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Representations of War and Conflict in the Painting of Gustave Dore

Tym, Sebastian

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UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

*Representations of War and Conflict in the Painting
of Gustave Doré*

by
Sebastian Tym

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fulfilment for the degree of

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the award of Research Masters has the author been registered for any other university award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

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SEBASTIAN TYM

The project, using the working title *Representations of War and Conflict in the Painting of Gustave Doré*, proposes to explore one of Gustave Doré's little-known, but extensive oeuvres in painting. That is, the artist's representation of conflict through the modes of history painting and allegory. With an initial chapter, Doré's successful debut as a politicised painter and pamphleteer during the Crimean War will be outlined, contextualising the focus of the two following chapters, which cover his artistic output during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 – 71.

The exploration of this largely unaccounted-for aspect of Doré's career is to the greatest extent facilitated by a new engagement with his earliest, and only contemporary French biographer, René Delorme. Delorme's text, part-biography, part-catalogue raisonné and part-invitation for the purchase of his art, will be incorporated as an invaluable primary source from both an art biographer, and one of the very few native commentaries on Doré.

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Gustave Doré is perhaps the most prolific and successful book illustrator of the late-nineteenth century. A Frenchman born in Strasbourg in 1832, he was, second only to his devout Catholicism, a fervent patriot – one might even use the term nationalist – but had he been born six miles further east; he would have been German. He spoke Parisian with an Alemannic accent, and despite having moved from Strasbourg to Paris in 1847, thereafter becoming a Parisian, he continued throughout his life to idolise his beloved homeland which was culturally as German as it was French. Although Doré's controversial fame has significantly declined in the modern day, his handful of twentieth-century biographers seem to share in the proposition that his staggeringly extensive oeuvre of over 100,000 drawings amongst (but not restricted to) some ninety illustrated volumes, has in body and influence permeated the artworld to such an extent that most will in some way or another, have encountered the artist whether they know the name Doré or not.

The Doré legend, almost Vasarian, invariably begins with his recognition as a child prodigy: '*un gamin de génie*'. By the age of four he was not seen without a pencil in hand, sharpened at both ends. If the charm of this boy who would so captivatingly sketch the quaint scenes of country life: his neighbours' dog and Strasbourg's robust market-goers; but also, the far-away exploits of Emir Abdelkader against French rule in Algiers, was not enough to steal affection, then the more mischievous side to Doré was held in ready disposal. This is the too-appealing characteristic to Paris's pleasure-seeking elite, that he was, despite his genius, a perpetual child. A daring and eccentric acrobat, he climbed ropes, traversed marshlands atop stilts, flew large kites, intrepidly horse-rode and was well-known for his walking handstand entries. At fifteen, Doré took his first steps as a professional artist at Charles Philippon's Paris periodical, the *Journal Pour rire*. Already famous and earning enough money to self-fund his education, he began studying at the Lycée Charlemagne where the schoolmasters would have him

illustrate their lessons on the chalkboard. This childhood recognition propelled Doré into stardom as an adult, having been commissioned to illustrate the hugely successful *Oeuvre de Rabelais* in 1854, by the age of twenty. His illustrated volumes continued at astonishing speed until his death in 1883, leaving what was to be his last project, Poe's melancholy poem, *The Raven*, unfinished.

It has been treated with increased attention in the last four decades, although there has still been no dedicated monograph, that Doré's ambitions as an artist remained far more than achieving recognition as a great illustrator. To a nineteenth-century audience, illustration fell under the designation of craftsmanship, that is, a pictorial mode decidedly beneath the high academic pursuits of painting and sculpture. Without any formal training, Doré pursued painting with as much activity as he did illustration, and with some initial success during the period of the Crimean War, but his later efforts went largely without appreciation in France. At the Salon, his submissions were either rejected outright, or harshly criticised for their naïve use of colour. The association with his most dedicated patron, France's emperor Napoleon III, who was regarded by Paris's elite as at best, ostentatious and incompetent, caused further damage to the reputation which he sought so avidly to establish. His vibrant religious and landscape canvasses were mostly exhibited in the more accommodating climate of Victorian London, at the Doré Gallery on Bond Street, opened in 1868. But he never gave up on seeking such recognition at home as he found in London, even in the last years of his life making failed attempts in large-scale bronze sculpture. The attempt to move away from illustration was a persistence which subjected Doré to increasingly contemptuous scorn from the critics, causing his perceived descent into mediocrity by the late-1860s, and according to some biographers, leading to his premature death at fifty-one.

Doré's painting, probably for its contemporary, and somewhat continuing unpopularity, is still relatively unexplored. This study engages with one of the still less-

explored, though more unique aspects of this medium: the patriotic depictions of France at war for which he first found success in painting, and those which succeeded throughout his life. An initial chapter will foreground Doré's recognition as a history painter and Second Empire propagandist, working on the subject of the Crimean War, 1853 – 56. The two chapters which follow will engage with his extensive commentary on the Franco-Prussian War, chronologically engaging with a narrative series of six complex allegories, inspired by the Romantic poetry of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset. Chapter Two, treats principally, the first three allegories in Doré's series which predict France's triumphant invasion of Germany and reminisce about France's historical, and continued hegemony in Europe. Chapter Three treats the final three allegories in the series which shift in subject to frantic depictions of France's unexpected, and crushing defeat in the war, mirroring the mythology of ancient Thebes.

The first modern literature on the artist after his death, came in c. 1920, with a biography written by the German art historian, Gustave Friedrich Hartlaub.¹ The text remains exclusively published in its original German, and so I have been most effectively able to access its content through an English review written by the British artist and critic, Walter Sickert, published in 1924. Sickert foregrounds Hartlaub's text with the consideration that German scholarship lacks the quality of decisiveness that he should prefer, stating that the account is “One of the laboriously fair and almost too humble estimations which we expect from German criticism”.² Hartlaub’s account is at once remedied by Sickert’s indictment of Doré, that he “touched nothing that he did not spoil”.³ Sickert continues to quote Hartlaub to illustrate their concurrent disregard for Doré: “Herr Hartlaub describes the paintings that we can remember as “dragged into existence and painted to death”, as not painting at all in the proper sense, but gigantic, coloured illustrations in oil.” Sickert’s dissonant account of Hartlaub’s text, making for its core argument that the works in contention are so unimpressive to the trained eye that the reviewer fails to remember that for which he is writing, is demonstrated by their altogether lack of mention within the article.

Sickert conclusively assaults Doré’s oeuvre from youth to maturity, stating that “if the sacred oil paintings of Doré’s maturity were bad, the secular and jocular lithographs of his youth were as bad in their own way.” From this mention of Doré’s early career in illustration, Sickert tangentially informs his reader that Doré, by virtue of this biography, should not only be considered a disreputable artist, but also held

¹ G.F. Hartlaub, *Gustave Doré* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, c. 1920).

Possessing only a basic knowledge of the German language, I have not been able to access this text to the full extent that I would wish. I have chosen to focus on bettering my proficiency of the French language, as much of the research conducted for the completion of the thesis has been necessarily carried out using French texts.

² Walter Sickert, review of G.F. Hartlaub, *Gustave Doré* in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 45, No. 258 (September, 1924): p. 153.

Sickert’s translations.

³ Ibid.

accountable for having “precipitated the artistic ruin of book illustration” in that he is the founder of the *prachtwerk*, or illustration by unskilled letterpress engraving. The review is parted with in Sickert’s final comment, that Hartlaub “will find no one to contradict him”.

Perhaps unsurprisingly after Hartlaub’s “laborious” criticism, no revisionist account of Doré was published for the next two decades, until the publication of another eponymous biography by the British historian, Millicent Rose.⁴ A well-regarded scholar of the social history of Victorian London, in particular the East End, Rose published a distinctly more optimistic account of Doré in 1946, devoting principal focus to the thus far unexplored book collaboration of 1869 – 72 by Doré and the British journalist, William Blanchard Jerrold, *London: A Pilgrimage*.⁵

Rose’s account, informed by a detailed analysis of *London: A Pilgrimage*, lends its focus to exploring Doré’s affinity for the rising popularity of nationalism in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but also to what is read as a clear social prejudice for the urban poor of Victorian London, wholly contradictory with his well-documented idealism of the rural poor of his homeland, Alsace. Doré’s contempt for urbanisation is further explored by Rose in her commentary on the 1871 caricatures of the Paris communards following the siege of Paris in the Franco-Prussian War, and the mob.⁶ Rose also, for the first time in English, engages, although in brief, with Doré’s little-known experimentation in sculpture. The monumental bronze vase, *The Poem of the Vine* conceived in 1878 (Fig. 31), standing four metres tall, was designed as the centrepiece for the French winemaking display at the Paris Exposition Universelle of the same year, but was rejected and remained uncast until 1882, the year before Doré’s

⁴ Millicent Rose, *Gustave Doré* (London & Hertford: Pleiades, 1946).

⁵ William Blanchard Jerrold, Gustave Doré (ills.), *London: A Pilgrimage* (London, 1872).

⁶ Millicent Rose, *Gustave Doré* (London & Hertford: Pleiades, 1946), p. 44.

death. Typical of his later work, the vase is considered by Rose to evoke “a predication for allegorical subjects of a melancholy kind”.⁷

In a review of Rose’s monograph in the following year, written for the London *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Nicolette Gray commended the importance of Rose’s biography, stating that “it is good to have a book on Doré. The contemporary biographies of Jerrold and Blanche Roosevelt contain invaluable material, but there is no critical, well-illustrated estimate of his work.”⁸ It is observed by Gray that some of Doré’s illustrations are “unforgettable”, although he himself might be considered somewhat forgettable, for he is recognisable as neither a French nor a British artist. Gray regards *London: A Pilgrimage* to be Doré’s greatest work, but not because as Rose suggests, it provokes him in some deep-seated disdain for the urban poor, but because he treats a contemporary theme which successfully resonated with his most supportive audience, the British, who too shared concern for the aesthetic decline of London as the city became increasingly industrialised. A sensationalism that arises in the literature of this period, is of the inconsistent reception of Doré’s great ambition to illustrate editions of all of the masterpieces of literature: Epic, Comedy and Tragedy. Gray focusses on two pertinent points in her review in this regard, that it is through looking at Doré’s illustration that the inconsistency of his engraving is revealed, and that “it is unfortunate that [Doré] thought that tragic authors could only be illustrated in the classical style.” She regards these two issues as a “rare abuse of talent”.⁹

In 1973 a further biography was published by the British art critic, Nigel Gosling, sensationally self-styled as the “first full account in English this century... of an incredibly prolific artist whose fertile imagination expressed the energy of the

⁷ Millicent Rose, *Gustave Doré* (London & Hertford: Pleiades, 1946), p. 47.

⁸ Nicolette Gray, review of Millicent Rose, *Gustave Doré* in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 89, No. 535 (October, 1947): p. 293.

⁹ Ibid.

Industrial Revolution.”¹⁰ We might consider by this statement that Gosling was either unaware of, or did not recognise the importance of Rose’s 1946 biography, which treats many of the same subjects. Gosling follows a similar approach to Rose, giving focus to Doré’s artistic presence in Victorian London, but enters in further concentration into Doré’s career as an illustrator, and uniquely documents its controversial contemporary reception in London. His illustrative career is subdivided into chapter-headed categories, which are each preceded by a biographical account. The given categories are ‘Satire’, ‘Adventure’, ‘Horror’, ‘Awe’, ‘Realism’ and ‘Compassion’. ‘Horror’, of particular pertinence to this study, gives attention to the surprising disaffection found in London for Doré’s Grotesque illustrations, where he was in all other genres and media, celebrated. Gosling observes that “there is hardly a book illustrated by Doré... which does not contain some image of violent death or savage maiming.”¹¹ British critics’ greatest issue with Doré’s work was his “disgusting” obsession with violence. This is taken by Gosling to suggest the potential of “some disturbance in Doré’s personality”; “an anxiety and aggressiveness” that is most revealingly demonstrated through his obsession with chimeras and giants, which feature in almost all of his illustration, and indeed, evoke the sort of monsters in the canvasses of 1870 – 71 which this study proposes to explore.¹² Gosling regards Doré’s proposed obsession as an artistic link to the Symbolists, particularly Gustave Moreau. Without providing examples of Doré’s painting, perhaps in the fashion of Hartlaub’s negative criticism of c. 1920, imploringly, Gosling concludes his study with the insistence that “[Doré’s] entire output as an oil painter must be written off. His fellow Frenchmen never accepted this side of his work; he knew this and the knowledge helped to kill him.”¹³

¹⁰ Nigel Gosling, *Gustave Doré* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973).

¹¹ Nigel Gosling, *Gustave Doré* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), p. 57.

¹² Nigel Gosling, *Gustave Doré* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), p. 64.

¹³ Nigel Gosling, *Gustave Doré* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), p. 81.

John Milner's 2000 monograph, *Art, War and Revolution in France, 1870 – 71*, marks the first contemporary engagement with Doré's wartime painting.¹⁴ The text, a dedicated study of French artists' works during the Franco-Prussian War and reminiscences in later years, gives principal focus to the oeuvre of Ernest Meissonier, including detailed passages on such later works as his allegorical canvas, *The Siege of Paris*, completed in 1884 (Fig. 30). Despite incorporating the better-known of his wartime works, Milner's account of Doré during the Franco-Prussian War is sparse, offering little more attention than short and often incomplete inventorinal accounts.

The Dahesh Museum of Art's exhibition catalogue for the 2007 retrospective, *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, comprises three critical studies on major aspects of Doré's career.¹⁵ Of the three, Small's 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery', a dedicated study on Doré's involvement in the Franco-Prussian War is by far the most useful modern resource to this study, and whilst not making a full account of his major works of the period, the essay explores the war's outbreak, the siege of Paris and the Paris Commune, introducing an invaluable corpus of period literature.¹⁶

The catalogue was reviewed in the year following its publication by Peter Cooke, writing for the London *Burlington Magazine*.¹⁷ Cooke disclosed that despite the catalogue's publication, the exhibition for which it was written was quietly and mysteriously cancelled. He continued to take issue with the cancellation having not been openly stated within the text. In his deduction, it was surmised that the cancellation may account for why the relatively small selection of works are for the

¹⁴ John Milner, *Art, War and Revolution in France 1870 – 71. Myth, Reportage and Reality* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007.

¹⁶ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 39–61.

¹⁷ Peter Cooke, review of Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré* in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 156, No. 1262, 'French Art and Artists' (May, 2008): p. 339.

most part, those resident in North American collections.¹⁸ Whilst the catalogue does not account for its incomplete roster of Doré's works, Robert Rosenblum in 'Resurrecting Gustave Doré' admits that there is still insufficient literature on the subjects for which the catalogue's essays give focus: "we need new ways of integrating Doré into the history of 19th century art".¹⁹ Cooke regards the text as typical of exhibition catalogues, in that it is somewhat lacking in depth and interpretation, compounded by its incomplete inventory, although he adds that the final essay, Zafran's 'Doré's Subjects' is a more extensive and satisfactorily detailed study than its companions.²⁰ This is perhaps owing to the already-rich reception of Doré's illustrative and lithographic career.

The publication of an accompanying catalogue to the 2012 Bourg-en-Bresse exhibition, *Gustave Doré: Un Peinture-né*, makes further contributions to the still limited reception of Doré's controversial artistic consideration as a major painter.²¹ Jérôme Ponterollo's 'Doré, témoin de son temps' offers a broad reception of the major social and political events which Doré experienced during his lifetime, proposing in a pertinent passage on the Franco-Prussian War, that the culmination of his intense nationalism and fundamental religious values led him to transcend artistic traditions and experiment in the composition of non-religious triptychs.²² Whilst the catalogue uniquely explores the period that this study gives focus, it is still, as with the remainder of the relevant literary corpus, an incomplete and less ambitious study than for which I would argue there is potential.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Robert Rosenblum, 'Resurrecting Gustave Doré, in in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 21.

²⁰ Peter Cooke, review of Eric Zafran (ed.,) *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré* in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 156, No. 1262, 'French Art and Artists' (May, 2008): p. 339.

²¹ *Gustave Doré : Un Peinture-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012.

²² Jérôme Ponterollo, 'Doré, témoin de son temps' in *Gustave Doré : Un peintre-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012, pp. 123-125.

The most recent relevant publication on Doré is the accompanying catalogue to the Musée d'Orsay's 2014 retrospective, *Doré: Master of Imagination*.²³ The text is considerably larger than both those of the Dahesh Museum and the Monastère Royal de Brou, comprising an impressive retinue of twenty essays authored in total by fourteen scholars. Each essay explores a different aspect of Doré's oeuvre, from the jocular sketches of his youth, to his illustration of literary classics, engraving, painting, and his late venture into bronze and marble sculpture in the 1870s and 1880s. Whilst the remaining nineteen essays are of excellent depth and rigour, Côme Fabre's 'The Enigma', an eponymous study on the major painting of 1871 depicting in allegory, a scene from the siege of Paris, is by far the shortest and least incisive essays component to the catalogue.²⁴ Four of its five pages are full-page illustrations, and the entry borrows heavily from those tentatively offered by Lisa Small in 2007, offering little in the way of new interpretation. In fact, Bertrand Tillier's essay, 'The Stylization of History', which precedes Fabre's 'The Enigma', whilst committing to a more general study of the Franco-Prussian War period, exploring the development of photo-journalism and other forms of war correspondence between the American Civil (1861 – 65) and Franco-Prussian (1870 – 71) wars, offers a more substantial reading of the work for which Tillier's contribution is dedicated.²⁵

²³ Philippe Kaenel (ed.), *Doré: Master of Imagination*, Musée d'Orsay exhib. cat., Flammarion, 2014.

²⁴ Côme Fabre, 'The Enigma' in Philippe Kaenel (ed.), *Doré: Master of Imagination*, Musée d'Orsay exhib. cat., Flammarion, 2014, pp. 170-174.

²⁵ Bertrand Tillier, 'The Stylization of History' in Philippe Kaenel (ed.), *Doré: Master of Imagination*, Musée d'Orsay exhib. cat., Flammarion, 2014 pp. 157-169.

CHAPTER ONE

The ‘Zouave de la peinture’: Doré on The Crimean War

By the mid-1850s, Doré, had already established a reputation for political satire at Charles Philippon’s *Journal Pour rire* and begun in his career as a book illustrator. It was during this period of early success that he found an opportunity to exercise his artistic talents in a new and more serious medium, history painting. This was facilitated by the surprising Anglo-French intervention in one of the many Russo-Turkish wars of the nineteenth century, against the threateningly expansionist Russia of Tsar Nicholas I. The Russian invasion of Ottoman-controlled Moldavia and Wallachia in July 1853 had been issued with the surety that the Porte’s Christian allies would never offer military aid to a Muslim power.²⁶ But as it became apparent that the tsar’s real intention was to seize Constantinople (Istanbul) from the collapsing Ottoman Empire as the strategic gateway from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean (signalled by significant developments in the Russian navy), Britain and France, concerned by the threat of Russian expansion into Europe, declared war on 27 and 28 March 1854, respectively.²⁷ Joint preparations were made to halt Russian naval potential by destroying its headquarters at the major port city of Sevastopol, in the Russian Crimea. Five months later, British and French troops landed on the Crimean Peninsula, where the three major battles of the conflict were fought whilst the city endured a year-long siege. These

²⁶ Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004), pp. 1 – 3.

