Horace Vernet’s ‘Orient’: photography and the Eastern Mediterranean in 1839, part I: a daguerrean excursion

by MICHÈLE HANNOOSH

HORACE VERNET was one of the most frequent, indeed obsessive, of all nineteenth-century French travellers to the ‘Orient’. His first visit to Algeria in 1833 inspired, over the following two decades, a spate of other ones: to Algeria again in 1837, to Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Constantinople in 1839–40, to Algeria and Morocco in 1843 and again in 1853–54. The taste for the ‘oriental’ acquired on these journeys manifested itself in multiple ways, from Vernet’s own oriental dress, memorialised in the famous self-portrait of 1835 (Fig.38), to the design and installation of the ‘Chambre turque’ in the Villa Medici (Fig.41), to numerous genre paintings such as The Arab tale-teller (1837; Fig.39), Rebecca at the well (1835; Fig.40), Hagar banished by Abraham (1837; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes) or Judah and Tamar (1840; Fig.42), and finally to the many battle paintings commemorating French victories in North Africa, of which The capture of the Smalah of Abd-er Kader (1845; Versailles) remains the best known.

Unlike other artists who travelled to the region in this period, Delacroix or Fromentin, for example, Vernet left little in the way of drawings or notes relating to his trips. Vernet’s memory was legendary and is usually cited to account for this dearth of material, which contrasts so remarkably with the plethora of paintings. The exception to this is his journey to Egypt and the Levant in 1839–40, which left an extraordinarily rich textual and visual legacy, thanks to the young painter Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet who accompanied him and recorded the journey in both text and image. For Goupil-Fesquet had just learned the brand-new daguerrotype process, which had been revealed only two months before. Together he and Vernet photographed the sites they visited and people they encountered, tested exposure, lighting and weather conditions, spent their evenings polishing the metal plates and showed off the process to admiring or perplexed audiences. These included the powerful pasha of Egypt, Mehmet-Ali, the Frenchman Joseph Sève who had organised and trained Mehmet-Ali’s army and had taken the name Soliman-Pasha, painted by Vernet (Fig.43), and Archduke Friedrich of Austria. These daguerreotypes were arguably the first to be made of the Near East and in some ways set the terms for what was to become the ‘photographic Orient’, the proliferation of photographs of ancient sites and modern customs of the countries of the Mediterranean basin by Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangé, Maxime Du Camp, Francis Frith, Gustave Le Gray, William James Stillman and others. Although the actual daguerreotypes have not been located, eight of the images were published, by a process of transfer engraving, in Noël-Paymal...
Lerebours’s famous series produced between 1840 and 1844, *Excursions daguerriennes*, accompanied by texts in which Goupil-Fesquet described the view, the circumstances in which it was taken and anecdotes from the travellers’ experiences.9 Goupil-Fesquet was the chief agent in executing the daguerreotypes, but he and others made clear that Vernet took part and was adept at the process, a point confirmed by Vernet’s letters, as shall be seen.7 A traveller and fellow daguerreotypist whom they met on the journey, Gustave Joly de Lohinière, repeatedly referred in his diary to Vernet’s photographic activity.9

In addition to the images and texts of the *Excursions*, Goupil-Fesquet wrote a longer account of the trip, *Voyage en Orient fait avec Horace Vernet en 1839 et 1840*, which records, like a travel-diary, the daily experiences and impressions of the travellers, what they said, did and even thought.9 The similarity between Goupil-Fesquet’s account and passages in Vernet’s own letters suggests a collaborative approach to these memoirs too;10 Goupil-Fesquet described the view, the circumstances in which it was taken and anecdotes from the travellers’ experiences.9 Goupil-Fesquet was the chief agent in executing the daguerreotypes, but he and others made clear that Vernet took part and was adept at the process, a point confirmed by Vernet’s letters, as shall be seen.7 A traveller and fellow daguerreotypist whom they met on the journey, Gustave Joly de Lohinière, repeatedly referred in his diary to Vernet’s photographic activity.9

