le plus grand obstacle que le Français avait eu jusqu'ici à vaincre, était sa propre impétuosité. C'est au Génie qui les conduit à la Victoire que nos Guerriers doivent cette assurance froide et cette espèce d'impassibilité au milieu des extrêmes périls." Chaussard, *Pausanias Français,* 219.
48. "La vue des Pyramides ne laisse aucun doute sur le sujet que le peintre a choisi: la symétrie qui, le plus souvent, nuit aux effets pittoresques, leus [*sic*] prête ici un nouveau secours.

    L'oeil se promène avec plaisir sur ces bataillons carrés qu'affronte vainement la temérité des Mamelouks." "Salon de 1806," *Le Publiciste* (10 October 1806): 3.
49. "Son Ordre admirable" versus "le tumulte, l'effroi, la rage et le désespoire des Barbares." Chaussard, *Pausanias Français,* 208. Other critics lodge the same complaint with Hennequin. See: C., "Salon de 1806," 600; and Clarac, "Lettre sur le Salon de 1806," 486. One critic said that the public did not hesitate in awarding its sentiment to Lejeune's picture over that of Hennequin's. ("Salon de 1806," 3.) Hennequin, however, posited a fundamental meeting of opposites in his Salon *livret,* where he concludes by saying: "Few of the French perished in that memorable battle: everyone stayed in their rows. (Peu de Français périrent dans cette mémorable bataille: tous restèrent dans leurs rangs.)" Quoted in Chaussard, *Pausanias Français,* 206.

    Hennequin had taken over Vincent's 1800 commission, as the latter had fallen ill. See Philippe-Auguste Hennequin, *Mémoires de Philippe-Auguste Hennequin,* ed. Jenny Hennequin (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1933), 223–24.

    After viewing Gros's entry (*Battle of Aboukir*) in the same Salon, Chaussard was compelled to credit France's success to a long tradition of French rationalism, to the French character, which is opposite the Oriental character: "Corneille, this profound genius, expressed in a single verse all the character of heroism: 'Valor is only valor as long as it is calm.'" Chaussard, *Pausanias Français,* 76.
50. "Les tableaux de cet artiste [Lejeune] sont moins des compositions pittoresques que les

représentations exactes des faits d'armée, tels qu'ils se sont passés, et auxquels le peintre a le plus souvent pris part lui-même." Boutard, "Salon de l'an 1806," 2. See also, for instance, C., "Salon de 1806," 601; and Clarac, "Lettre sur le Salon de 1806," 484.

51. "Lejeune, chef de bataillon au corps impérial du génie, élève de M. Valenciennes." This position is continued in recent publications, such as Marguerite Gaston, "Le Général baron Lejeune (1775–1845)," *Bulletin du Musée Bernadotte* (Pau) 20 (December 1975): 25–26.
52. "Il est aisé de reconnaître qu'il a eu les camps pour ateliers et les champs de batailles pour modèles." D. B., "Salon de l'an XII," *Le Publiciste* (16 October 1804): 1–2.
53. "Ce n'est sans doute pas sans y avoir pensé que l'auteur a sacrifié ici les intérêts de l'art à ceux de l'histoire." Boutard, "Salon de l'an XII," *Journal des débats* (3 October 1804): 2–3.
54. Gaston, "Le Général baron Lejeune (1775–1845)," 21–22; Louis Sonolet, "Le Général baron Lejeune," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 33 (1905): 282–88; Fournier-Sarlovèze, *Le Général Lejeune* (Paris: Librairie de l'art ancien et moderne, 1902), 24. Also, see Siegfried on Lejeune's military-artistic profile and his use of conventions of scientific drawing. Siegfried, "Naked History," 235–58.
55. "Le beau portrait que nous reproduisons au début de cette étude explique admirablement l'oeuvre de Lejeune. L'ensemble du personnage est d'une distinction raffinée et qui n'est pas exempte de recherche. Le front vaste, sous les cheveux qui s'envolent au vent des balles, révèle l'imagination, l'esprit précis et sûr. Autour de l'imprudent artiste, la bataille gronde, mais l'oeil clair, scrutateur, souriant, n'en continue pas moins à observer et la main à dessiner. Devant cette allure martiale et décidée, on devine qu'il peint comme il se battait: à la française." Sonolet, "Le Général baron Lejeune," 302. The Chassaignac painting is said to be a copy after an 1810 Salon miniature by Guérin, which seems to have passed to the sitter's family and possibly been destroyed in a fire. Other variants are kept at Versailles and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Toulouse.
56. "J'ai déjà été récompensé de l'abandon que j'ai fait de cet amour-propre par la complaisante curiosité que vous avez mise, citoyens, à observer avidement le nombre immense des dessins que j'ai rapportés; dessins que j'ai faits le plus souvent sur mon genou, ou debout, ou même à cheval: je n'ai jamais pu en terminer un seul à ma volonté." Denon, *Voyage* (1802) 1:iv, 2.