²⁷ Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004), p. 19.

battles took place at Alma on 20 September, Balaklava on 25 October and Inkerman on 5 November 1854.

In the following year, 1855, the war in the Crimea proved a popular subject at Napoleon III's Exposition Universelle, the second in a series of World's Fairs following in the fashion of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. The Anglo-French alliance against Russia had succeeded in fostering an unprecedented artistic exchange between the two nations, which had for the last 500 years fought each other almost without pause.²⁸

Doré at just twenty-two years of age submitted alongside two landscapes, titled *Le Soir* and *La Prairie*, a commemoration of the Battle of Alma (Fig. 1). Not only was this Doré's first engagement with conflict in the medium of history painting, but also a particularly lauded contribution to what his earliest biographer, René Delorme, writing in 1879, considered to be the first exhibition in which he took part "in a serious way".²⁹ The battle itself was regarded as a decisive victory, with the French army having near single-handedly won the day, distinctly outperforming their poorly-managed British allies. Doré chose to depict the daring moment in which the Zouaves, the famously effective irregulars drawn from the North African colony of *Algérie française*, surprised and overran a commanding artillery position on the Russian extreme right flank by scaling a cliff which rose some fifty metres above the Alma River.³⁰

Amidst Doré's busy and, we might surmise, large canvas, Zouaves and Chasseurs charge furiously with bayoneted Minié rifles up the heights towards the surprised and outnumbered Russian artillery. Doré's closely observed scene is attested

²⁸ See: Patrick Noon (ed.), *Constable to Delacroix: British Art and the French Romantics 1820 – 1840*, exhib. cat., Tate Publishing, 2003.

²⁹ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 18.

« Ainsi, à la première exposition à laquelle le peintre prend part d'une manière sérieuse, il reçoit le glorieux baptême de notre plus grand critique. »

My translations.

³⁰ Ironically, France had invaded Ottoman North Africa and annexed Algiers in 1830.

to by his depiction of the prominent men of rank involved in the assault. General Bosquet, the commanding officer, can be identified on horseback off-centre rallying the troops forward, as can Lieutenant Lepoitevin, shown central with a sabre, who as he reaches the summit is depicted in the moment that he is shot dead. Lepoitevin's death, which was perpetuated in France as that of a hero, is specifically incorporated by Doré to emphasise his nation's military eminence. Although we may reasonably assume that the canvas was composed in oil colours, as were his other submissions, only a monochrome photoprint produced by Goupil & Cie survives.³¹

The print is accompanied by commentary written in both French and in English:

« *Le 20^e Septembre à midi, le maréchal St. Arnaud donné le signal de l'attaque, la 2e division, commandée par le général Bosquet, ayant franchi Alma et enlevé l'extrême gauche des Russes sous la protection des flottes alliées, tandis que l'armée Anglaise abordait leur l'extrême droite, les 1^{re} et 3^e divisions commandées par le maréchal se précipitèrent au centre, à travers les jardins, escaladant des Falaises perpendiculaires à pic et sont reçues par un feu nourri de 180 pièces de canon. Le lieutenant Lepoitevin trouve une morte glorieuse en plantant sur les hauteurs de la drapeau le France ! A 4.h ½ la victoire est complète l'ennemi est en pleine déroute et la journée de l'Alma est une belle page à ajouter à nos fastes militaires.* »

“On the 20th September at noon, Marshal St. Arnaud gave the signal to commence the attack, the 2nd division, commanded by Gen. Bosquet, traversed Alma and carried the extreme left of the Russians under the protection of the allied fleets, in the mean while the English army fell upon their extreme right, the 1st and 3rd divisions commanded by the Marshal rushed upon the centre, through the gardens, scaling perpendicular cliffs and were received by a most galling fire from 180 cannons. Lieutenant Lepoitevin met a glorious death while in the act of planting the banner of France upon the heights! At half past four they were completely routed, and the day of the Alma is another glorious page to be added to our military annals.”

Two of the Exposition Universelle's French critics, Edmond About and Théophile Gautier, who suspiciously happened to be old schoolfriends friends of Doré, gave particular attention to the artistic potential demonstrated in his *Bataille de l'Alma*.

³¹ Monochrome photoprint produced by Goupil & Cie in 1855, sourced from the Bibliothèque Nationale's digital archive:

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53100084k/f1.item.zoom>

Gautier noted that history painting was a new pictorial mode for Doré, and that he had well-captured the essence of a battlefield through the close detail of his soldiers and the impression of fast movement in the Zouaves' decisive charge. Gautier commented further in mild criticism, that the scene appeared rushed in execution, and alluded to an imitation of the Dutch style in stating that "it is believed, in some muddy tones, that the artist has not even taken the time to wipe his brush."³² Gautier's reception was concluded on the prophetic note that the young Doré possessed "a fury which surpasses that of Goya", further comparing his submitted work's quality to that of Tintoretto, Velasquez and allusively, Rubens.³³

Edmond About wrote much to the same effect, also commenting that although he considered one of the two submitted landscapes to be "of a beautiful feeling and a great aspect", it could not be observed in close detail due to its having been disappointingly 'skied'. Doré was considered to have demonstrated a various competency in both

³² René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), pp. 17 – 18.

« *M. Gustave Doré, dans sa Bataille de l'Alma, s'est éloigné des dispositions habituelles ; il a fait une bataille, les soldats : les zouaves escaladent les pentes rapides de la montagne avec une impétuosité tumultueuse, culbutant les Russes surpris. Le mouvement ascensionnel de la vaillante cohorte est très bien rendu ; on dirait un torrent qui rebrousse vers la source. Les épisodes disparaissent dans le tourbillon, et l'œil ne saisit aucun détail. L'exécution, beaucoup trop rapide, dépasse en fougue les esquisses les plus fiévreuse et l'on croirait, à certains tons boueux, que l'artiste n'a pas même pris le temps d'essuyer son pinceau.* »

M. Gustave Doré, in his *Battle of Alma*, is far from the usual dispositions; he made a battle, the soldiers: the Zouaves climb the fast slopes of the mountain with a tumultuous impetuosity, overthrowing the surprised Russians. The ascending movement of the valiant cohort is very well made; it looks like a torrent that turns back to the source. The episodes disappear in the whirlwind, and the eye does not capture any details. The execution, much too fast, goes beyond the fiercest sketches and it is believed, in some muddy tones, that the artist has not even taken the time to wipe his brush.
My translations.

³³ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 18.

« *Son atelier regorge de toiles par immenses toiles [avec] une furie qui dépasse celle de Goya, puis laissées et reprises, ou dans un chaos de couleurs, étincelant des morceaux de premier ordre : une tête, un torse, un pourpoint, enlevés comme pourraient le faire Rubens, Tintoret ou Velasquez... Dès à présent, à travers les vapeurs brille un rayon de génie ; oui de génie, un mot nous ne sommes pas prodigue : il est bien entendu que nous parlons seulement de l'avenir du peintre.* »
My translations.

landscape and history painting: “the Zouaves and the flowers of the fields.” Edmond About paid particular notice to the *Bataille de l’Alma*’s unusual composition, in that it did not, in the popular tradition of the *genre historique*, give its focus to the “princes” of the scene; the martyred Lepoitevin or Bosquet and his staff. Instead, the focus of the scene is the moment itself, with the officers factually situated where they might have actually been during the assault, blending into the chaotic “pushing shouting pell-mell”. This was considered “in the same spirit” as Jules Michelet’s monumental *Histoire de France* (1833 – 67), which had earlier in that year resumed progress after an eight-year hiatus. Michelet, the first historian to consider the Renaissance, on which he was writing in 1855, to mark the definitive end of the Medieval period, was famous for his insistence that history should account for the common people, rather than only those who held power. About’s reception concluded with the very high praise that for his submissions, Doré was not merely an artist: if the Zouave irregulars were the heroes of the Battle of Alma, then Doré, irregular in his own way, was a “Zouave of painting”.³⁴

³⁴ Ibid.

« Le peu qu'on a reçu prouve que vous savez peindre les paysages et les batailles, les zouaves et la fleur des champs. Votre paysage de peupliers est d'un beau sentiment et d'un grand aspect ; mais il est juché si haut, qu'il faudrait deux échelles bout à bout pour en voir quelque chose. On vous a porté aux nues du premier coup, et votre mérite comme paysagiste n'est visible qu'au télescope. Votre bataille de l'Alma est une œuvre originale. Tous les peintres d'histoire installent au premier plan un général avec son état-major. La fumée, les soldats et la pousserie s'agitent pêle-mêle dans le fond. Pour vous, vous avez eu l'idée originale et généreuse de faire une bataille de soldats. C'est dans le même esprit que M. Michelet a écrit l'*Histoire de France*, reléguant les princes au fond du tableau, et donnant la place d'honneur au héros véritable, le peuple. Vos chasseurs à pied et vos zouaves se battent avec une belle furie ; vous étiez né pour retracer ces mêlées fougueuses, ces combats corps à corps et cette intempérance de courage : vous êtes-vous-même un zouave de la peinture. »

The little we have received proves that you know how to paint landscapes and battles, the Zouaves and the flowers of the fields. Your poplar landscape is of a beautiful feeling and a great aspect; but it is so high that it would take two ladders end to end to see something. You were brought to the skies the first time, and your merit as a landscapist is visible only by telescope. Your *Battle of Alma* is an original work. All history painters install in the first plan a general with his staff. The smoke, the soldiers and the pushing shouting pell-mell in the background. For you, you had the original and generous idea to make a battle of soldiers. It is in the same spirit that M. Michelet has written the history of France, relegating the princes to the bottom of the picture, and giving the place of honour to the true hero, the people. Your Chasseurs à Pied and your Zouaves fight with a beautiful fury; you are not here to retrace these fiery melees, these fights body to body and this intemperance of courage: you are yourself a Zouave of painting.

My translations.

Delorme details the discontent felt by About and Gautier at the absence of a fourth submission to the Exposition Universelle, *Le Meurtre de Riccio* (Fig. 2).³⁵ The only literature to acknowledge Doré's early experimentation in historical genre painting which evokes the waning fashion of Delaroche, is The Dahesh Museum of Art's accompanying catalogue to the 2007 New York exhibition, *Fantasy and Faith*.³⁶ The work is mentioned only once in the catalogue's introductory pages given to chronology, in which Zafran, the catalogue's editor, notes under the year 1855 that *Le Meurtre de Riccio* was rejected from the Exposition Universelle, although no citation is provided.

Moreover, Doré's depiction of this British legend which speaks to nationalistic hegemony at such a crucial time for Anglo-French relations, appears to have been subject to no engagement since its rejection in 1855. *Le Meurtre de Riccio*, it seems clear, is a second, politically charged work regarding the war in the Crimea in the form of an allegory. Its subject concerns the murder of Davide Rizzio, the hated Italian adviser to Mary, Queen of Scots on 9 March 1566. Rizzio had arrived in Edinburgh in 1561 as a musician in the entourage of the ambassador of the Duke of Savoy, and thereafter remained at court as a member of Mary's choir. By March 1566, Mary was heavily pregnant and Rizzio had for some years been her inseparable confidant. It was suspected by her jealous husband, Lord Darnley, that the pregnancy was by Rizzio, and so he conspired with Lord Ruthven, Sir William Kirkcaldy and other Scots nobles to have Rizzio brutally dispatched. The cohort of conspirators entered the Queen's supper room in Holyroodhouse after the two had dined together and stabbed Rizzio over fifty

³⁵ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), pp. 17 – 18.

³⁶ See: Stephen Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted* (London: Reaktion, 1997). Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 13.

times, whilst Lord Darnley restrained his pregnant queen. Rizzio's body was stripped and thrown down flights of stairs before being buried in an unmarked grave.³⁷

This legend was to be revived to symbolise the culmination of the Anglo-French alliance in the Crimean War, in its ultimate goal of triumphing over Russia's tyrannical ambitions in Europe. The carefully chosen British subject by a French artist communicates the clear intention of the alliance, substituting Rizzio as the Russian 'other'. Doré's scene depicts the moment at which Rizzio is dragged into the queen's bedchamber and murdered by his assailants, with a frantic Mary restrained by her husband as she clutches at one conspirator's sleeve in desperate protest. Witnessed by obscured figures in the background, four of the assailants thrust stiletto daggers into Rizzio's side, torso and face, as a fifth inspects the scene whilst leaning over his rapier.³⁸

A plausible explanation may be offered as to why the much-anticipated canvas was not shown at the Exposition Universelle of 1855: that its historical context had become compromised by current events. In January of the same year, the Italian Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia entered the Crimean War as a tertiary ally of Britain and France, committing 10,000 troops to the campaign to seize Sevastopol. The reason that this event may be seen to have compromised Doré's submission, is that Rizzio himself was Piedmontese. After the event, Doré's Rizzio may have been read as more indicative of the Italian troops committed to the Crimean War, than as a symbol of Russia. In this

³⁷ See: David Tweedie, *David Rizzio & Mary Queen of Scots: Murder at Holyrood* (Stroud: Sutton, 2007).

³⁸ It is important to take note of the type of armament which is used to assail Rizzio. The Stiletto daggers which the conspirators use is a contemporary symbol of the knightly class, developed in Italy in the late fifteenth century and commonly worn as a sidearm by armoured combatants on the battlefield. The French term *Miséricorde*, or 'Act of Mercy', was adopted to denote such daggers as Stilettos, and their function in the context of the Late-Medieval battlefield, as that of delivering a killing blow between the gaps in armour, so to spare a defeated combatant of a slow and painful death. For Rizzio, the concept of the *Miséricorde* is in fact rejected by his assailants, who stab him repeatedly and indecisively, intending for him to suffer.

case, the allegory would read not as Britain and France dispatching Russia, but as them turning on their new Italian ally.

Doré had in fact been working on the subject of the Crimean War since before the allies' arrival at Sevastopol in September 1854. Probably in the August of that year he published a two hundred-page satirical pamphlet complete with over five hundred illustrations, which would become popularly known by the abbreviated *Sainte Russie*.³⁹ David Kunzle has suggested, writing for the *Russian Review* in 1983, that the pamphlet caused concern in publishers because of a potentially juvenile sense of comedy, which might have been deemed inappropriate as public support for the war soon vanished in the face of heavy casualties and the loss of the campaign's anticipated momentum.⁴⁰

Although the French army, many of whom were veterans of the ongoing pacification of Algeria (in which tribal rebellions and razzias against colonial rule had persisted since 1835), distinctly outperformed the untested British army in terms of organisation, neither ally was adequately prepared for the first winter spent in the Crimea. What little field hospitals there were lacked adequate supplies, which led to severe outbreaks of cholera and dysentery.⁴¹ Winter clothing for the troops had been an oversight, and had not been ordered in time for the climate setting-in, resulting in many cases of frostbite and death due to exposure in the trenches. The appalling conditions of winter warfare in the Crimea which Kunzle alludes to, are argued as the perhaps reason

³⁹ Gustave Doré, *Histoire pittoresque, dramatique et caricaturale de la Sainte Russie d'après les chroniqueurs et historiens Nestor, Nikan, Sylvestre, Karamsin, Segur, etc.* (Paris: de Bry, 1854). Kunzle attributes the publication of the pamphlet to the August of 1854, during which time the French army was preparing to cross the Black Sea for Sevastopol. Doré's lack of explicit reference to Sevastopol or the battles of Alma and Balaclava, are taken as indicative that the entire book was published before the army crossed into the Crimea in the September of 1854. It is also noted that during the August there was an unaccounted-for hiatus in Doré's usually regular contributions to the *Journal pour rire*.

Kunzle, David., 'Gustave Doré's History of Holy Russia: Anti-Russian Propaganda from the Crimean War to the Cold War' in *The Russian Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (July., 1983).

⁴⁰ David Kunzle, 'Gustave Doré's History of Holy Russia: Anti-Russian Propaganda from the Crimean War to the Cold War' in *The Russian Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (July., 1983), pp. 281 – 88.

⁴¹ For a full account of the allies' first winter spent in the Crimea, see: Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004), pp. 194 – 208.

why only one publisher printed the book, de Bry, who, he adds, were convinced only by the great success of Doré's 600-page Grotesque anthology, the *Œuvre de Rabelais* which had been published by Bry Ainé earlier in that year.⁴² Kunzle suggests that the uncertainty felt towards the success of the pamphlet, might be why it was produced as cheaply as possible, printed on thin newsprint paper and priced at just four Francs.⁴³ Probably because the *Sainte Russie* was published only once during Doré's lifetime, it is thought to have been regarded in its time as a commercial failure. On the other hand, although with the benefit of hindsight, Delorme reminisces fondly about the text, poetically commenting “never was a more terrible pamphlet shot against an enemy.”⁴⁴

Doré's *Picturesque, Dramatic and Caricatural History of Holy Russia after the Chroniclers and Historians Nestor, Nikan, Sylvester, Karamsin, Segur, etc.* begins with humorous depictions of a well-known Russian origin myth. Commentary coupled with illustrations divulge that the first Russian was born in “round about the year 2 or 2 ½”, shaggy-haired and with a full beard, after the sinful union of a handsome bear named Polnor and a “lazy-smiled” young walrus cow.⁴⁵ They, along with their progeny are illustrated in an almost nativity-like scene inside a cave (Figs. 32, 33). The bearded infant makes a belligerent gesture towards the viewer as his parents in the background share a warm embrace.

⁴² Gustave Doré, *Œuvre de Rabelais* (Paris: J. Bry Ainé, 1854).

⁴³ David Kunzle, ‘Gustave Doré’s History of Holy Russia: Anti-Russian Propaganda from the Crimean War to the Cold War’ in *The Russian Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (July., 1983): pp. 281 – 88.

⁴⁴ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 49.

« *Jamais pamphlet plus terrible ne fut lancé contre un ennemi.* »

My translations.

⁴⁵ Gustave Doré, Daniel Weissbort (trans.), *The Rare and Extraordinary History of Holy Russia*, 1854 (New York: The Library Press, 1971), p. 3.
Weissbort’s translations.

Weissbort’s evocative title is the most recent of the modern republications of the *Sainte Russie*.