Vernet’s letters, and the letters and notes of Goupil-Fesquet himself (see Appendix below), provide further information on the trip. Taken together, these visual and verbal accounts present a precious source of material on that ‘Orient’ which Vernet encountered, experienced and imagined. This article will explore what these daguerreotypes and travel narratives can tell us about Vernet’s ‘Orient’ and what they may suggest about his paintings of Oriental subjects. Part I will present the circumstances of the journey, the context of the beginnings of photography and the contemporary situation of the eastern Mediterranean. Part II, to appear in the June issue of this Magazine, will discuss the images and texts from the journey, and the kind of ‘Orient’ they project. If, like much Orientalist painting, Vernet’s work ignored the signs of ‘real’ life in favour of an idealised, in his case biblical, vision, these parallel accounts — photographic and textual — suggest something more.11 For, from behind the pictorial and ethnographic commonplaces emerges the image of a region more complex. These accounts record an area of multiple ethnicities and languages, riven by law, Paul Delaroche.11 Vernet’s letters, and the letters and notes of Goupil-Fesquet himself (see Appendix below), provide further information on the trip. Taken together, these visual and verbal accounts present a precious source of material on that ‘Orient’ which Vernet encountered, experienced and imagined. This article will explore what these daguerreotypes and travel narratives can tell us about Vernet’s ‘Orient’ and what they may suggest about his paintings of Oriental subjects. Part I will present the circumstances of the journey, the context of the beginnings of photography and the contemporary situation of the eastern Mediterranean. Part II, to appear in the June issue of this Magazine, will discuss the images and texts from the journey, and the kind of ‘Orient’ they project. If, like much Orientalist painting, Vernet’s work ignored the signs of ‘real’ life in favour of an idealised, in his case biblical, vision, these parallel accounts — photographic and textual — suggest something more. For, from behind the pictorial and ethnographic commonplaces emerges the image of a region more complex. These accounts record an area of multiple ethnicities and languages, riven by
Horace Vernet's 'Orient'

Conflict between regional powers and between European states, where ordinary life, in its banal detail, continuously mingles the modern and the ancient. Significantly, it is a place that escapes the control of the traveller and artist. The paintings simplify this complexity, converting specific locations into mythical spaces where ordinary life, in its banal detail, continuously mingles the modern and the ancient. Significantly, it is a place that escapes the control of the traveller and artist. The paintings simplify this complexity, converting specific locations into mythical spaces where ordinary life, in its banal detail, continuously mingles the modern and the ancient.

Despite Vernet's claims of 'seeing painting everywhere' on this journey,14 the daguerreotypes and accompanying texts provide glimpses of a different 'Orient', more historicised, political and individualised.

The Egyptian/Levantine journey was conceived in the immediate aftermath of Vernet's first visit to Algeria in 1833, 'an admirable journey which will remain engraved in my mind as the most wonderful that I ever took'.15 A letter from his wife, Louise, dated 12th September 1833, just two months after his return from Algeria, states that 'he is already planning another trip to Africa. At the moment it is Egypt that he wants to tap. [...] His fertile imagination and his talent gain immeasurably from these trips'.16 In 1839, reports in the press asserting that Vernet had been invited by Mehmet-Ali to paint a picture on the subject of the Battle of Nezib (24th June 1839), in which the Egyptian forces commanded by Mehmet-Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, had defeated those of the Ottoman sultan Mahmoud II, were soon denied.17 However, Vernet's letters attest that he did agree to paint such a picture, even if ultimately he never produced it.18

The circumstances in which Goupil-Fesquet joined him are unknown, although Goupil had been Vernet's student (and possibly Delacroix's), and it was common on such trips to take along a travelling companion.19 Vernet suggests that the journey was an initiation for the twenty-two-year-old: 'M. Goupil is the most easy-going and even-tempered of companions. For