    Appositely, Stafford places Denon at the end of an Enlightenment tradition, in the humanist tradition of a scientific or predominantly factual voyage that signified a new golden age of humanitarian interests united with science in the noblest occupation—to explore distant parts of the globe. Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760–1840* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 25. In the line of works she describes, including Denon's, "art could again serve a practical purpose; it could be a vehicle for knowledge without stigma." Ibid., 29. For Stafford, Denon provides the image of an artist in hot pursuit of novel images, riding across an unexplored desert. Ibid., 50.

    Denon belongs with the scholars of the Egyptian campaign whom Said considers inaugural heroes of Orientalism, who put Orientalism on a scientific and rational basis through scrupulous observation in the face of Eastern perils. Said, *Orientalism,* 122.

Bendiner remarked on the critical importance of amateur and scientific draftsmen to the early British Orientalists. Bendiner, "Portrayal of the Middle East in British Painting," 2, 9.

57. See Siegfried, "Naked History," 236.
58. In 1810, Napoleon chose Guérin's picture and ten others to be translated into tapestries. Fernand Calmettes, *Etat général des tapisseries de la manufacture des Gobelins depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours, 1600–1900*, ed. Maurice Fenaille, vol. 5: *1794–1900* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1912), 220, 237.
59. "L'armée se range en colonnes mobiles." This is repeated by an anonymous critic; see *L'Observateur au Museum ou Revue critique des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture et gravure exposés au musée Napoléon en l'an 1810* (Paris: Aubry, n.d.), 12.
60. Napoleonic clemency in Egypt is the subject of other pictures such as Rigo's *The Clemency of His Majesty the Emperor toward the Divan in Egypt* and *The Clemency of His Majesty the Emperor toward an Arab Family*, both of the Salon of 1806; as well as Colson's *Entry of General Bonaparte in Alexandria* (Salon of 1812; Musée National du Château, Versailles), in which Bonaparte grants clemency to a pleading, fawning family as French troops enter the city.
61. "Un trophée précieux à ces barbares; . . . [mais à laisser substituer sur ce visage ce que] la beauté, la jeunesse, la majesté des traits, ce qu'un certain caractère de douceur et de noblesse, attributs ordinaires d'une vie prospère, doivent exciter de regret et de pitié sur une mort cruelle." Boutard, "Salon de 1810," *Journal de l'Empire* (21 December 1810): 2–3.
62. Brown University, *All the Banners Wave: Art and War in the Romantic Era, 1792–1851*, exh. cat. (Providence: Brown University, 1982), 52.
63. Betts wrote: "Indeed, it has been argued that all colonial enterprises in the nineteenth century required the establishment of cultural antitheses, without which the ideologies of liberalism and democracy would have seemed moral contradictions to an imperialism fundamentally based on force and domination." R. F. Betts, "The French Colonial Empire and the French World-View," in *Racism and Colonialism: Essays on Ideology and Social Structure*, ed. R. Ross (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 68.

    Weber wrote about the myth of a national, providential mission:

    > *Another element of the early idea was the notion that this mission was facilitated solely through the very cultivation of the peculiarity of the group set off as a nation. Therewith, in so far as its self-justification is sought in the value of its content, this mission can consistently be thought of only as a specific "cultural" mission. The significance of the "nation" is usually anchored in the superiority, or at least the irreplaceability, of the culture values that are to be preserved and developed only through the cultivation of the peculiarity of the group. It therefore goes without saying that the intellectuals, as we have in a preliminary fashion called them, are to a specific degree predestined to propagate the "national idea," just as those who wield power in the polity provoke the idea of the state.* (Weber, "The Nation," 24–25)

64. "Une émeute populaire dans une ville conquise, une entreprise restée sans résultats, la révolte inutile d'une poignée de barbares." Boutard, "Salon de 1810" (21 December 1810): 1.

    For a discussion of the disinclination in the field of art history to examine the homoerotics

of Girodet's paintings, see James Smalls, "Making Trouble for Art History: The Queer Case of Girodet," *Art Journal* 55, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 20–27.