Sources for the legend conflict however, as Doré is quick to note. Some say that it was not a walrus, but a penguin that mothered the first Russian. Doré further demeans the Russian legend in dismissing the issue, noting that “to return to the origins of this story would be like climbing the Urals”.⁴⁶ This throwaway remark barely hides a deeply racist demarcation between what Doré considers to be the superior culture of Europe and its inferior Russian counterpart, since the Urals provide a significant divide between the continents of Europe and Asia. An historical account then follows, focussing especially on what are considered to be the violent and barbaric autocracies of the tsars, and engaging on the final pages with current events in Russia, the Crimean War. Doré’s continued ‘othering’ of Russia from the very origin story of its people, is used in duality as a counter-narrative in support of his own propagation of French nationalism.

The strongest example of this propagandic visual mode, somewhat in the manner of Daumier, is Doré’s depiction of Napoleon III, who with immense enjoyment cradles a struggling but helpless Tsar Nicholas I in his lap, ramming the jumbled date 1812 down his throat with the stock of his rifle (Fig. 34.).⁴⁷

Alongside the engraving are the words:

“You’ve been mumbling 1812 between your teeth long enough, old chap, now you can stuff it down your gullet...”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Gustave Doré, Daniel Weissbort (trans.), *The Rare and Extraordinary History of Holy Russia*, 1854 (London: Alcove Press, 1972), p. 203.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Weissbort’s translations.

The date, 1812, refers to Napoleon I's disastrous Russian Campaign, which, after its abandonment, resulted in the dissolution of the First Empire and Napoleon's first abdication. Early in 1812 when relations broke down, Napoleon and his vast European empire declared war and began preparations for a summer campaign into Russia. On 24 June 1812, when Napoleon crossed the River Niemen into Russia, he commanded the largest invasion force ever assembled: 1,200 cannon, 250,000 horses and 615,000 troops, nearly half of whom (48%) were foreign troops drawn from across the Empire. The largest foreign contingent was of Poles, with the rest being of: Austrians, Prussians, Westphalians, Würtembergers, Saxons, Bavarians, Swiss, Dutch, Illyrians, Dalmatians, Neapolitans, Croats, Romans, Piedmontese, Florentines, Hessians, Badeners, Spaniards and Portuguese. There was even a squadron of Egyptian Mamluks attached to the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Old Guard.⁴⁹

Oversight in regard to the competency of the Russian officer corps, over half of whom were veterans of up to six battles, resulted in the Grande Armée being drawn deep into the inhospitable Russian hinterland in pursuit of the tsar's armies, which tactfully avoided fighting pitched battles; the pursuit was to span 800 miles from The Niemen to Moscow.⁵⁰ When the Grande Armée finally reached Moscow, they found it abandoned and razed. With the tsar, who was safely out of reach at his Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, refusing to negotiate, the winter climate setting-in and provisions spent, the Grande Armée had no choice but to abandon their offensive and retreat from Moscow back to Poland. During the retreat, the army, ill-equipped for the extreme conditions of the Russian winter succumbed to attrition, sporadic raids by the feared Cossacks and the devastating spread of typhus or 'war plague', by lice.⁵¹ When the

⁴⁹ Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon the Great* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 557.

⁵⁰ Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon the Great* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 576.

⁵¹ Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon the Great* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 589.

Grande Armée crossed the River Berezina, nearing Poland, only 30,000 of the 615,000 troops remained, with less than 1,000 ever able to return to active service.

It is understandable, from the perspective of France during the 1850s, the disaster of 1812 still considered unavenged, why such opportunities to attack Russia were taken so eagerly and with such volatility as in Doré's engraving. In contrast to Kunzle's suggestion that the *Sainte Russie* was a failure, Delorme reminisces about the book's critical success between 1854 and 1856.⁵² To be sure, Delorme admits that when peace between Russia and the allies was negotiated at the Congress of Paris on 30 March 1856, the *Sainte Russie*, considered to be profane in Russia, was confiscated from all booksellers by the French authorities and destroyed. This is described as "an act of peace towards the conquered" by the French government. Delorme, whilst, it should be noted, writing as an art biographer with the intention of celebrating the value and rarity of Doré's oeuvre, concludes his passage on the subject with an expression of lament that after the confiscation of the *Sainte Russie*, "no copies can be found today".⁵³

Doré's last engagement with the Crimean War came in 1857, the year following the conflict's end. He was one among eighteen artists commissioned between 1855 and 1861 by Napoleon III to compose a history painting for the Salle de Crimée, a new room at the Museum of French History at Versailles which was dedicated to commemorating the war.⁵⁴ Doré's subject was a representation of The Battle of

⁵² René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 49.

« Après la prise de Sébastopol et la conclusion de la paix, le gouvernement, voulant apaiser les esprits et faire acte d'urbanité envers le vaincu, fit acheter et détruire tous exemplaires qu'on put recueillir dans les libraires. »

My translations.

⁵³ Ibid.

« Malheureusement, le livre est introuvable aujourd'hui. »

My translations.

⁵⁴ See: Thoma, Julia., 'Panorama of War: The Salle de Crimée in Versailles' in *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring, 2016).

Doré is mentioned as a contributing artist to the 1857 Salon, although only in passing.

Inkerman (Fig. 3), which he hoped would mark his “serious beginning” as a painter.⁵⁵

Still unfinished when it was submitted at the 1857 Salon, it received an honourable mention and was again particularly lauded by Edmond About, as well as by a new admirer, the politician and art critic Charles Perrier.⁵⁶

The battle, fought atop the rocky, scrub-covered no man’s land of Inkerman Ridge, was both the final major engagement and the bloodiest battle of the Crimean War.⁵⁷ It was characterised, as Doré chose to depict, by the heroic defence mounted by the 3,500 men of the British Second Division under the command of Sir George de Lacy Evans. At dawn on 5 November 1854, a large Russian force descended south from their position, through thick fog and steady drizzle into the valley below and towards the British right.⁵⁸ Owing to the fog in the valley, the size of the attacking force was unclear, and de Lacy Evans ordered the Second Division to descend from the hill to engage the Russians.⁵⁹ The 3,500 troops of the Second Division met a force of 15,000 Russian infantry in the valley. Repelling assault-after-assault but suffering heavy losses, the Second Division were rescued at the decisive moment by the arrival of the French army and British reinforcements.⁶⁰ Contextually intrinsic to Doré’s scene is the smug truth that the prideful and incompetent British Field Marshal, Lord Raglan, had refused French offers of reinforcement, allowing the Second Division to suffer heavily, and was eventually forced to concede, resulting in the French army once again winning the day. As with his *Bataille de l’Alma*, Doré’s *Bataille de Inkerman* is a

⁵⁵ From a letter by Doré, probably to the sculptor Émilien de Nieuwerkerke, who, in his role as general director of the museums, was the ex-officio president of the Salon jury. Doré to a “Monsieur,” May 8, 1857, *dossier Doré*, AMN, p. 30; cited in Thoma, Julia., ‘Panorama of War: The Salle de Crimée in Versailles’ in *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring, 2016).

Thoma’s Translations.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints I have been unable to access the above primary texts in earnest, and cite their nature only as is detailed in Thoma.

⁵⁷ Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004), p. 145.

⁵⁸ Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004), p. 146.

⁵⁹ Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004), pp. 143 – 159.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

crowded canvas, and only the closely observed uniforms of the mass of British Foot and French Zouaves distinguish them amidst the chaos of their decisive bayonet charge into the advancing Russian column. The column, to a similar effect, can hardly be made out through the smoke, fog and grey Russian uniforms which amalgamate into a monochrome wash, effectively denying the Russian forces of any notable pictorial presence, and emphasising the triumph of the allies.

Between the Salle de Crimée in 1857 and Doré's next engagement with conflict which came nearly a decade later in 1866, were the most successful years of his career, during which time he concentrated on his hugely successful book illustration. During this period, at characteristically astonishing speed, he produced over twenty illustrated volumes. Most notably Dante's *Inferno* in 1857, Shakespeare's *Tempest* in 1860, an anthology of Perrault's Fairy Tales in 1862, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in 1863, Chateaubriand's *Atala* in 1865, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the immensely popular King James Bible in 1866. Doré was celebrated and at the height of his popularity, moving in elite social circles "at the centre of French culture, [with] friends... such as Dumas, Gautier and Taine; musicians and performers such as Liszt, Rossini, Saint-Saens, and Adelina Patti; and of other artists Hébert and Harpignies."⁶¹

This period of success, during which time Doré amassed a vast fortune of seven million Francs through the sale of his books, was, however, still absent of the recognition he most desired as a painter.⁶² His eagerly anticipated career as an artist which had begun with the Exposition Universelle of 1855, had been wholly overshadowed by the plethora of illustrated volumes for which he had become inescapably celebrated. Nigel Gosling, a modern biographer whose 1973 monograph

⁶¹ Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 14.

⁶² Nigel Gosling, *Gustave Doré* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), p. 78.

exclusively engages in Doré's illustrative career, coins the practice “the modest medium”, which, as his fame frustrated his success in painting, he began to resent.⁶³

Doré's return to painting came in 1865, in the popular style of the *genre historique*. We might consider that the peacetime atmosphere in France had dictated a move away from the nationalist history painting of the wartime Salon, and informed by his devout Catholicism, towards apolitical genre painting. The small religious scene, *L'Ange de Tobie* (Fig. 4), despite its lack of response or acclaim, was purchased by the ever-supportive Napoleon III.⁶⁴ Two years later, in 1867, Doré exhibited another, more ambitious religious scene to the Salon, *Le Néophyte* (Fig. 5), which was badly received.⁶⁵ This step away from illustration and back towards Salon painting is characterised by Gosling as a “search for greatness which led him disastrously to ‘noble’... morally edifying themes.”⁶⁶ From the point of Doré's return to painting in 1865, Gosling defines his career as a “slow upholstered slide into mediocrity”, although I would only go so far as to concur with this point in the context of his apolitical, peacetime works.⁶⁷

As disclosed by Delorme, it would seem that Doré's experimentations in the mode of the *genre historique* at one point entered his lexicon of history painting. In the previous year, 1866, he completed a pair of little-known canvases entitled *La Paix* and *La Guerre* (Figs. VI, VII), expressing the horrors of the Austro-Prussian, or Seven Weeks' War of the same year. The war was waged by Prussia in a direct challenge to Austrian leadership of the independent states of the German Confederation, but under the pretext of the issue of the division of the jointly held province of Schleswig-Holstein

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Samuel Clapp (ed.), *Gustave Doré, 1832 – 1883*, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg exhib. cat., Strasbourg Musée d'Art Moderne, 1983, p. 94.

⁶⁵ Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 14.

⁶⁶ Nigel Gosling, *Gustave Doré* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), p. 78.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

on the Jutland Peninsula, which had been seized from Denmark in the Second Schleswig War of 1864.

Delorme, the only writer thus far to critically engage with the pair, confirms that they were composed in direct response to the massacre of the Austrian army at The Battle of Königgrätz (called the Battle of Sadowa in France), fought on 3 July.⁶⁸ The battle, pitched outside the town of Sadowa in Bohemia (Czech Republic), resulted in an overwhelming Prussian victory, and was the first time that a first-class, musket-armed army was matched against breechloading rifles – the Prussian Dreyse Needle Gun. The well-drilled Prussian infantry outfired the much larger Austrian force three-to-one, and crucially were able to reload whilst lying down, using the terrain as cover. The reason why the battle was seen as so horrific, was that Austria had refused to sign the first Geneva Convention (in the threat of offering no quarter to the Prussians). In the aftermath of the battle there was no distinction made of non-combatants entering the field, meaning that the Austrians could not remove their wounded, and many more casualties than those killed outright died where they lay, in agony.

The plates of *La Paix* and *La Guerre*, taken from the December 1870 edition of the New York periodical, *Appleton's Art Journal*, give a reasonable impression of Doré's pair, which evoke more-so than his other genre scenes, the style of Rubens which had since become popular in France.⁶⁹ although the originals are now considered lost, we may assume that the pair were composed in oil colours.⁷⁰ *La Paix* represents a tranquil farmstead and the greeting of peasants as they return home after an evening

⁶⁸ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

« Après Sadowa, il avait dessiné contre la guerre un éloquent plaidoyer en mettant en opposition deux gravures : *Le Paix* et *La Guerre*. »

My translations.

⁶⁹ See: Svetlana Alpers, *The Making of Rubens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁷⁰ 'The Chronology of the War of 1870, from Its Outbreak to the Surrender of Metz' in *Appleton's Journal: A Magazine of General Literature*, Vol. 4, No. 88 (3rd December, 1870).

harvest, while *La Guerre* shows the same scene after the passage through of an enemy army. As Delorme recounts, the village in the latter scene is “devastated to a low calcine, traversed by terrified animals, filled with the cry of orphans.”⁷¹ Unlike Doré’s patriotic images of the 1850s, this is not a glorification of war, nor a recognition of the victors. Rather, the images argue only for the tragedies of war, which we are reminded, are not only experienced by the combatants. Doré’s *La Paix* and *La Guerre* may have been so titled in homage to the great French military painter and proponent of the *genre historique*, Horace Vernet (1789 – 1863), who, having died several years earlier, had in 1820 completed a Neo-classically inspired canvas similarly entitled *Paix et Guerre* (Fig. 8).

It seems to be the case that the pair did not receive any published critique in France or abroad, contemporary with their completion. It is also unclear whether the pair were submitted to the Salon, commissioned, or later bought. The only reference to the canvasses which I have found is their incorporation in the aforementioned December 1870 edition of *Appleton’s Art Journal*, which came years after their completion and in the context of a different war: the Franco-Prussian War, not the Seven Weeks’ War for which they were originally composed.⁷² Absent of commentary, *La Paix* and *La Guerre* were refashioned as visual accompaniments to an article entitled *The Chronology of the War of 1870, from Its Outbreak to the Surrender of Metz*, which journalistically followed the progress of the war of 1870 in the United States.

⁷¹ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

« Dans la première on voyait un petit village tout au bonheur de la rentrée des paysans un soir de moisson. La seconde montrait le même village après le passage des armées ennemis, dévaste à moite calcine, parcouru par des bêtes affolées, rempli par les appels déchirants des orphelins. »
My translations.

⁷² ‘The Chronology of the War of 1870, from Its Outbreak to the Surrender of Metz’ in *Appleton’s Journal: A Magazine of General Literature*, Vol. 4, No. 88 (3rd December, 1870).

It is clear for Doré's ambitions in painting that wartime propagations of nationalism such as his scenes of the Crimean War, were fundamental points of success in his early oeuvre. This was so much recognised to be the case that within a year of his return to painting, he too returned to such historical scenes in his continued experimentations with genre painting.

CHAPTER TWO

'Dessins Patriotiques': *Images of Victory in The Franco-Prussian War*

Since its victory over Austria and assumption of leadership over the Northern German States in 1866, the eventuality of a war between France and Prussia had been considered unavoidable. Although France with its vast colonial empire in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and North Africa, was still officially seen to be the world's leading military power, the last decade under Napoleon III had been less than convincing. The emperor had proven his inaptitude for command in the Italian War of Independence of 1859, with his army suffering horrific casualties in fumbled victories against Austria at the battles of Magenta and Solferino. He had also been responsible for the disastrous Mexican Campaign of 1867, culminating in the execution of the Habsburg emperor Maximilian I. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that many in France, such as Doré in his *La Paix* and *La Guerre*, saw the Prussian threat as truly concerning, especially because Prussia, after annexing Austrian lands in 1866, shared a direct border with France along the River Rhine.

By March 1870, the outbreak of war was looming close due to an ongoing diplomatic crisis over a Hohenzollern prince having been nominated for the Spanish throne.⁷³ Effectively capturing the growing tensions in France, the well-known French animal painter, Rosa Bonheur wrote the following to a correspondent in a letter dated to 18 March:

“These rumours disturb me... there are some things about which I do not change, I have resolved to execute what is in my mind... to paint my animals and then eat them, one after another, so that if the Prussians should come, there will remain nothing for them!”⁷⁴

The Hohenzollern Crisis climaxed on 14 July 1870, Bastille Day in France. On the previous day, the French ambassador, Count Benedetti, had been received at the Prussian King, Wilhelm I's estate at Baden Ems to continue negotiations. The ambassador had been politely received, despite his orders to provoke the monarch in demanding personal assurance to the French government that the candidacy which had recently been withdrawn, would not be renewed. A telegram of the meeting was dictated by the Prussian Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck to be sent to the French press, but selectively shortened in a counter-provocation so to sound as though the ambassador had been rudely dismissed.⁷⁵ On 14 July, the French press and embassies published the unknowingly edited document, along with State officials' response to it, such as that of the Duc de Gramont, who was quoted in the French newspaper, *Le Moniteur universel*:

⁷³ See: William Carr, *The Origins of the Wars of German Unification* (London & New York: Longman, 1991) pp. 182-203.

⁷⁴ Quoted in John Milner, *Art, War and Revolution in France 1870 – 71. Myth, Reportage and Reality* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 29. Milner's translations.

⁷⁵ William Carr, *The Origins of the Wars of German Unification* (London & New York: Longman, 1991) pp. 195-97.

“After the news of the renunciation of the Prince of Hohenzollern had been communicated to the Imperial French Government by the Royal Spanish Government the French ambassador made a further demand of His Majesty the King at Baden Ems that he should authorise him to send a telegram to Paris to the effect that His Majesty undertook in perpetuity never again to give his consent should the Hohenzollerns once more renew the candidature. His Majesty the King thereupon refused to receive the ambassador again and through his adjutant informed the ambassador that he had nothing more to say.” Carr's translations.

“We have done everything to avoid a war; we shall prepare to fight the war which has been offered to us.”⁷⁶ The perceived insult on such an inspiring national holiday was received as an unforgivable slight, and an incontrovertible premise for war. Five days later, on 19 July, Napoleon III behind an incensed, “sabre-rattling” public, declared the long-anticipated Franco-Prussian War.⁷⁷

When Doré, in Paris, became aware of the conflict in which his homeland of Alsace was likely to become the theatre of war, should Prussia invade, he cancelled prior plans to travel to London, and on 27 July expressed his worry to a correspondent there, the reverend Fredrick Kill Harford, the Minor Canon of Westminster Abbey. He wrote the following to the canon, eight days after France’s declaration of war:

“You have understood, dear friend, the sad reason why I have had to put off my projected journey to London – a gigantic and terrible war, which puts France in a fever and on fire! You will understand how, under such circumstances, I should be disinclined to be absent from the country where all are uniting against the common danger which may come. Then, again, great news is expected from day to day; ...