40. Rebecca at the well, by Horace Vernet. 1833. Canvas, 180 by 80 cm. (Location unknown).

41. Central motif of the vault, Turkish Chamber, designed by Horace Vernet. 1833. (Villa Medici, Rome).

14 Letter to Monfort, 20th January 1840 (AMN P30); see L'Illustration (12th April 1840) and Durande, op. cit. (note 2), p.142.
16 Letter to Montfort, 20th January 1840 (AMN P30); see L'Illustration (12th April 1840). Vernet obtained permission to take the trip but renounced the return from Algeria, states that 'he is already planning another trip to Africa. At the moment it is Egypt that he wants to tap. [...] His fertile imagination and his talent gain immeasurably from these trips'.16 In 1839, reports in the press asserting that Vernet had been invited by Mehmet-Ali to paint a picture on the subject of the Battle of Nezib (24th June 1839), in which the Egyptian forces commanded by Mehmet-Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, had defeated those of the Ottoman sultan Mahmoud II, were soon denied.17 However, Vernet's letters attest that he did agree to paint such a picture, even if ultimately he never produced it.18

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him, everything is fine, he is happy with everything. I don’t know anyone who lets himself be led around better than he does. He is taking care of himself now, and he is always prepared. This is progress; one more trip, and he will be able to go off on his own.20 Although he seems to have fallen on hard times, Goupil-Fesquet came, through his mother, from one of the most important merchant and banking families in France, active in Marseille, Bordeaux, London, Amsterdam, Smyrna and the Levant.21 The few scattered remarks in the Voyage during the travellers’ stay in Smyrna provide only the slightest hint of this illustrious genealogy. His great-grandfather, Pieter van Sanen, had been a Dutch merchant in Smyrna and the Prussian consul-general there.22 His grandfather Casimir Fesquet (c.1748–1821) had been a prosperous merchant and banker in Smyrna, Marseille and London. His aunt Arsène Fesquet had married the banker Frédéric Soehnèze, son of a powerful censeur (overseer) of the Banque de France, and had held an important Salon for liberals under the Restoration. His mother was the niece of another censeur under the Restoration. His mother was the niece of another censeur under the Restoration. His mother was the niece of another censeur under the Restoration. His mother was the niece of another censeur under the Restoration.

The extraordinary idea of daguerreotyping the journey came from Vernet and Goupil-Fesquet themselves. Vernet would have had knowledge of the new process from the deliberations of the Institut of which he was a member. In particular, his son-in-law Paul Delaroche had drafted the report on it for its first public presentation on 19th August 1839.24 Just three weeks later, Goupil-Fesquet asked for lessons from one of its pioneering practitioners, the architect Alphonse-Eugène Hubert, in view of the forthcoming trip.25 He also took advice from Daguerre (see Appendix 2 below). The ambition of this initiative, so soon after the process was made public and with all its attendant difficulties and complications, cannot be overstated. As Ken Jacobson observes, the taking of such views was extremely rare even ten years later, when most professional photographers produced commercial portraiture and few amateurs took outdoor views.26 Lerebours probably supplied the travellers with the daguerreotype apparatus and the darkroom tent, but contrary to what is usually claimed, he did not commission the views as he did for most of those destined for the Excursions daguerriennes. He implies, rather, that it was a different operation, and that Vernet and Goupil-Fesquet lent him their daguerreotypes: ‘M. Lerebours has chosen the images that he has had engraved from his gallery consisting of more than 1200 plates, executed in part by his travellers, and from among the most remarkable images brought back from the Orient by MM. Horace Vernet and Goupil’.27 When he announced the second volume, Lerebours specifically thanked them for entrusting their images to him.28 Goupil-Fesquet later repaid Hubert’s instruction by sending him detailed notes on the results of his experience in the field. The novelty of the process and the pioneering nature of the voyage that followed was highlighted by both Hubert and Paul Delaroche.