65. "L'Empereur, élevé sur un tertre, vient de pardonner aux révoltés du Caire: sa figure exprime la fermeté et l'indulgence." *Observations sur le Salon de l'an 1808* (Paris: Ve Gueffier, Delaunay, 1808), 16.
66. "Ces malheureux ont imploré la clémence du vainqueur, et le pardon a été accordé; quelques-uns sont encore prosternés en attitude de suppliants et déjà plusieurs lèvent au ciel leurs mains dégagées des fers." Boutard, "Salon de 1808," *Journal de l'Empire* (22 October 1808): 2.
67. "La vengeance est empreinte dans leurs regards: ce sont des tigres altérés de sang." *Examen critique et raisonné des tableaux des peintres vivants formant l'exposition de 1808* (Paris: Ve. Hocquart, 1808), 29.
68. For an overview of Freudian views of projection, see Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 349–52.
69. Boutard recognized Guérin's gambit as a fashion among French painters but did not feel that it had succeeded: "Afin de profiter du ciel brillant de l'Egypte, et de ménager des accidens de jour, M. Guérin a fait venir la lumière du fond du tableau: pratique dangeureuse, que de grandes scènes ont mis en vogue dans notre école, mais qui ne réussit point toujours également bien. Ainsi l'effet est ici peu satisfaisant." Boutard, "Salon de 1808," 3. One critic does find the light too divided, not focused enough like baroque lighting. *Examen critique des tableaux de 1808,* 30.
70. "On demeure étonné du génie singulier de l'auteur pour inventer la figure . . . selon son tempérament, sa profession, ses habitudes nationales." Boutard, "Salon de 1810" (21 December 1810): 3.
71. Denon's written description of the plate refers to the abject state of the Mameluke who can never move up a grade in society. Denon, *Voyage,* 2:33. Schlenoff reproduces a similar plate and says that studies like this "found their way into Gros's painting." Schlenoff, "Baron Gros," 154, figure 1.

    The stereotype was first an invention in printing technology announced in 1798 by Didot. Within a few decades, the word gained its current usage as in "a stereotyped expression." See introduction in Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 15–36.
72. The influence of Gros's *Battle of Nazareth* is undisputed: Monsieur Auguste, Théodore Géricault, and Horace Vernet copied it, and Eugène Delacroix proclaimed his fealty. Stevens, *The Orientalists,* 163; Detroit Institute of Arts, *French Painting 1774–1830: The Age of Revolution,* exh. cat. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 468–70.
73. George Levitine, *Girodet-Trioson: An Iconographical Study* (New York: Garland, 1978), 278a.
74. Woolf says that the statement was recorded during Napoleon's first exile at St. Helena, and this may be apocryphal. Woolf, "The Construction of a European World-View," 86n. 34. Indeed it may be, but it antedates St. Helena. Gros printed it in the Salon *livret.* Laurens maintains that the original quote was, "Allez, et pensez que du haut de ces monuments quarante

siècles nous observent," and that through usage in the nineteenth century it became known as "Du haut de ces Pyramides, quarante siècles vous contemplent." Laurens, *L'Expédition d'Egypte,* 88.

Brunner says that the picture's subject came from Denon in a letter to Napoleon. Brunner, "Antoine-Jean Gros," 291.

The historical greatness of Egypt is intoned by the looming pyramids in paintings of the Battle of the Pyramids, such as those by F. Watteau, 1799 (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes); Vincent, 1800–1806, figure 33; and Lejeune, 1806, figure 32.

In 1809, Gros's painting was commissioned for the Imperial Senate. Originally its format was vertical. In 1835, Louis-Philippe hired Gros and his studio to enlarge the canvas horizontally, thereby achieving its current state. The Cleveland Museum of Art posesses two full-sized preparatory oil paintings for the addition, generally thought to be by Gros's hand. After Gros's suicide, his assistant Auguste-Hyacinthe Debray completed the additions to the canvas, and it went first to the Salon of 1806 and then to the July Monarchy's Galerie historique at Versailles, where it is found today. See Alisa Luxenberg, "*General Kléber* and *Egyptian Family,*" in *Catalogue of Nineteenth-Century European Painting,* ed. Louise d'Argencourt (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1998).