My brother Emile, the captain, has just written to us that his division is about to take the field.”⁷⁸

Despite the clear danger which the Franco-Prussian War posed to France itself, to Doré’s brother in the army and his remaining family in Alsace, the anxieties which he expressed seem to have been short-lived. On the following day, 28 July, Napoleon III ordered the mobilisation of an expeditionary force, the Armée du Rhin, named in homage to the Revolutionary Army of 1792 which had famously invaded Austria, towards the Rhineland frontier.⁷⁹ The exhilarating spectacle of the army’s movement towards the front, poetically following in the footsteps of its namesake of 1792, seems

⁷⁶ Quoted in Joanna Richardson, *La Vie Parisienne* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), p. 24; cited in John Milner, *Art, War and Revolution in France 1870 – 71. Myth, Reportage and Reality* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 27.

Richardson’s translations.

⁷⁷ Friedrich-Wilhelm, Crown Prince of Prussia, quoted in *Moltkes Militärische Korrespondenz. Aus den Dienstschiffen des Krieges 1870 – 71* (Berlin, 1897), pp. 144 – 55; cited in Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 78.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Blanchard Jerrold, *The Life of Gustave Doré* (London: W.H. Allen & CO., 1891), pp. 285 – 86.

Jerrold’s translations.

⁷⁹ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), pp. 80 – 81.

to have quelled Doré's worry and instilled in him a vision of another great French victory in Germany. Since Doré, now thirty-eight, was too old to enlist with the army, he volunteered instead with the Garde Nationale in Paris. With access to his studio on the rue Bayard, the conflict became, for Doré, ideal fodder with which to undergo a dramatic return to history painting, in a mode now understood as Romantic Nationalism.

The preparatory sketch for an uncompleted canvas, *Les nuances des soldats français exhortent l'armée à la victoire sur le Rhin* (Fig IX), marks a notable departure for Doré from his empirical scenes of battle in the Crimean War. *La Paix* and *La Guerre* were imagined scenes of war, but real enough to have been believably taken from observation. Here, he details an altogether fantastical image of Napoleon III's expeditionary force crossing the Rhine as a "spectral host of the dead soldiers of France... [watch] in pride over the prowess of their descendants".⁸⁰ The "spectral host", that is, as interpreted by the New York monthly, *The Galaxy*, both the soldiers of Louis II, Prince of Condé, the famous general of the Thirty Years' War, and the Armée du Rhin of 1792, stand on the brow of a hill, saluting the modern army as it follows in their footsteps of conquest along the Rhine. The iconic bare-footed volunteers of 1792, as well as Fusiliers, Grenadiers, Hussars and Cuirassiers exclusively share their exchange to the sounding of cavalry bugles and clarion, with a lone female figure carrying a bayoneted rifle over her shoulder, echoing Delacroix's well-known figure of liberty (Fig. 12), and the nationalist republican effigy, Marianne.⁸¹ Her symbolic nature is reinforced by the dual interaction which she shares with the ghostly spectres and the modern army which she walks beside. The marching column of the expeditionary force

⁸⁰ McCarthy, Justin., 'Gustave Dore' in *The Galaxy*, Vol 17., No. 3 (March, 1874): p. 352; cited in Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 36.

⁸¹ See: Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789 – 1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981).

is led by an officer on horseback, rallying the army forwards with the brandishing of his sabre. Although the image is absent of the detail which it would doubtless have received, had a final canvas been completed, the officer shares a distinct resemblance to Napoleon III in facial composition, enormous goatee and moustache, and the characteristic Brigadier General's uniform in which he was commonly attired (Fig. 10).

It may appear unlikely for Doré to have featured Napoleon III, given the emperor's unpopularity by the year 1870, and the already-significant damage done to Doré's reputation in associating with him in recent years. In March 1868, he had been viciously attacked by the press after having stayed as Napoleon's personal guest at the imperial chateau at Compiègne. Émile Zola, writing for *La Tribune*, described him as one among many "amusing nonentities" which populated the imperial court, over which "a great fuss" was made since the emperor could not acquire better company.⁸² Doré, following this negative attention, had twice refused imperial invitations to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, in a clear effort to distance himself from the Bonaparte regime.⁸³ However, the emperor at the beginning of the war had commissioned of him "a grand picture of the crossing of the Rhine by the resistless legions of France."⁸⁴ The direct inclusion of Napoleon in *Les nuances des soldats français exhortent l'armée à la victoire sur le Rhin* might be taken as a strong potential for the work being a

⁸² *La Tribune* (November, 1868); cited in F.W.J. Hemmings, *Culture and Society in France, 1848 – 98: Dissidents and Philistines* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1971), p. 147.

"M. Gustave Doré, a delightful sketcher who is past master at opening a cotillion, represents almost every year the arts. M. Edmond About, a charming story-teller whose dream is to reduce politics to naughty little anecdotes, is present in the name of French literature. Science, naturally deputises all those directors and professors whose salaries eat deepest into public funds. It is clear that only the averagely good are ever chosen, firstly because the above average are unsociable, unapproachable people, and secondly because mediocrities make highly entertaining company. The genius of France can stay home; Compiègne contents itself with amusing nonentities. Courbet, Hugo and Littré do not exist for the court, but a great fuss is made of MM. Doré, About and LeVerrier."

Hemmings' translations.

⁸³ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 34-5.

⁸⁴ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 36.

preparatory design for the uncompleted, and now-considered unknown imperial commission.

We shall now turn to, according to Delorme, the first in a series of works which narrate an imagined campaign of Napoleon III's Armée du Rhin across the Rhine and into Germany.⁸⁵ With *La Marseillaise* (Fig. 11), we first encounter the chiton-robed central figure who leads the armies of France. She is perhaps a development of the Marianne figure after Delacroix's personification, liberty, which is echoed in *Les nuances des soldats français*. Doré's new visualisation of the effigy of France recites Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle's iconic nationalist hymn, *La Marseillaise*, whilst raising up a spontoon standard in her left hand and a sword in her right. Innumerable swathes of soldiers, civilians and bare-footed volunteers join behind her on the bank of the Rhine to sing in concert, and only the towering spire of Strasbourg Cathedral in the background distracts from the seemingly endless *sfumato* wash of bayonet-armed silhouettes. The detail of Strasbourg's unmistakable Gothic cathedral, which can famously be identified from miles away due to the region's flatland topography, importantly reminds us that the frontier was Doré's homeland, along with that of the revolutionary soldier, Rouget de Lisle after whom the work was titled.

Composed as a battle hymn in response to revolutionary France's declaration of war against Austria, and in preparation for its invasion of Austrian Germany, Doré's vision of the anthem emphasises the already-drawn parallels between the two Armées du Rhin, and predicts the same success for the modern army as that of 1792. However,

⁸⁵ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 45.

« Aussi bien la série des compositions que lui a inspirées l'amour de la patrie est-elle une des plus admirables de son œuvre. La pensée haute, le cœur ardent de l'artiste, se sont enflammés enthousiasmes pour les grands élans du pays. Il s'en est fait l'historien inspire. Si l'on suit l'ordre chronologique des sujets patriotiques qu'il a traités, on trouve tout d'abord à signaler ses compositions sur la *Marseillaise*. » My translations.

this is not to say that Doré's *Marseillaise* reflects a continuous lineage of revolutionary sentiment. Although Rouget de Lisle's *Marseillaise* is considered the canonical anthem of France's numerous revolutions since 1789, having itself been composed under a revolutionary government, the Assemblée Législative, Doré's *La Marseillaise* was composed during an exceptional, and short-lived period of tolerance for such revolutionary icons under the Second Empire.⁸⁶ It is well-documented, including by Lisa Small, that the early days of the Franco-Prussian War saw an unexpected revival, and toleration of Rouget de Lisle's – officially banned – *Marseillaise*.⁸⁷ The anthem had been censored since Napoleon's instantiation as emperor in 1852 over concerns that it might foster revolutionary feeling, yet, at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, massed recitals of *La Marseillaise* resulted in a renewed toleration, even encouragement of the anthem and other such censored materials for their crucial effect of boosting morale.⁸⁸

As Small has observed, Doré's scene undoubtedly takes inspiration from both Delacroix's depiction of 'the mob', and of his personification of liberty in the July Revolution of 1830, *Liberty Leading the People* (Fig. 12). Both Doré's central figure and Delacroix's "robust woman of the people" courageously lead 'the mob' towards the foreground and the viewer.⁸⁹ They both wear classical chitons, carry standards in their off-hand and a weapon in the other, and are also preceded by an armed child. This association is taken further still, as Delacroix, Small suggests, is considered to have been influenced for his Liberty by the Neo-classicist, François Rude's prototypical "genius of liberty", a winged woman who leads the charge of a force of classical

⁸⁶ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 43.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 36.

Hellenic soldiers in his own bas-relief limestone *Marseillaise* of 1792 (Fig. 13).⁹⁰

Whilst the influence of Delacroix is clear, Doré's central figure may be seen as directly inspired in her gesture by the outstretched arms of Rude's Liberty.

According to Small, Doré may be seen as having had two potential motivations for creating *La Marseillaise*. The first is that Doré sought to propagate a “nationalistic fervour that marked both the early days of the Franco-Prussian war and the revolution of 1789”.⁹¹ Alternatively, that the work may have been composed in a display of support for the young French Third Republic in the Autumn of 1870, after the collapse of the Second Empire (detailed in Chapter Three).⁹² Central to both of the approaches outlined by Small, is that Doré's principal motivation for creating *La Marseillaise* was commercial. The argument for the work's having been motivated by a “lucrative business opportunity” is based on the unusually fast production of albumen prints, advertised in the Goupil & Cie October catalogue of 1870.⁹³

Small cites a contemporary response to Doré's *Marseillaise* from the London *Art Journal*'s October 1870 edition, and probably based on the albumen prints produced by Goupil which were advertised to the public in the same month.⁹⁴ Echoing Doré's

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Lisa Small, ‘L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 38.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Lisa Small, ‘L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 39.

⁹⁴ *The Art Journal* (October 1st, 1870): pp. 321 – 22; cited in Lisa Small, ‘L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 39.

“... we looked with no small eagerness to the idealisation, by the author of *The Christian Martyr*, of “the *Marseillaise*”. Alas for France, if such be her gods! If the serried battalions of her foes were all composed of men of such exquisite culture that they would be arrested in their march by screaming out of tune, then the masculine, disreputable, undressed harridan who advances, with a large sword in one hand and a banner in the other, yelling forth a rhapsody, would be a very effective national guardian. Around this genius of the revolution is grouped a very photographer's gallery of frantic faces, all yelling to the same old tune. We mourn for anyone who can find the slightest gleam of manhood, martial worth, high unblenching courage, or appeal to any noble quality, in such childish and unmeaning dissonance. It has been a terrible lesson the past month has taught France that paper soldiers and paper victories are not all that is requisite for safety, and that truth, in the long run, is the only safe policy. Frenchmen can fight well – there is no doubt of that; but to scream is not to fight.”

popularity in Victorian Britain for his religious scenes, the article foregrounds its uncharacteristically harsh criticism of the artist's work with the assurance that Doré's painting is appreciated in London. However, the catastrophe for France that the Franco-Prussian War had become, invariably dictated that *La Marseillaise* no longer held its intended place as a piece of nationalist propaganda, and so could not be received with any degree of positivity. The article indignantly commented on the inappropriateness of the undressed, masculine and disreputable "harridan" which Doré had designed as a "national guardian". Adhering to Doré's musical theme, it was sarcastically observed that under the condition that the Prussian army were of such "exquisite culture" as their all-but defeated French foes, and focussed more on wartime music and less on actual warfare, then the fight might have been of a fairer nature.

Following the incorporation of the London *Art Journal*, Small introduces another harsh response to *La Marseillaise* by the French journalist, Edmond Durany in the Paris *Gazette des beaux-arts* in 1872, although it is written as if it were contemporary with the Franco-Prussian War, and so may have only been published at a later date. The article also reflects the negative contemporary feeling in France towards Doré as a painter.⁹⁵ Durany directly accused Doré of attempting to distribute his *Marseillaise, en masse*, throughout the art market – that is to say, the prints produced by Goupil. This, combined with Durany's less-than enthusiastic description of the artist as a "prolific

⁹⁵ Edmond Durany, 'La caricature et l'imagerie en europe pendant la guerre de 1870 – 1871' in *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 40ième année, 2ième période, tome 5 (1872): pp. 323 – 324; cited in Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 38.

"Gustave Doré, prolific creator of drawings, hastens to diffuse throughout the art market a symbolic *Marseillaise* of his own devising. It is odd in that it presents quite effectively the romantic concepts of tumultuous and picturesque scenic effects upon which we have subsisted since 1792. This accords well with the belief that all that is needed to obliterate the enemy are sticks, knives, rocks and a riotous crowd chanting patriotic hymns. One does not have the slightest inkling of the mechanistic, grasping, regimented nature of the battle to come. One is surrounded by a circus like atmosphere. *Les Frances*, helmeted and victorious, at the forefront of unruly gangs, swarm beneath the pencil of departing Symbolists. The naïve imagery clumsily echoes Rude's bas-relief in its *Oaths of the Brave* and its *Volunteers of 1870* guiding victory."

Small's translations.

creator of drawings” in the context of his reviewing one of his paintings, precedes a far less relenting criticism of the work than that of the *Art Journal*. The work is described as prescriptive to revolutionary Romantic Nationalism, but once again attacked for its then-inappropriate context. Duranty, though, takes his reception on to attack Doré *ad hominem*. He accuses him of viewing the Franco-Prussian War through an innocent and “circus like” lens, failing to understand the basic requisites of defeating the enemy: modern technology and a professional army, and not, as interpreted in Doré’s image, “sticks, knives, rocks and a riotous crowd chanting patriotic hymns.”

Evident in both the articles from the *Art Journal* and the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, is that the success of *La Marseillaise* was something intimately tied to the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War, which not only defined the appropriacy of its context, but can also be seen to have dramatically affected the public’s inherent support for Doré’s nationalist imagery.

Small’s final point on *La Marseillaise* is that in French history, Rouget de Lisle’s anthem has been “inextricably linked to republican ideals.”⁹⁶ As discussed, although it is true that the anthem has been invariably associated with revolution, has been and continues to be the National Anthem of French Republics, in the context of the Second Empire and the early days of the Franco-Prussian War, it is in exception, patriotic, and therefore detached from its ordinary associations with revolution and republicanism. This is reaffirmed by Delorme, who describes the anthem in the context of Doré’s *Marseillaise* as “the most solemn call to arms, the most vibrant invocation of patriotism.”⁹⁷ He continues, describing both Rouget de Lisle’s and Doré’s compositions

⁹⁶ Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 36.

⁹⁷ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 45.

« *L’œuvre de Rouget de Lisle est le plus sublimé appel aux armes, la plus vibrante invocation du patriotisme.* »

My translations.

at once: “This is the ultimate warrior song, the song of heroism. It is the cry of the fatherland in danger. In this it is really, incontestably national.”⁹⁸ In this sense, Doré’s *La Marseillaise* is a ‘performance’ of the famous battle hymn as a call to war, but not a literal embodiment of the anthem in its entirety.

The second work in the series is confirmed by Delorme to be another image inspired by a patriotic anthem, *Le Chant du départ* (Fig. 14).⁹⁹ Another multimedia wash, probably made in preparation for a final canvas, the scene evokes Étienne Nicolas Méhul’s and Marie-Joseph Chénier’s 1794 “war cry”, for which it is eponymously titled.¹⁰⁰ Directly following the progression of the Armée du Rhin from *La Marseillaise*, *Le Chant du départ* depicts the height of pitched Franco-Prussian engagements in the war, probably in August 1870, with Doré’s central figure, now winged, descended “From the heights of heaven”, as “a great warrior figure holding a torch in one hand and a sword in the other, [who] precedes the brave men who will conquer or die.”¹⁰¹ Delorme details the triumph with which Doré’s Armée is depicted: “In vain the cannon can thunder, in vain the shrapnel will pierce these naked breasts.”¹⁰² The focal point of the composition, beside the hovering, now, like Rude’s, winged effigy of France, are the pride of the French army, the cavalry, who, in tight formation charge *en masse* towards

⁹⁸ Ibid.

« *C'est la chanson guerrière par excellence, la chanson de l'héroïsme. C'est le cri de la patrie en danger. En cela elle est vraiment, incontestablement nationale.* »

My translations.

⁹⁹ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

« *Tout entier aux grandes préoccupations du moment, il composa d'abord, en 1870, une scène d'un entrain communicatif, d'un irrésistible élan : Le Chant du départ.* »

My translations.

¹⁰⁰ O.T. Kindler, Julien Tiersot, ‘Historic and National Songs of France’ in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (October., 1920): p. 627.

¹⁰¹ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 46.

« *Du haut des cieux, une grande figure guerrière, tenant d'une main la torche et de l'autre l'épée, précède les braves qui vont vaincre ou mourir.* »

My translations.

¹⁰² Ibid.

« *En vain le canon peut tonner, en vain la mitraille trouera ces poitrines nues.* »

My translations.

the viewer, riding down the already-routing Prussian infantry depicted in the foreground, recognisable by their iconic *Pickelhaubes*. As the second intermediary image in the series, it should be observed that the developed nature of Doré's artistic practice tends progressively closer towards his familiar practice of illustration: working inter-textually, rather than his early, empirical depictions such as those of the Crimean War.

According to Delorme, Doré completed *Le Rhin allemand* (Fig. 15), the third image in his series, in quick succession to *Le Chant du départ*, and with a “splendid invocation”.¹⁰³ Delorme, impassioned, enters into specific detail in describing the scene. “On the edge of the old flank, the French army arrives, illuminated by a pale moon, and on the passage of our valiant old women fall the road pits, open to let out the soldiers of former times, conquerors of the Rhine wake up from the dead to cheer on the flag again.”¹⁰⁴ As the army marches in column along a German road past the River Rhine, they salute their ancestral conquerors of Germany. The image’s composition is heavily borrowed from *Les Nuances des soldats français exhorent l’armée à la victoire sur le Rhin* (Fig. 9), with the modern army marching in column on the right, towards the viewer, and the spectres raised on the left. Only the central figure is altered, who was in *Les Nuances* reminiscent of an adult woman, but here, more convincingly a child – perhaps something further borrowed from Delacroix. The River Rhine runs through the centre of the scene, literally and symbolically separating Germany on the left and

¹⁰³ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

« Puis, presque aussitôt : *Le Rhin allemand, invocation splendide.* »
My translations.

The “old flank” probably referring to the historically contested region of Saarland, which was in 1870 a German land on the French side of the Rhine.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

« *Sur les bords du vieux fleuve, la jeune armée française arrive, éclairée par une lune pale, et sur le passage de nos vaillants les vieilles tombent, les fosses des routes, s’ouvrent pour laisser sortir les soldats d’autrefois, vainqueurs du Rhin, réveillés du mort pour acclamer encore le drapeau.* »
My translations.

France on the right. On the left, German riverbank, the column marches from the silhouette of a ruined castle, whereas on the right, a tall and impressive French counterpart can be made out through the fog in the background. This symbolises in clear terms, the desolation of Germany and the triumph of France.