20 Burton (1813–89) was Vernet’s nephew by marriage; his mother was Aimée Pujol, the sister of Vernet’s wife, Louise. Vernet painted his portrait (private collection; Renaudeau, no.230).


22 ‘Smyrne a pour moi le charme puissant des souvenirs de famille: ma grand’mère et ma tante y sont nées; mon grand-père y fut heureux auteur […] tous les récits qu’on m’en faisait dans mon enfance me reviennent à l’esprit comme des songes qu’on cherche à réaliser en bâtissant des maisons en pensant à eux et à leurs héritiers’. (Letter of 9th January 1840 (AMN P30); see Szramkiewicz: Les Régents et censeurs de la banque de France nommés sous le Consulat et l’Empire, Geneva 1974, esp. pp.247–51 and pp.391–93.)

23 Burton (1813–89) was Vernet’s nephew by marriage; his mother was Aimée Pujol, the sister of Vernet’s wife, Louise. Vernet painted his portrait (private collection; Renaudeau, no.230).


27 ‘M. Lerebours a choisi les épreuves qu’il a fait graver dans sa galerie, composée de plus de 1200 planches, exécutées en partie par ses voyageurs et parmi les épreuves les plus remarquables rapportées d’Orient par MM. Horace Vernet et Goupil (Excursions daguerriennes, vol. I, “Avis de l’éditeur”).’ Goupil-Fesquet undoubtedly acquired the equipment from Lerebours, however, since he alludes to ‘l’opticien qui […] a fourni’ (Voyage, p.40); the other main supplier at this time, Alphonse Guiroux, was not an opticien.

trip meant that he had unique information to pass on: technical notes on lighting, aspect, exposure times, weather conditions, materials, equipment and processes (see Appendices 3 and 4 below). Hubert evoked these findings in a pamphlet that he published anonymously, *Le Daguerréotype considéré sous un point de vue artistique, mécanique et pittoresque* (Paris 1840). There he cited Goupil-Fesquet on ways to take pictures in focus even from the deck of a moving ship, on the most advantageous air-humidity and on the superiority, for adequate contrast, of coloured monuments over white houses or snow-capped mountains. Vernet and Goupil-Fesquet also transmitted some of their findings to Daguerre himself, as a letter from Vernet indicates. The daguerréotypes seem to have been sent back home periodically, perhaps to cut down on weight. From Alexandria on 6th November 1839, Vernet instructed his wife to ask Théodore Gréterin, director of the customs division at the Ministry of the Interior, to leave the box of daguerréotypes unopened: ‘You can imagine that it would be fatal if a customs officer wrecked the pictures’.

From Cairo on 21st November, he wrote: ‘We have been daguerréotyping like mad and you will receive a part of what we have done as a sample. Delaroche should choose the plates that he thinks will be of interest to the Institute’.

On 23rd November, he specified that he wished to send the most interesting plates to the Académie and he asked that they be spared fumigation during quarantine in Malta. Whether the plates ever went to the Académie is unclear; only the engravings from the *Excursions* are known today.

The *Excursions daguerréennes*, consisting of one hundred and eleven images representing sites from Europe, the Near East, North Africa, Russia, Saint-Helena and even North America, each with accompanying text, was the first major publication to use the new technology of the daguerréotype. The published images were, in all but three cases, aquatint engravings taken from tracings of the daguerréotypes. The work appeared first in fifteen instalments, each consisting of four images and their texts, beginning in August 1840 and continuing every month or two.

Four instalments had appeared by the end of December 1840, including Goupil-Fesquet’s chapters on Acre, Beirut, Jerusalem and Pompey’s Pillar with their corresponding views. By mid-February 1841, the seventh instalment had appeared, and by mid-December 1841, the twelfth, which included his *Harem de Méhémet-Ali* and his *Vue de Louxor*.