75. The canvas is soundly attributed to Jean-Pierre Franque (1774–1860) and not his brother Joseph. Detroit Institute of Arts, *French Painting 1774–1830,* 421–22.
76. "On voit sur le devant, à gauche du tableau, trois guerriers, un Turc, un Arabe et un Africain mortellement blessés. Ce groupe, d'un bon effet pittoresque, est allégorique; il représente les nations vaincues dans la guerre d'Egypte." Boutard, "Salon de 1810," *Journal de l'Empire* (23 November 1810), 1. Boutard also credited Gros's transparent color as true in all parts of the picture. Ibid., 2.

    It should be noted that parts of the left and right of the painting, including Kléber on the rearing brown horse and the Arab family, were added for the 1836 reexhibition of the picture. Schlenoff, "Baron Gros," 156–57.
77. Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Great Powers and the Near East 1774–1923* (London: Edward Arnold, 1970), 28–55.
78. Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *French Images from the Greek War of Independence, 1821–1830: Art and Politics under the Restoration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 39–41. Woolf is interested in the Egyptian campaign for examining how France could use it to unite Europe. Woolf, "Construction of a European World-View," 86. In this regard, see the circulation of the Sèvres Egyptian service among European capitols in Porterfield, "Egyptomania," 87–88.
79. "Les tableaux dont nous parlons sont contemporains d'un siècle déjà bien loin de nous." Alfred de Musset, "Exposition au Profit des Blessés dans La Galerie du Luxembourg," in *Oeuvres complètes de Alfred de Musset,* ed. Edmond Biré, vol. 7, *La Confession d'un enfant du siècle* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1975), 249–51. Originally published in *Le Temps* (27 October 1830).
80. See Michael Marrinan, "Shadowboxing Napoleon's Glory: The Orléanist Revival of Imperial

Imagery," Part 4, in *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe: Art and Ideology in Orléanist France, 1830–1848* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 141–200. He discusses Louis-Philippe's use of Gros's *Battle of Aboukir* in the Salle du Sacre at Versailles in terms of Louis-Philippe's personal political advancement but not in terms of his foreign policy. Ibid., 150–54.

Chapter 3

1. Denon is identified through the pun, "de nom." The print is reproduced in Humbert et al., *Egyptomania,* 316. In discussing a wallpaper design of 1818 that depicts General Kléber in Egypt, Humbert apparently shares the opinion of the anti-Denon printmaker, as he finds it "peu conforme à l'esprit de la Restauration." Ibid., 318.
2. The foreword of the Restoration's first volume in the grand folio edition says only that recent political events delayed the publication and that Louis's high esteem for the arts and sciences naturally compelled him to insure its continuation. See this "Avertissement" in *Description de l'Egypte,* 1st ed., vol. 4 (1817).

   The Restoration's own edition attributes the opportunity to acquire an exact knowledge of Egypt to the victorious French army. See Siméon's short introductory essay in *Description de l'Egypte,* 2nd ed., 1:n.p.

   In the first volume of the grand folio edition, a second and later frontispiece, drawn by Louis Lafitte (1770–1828), has been inserted in the example in the Département des Cartes et Planches of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Below a bust of Louis XVIII, a cartouche declares: "His Majesty Louis XVIII ordains that the *Description de l'Egypte* be continued and that its editions be multiplied." Lafitte's drawing seems to be a model for an engraving. It has not, to my knowledge, been previously published, although it was exhibited at the Bibliothèque Nationale in the "Exposition de 1875. Congrès International des Sciences géographiques," where it was the forty-sixth item.

   Piussi's valuable and synthetic (but not critical) historical account, "Images of Egypt during the French Expedition (1798–1801)," distinguishes between the pure science of the work of the savants and the political work made of it by politicians, beginning with Napoleon. She says, "The publication itself was not overtly Napoleonic, apart from the frontispiece and the Preface." Piussi, "Images of Egypt during the French Expedition," 169. She cites Jomard's letter to the Minister of Interior of the first Restoration (Ibid, 166–67), in which he proclaims the *Description* nonpartisan, reasoning that it has its origins in the Enlightenment of the ancien régime and that the study of Egypt dates to antiquity. BN, NAF 3580, 26 July 1814, 21–23.
3. "Il y a trente ans, les travaux historiques sur la Grèce, Rome et l'ancienne Europe semblaient près d'être épuisés, et l'Orient paraissait fermé pour toujours aux justes désirs des savans et des artistes. Mais bientôt la puissance anglaise leur révéla les trésors littéraires de l'Industan. Une expédition, toute militaire dans son but, toute scientifique dans ses résultats, livra à leur méditation l'antique Egypte toute entière." La Rochefoucauld went on to write, "Relative-