The work, it seems clear, is inspired both in its title and subject matter by an 1841 poem of the same name by the French poet, Alfred de Musset. The possibility of Doré having been inspired by de Musset's poetry was first suggested by Small, who, despite the absence of Doré's *Le Rhin allemand* from 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery', considered that *La Marseillaise* and *Le Chant du départ* draw inspiration from de Musset's "patriotic and defiant" poem.¹⁰⁵ With my own discovery that de Musset's *Le Rhin allemand* was attached in accompaniment to Goupil's albumen print of Doré's work of the same name (Fig. 35), which was probably another photoprint featured in the October 1870 catalogue, Doré's having been inspired by de Musset should be considered proven.

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When one looks at the poem, Doré's homage to de Musset is revealed to be rather more shocking than one might assume. *Le Rhin allemand* is not so much a display of French nationalism as it is a celebration of historic German misfortune and tragedy. Six stanzas comprise a litany of insults, threats and reminiscences of the atrocities committed against the German lands along the Rhine, from the Thirty Years' War (1618 – 48) to the formation of the First Empire's puppet state, the États Confédérés du Rhin (1806 – 13). Particular attention is given to the celebrated French general, Louis II, Prince of

¹⁰⁵ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 36.

¹⁰⁶ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53100080s.r=le%20rhin%20allemand%20dore?rk=21459;2>

Bourbon, fashioned Le Grand Condé for his famous victories at the battles of Thionville and Siercke in 1639, in by far the most horrific of Europe's Wars of Religion.¹⁰⁷

Again, the artistic context for Doré's *Le Rhin allemand* is clear. It is unmistakable that he also took inspiration from Jacques Louis David's series of equestrian portraits of Napoleon Bonaparte as the First Consul of France, commonly known by the English title, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (Fig. 16). David communicates Napoleon's military genius by the carving of the Gallicised version of his family name 'Buonaparte' into a stone in the foreground, alongside the names of some of the most famous military leaders in history who had crossed the Saint Bernardino Pass into Italy before the young consul. Beside the ambitious carving of 'BONAPARTE', are the names 'HANNIBAL', the undefeated Carthaginian general of the Second Punic War, and 'KAROLUS MAGNUS', Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor and the progenitor of modern Europe.¹⁰⁸ David's detail was probably inspired by Napoleon's well-known carving of his family name onto a tree before the Battle of Marengo which shortly followed his crossing of the Alps, *en route* to his relief of the city of Turin from its Austrian besiegers. Doré emulates David's stone-carving in his *Le Rhin allemand*, inscribing the names of conquered German towns, mostly residing in the Rhineland-Palatinate, onto stones in the foreground. The following can be made out, from left to right: 'NEUWIED', 'UCKERATH', 'ALTENKIRCHEN' and 'GERMERSHEIM'.

¹⁰⁷ See: Anon., 'The Thirty Years' War' in *German History*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (27th April, 2017): pp. 252-70.

¹⁰⁸ See: Alessandro Barbero, *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

CHAPTER THREE

‘Souvenirs de 1870’: *The Siege of Paris*

Doré’s first three images in this series are accurate depictions of the Franco-Prussian War, only insofar as they are reflective of the sort of exaggerated reportage that the Parisian press relayed to the non-combatant French public during its first weeks. Michael Howard details that “It was taken for granted by military opinion in Europe, both informed and uninformed, that the war would begin with a French thrust into Germany”.¹⁰⁹ In London, the *Standard* on 13 July 1870, anticipating the war’s outbreak, published an article scrupulously analysing the routes by which Napoleon III might launch his invasion of Germany, but did not even consider the possibility of a Prussian invasion of France.¹¹⁰

The final three works in the Franco-Prussian War series, *L’Énigme*, *La Défense de Paris* and *L’Aigle noir de la Prusse*, mark a distinct shift in the mood of Doré’s wartime painting. The works, uniquely informed by his own first-hand experience as a combatant are darker representations of an unjustly defeated nation, which parallel the turmoil of contemporary Paris with that of the Greek mythology surrounding the House of Thebes. When compiled as a trio for the posthumous sale of Doré’s studio in 1885, the works were collectively titled ‘*Les Souvenirs de 1870*’, evoking the popular fashion of military memoir-writing – *souvenirs militaires*, expressed through the mode of high allegory.

The cause for why Doré’s treatment of this subject shifted to such an extent should first be contextualised. Despite the Second Empire’s provocative foreign policy towards

¹⁰⁹ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 77.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Prussia, inspiring confidence at home and abroad in France's expectation to win the war, the nation's military machine proved to be so unprepared, disorganised and mismanaged, that it was, in fact, incapable of facilitating the war which it itself had declared, before the fighting had even begun. One such example might be the huge quantities of ammunition and army rations which were sent via railway to Metz, the army headquarters, which could not be sufficiently inventoried due to a lack of staffing at the railway station and magazine.¹¹¹ When Marshal Edmond Lebœuf left for Metz on 24 July in order to inspect his charge of the Armée du Rhin, he had every expectation to find the force ready for campaign. Arriving on 28 July, he instead found that only half of the 385,000-strong force had reported for duty.¹¹² Compounding these issues, Napoleon III had resolved to once again adopt the traditional imperial role as the head of the army, despite his proven inaptitude for command, and by this time, desperately ill health.¹¹³ With the emperor's arrival at Metz, also on 28 July, the order remained that France was to initiate an offensive with a campaign into Germany.

The Emperor wrote:

“Whatever may be the road we take beyond our frontiers, we shall come across the glorious tracks of our fathers. We shall prove worthy of them. All France follows you with its fervent prayers, and the eyes of the world are upon you. On our success hangs the fate of liberty and civilisation.”¹¹⁴

On the following day, with the army still garrisoned at Metz, Friedrich Engels, wrote for the London *Pall Mall Gazette*, captured the now-deteriorating confidence in France's

¹¹¹ Barthélémy Lebrun, *Souvenirs Militaires 1866-1870* (Paris, 1895), pp. 207-208; cited in Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 78.

¹¹² Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 78.

¹¹³ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 79.

Howard details that Napoleon had proven himself wholly incapable of military command after his disastrous charge of the 1859 invasion of Austrian Italy, even when in good health. During the summer of 1870, he was suffering in constant pain from renal stones; he could barely mount a horse, and often “could not make coherent thoughts”.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Howard's translations.

ability to win the war, that if the French had not planned an offensive, their declaration of war made no sense.¹¹⁵ This too was the popular opinion in Prussia, so much so that Wilhelm I, himself a military veteran, had thought it wholly unnecessary to have any maps of France available at the campaign's start.¹¹⁶ The fighting finally began on 2 August, when the entire French army marched on the town of Saarbrücken in the Saar Valley. Though tactically insignificant and barely garrisoned, the attack on Saarbrücken was exaggerated by the Parisian press in what Howard described as "a crumb of news", seized "with the greed of a starving man".¹¹⁷ The press triumphantly reported that three Prussian divisions had been beaten at a major battle by an outnumbered French force, and Saarbrücken destroyed. To give one example, the Paris *Journal Officiel* wrote on 3 August:

"Our army has taken the offensive, and crossed the frontier and invaded Prussian territory. In spite of the strength of the enemy positions a few of our battalions were enough to capture the heights which dominate Saarbrücken."¹¹⁸

Two days later, on 4 August, the first battle of the bloody and decisive Prussian counterattack began. Through the month of August, the fighting was pushed from Germany with French defeat-after-defeat, and into Doré's native Alsace, culminating in a full-scale Prussian invasion of France. By 2 September, Napoleon III had been captured at the Battle of Sedan, along with 100,000 soldiers of the last remaining French army, the Armée du Châlons. When news reached Paris, a democratic government was declared, the Third Republic, along with the dissolution of the Second Empire. By 19 September, the city was besieged by two Prussian armies, resolved to starve the city into surrender to end the war. Initially, morale in the city was high: it had formidable defences and well-over one million soldiers, national

¹¹⁵ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 77.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 82.

¹¹⁸ Émile Leclerc, *La Guerre de 1870: L'Esprit Parisien* (Paris, 1871), p. 79; cited in Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1961), p. 82. Howard's translations.

guardsmen and civilians ready to deny the Prussians. Doré's final three works reflect his experience of the siege of Paris as a national guardsman stationed in both the city and its surrounding suburbs, witnessing the destruction of the city, and its defenders' suffering.¹¹⁹ He is described by one unnamed contemporary as having travelled the devastated city "with both his pencil and his rifle."¹²⁰ Delorme laments the former three works in the series as "alas... only a vision"; an adherence to the recurring mythologically-informed idea that France's defeat was a divine judgement.¹²¹

The first of Doré's images of the siege of Paris reinforces this stance in depicting a shelled Parisian suburb strewn with French corpses, and Paris set ablaze in the distance (Fig. 17). Surrounded by the scattered bodies of soldiers and civilians, broken barricades and a toppled field gun whilst Prussian shells bombard the surrounding suburban landscape, the figure of France, now shown irresolute, appeals to a solemn sphinx which crouches on top of a raised earthen mound. The winged figure's extended arm emotively grasps the sphinx's head, turning its gaze away from the far-off desolation of Paris in the distance and towards her as she pleads for answers. The sphinx gazes back with compassion, resting its paw on her shoulder, but remains still and silent. Thick plumes of black smoke rise up from the city, and between the first two columns from the left, the impression of a black bird flies over the city – the heraldic eagle of Prussia. The winged figure is no longer shown leading France to

¹¹⁹ Letter to Amelia Edwards, dated to 17 February, 1871, quoted in Edwards, Amelia., 'Personal Recollections of the Artist and His Works' in *The Art Journal* (1883): p. 393.

"As for military service, I have not been called out – not, that is to say, as a soldier for outside fighting. The limit of age exempted me so far; but I still serve in the National Guard both in Paris and the suburbs, receiving no more glorious wounds than some bad colds and severe attacks of rheumatism."

Edwards' translations.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Jérôme Ponterollo, 'Doré, témoin de son temps' in *Gustave Doré: Un peintre-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012, p. 125.

« Doré, engage comme garde national, parcourait Paris dévaste avec son crayon et son fusil. »

My translations.

¹²¹ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

« Mais, hélas ! ce n'était qu'une vision. »

My translations.

victory, but instead laments the nation's defeat that is characterised by the death and destruction which surrounds her. Here, the winged figure adopts a vaguely classical black chiton in place of her previously adorned white garment, which is indicative of her undertaken state of mourning.

L'Énigme remains the most discussed work of this series in modern scholarship. First cited in *Art, War and Revolution in France*, John Milner provides a short account of the work, giving focus to the presence of "a winged woman on the battlefield".¹²² Lisa Small in 2007 continued to attend to the presence of an allegorical figure, returning to Blanche Roosevelt's 1884 biography, quoting Roosevelt's identification of the winged figure as a "goddess of victory", and offering more specific interpretation that she is "of clear descent from Nike."¹²³ Taking this point further, Small opens the reading to wider interpretation in suggesting the winged figure under various identities as "the allegorical winged figure of France... *The Winged Victory*, The Spirit of Liberty, of The Motherland or even history itself."¹²⁴

Small most confidently argues the identity of Doré's figure of France as being directly inspired by the *Nike of Samothrace* (Fig. 8), excavated on the Aegean island in 1863 and moved into the Hall of Statuary at the Musée du Louvre in 1867, where it resided during the Franco-Prussian War period.¹²⁵ After its relocation to the Louvre, it became commonly known as *The Winged Victory*, and, according to Small, the sculpture's "forceful stride, clinging drapery and dynamic wings dramatically affected the public's conception of the

¹²² John Milner, *Art, War and Revolution in France 1870 – 71. Myth, Reportage and Reality* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 195.

¹²³ Blanche Roosevelt, *The Life and Reminiscences of Gustave Doré* (New York: Cassell & Company, 1885), p. 365 in Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 39.

¹²⁴ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 61.

¹²⁵ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 39.

image of victory, and surely provided Doré with a model for his own battlefield goddess.”¹²⁶

On the contrary, however, I would argue that Doré rejects these sentiments of victory. In this scene, the ‘Victory’ has failed to secure that which she personifies, and so she instead embodies the nation’s defeat. I would argue instead that Doré returns with *L’Énigme*, for the inspiration of this dark counterpart to the triumphal images of victory from the start of the war, to the Romantic poetry of Alfred de Musset. Common of the widely-felt antipathy in France towards what Stanley Mellon characterised as “that curious atmosphere of relaxation and repression of post-revolutionary Europe”, de Musset’s 1841 poem, *Souvenir*, is a melancholy reminiscence of the military glories of the First Empire under the monarchy of King Louis Philippe.¹²⁷ De Musset refers to the fond memories of a deceased friend in his allusion to Napoleon I, whose mortal remains had been repatriated to France from the British island of St. Helena in the previous year, on 15 December 1840 in a *coup de théâtre* cortege engineered by Louis Philippe and his Prime Minister, Adolphe Thiers.¹²⁸ The poem in its twenty-first stanza details the death of an “angel of glory” named Françoise; literally ‘from

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Mellon, Stanley., ‘The July Monarchy and the Napoleonic Myth’ in *Yale French Studies*, No. 26 (1960): p. 70.

Mellon, I think quite pertinently relays the atmosphere of secret infatuation for the Napoleonic myth in post-revolutionary France through the example of Stendhal’s protagonist, Julien Sorel from the 1830 novel, *Le Rouge et le noir*, who covetously carries a picture of Napoleon about with him in his locket.

Alfred de Musset, *Souvenir* (1841).

¹²⁸ Mellon, Stanley., ‘The July Monarchy and the Napoleonic Myth’ in *Yale French Studies*, No. 26 (1960): p. 70.

The misleadingly named *Retour des cendres* (the remains were in fact not ashen) was an attempt to strengthen the faltering reputation of the July Monarchy by appeasing the popular Romanticism with which the Napoleonic myth had become perpetuated, lessening the antipathy felt towards the monarchy of Louis Philippe. Thiers’ engineering of the *Retour* was in fact a bold attempt to save his own office, in which he was losing support due to an aggressive – and disastrous – manoeuvre in foreign policy in North Africa, which had almost led to the outbreak of war between France and Great Britain in the summer of 1840. Thiers’ support for Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Ottoman Wāli of Egypt and Sudan who had openly rebelled against the Porte in proclaiming himself the independent Khedive of Egypt and Sudan, was an attempt to consolidate greater influence in North Africa and the Near East following the French invasion of Algiers in 1830. France was forced to rescind its support for the Khedive upon the threat of entering into a major war with Britain, and Thiers was replaced by a new Prime Minister, Nicolas Soult, in the October of 1840, rendering the *Retour* a political failure.

France', whom I would argue to be the principal inspiration for Doré's new imagining of the winged figure in *L'Énigme* and the works in the series which follow it. With this consideration, we could well be looking at Doré's conception of Françoise, an ornament from the glorious – and once again lost – annals of France's imperial past. The influence of the Romantic poetry of the July Monarchy period is clear in these works, Doré having complemented each of their print versions with stanzas from the contemporary poetry of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset.

Accompanying Goupil's print version of *L'Énigme* are two stanzas from Hugo's *Ode à l'Arc de Triomphe* of 1837, another reminiscence of the First Empire.

"What a spectacle! Thus dies everything that man creates!

A past such as this is a deep abyss for the soul!"¹²⁹

The shocking image which Doré conceived fits closely to his mournful description of the actual conditions under which the defenders of Paris suffered in October 1870, when the Prussians eventually fired on the city, discharging 12,000 shells in three weeks. He detailed this traumatic experience in a letter addressed to two affiliates of his Bond Street gallery in London (undated).

"Our poor capital is in flames; its palaces destroyed – its finest streets, and all that make it beautiful. As I write, I have before me immense volumes of smoke, rising to the heavens. In the whole history of the world, I don't think there is a parallel instance of so sanguinary a drama, and of such ruin."¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Victor Hugo, 'Ode à l'Arc de Triomphe' in *Les Voix intérieures* (1837).

« Quel Spectacle ! / Ainsi meurt tout ce que l'homme crée ! / Un passé comme celui-ci est un abîme profond pour l'âme ! »

¹³⁰ Letter to James Liddle Fairless and George Lord Beeforth of the Bond Street Doré Gallery in London, quoted in Blanchard Jerrold, *Life of Gustave Doré* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1891), p. 159. Jerrold's translations.

Doré did, though, find a “parallel instance” tragic enough to compare to the siege of Paris. That is, the ruin of the House of Thebes in Greek myth, popularly revived by the Tragedians of fifth-century Athens.

Convincing parallels may be drawn between Oedipus’ famous solving of the sphinx’s riddle (Fig. 19) and the distinct reversal of that myth in *L’Énigme*, in which the hero, perhaps Françoise, pleads with the monster for answers rather than triumphantly solving its riddle in order to save the terrorised city. In this sense, Paris in the background is also a parallel of ancient Thebes. The idea that *L’Énigme* inverts traditional Oedipal iconography was first highlighted by Lisa Small in 2007, although it was dismissed in preference of the sphinx instead being of Egyptian descent, by which it is seen to represent “a more glorious episode in France’s history”.¹³¹ This probably refers to Napoleon Bonaparte’s Egyptian Campaign of 1798 – 1801. The Egyptian Campaign remained an integral part of French imperial mythology, particularly in regard to the army : Napoleon was portraited by David (Fig. 16) shortly following the Egyptian Campaign, wearing the ornate shamshir memento which he carried at the Battle of Marengo, and under the First Empire the Grande Armée retained a regiment of Mamelukes in the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Old Guard, to name but a pertinent few examples. In reading Doré’s sphinx as Egyptian, Small argues that: “according to some iconographical traditions the sphinx poses riddles like its Greek counterpart, yet in this image France appears to be seeking an answer from the creature, which rests one paw on her shoulder in a gesture of comfort”, therefore more closely aligning it with the Egyptian guardian of the underworld.¹³² Côme Fabre, writing in 2014, took Small’s reading further in suggesting that Doré, in *L’Énigme* , experimented in “a new pictorial interpretation” of the legend of Oedipus and the sphinx, having been influenced by the Symbolists of the 1860s

¹³¹ Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 61.