After the enormous success of the first series, in April of 1842 Lerebours announced a second series, concentrated more on France. The two series were collected into two volumes dated 1841 and 1842 respectively. The eight Vernet/Goupil-Fesquet images appeared entirely in the first series and therefore in volume I: *Colonne de Pompée à Alexandrie, Harem de Méhémet-Ali à Alexandrie, Louxor, Pyramide de Chéops, Jérusalem, Beyrouth, Saint-Jean-d’Acre et Nazareth*.

Their images were regularly singled out as particularly striking. The *View of Acre*, which appeared in the first instalment, was praised for its nuance, clarity and variety – the different parts of the city, the peak of Mount Carmel, the citadel with the Turkish flag, the gardens of Abdallah in the plain and the Djezzer aqueduct in the distance. The view of Mehemet-Alli’s harem was admired for its light and its pictorial effect; the same article calls attention to the *View of Louxor*; *Pompey’s Pillar*, the *View of Beirut* and the *View of Jerusalem* were cited by the British press for their interest, clarity and beauty.

43. *Portrait de Soliman Pacha*, by Horace Vernet. 1840. Canvas, dimensions unknown. (Location unknown, formerly in the collection of Sherif Sabry Pasha, Cairo). Fig.6 from J.M. Carré: *Voyageur et lettrés français en Égypte*, Cairo 1932, II, p.54.


46. L’Artiste 7 (1841), no. 5, p.81; 8 (1841), no.23, p.400.
The party left Marseille by steamship on 21st October 1839, after Vernet demonstrated the daguerreotype process there on the 20th and, it appears, took the first images ever of the city: two views of the entrance to the Vieux-Port. They went via Livorno to Malta, where they boarded a ship for Syria. There they caught another boat for Alexandria, where they shaved their heads and donned Arab dress for the remainder of the trip: this was more convenient for the climate and would allow them easier access to mosques and other sites. The itinerary included Alexandria, Cairo, Luxor, the Pyramids of Giza, El Arish, Khan Yunis, Gaza, Bethlehem, Hebron and Jerusalem, taking in the Valley of Josaphat, the Jordan river and the Dead Sea, then on to Nablus, Jenin, Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Shefa Amr, Acre, Tyre, Sidon, Damascus, Beirut, Smyrna and Constantinople. From Constantinople they returned by boat to France via Rome, stopping en route in Malta where Vernet executed his Judah and Tamar. They landed in Marseille on 12th April 1840. Vernet later recalls the journey with great nostalgia, especially during his trip to Russia in 1842–43, longing for ‘my dear Orientals, whom I love more every day’. His memories of Egypt were literally restorative: ‘I am like a drunkard who stops up a bottle, whenever I am able to reconnect with my memories of a country where the sun is not the way it is here, an orange wrapped in grey paper’. It was not merely the weather: ‘When I remember the evening I spent in Jerusalem writing to you at the table in the convent, after a meal of baccala! I was thin and run down; but the cause was very different from what is turning me pale now!’ With the Bible and everything I was seeing, I was filling my bag, like the ant who stores food for the future; here, it is the opposite, a void that surrounds me and that I am filling at my expense.’

The 1843 Arab travelling in the desert (Fig.44), depicting Vernet, Burton and Goupil-Fesquet themselves, was the fruit of these memories, a warm and brilliant antidote to the cold, dark Russian winter.

The political situation in the Eastern Mediterranean was very unstable. Since at least the Greek War of Independence in the

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38 The copy at the British Library, London, has 1842 for vol.I and 1843 for vol.II. The copy at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, has 1840 for vol.I, but as most of the instalments had not yet appeared, this date must represent that of the first instalment. In any case, the second series extended into 1844, since T. Bettiinger’s Vallée de Saint-Cœurnois et Le Bonmant is dated ‘17 juin 1843.
39 None of the plates in the Excursions is attributed to any particular individual; all are marked ‘Daguerréotypes Lerebours’. Goupil-Fesquet’s are certainly those for which he signed the accompanying text. He also wrote the text for two views of Paris (Saint-Germain l’Auxerrois and Porte latérale de Notre-Dame de Paris) suggesting that he may have supplied these daguerreotypes as well.
40 Journal des beaux-arts et de la littérature 2/7 (February 1840), p.37.
43 A. Brun: ‘La Première Photographie prise à Marseille’, in Mémoires de l’Institut historique de Provence 13 (1916), pp.5-9, esp. p.7. The daguerreotypes have not been located.
44 Voyage, p.79.
45 H. Vernet. Malte 1840

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44. Arab travelling in the desert, by Horace Vernet. 1843. Canvas, 46.7 by 57.7 cm. (Wallace Collection, London).
1820s, the region had been subject to intense and prolonged conflict between both internal and external forces. In 1832 a weak Ottoman Sultan had been challenged by his formidable vasal Mehmet-Alì, the pasha of Egypt, who defeated the sultan’s forces in the first Egyptian–Ottoman War. By the terms of the Peace of Kutchah in May 1833 Mehmet-Alì acquired rule over the large territory that was then Syria.49 Subsequently, Mehmet-Alì’s decisive victory over the Ottoman armies at Nezib on 24th June 1839 strengthened his position and placed the whole of the Levant, and thus the route to the East, within his reach. Sultan Mahmoud II died on 29th June 1839 and was replaced by his inexperienced sixteen-year-old son Abdulmecid. At the same time, the Ottoman fleet defected to Mehmet-Alì, creating an unparalleled naval force. This alarmed Britain and Russia in particular. Both wished to maintain the status quo: Britain so as to protect its routes to India and to contain Russian expansionism; Russia to keep its own foothold in the region, which it had gained at the expense of a weak Mahmoud II but which was threatened by a powerful Mehmet-Alì. Joined by Austria and Prussia, Britain and Russian forces soon intervened to support the new sultan and drive Mehmet-Alì, who was backed by the French, from Syria. In July of 1840, shortly after the travellers’ return to France, the allied powers signed the Convention of London, issuing Mehmet-Alì with an ultimatum; in the autumn, led by the British, they retook Beirut, Sidon and Acre, forcing Mehmet-Alì to renounce all claims to Syria.50

Within the Ottoman empire the situation was also extremely tense. Vernet noted the hatred the Syrians and Lebanese had for the Egyptian occupation: ‘As for the territory that [Mehmet-Alì] governs, nothing is less certain than that he will retain it, for he is detested there. The land is ruined; the fields lie fallow, abandoned by the peasants who have fled the pasha’s agents; insurrections are flaring up everywhere, and just one setback for the army would be the signal for a general uprising, not only in Syria but even in Egypt, where there is unbearable suffering’.51 He predicted an uprising in Beirut, especially if the French invaded to support the insurgents: ‘as soon as we were to land here, revolution would break out everywhere. The emir Bashir, a prince from Mount Lebanon, commands more than a hundred thousand Christians, who are suffering under Egyptian domination’.52

The party encountered reminders of war throughout their journey. On their arrival in Egypt, they were struck by the presence of Mehmet-Alì’s warships, which filled the port of Alexandria.53 At their very first meeting with Mehmet-Alì, they received the full force of his sarcasm about the French suggestion that he restore the Ottoman fleet to the sultan as a gesture of peace: ‘Really, my good Sir, I do not understand the French, who are so good at making war and who speak of nothing but peace’.54 In January 1840 they spent a week with the commander of the Egyptian army, Soliman Pasha, in Sidon where he had been sent to inspect the fortifications along the coast. While there, Vernet admired the tent and the arms that had been captured from the Turks at Nezib, as well as the horse which Soliman had ridden during the battle. On the return voyage, they met the French navy moored at Smyrna. The travellers were housed aboard the 86-gun warship Santì Pietri, the deck and battery of which Vernet daguerreotyped;55 they were also entertained aboard the 90-gun İlena, where Goupil-Fesquet daguerreotyped the deck.56 Archduke Friedrich of Austria, to whom they demonstrated the daguerreotype process on board the İlena on 1st February 1840, was the commander of the Guerriera which later assisted the British in the shelling of Beirut and Sidon.