¹³² Ibid.

who had revived the legend in the fashion of “popular ambiguity”.¹³³ Fabre takes Doré’s proposed ambiguity to such an extent of detachment from the traditional myth, in fact, that he argues it as an entirely “free use of the myth of the sphinx”, unrelated to the Theban Cycle.¹³⁴

Although other contemporary depictions of the Oedipus legend should be considered in their potential for having inspired Doré, as alluded to by Fabre, it is my view that such influences as Moreau’s *Oedipe et le sphinx* (Fig. 20) are little more than compositional. Doré’s use of Theban mythology in the mode of high allegory, inverts the classically-rooted perpetuation of imperial France as something which has culminated in disaster comparable only to the great tragedies of the ancient world. Symbolist depictions such as Moreau’s, incorporate the Oedipal legend only insofar as it is a means to depict the anecdotal male nude. We are reminded with Moreau that the scaled-down sphinx which clutches onto his carefully placed drapery, is in fact a murderous monster, by the several strewn arms and legs of its past victims which protrude from the crevice in the foreground. It might be argued that this device is borrowed by Doré in his allusion to the sphinx’s victims, which are mirrored with those of the artillery barrage which has destroyed the depicted suburb, probably Saint-Cloud which was among the worst-affected areas.¹³⁵ Delorme too treats the sphinx with accountability for the tragic depiction, so much so that he familiarly refers to the work not as *L’Énigme*, but as *Le Sphinx*:

“The sphinx is war, it is this bloody unknown who gives victory or defeat, it is the eternal mystery, it is the deaf God that France questions anxiously.”¹³⁶

¹³³ Côme Fabre, ‘The Enigma’ in Philippe Kaenel (ed.), *Doré: Master of Imagination*, Musée d’Orsay exhib. cat., Flammarion, 2014, p. 171.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ See: Bertrand Tillier, ‘The Stylization of History’ in Philippe Kaenel (ed.), *Doré: Master of Imagination*, Musée d’Orsay exhib. cat., Flammarion, 2014 p. 168.

¹³⁶ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

To the strength of considering the work in direct relation to the Oedipal myth, it is worth considering the possibility that it, *L'Énigme*, has been mistitled in English, ‘*The Enigma*’, by which it has been consistently referred. The French *Énigme*, may be translated into English as ‘enigma’, or as what I would argue to be an interpretation more appropriate for the reading of the work’s proposed allegory, ‘riddle’. In considering the work’s title in English as ‘*The Riddle*’, we can see a closer correlation to the ancient Greek source. One example of how the work might have been overlooked in its deeper meaning, is Bertrand Tillier’s dismissive comment on the work in ‘The Stylization of History’, as its being of a “strangely dreary” quality.¹³⁷ Probing the work’s meaning further with the consideration of this mistitling, further minutiae can be seen to directly align the siege of Paris to the turmoil of classical Thebes. Seven plumes of smoke rise from Paris as the city burns in the distance, perhaps alluding to the tragedy of Oedipus’ sons which he himself prophesied, commonly known as *Seven Against Thebes*.¹³⁸ Eteocles, denied his rightful turn as King of Thebes by his twin brother Polynices, turns on his homeland and attacks Thebes with an army from Argos. The impression of the bird in flight, whilst of course functioning as the heraldic black eagle of Prussia stalking the city as its prey, may also be interpreted as a vehicle of heralding through the common association of eagles with Zeus, which Lisa Small recounts to have been a widely felt stance regarding the collapse of the Second Empire.¹³⁹

« *Le Sphinx. Le Sphinx, c'est la guerre, c'est cet inconnu sanglant qui donne la victoire ou la défaite, c'est l'éternel mystère, c'est le Dieu sourd que la France interroge anxieusement.* »

My translations.

Philippe Kaenel (ed.), *Doré: Master of Imagination*, Musée d’Orsay exhib. cat., Flammarion, 2014.

¹³⁷ Bertrand Tillier, ‘The Stylization of History’ in Philippe Kaenel (ed.), *Doré: Master of Imagination*, Musée d’Orsay exhib. cat., Flammarion, 2014 p. 168.

¹³⁸ For a detailed critical account of *Seven Against Thebes*, see: Vellacott, Philip., ‘Aeschylus’ Seven Against Thebes’ in *The Classical World*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 1979 – January 1980): pp. 211 – 219.

¹³⁹ Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 41.

This view of the Second Empire's collapse as a divine judgement, is exemplified by Small in the use of a passage from Émile Zola's fictionalised account of the Franco-Prussian War and its aftermath, *La Débâcle*:

“the collapse of a world, the Second Empire swept away in the wreckage of its vices and follies”.¹⁴⁰ It remains unaddressed in extant literature that *L'Énigme* was selected for the cover of Robert Fagles' celebrated English translation of the Theban Cycle from its original ancient Greek, over two decades before Small's essay in 2007 (Fig. 36.).¹⁴¹ In a short caption of the image on the text's rear cover, it is asserted that ‘*The Enigma*’ was “Inspired by a Hugo poem about the Paris Commune, with references to Oedipus and the Sphinx.” The poem cited by Fagles likely being *Ode à l'Arc de Triomphe*, a stanza of which accompanied Goupil's print version of *L'Énigme*.

Doré's next work, *La Défense de Paris* (Fig. 2), as its title suggests, depicts the city's garrison: soldiers, national guardsmen and civilians, perhaps in one of the three unsuccessful sorties which were made during the course of the siege. The winged woman, standing *contrapposto*, braces the gates of Paris with her outstretched wings, protecting the French tricolour behind her back. The resolution of the winged woman may be read as reflective of Jules Favre's famous declaration made in the September of 1870, that the defenders would concede “not an inch of our territory, not a stone of our fortress.” Terrified civilians, including an infant cradled in a swaddle by its mother, as well as panicking soldiers, swords unpoised and fumbling to load their rifles, surround the gate amidst the chaos of a Prussian

¹⁴⁰ Émile Zola, *La Débâcle* (1892), p. 403; cited in Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 41.

Small's translations.

¹⁴¹ Robert Fagles (trans.), Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus* (London: Penguin, 1984).

artillery bombardment. Spent shells and shot litter the foreground, several of the men clamber over their fallen comrades, and the gate is heavily splintered from cannon fire.

To the strength of the case that this scene depicts a closer detail of the blazing city in the background of *L'Énigme*, a single plume of black smoke emanates across the top right corner of the canvas, as seen in the background of *L'Énigme*; the scene is therefore set at the gates of Paris, which may in turn be read as one of the seven famous gates of Thebes, symbolised by the seven plumes of smoke visible in *L'Énigme*. In the less-known continuation of the Theban legend, after the story of Oedipus, the scene, I would argue, represents the fratricidal tragedy of the siege of Thebes. In the legend, Oedipus' twin sons, Eteocles and Polynices, are left their father's throne as joint rulers: one was to rule for two years, and then relinquish the throne so that the other would rule for the next two, and so on. After the first two years, Eteocles, corrupted by power, refused to cede the throne to Polynices, and exiled him from the city. Polynices returned to Thebes with an army from Argos led by seven commanders. Investing the city, each of the seven commanders with their soldiers were to attack one of the seven famous gates of Thebes. Here, Eteocles is represented by the winged woman, and the gates of Paris are mirrored with the seventh gate of Thebes, where to the two brothers fought in a sortie outside the gates, and were both killed, though the city was saved. This is further indicative of Favre's famous declaration, in essence, that the defenders of Paris would die before ceding ground to the enemy.

Perhaps symptomatic of the work's evident obscurity – it is not mentioned by Delorme in his otherwise exhaustive biography, and does not appear to have been made into a print, no engagement with the work came until 1980. *La Défense de Paris*, in its first publication, was featured in an article written for the New York periodical, *Art in America*, on the subject of nineteenth-century French artists' depictions of the French tricolour flag which are seen to have influenced Picasso's colour palette during his Cubist period (1909 –

1912).¹⁴² Nochlin engages the work alongside that of better-known artists' depictions of the tricolour, such as Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (Fig. 12) and Meissonier's *The Barricades of 1849* (Fig. 22), commenting that although it is "less-known" than the other works in contention, it remains "ambitious in subject".¹⁴³ Nochlin observes that "France or the Republic, [defends] the very gates of Paris, the wounded and starving at her feet", and with the withdrawn tricolour, "the faltering, young figure of the Republic bars access to the besieged city."¹⁴⁴

The only further engagement to date is from Small in 2007, who held the winged figure in relation to Doré's earlier *Marseillaise* imagery, in coordination with the argument for both works as perpetuating republican sentiment (see Chapter Two). Particular attention is paid to the heightened "documentary aspect" observed in the work, detailing "such... elements as the buttons and epaulettes of the line infantry uniform, spent cannonballs, woven embankment fortifications, and lumpen piles of sandbags that echo the bodies of fallen soldiers."¹⁴⁵ This is to say that it is evident that Doré had probably witnessed similar conditions to those depicted as a participant in the actual defence of Paris. Further, Small notes that the particular *mise en scène* of the soldiers "recall[s] those of the dead soldiers in battlefield photographs from the American Civil War."¹⁴⁶

Although the date of *La liberté triomphant de la tyrannie* (Fig. 23) is currently approximated on either side of that of *La Défense de Paris*, it is clear that one work was inspired in composition by the other. Doré's personification of liberty echoes that of Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*, from which he openly borrows throughout this series.

¹⁴² Nochlin, Linda., 'Picasso's Color: Schemes and Gambits' in *Art in America*, Vol. 68, No. 10 (1980): pp. 114-115.

¹⁴³ Nochlin, Linda., 'Picasso's Color: Schemes and Gambits' in *Art in America*, Vol. 68, No. 10 (1980): p. 114.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 51.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

L'Aigle noir de la Prusse (Fig. 24) is the final work in which the winged woman appears, and is confirmed by Delorme to be the final work in the series.¹⁴⁷ Illuminated through thick night-time fog, the winged figure who represents France lies, battle-wearied, on top of a fallen officer and against broken barricades, surrounded by shards of shrapnel and spent shells. Blood streams, as if it were her Crucifixion, down her face, a fresh wound is visible on her breast, her sword and wings are broken, and a monstrous black eagle descends through the darkness towards her, its talons poised for the kill. Small details that amongst the vivid detail of “specific minutiae”, are “the two potent symbolic figures: the black eagle of Prussia and the female personification of France.”¹⁴⁸

It is considered by Small that the winged figure lies in a position reminiscent to that of the classical sculpture, *The Dying Gaul* (Fig. 25).¹⁴⁹ Although Doré’s figure distinctly differs from *The Dying Gaul* in its defiant gaze, directly engaging the eagle which will kill her, whereas the classical Gallic warrior pensively accepts death, exposing his torque as he stares at the ground beneath him, the inspiration may be taken as an affirmation that this scene depicts France’s death. In a cathartic return to the initial, triumphal imagery of the Franco-Prussian War, the death scene of the winged figure, does differ from the contemplative acceptance of *The Dying Gaul*. Delorme offers a contrary reading to that of Small, describing the scene as a depiction of the *guerre à outrance* waged by the people of France against their Prussian invaders, despite the knowledge of their ultimate defeat. He describes the scene: “the “genius with shattered wings” has fallen to the ground, “but not discouraged, still struggling, lying on the flag, against the eagle which her dying gaze still

¹⁴⁷ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

¹⁴⁸ Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 51.

¹⁴⁹ Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 50.

frightens.”¹⁵⁰ Despite the different readings in contemporary and modern reception, it is clear that Doré here reduces his allegorical mode to a base depiction of good versus evil, in which the monstrous eagle, Prussia, triumphs as the “gloating and unworthy enemy” over the personified righteous figure of France.¹⁵¹

This is reaffirmed by the stanza from Hugo’s *À Olympio* which was attached to Goupil’s print version of the work:

With cries of joy they counted your wounds
And counted your sorrows,
As one counts out coins on a stone
In a thieves’ den.¹⁵²

Small comments that this “new and disturbing dynamic between the two nations” marks a shift from the way in which Germany was viewed in France after the publication of de Staël’s *On Germany* in 1810 (republished in Britain in 1813 after its censorship under the First Empire), by which the independent German States became regarded as “a land of poets and dreamers, a mistress requiring France’s chivalric protection” against Prussia.¹⁵³ After

¹⁵⁰ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

« *Pauvre France ! L’artiste nous l’a montrée encore une fois, génie aux ailes brisées, gisant à terre, mais non découragée, et luttant toujours, couchée sur le drapeau, contre l'aigle que son regard de mourante épouvante encore.* »

My translations.

¹⁵¹ Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 49.

¹⁵² ‘À Olympio’ in Victor Hugo, *Les Voix intérieures* (1837) in Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 50.

Avec des cris de joie ils ont compté tes plaies / Et compté tes douleurs, / Comme sur une pierre on compte des monnaies / Dans l’antre des voleurs.

Small’s translations.

¹⁵³ Germaine Baroness Staël-Holstein, *On Germany* (London: John Murray, 1813).

Lisa Small, ‘L’Année Terrible and Political Imagery’ in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 50.

France's defeat, the self-image of the chivalrous protector became that of the "defiled maiden", with the newly united German Empire in turn regarded as a "rapacious beast, preparing to have its way with her."¹⁵⁴

In continuity with the evident Oedipal narrative in *L'Énigme* and *La Défense de Paris*, *L'Aigle noir de la Prusse* may be read to parallel the last tragedy to befall the House of Thebes, that of Oedipus' eldest daughter, Antigone. The winged woman shields the fallen officer from the eagle with her own body, although, confirmed by her broken sword, she is unable to defend her own person and therefore willingly condemns herself to death to protect the fallen soldier. This echoes Antigone's defence of Polynices through the granting of funerary rites, fulfilling her essential familial-religious duty in the knowledge that the act of burying her brother will surely result in her own death.¹⁵⁵ This championing of duty and honour at the expense of one's life undoubtedly echoes the stalwart defence of Paris, which was undertaken in the knowledge that the defenders could not win, but rather, remedy the humiliation of August 1870.

The notion that the works might have been designed as a triptych, has been treated with scepticism. There has been no serious scholarship on this subject, as the majority of literature of the still limited corpus which engages with the *Souvenirs*, dismisses the potential of an Oedipal narrative and therefore the narrative continuity of the works. The 2012 exhibition catalogue, *Gustave Doré: Un peintre-né*, does however exclusively entertain this potential.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, Jefferson Chase (trans.), *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning and Recovery* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2003), p. 121 in Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political Imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 50.

¹⁵⁵ See: Loman, Pasi., 'No Woman No War: Women's Participation in Ancient Greek Warfare' in *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (April, 2004): pp. 34-54.

¹⁵⁶ *Gustave Doré: Un Peintre-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012.

Briat-Philippe in ‘Gustave Doré: témoin de son siècle’ engages with works which are considered to be a narrative triptych set during the chaos of the siege of Paris: *La Départ du Garde National*, *Le Garde blesse* and *Le bombardement* (Figs. XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII).¹⁵⁷ This might be considered proof that Doré was indeed designing narrative triptychs during this period.

Ponterollo in ‘Doré, témoin de son temps’ writes on *L’Énigme* : “the title of the work refers directly to the Sphinx of Greek mythology and the riddles it posed to travelers under penalty of devouring them.”¹⁵⁸ Ponterollo also points out, to greatly strengthen the case for the works as a triptych, that they are uniform in their dimensions, 130 x 195cm, and were therefore clearly meant to be hung together, with *L’Énigme* at the left, *La Défense de Paris* in the centre, and *L’Aigle noir de Prusse* at the right (Fig. 37); this ordering is in coordination with the chronology outlined by Delorme.¹⁵⁹ This uniformity of dimensions also applies for the triptych detailed by Briat-Philippe (Figs. XXVII, XXVIII and XXIX). For the importance of this finding, Ponterollo is not concurrent with the ordering which I have proposed; he instead argues, and whilst advocating for the inspiration of Greek myth, yet without proposing any narrative, that *L’Énigme* is the first, *L’Aigle noir de Prusse* the second, and “logically”, the centrepiece for its converse portrait dimensions should be considered the final work in the series.¹⁶⁰ It is also observed that tonally, the images together form the colours of

¹⁵⁷ Magali Briat-Philippe, ‘Gustave Doré, témoin de son siècle’ in *Gustave Doré : Un peintre-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012, p. 50.

Il [Doré] évoque dans un triptyque un drame familial : La Départ du garde national, Le Garde blesse et Le bombardement, entraînant le renversement du berceau et la mort de l’enfant.

My translations.

¹⁵⁸ Jérôme Ponterollo, ‘Doré, témoin de son temps’ in *Gustave Doré : Un peintre-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012, p. 123.

¹⁵⁹ Jérôme Ponterollo, ‘Doré, témoin de son temps’ in *Gustave Doré : Un peintre-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012, p. 125.

René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

¹⁶⁰ Jérôme Ponterollo, ‘Doré, témoin de son temps’ in *Gustave Doré : Un peintre-né*, Monastère royal de Brou, exhib. cat., Somogy, 2012, p. 125.

the tricolour when held in this order.¹⁶¹ *L'Énigme* in corpulent shades of blue, *La Défense de Paris* in muted whites, and *L'Aigle noir de Prusse* in the deep reds which evoke the ultimate death of the figure of France.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

On 28 January 1871, Paris surrendered after a 131-day siege. Few had died from starvation, but much of the city lay in ruin. The Château de Saint-Cloud had been accidentally hit during artillery exchanges and burnt down. Almost all of the animals at the Ménagerie du Jardin des Plantes had been eaten. Ten days earlier, Wilhelm I had been crowned Emperor of Germany in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Following the surrender, an armistice was agreed to allow for the election of a permanent government, the Assemblée Nationale, to negotiate peace terms. When the terms, negotiated by the ex-Prime Minister and new chief of government, Adolphe Thiers, were agreed on 26 February, France's humiliation was made complete. Four billion Francs were to be paid in reparation, along with the cession of Alsace and most of Lorraine to the new German Empire. Although peace had been secured, Thiers was pilloried as a traitor, especially by those such as Doré, who had not only witnessed their nation's defeat, but were too to lose their homeland. France's precarious situation was worsened still, when in the summer of 1871 the city of Paris rebelled from the government of Thiers, led by a group of working-class revolutionaries and supported by the Garde Nationale with whom Doré had served, declaring its new government the Paris Commune.¹⁶² In the week of 21 May, *Le Semaine sanglant*, the French army shelled its own capital, killing thousands of civilian men, women and children, and destroying the Tuileries Palace and the Hôtel de Ville. Doré escaped to Versailles with his mother, and whilst having been a national guardsman, we might assume that he felt some degree of sympathy for the communards, he was horrified by the country's descent into civil war. Through a series of caricatural sketches, he

¹⁶² See: R.D. Price, 'Ideology and Motivation in the Paris Commune' in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (March, 1972): pp. 75-86.

communicated his deep contempt for the communards, and later in equal measure, for the traitorous government of Thiers.

In the following year, Doré captured the nation's overwhelming sense of mourning for Alsace, to which he would never return, in an allegorical canvas, *L'Alsace Meurtrie* (Fig. 29). Exhibited at the 1872 'Salon of the Defeat', the first since the Franco-Prussian War, the scene depicts Doré's homeland, represented by a widowed peasant woman, standing with her back to a wall, wearing traditional mourning dress and clutching the tricolour to her breast as she fights to compose her grief. The image of the woman with her dark, downturned eyes is deeply discomforting, and heightened in this aspect with Doré's title disclosing that the widow – Alsace – has been physically beaten into subjugation. Probably for this reason, modern English accounts of the work have left the title in its original French, where other works are referred to using translated English titles.