Vernet may have been doing a little reconnaissance of his own: ‘Tell General Boyer that we have in our bags everything we promised to bring back, and that he can assure the person we went to see together that nothing will escape our observation’.57 A former Napoleonical general, Pierre-François-Xavier Boyer (1772–1851) had frequented Vernet’s studio in 1820 and is pictured on the far left of the latter’s L’Atelier d’Horace Vernet, rue des Martyrs (1822; private collection).58 From 1824 to 1826 he had led the team of French military advisors sent to reform Mehmet-Alì’s army and thus had an interest in, and knowledge of, the political and military situation in the region. It is unclear what information he asked Vernet to obtain, or whom he and Vernet visited – perhaps an official in the War Department? – but traces of this arrangement are found in his memoirs. Boyer recounted how Vernet’s nephew Burton secretly made drawings and plans of the military installations at Acre when they passed through in January 1840. When a certain Fiorentino, the major de place attached to Mehmet-Alì’s army, inadvertently discovered the plans, he reproached Vernet and Burton for compromising him and told them of the dangers they would have incurred if caught.59 Burton’s plans must have been among the things in Vernet’s ‘bags’ destined for Boyer, as mentioned in the letter cited above.

Vernet’s Orientalist genre scenes suggest none of these complexities, and instead project the image of a timeless, mythical world. With their highly finished surface and lavish, minutely rendered detail, they are extremely theatrical and contrived. Paintings such as Rebecca at the well, Hagar banished by Abraham and Judah and Tamar (Figs.40 and 42) have a sugary suaveness

50 This encompassed modern-day Syria, Lebanon and part of Israel.
51 ‘J’ai pris la vue du pont et de la batterie au daguerreotype’, letter of 16th February 1840 (AMN P30); see L'Illustration (12th April 1840).
52 Voyage, p.220.
53 ‘Die au général Boyer que nous avons dans notre sac tout ce que nous avons promis de rapporter, qu’il peut assurer à la personne chez laquelle nous avons été ensemble que rien ne manque à nos observations’, letter to his wife of 5th January 1840 (AMN P30).
54 Renuaude (no.135) identifies this figure correctly. The face matches Robert Lebreton’s portrait of Pierre-François-Xavier exactly. Boyer had been part of Napoleon’s Egyptian and Syrian expeditions in 1798–99. From 1817 to 1825 he had served as military governor of Oran, a post in which he was notorious for his extreme severity. In August 1839 he moved from active service to the army reserve.
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Notes de Goupil sur le Daguerréotype

1. Lettre de Hector Horeau à Alphonse-Eugène Hubert, 13 septembre 1839.

Mon cher Hubert, Tu fais des daguerréotypes avec les amis. Veux-tu permettre que Mr Goupil (qui en a naguère un) te rende ton service? Il vient de se réfugier à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien s’en rappeler chez M. Hubert prendre congé de lui; il a chargé sa mère de lui en témoigner tous ses regrets. Il m’a écrit d’user du tripoli de Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils.

2. Lettre de Honorine-Zoé Goupil-Fesquet à Alphonse-Eugène Hubert, 14 octobre 1839.

[on verso] Mon cher Hubert, Tu fais des daguerréotypes avec les amis. Veux-tu permettre que Mr Goupil (qui en a naguère un) te rende ton service? Il vient de se réfugier à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien s’en rappeler chez M. Hubert prendre congé de lui; il a chargé sa mère de lui en témoigner tous ses regrets. Il m’a écrit d’user du tripoli de Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils.

3. Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet’s notes on the daguerreotype process.

Notes de Goupil sur le Daguerreotype

Le 7 octobre 1839 j’ai fait à Alexandrie devant le pacha d’Egypte Méhémet-Ali, une belle épreuve de son armée en deux minutes ½ de 10 à 11 heures du matin.

Le 16 du même mois, au Caire voulant opérer de la même manière et le ciel étant aussi pur, je n’ai obtenu rien. Le 20 j’ai très bien réussi les Pyramides et le sphinx, objets d’un jaune rougeâtre, en 9 minutes après-midi.

Les fonds éloignés ne viennent jamais très nets, et n’offrent que de très petits détails. J’ai observé que le portrait de la mer sur un fond de ciel n’est jamais acquitté que dans la nature.

Lorsqu’il fait du brouillard il faut laisser de 15 à 30 minutes suivant que le soleil le traverse ou non.

Le ciel parfaitement pur, objets blancs, toits rouges

Le 16 du même mois, au Caire voulant opérer de la même manière et le ciel étant aussi pur, je n’ai obtenu rien. Le 20 j’ai très bien réussi les Pyramides et le sphinx, objets d’un jaune rougeâtre, en 9 minutes après-midi.

Les fonds éloignés ne viennent jamais très nets, et n’offrent que de très petits détails. J’ai observé que le portrait de la mer sur un fond de ciel n’est jamais acquitté que dans la nature.

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J’ai toujours remarqué que les épreuves obtenus au bord de la mer m’avaient partout très bien réussi.

A Rome où le temps était humide et les nuages intempestifs j’ai eu beaucoup de peine. Il fallait laisser un instant pour faire déférer la lumière; temps gris, en 20 minutes. Les arbres, la verdure se rendant parfaitement sur un temps bien calme, il est nécessaire d’ôter plus fortement la plaque pour un paysage et d’éviter un site où les blancs des fabriques soient très éclatants. Le ciel couvert et la fin de la journée vers 6 heure est le mieux pour obtenir des détails très nets et le modèle des masses d’ombre.

J’ai obtenu à 4 heures dans 32 minutes, temps couvert, la ville Bergame parfaitement réussie. J’attribue la beauté des épreuves maritimes à l’action de l’air salin qui détériore l’iode en même temps que la lumière et facilite en ce sens l’opération.

4. Letter from Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet to Alphonse-Eugène Hubert, 8 May 1840.

[on verso] Mon cher Hubert, Tu fais des daguerréotypes avec les amis. Veux-tu permettre que Mr Goupil (qui en a naguère un) te rende ton service? Il vient de se réfugier à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien s’en rappeler chez M. Hubert prendre congé de lui; il a chargé sa mère de lui en témoigner tous ses regrets. Il m’a écrit d’utiliser du tripoli de Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils. Le départ de M. Vernet a été si précipité que M. Vernet n’a pu trouver un instant pour aller jusqu’à Venise pour le polissage des planches. M. Hubert voudra bien recevoir les excuses de son fils.

J’ai récemment remarqué que les épreuves obtenus au bord de la mer m’avaient partout très bien réussi.

Le 7 novembre 1839 j’ai fait à Alexandrie devant le pacha d’Egypte Méhémet-Ali, une belle épreuve de son armée en deux minutes ½ de 10 à 11 heures du matin.

Dangers qu’ils eussent courus tous trois si quelques officiers ou soldats de la garnison égyptienne

Le ciel parfaitement pur, objets blancs, toits rouges

Les images dites formidables, même dans les campagnes les plus sauvages, ont été obtenues à Alexandrie. Le 16 du même mois, au Caire voulant opérer de la même manière et le ciel étant aussi pur, je n’ai obtenu rien. Le 20 j’ai très bien réussi les Pyramides et le sphinx, objets d’un jaune rougeâtre, en 9 minutes après-midi.

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