In a surprising boom for Doré's painting, *L'Alsace Meurtrie* proved a popular success at the 1872 Salon, and in the autumn of that year moved to the Doré Gallery in London. There, the canvas received further praise, with British critics enthusiastically defending Doré after the *Art Journal* circulated a – probably accurate – rumour that the Assemblée Nationale, eager to repress the memory of the Franco-Prussian War, had requested that Doré remove the canvas from the Salon.¹⁶³ One critic wrote: "The heart of the man who does not feel as he looks at the picture that he *has* a heart, must be callous." A close friend in London, the Egyptologist, Amelia Edwards, suggested that he should move the remainder of his Franco-Prussian War oeuvre to London where it would doubtless enjoy the same success as *L'Alsace Meurtrie*, but Doré angrily rejected the idea. Even with surety of the recognition in painting

¹⁶³ Anon., *The Art Journal* (October, 1872): p. 289; cited in Lisa Small, 'L'Année Terrible and Political imagery' in Eric Zafran (ed.), *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, Dahesh Museum of Art exhib. cat., Yale UP, 2007, p. 57.

which he had desired for so long, it seems that the idea of capitalising from such misery was too much a betrayal of his patriotism. Edwards, who wrote Doré's obituary in *The Art Journal* in 1883, recalled that upon her suggestion, Doré had retorted "Not for the world!"; "Would you have me exhibit the misfortunes of my country?"¹⁶⁴ In 1879, Delorme described the still-popular painting, the "last painful page" of the Franco-Prussian War, with ominous prophecy.¹⁶⁵ In a direct address to the reader, he wrote: "You all know her, this Alsatian wearing a black ribbon that holds the tricolour flag against her heart, while her mother seated near her looks after the beloved child, the orphan who will be the Man of Revenge."

For Doré, his career in painting was only truly successful so far as it was in his native France. France's catastrophic defeat in the Franco-Prussian War signalled the end of this aspect of his pursuit in painting. This is perhaps partly due to him having not experienced another major war during his lifetime. Indeed, Europe would not see another major war for the next forty years, until the outbreak of the Great War of 1914 – 18 which so many in France, such as Delorme, musing on Doré's *L'Alsace Meurtrie*, covetously prophesied for the theft of the Frankish heartland. Although Doré would not live to see another war, his works of wartime propaganda were extensively harnessed in Germany throughout the twentieth century. The *Sainte Russie*, for example, received three republications in Germany, during the Great War, under the Third Reich and during the Cold War, to attack Russia, but was not rediscovered in French, nor in English until the 1970s. Whether we consider Doré a canonical painter, an illustrator, a draftsman, sculptor or engraver, it is true that he was able to pursue

¹⁶⁴ Amelia. Edwards, 'Personal Recollections of the Artist and His Works' in *The Art Journal* (1883): p. 393.

¹⁶⁵ René Delorme, *Gustave Doré, peintre, sculpteur, dessinateur et graveur* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), p. 50.

« Enfin, c'est ici la dernière page douloureuse de ce poème trop réel, Gustave Dore a personnifié l'attachement de l'Alsace à la France et ses espérances, par un dessin qui n'a pas tardé à devenir populaire. Vous la connaissez tous, cette Alsacienne coiffée d'un ruban noir qui tient, serre contre son cœur, le drapeau aux trois couleurs, tandis que sa mère assise près d'elle soigne l'enfant bien-aimé, l'orphelin qui sera l'homme de la Revanche. »

My translations.

none of these media without his natural inclination towards inter-textuality. He remained, invariably, an intermediary illustrator of text, whether the point of reference was the press, literature, poetry or the great myths of the ancient world.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *Bataille de l'Alma (The Battle of Alma)*. 1855. Oil on canvas.
Whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 1.



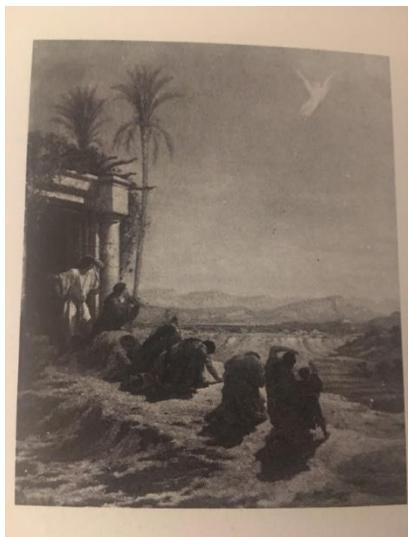
Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *Le Meurtre de Riccio* (*The Murder of Riccio*). 1855. Oil on canvas. 263.5 x 314.2cm. San Diego Museum of Art.

Fig. 2.



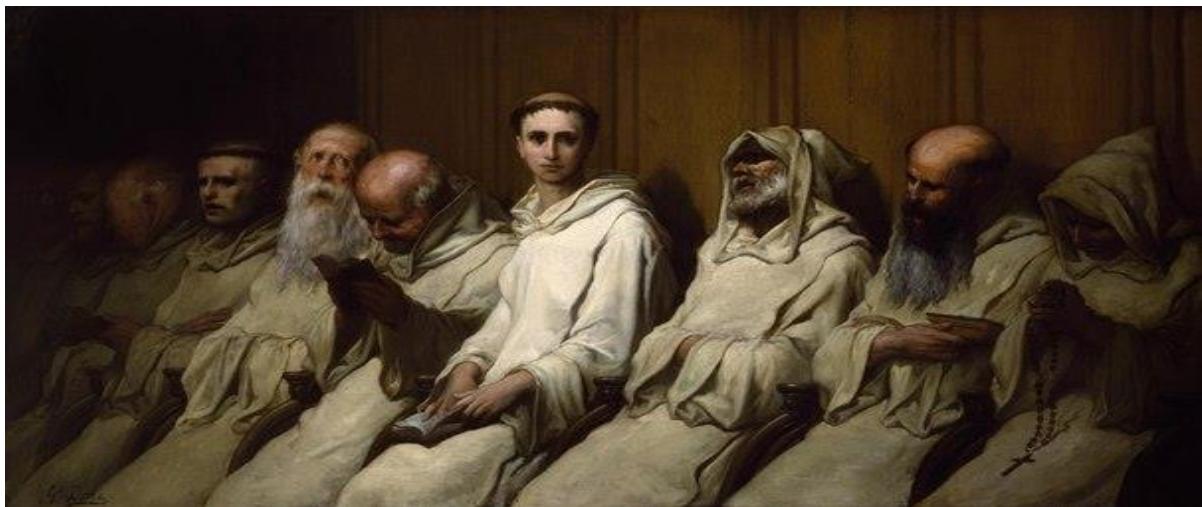
Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883), *Bataille de Inkerman* (*The Battle of Inkerman*). 1857. Oil on canvas. Château de Versailles, Yvelines.

Fig. 3.



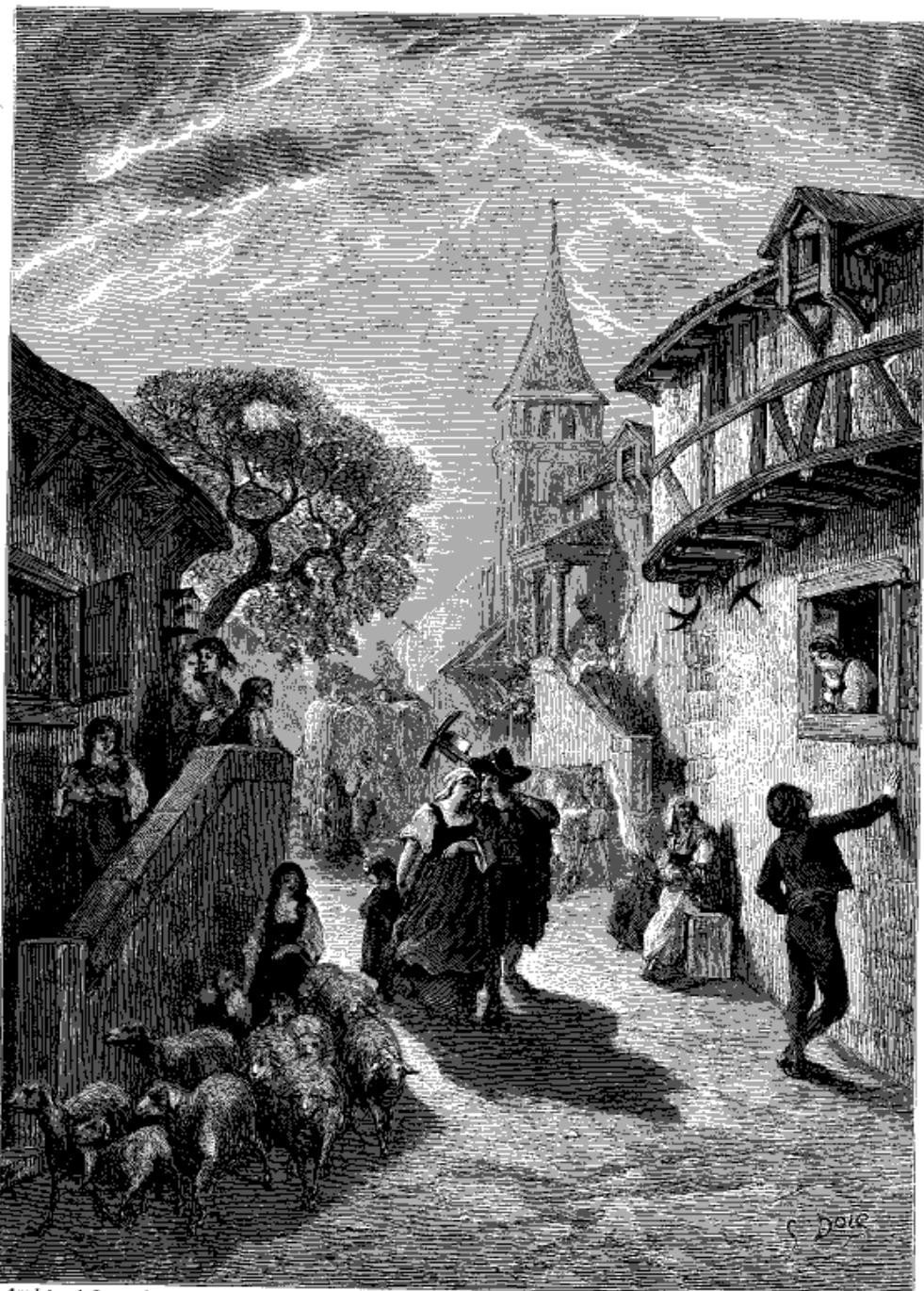
Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *L'Ange de Tobie (The Angel Appearing to Tobias)*. 1865. 91 x 73cm. Oil on canvas. Musée Unterliden, Colmar.

Fig. 4.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *Le Néophyte (The Neophyte)*. c. 1866 – 68. 145 x 273cm. Oil on canvas. Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia.

Fig. 5.



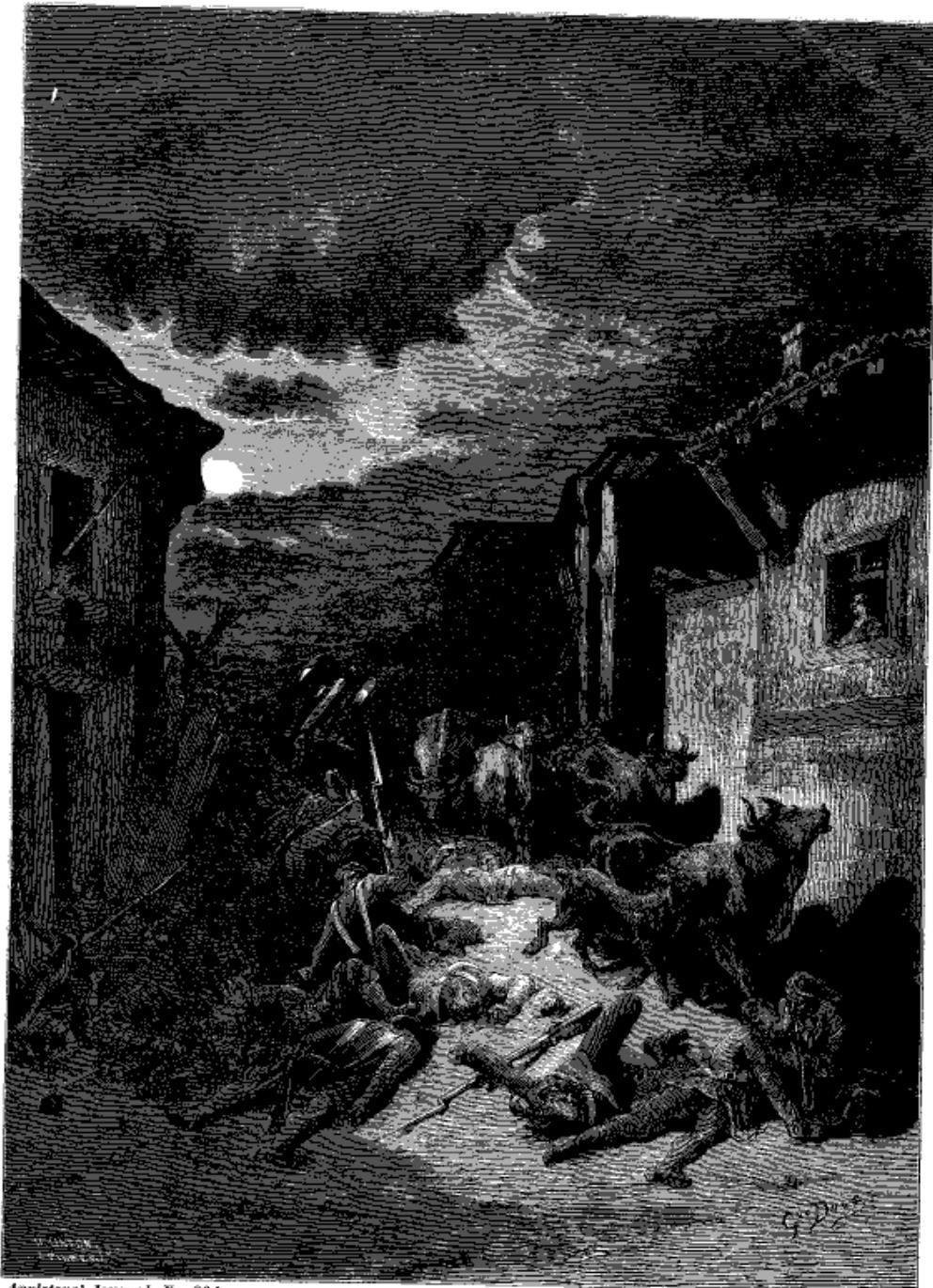
Appletons' Journal, No. 88.]

PEACE.

BY GUSTAVE DORÉ.

Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). Plate of *La Paix (Peace)*. 1866. Whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 6.



Appletons' Journal, No. 88.]

WAR.

BY GUSTAVE DORÉ.

Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). Plate of *La Guerre (War)*. 1866. Whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 7.



Horace Vernet (French, b. 1789 – 1863). *Paix et Guerre* (*Peace and War*). 1820. Oil on canvas. 55 x 45cm. The Wallace Collection, London.

Fig. 8.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *Les nuances des soldats français exhorent l'armée à la victoire sur le Rhin* (*The Shades of French Soldiers Exhort the Army to Victory on the Rhine*). 1870. 65.5 x 91cm. Brush and brown ink, black watercolour and white gouache over graphite on wove paper. The National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Fig. 9.



Hippolyte-Jean Flandrin (French, b. France 1809 – 1864). *Portrait de Napoléon III portant l'uniforme du brigadier général dans son grand cabinet aux Tuileries* (*Portrait of Napoleon III, Wearing the Uniform of Brigadier General in his Grand Cabinet at the Tuileries*). 1861. 212 x 147cm. Oil on canvas. Château de Versailles, Yvelines.

Fig. 10.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *La Marseillaise (départe des volontaires en 1792) (The Marseillaise)*. 1870. 37.7 x 55.5cm. Black chalk, charcoal, pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash and gouache. Private collection.

Fig. 11.



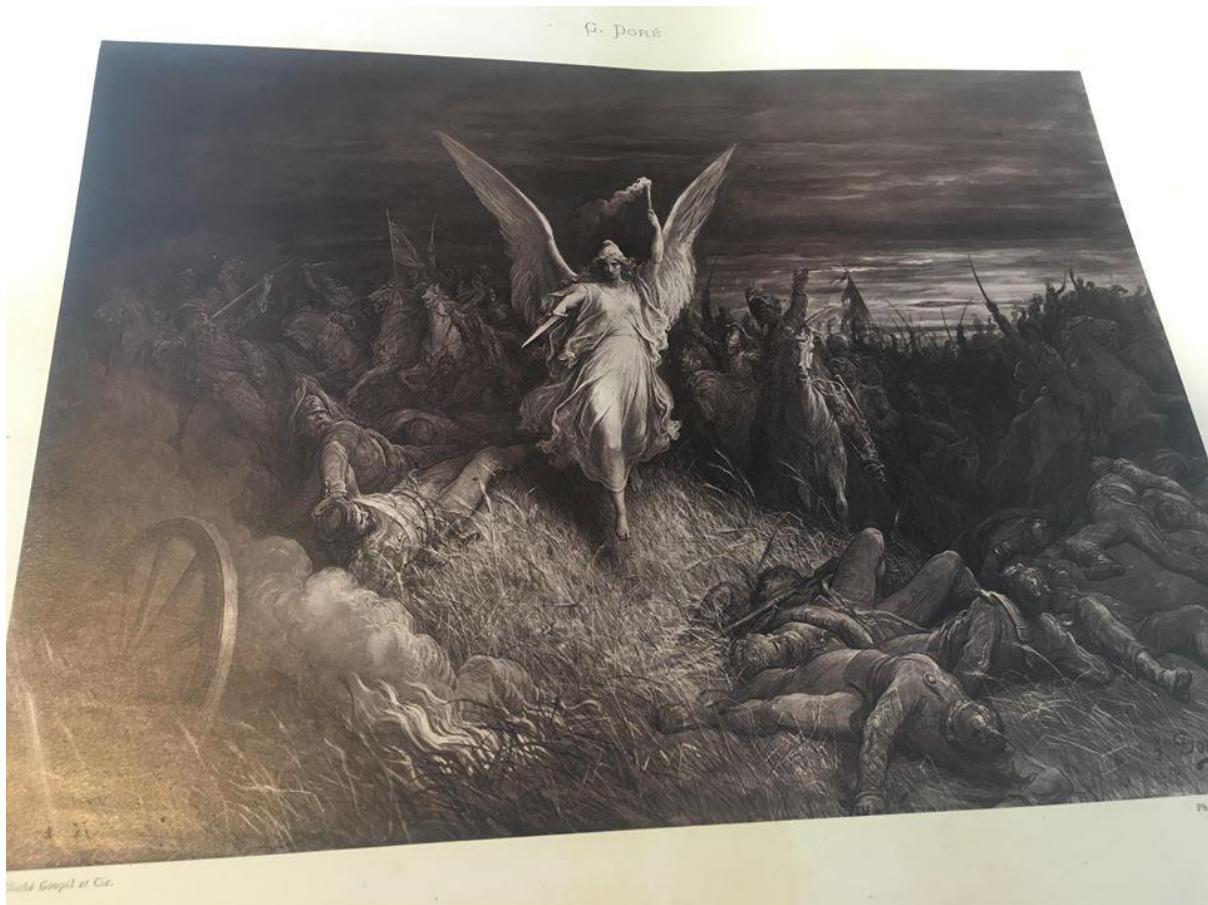
Eugène Delacroix (French, b. France 1798 – 1863). *Liberty Leading the People*. 1830. 260 x 325cm. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Fig. 12.



François Rude (French, b. France 1784 – 1855). *Départ des volontaires de 1792 (La Marseillaise)* (*Departure of the Volunteers of 1792*). 1792. H. 12.8m. Limestone. Arc de Triomphe, Place de l'Etoile, Paris.

Fig. 13.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *Le Chant du Départ* (*The Song of Departure*). 1870. Black chalk, charcoal, pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash and gouache. Whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 14.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *Le Rhin allemand* (*The German Rhine*). 1870. 73 x 99cm. Black chalk, charcoal, pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash and gouache. Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg.

Fig. 15.



Jacques Louis David (French, b. France 1748 – 1825). *Le Premier Consul franchissant les Alpes au col du Grand-Saint-Bernard* (*Napoleon Crossing the Alps*). 1801 – 1805. 270 x 230cm. Oil on canvas. Château de Versailles, Yvelines.

Fig. 16.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *L'Énigme* (*The Enigma/The Riddle*). 1871. 130 x 195.5cm. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Fig. 17.



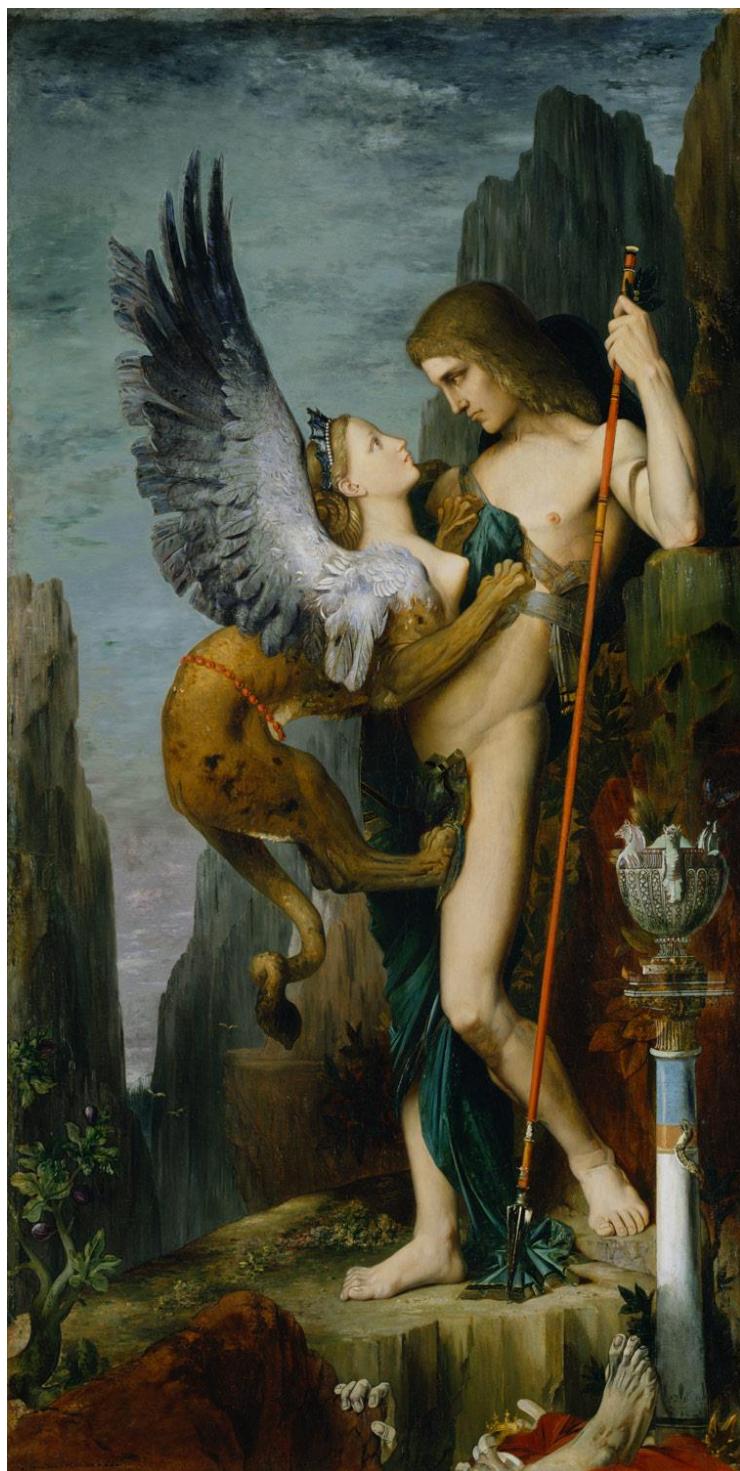
Nike of Samothrace (Winged Victory); view from the front left-hand side; detail of torso. C. 190 BCE. Height: 328cm. Excavated on the island of Samothrace in 1863. Sculpture, Paros marble. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Fig. 18.



Oedipus and the Sphinx, interior of an Attic red-figured *kylix*. c. 470 BCE. Gregorian Etruscan Museum, Vatican Museums, Rome.

Fig. 19.



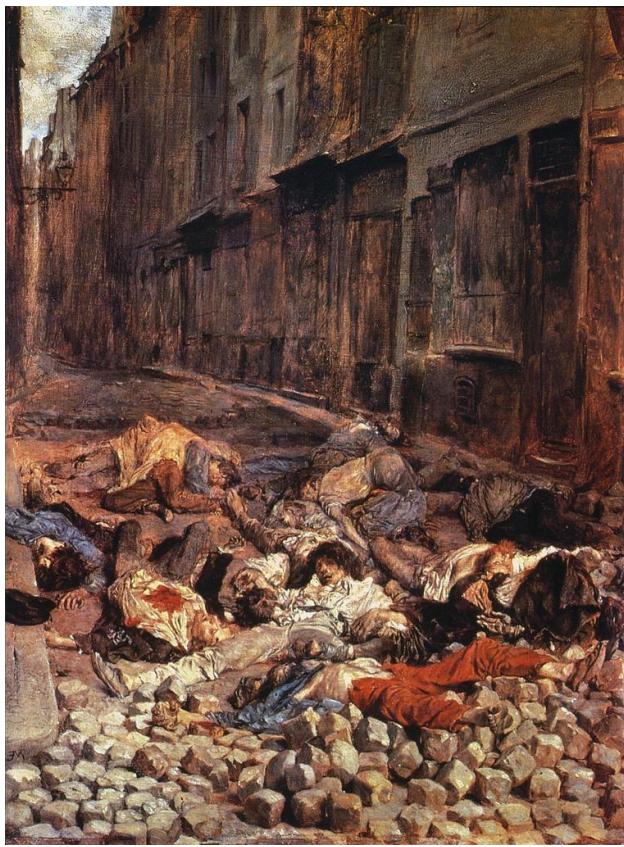
Gustave Moreau (French, b. France 1826 – 1898). *Oedipus and the Sphinx*. 1864. 206.4 x 104.8cm. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Fig. 20.



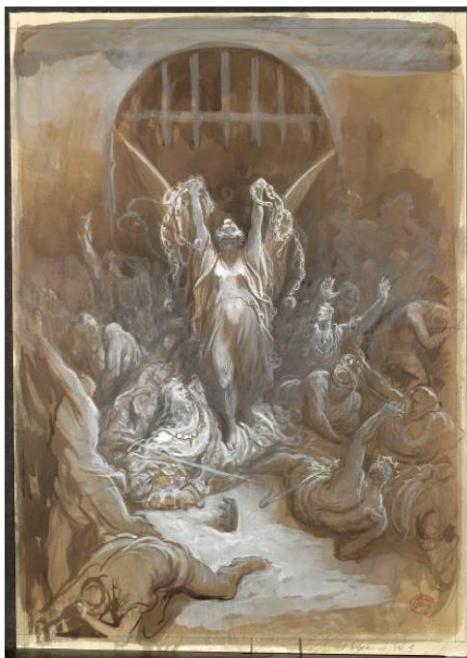
Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *La Défense de Paris* (*The Defence of Paris*). 1871. 194.31 x 129.54cm. Oil on canvas. The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Centre, New York.

Fig. 21.



Ernest Meissonier (French, b. France 1815 – 1891). *Mémoire de guerre civile (Les barricades) (Memory of Civil War (The Barricades))*. 1849. 27.94 x 20.32cm. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Fig. 22.



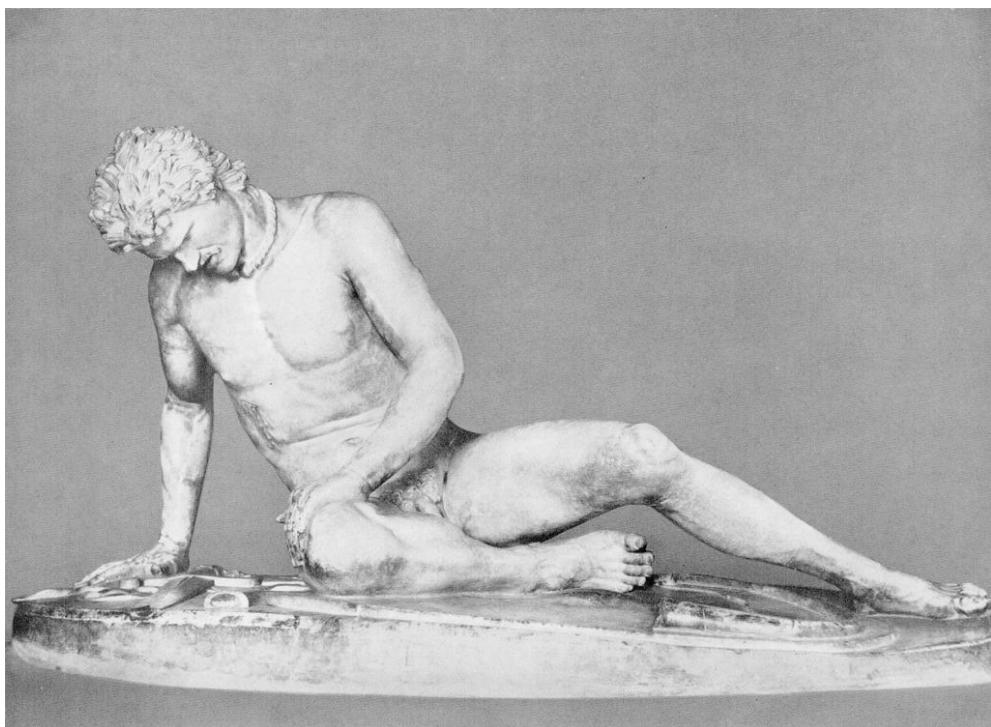
Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *La liberté triomphant de la tyrannie (Liberty Triumphing over Tyranny)*. ca. 1865 – 1875. Brown wash and grey and white gouache with graphite on beige wove paper. 46.5 x 32.9cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Fig. 23.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *L'Aigle noir de la Prusse* (*The Black Eagle of Prussia*). 1871.
129.54 x 194.945cm. Oil on canvas. The Dahesh Museum of Art, New York.

Fig. 24.



Roman copy after Epigonos, *The Dying Gaul*. ca. 220. Sculpture in marble. 93 x 185cm. Musei Capitolini, Rome.

Fig. 25.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832-83). *La Départ de Garde National (The Departure of the National Guard)*. c. 1870-71. Pen and brown ink, watercolour and gouache on paper. 16 x 12cm. Private Collection,

Fig. 26.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832-83). *Le Garde blessé* (*The Wounded Guard*). c. 1870-71. Pen and black ink, white gouache and pencil on paper. 16 x 12cm. Private collection.

Fig. 27.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832-83). *Le Bombardement* (*The Bombardment*). c. 1870-71. Pen and brown ink, watercolour, white gouache and pencil on paper. 16 x 12cm. Private collection.

Fig. 28.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *L'Alsace Meurtrie* (*Beaten Alsace*). Oil on canvas. 348 x 178cm.
Conseil Général du Haut-Rhin,
Colmar.

Fig. 29.



Ernest Meissonier (French, b. France 1815 – 1891). *The Siege of Paris* (1870-71). c. 1884. 53.5 x 70.5cm. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Fig. 30.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). *The Poem of the Vine*. 1882.

Height: approx. 4m. Sculpture in bronze.

Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco.

Fig. 31.

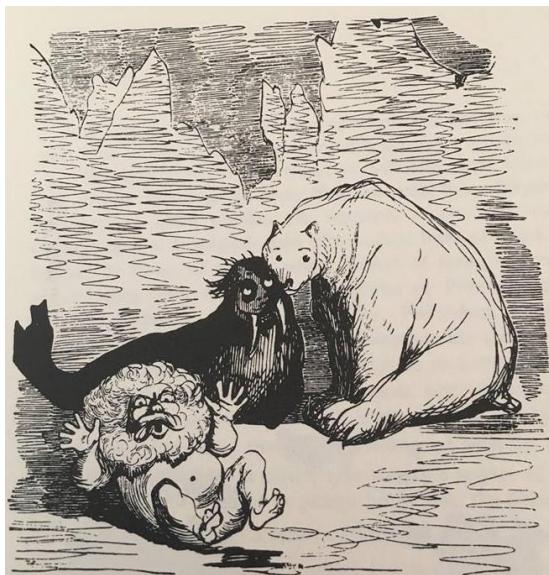


Fig. 32.

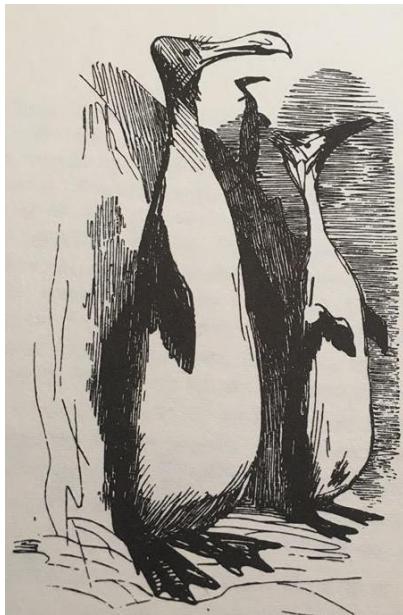
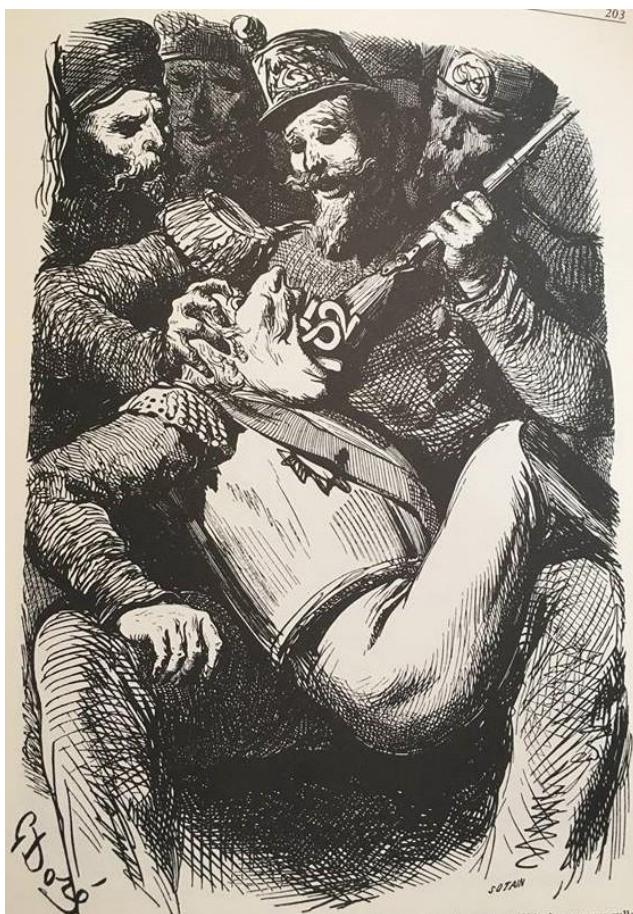


Fig. 33.

Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). Detail of Russian origin myth from *Histoire pittoresque, dramatique et caricaturale de la Sainte Russie d'apres les chroniqueurs et historiens Nestor, Nikan, Sylvestre, Karamsin, Segur, etc.* (Paris: de Bry, 1854).



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883).
Detail of Emperor Napoleon III and Tsar Nicholas I from *Histoire pittoresque, dramatique et caricaturale de la Sainte Russie d'apres les chroniqueurs et historiens Nestor, Nikan, Sylvestre, Karamsin, Segur, etc.* (Paris: de Bry, 1854).

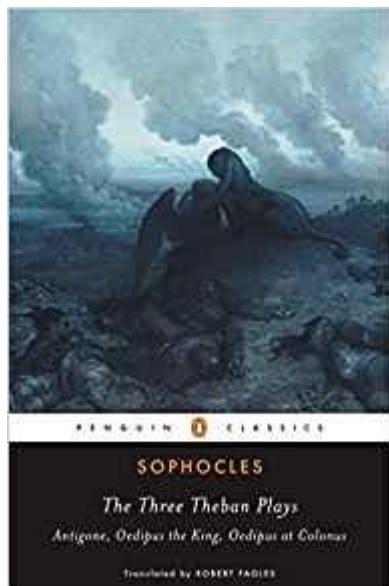
Fig. 34.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). Albumen silver print of *Le Rhin allemand*, accompanied by the poem by Alfred de Musset, also titled *Le Rhin allemand*. Produced by Goupil & Cie, c. 1870.

Fig. 35.



Front cover detail of Robert Fagles (trans.), Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus* (London: Penguin, 1984).

Fig. 36.



Gustave Doré (French, b. France 1832 – 1883). ‘Souvenirs de 1870’ shown in proposed chronology, aligning with the blue, white and red of the French tricolour flag.

Fig. 37.