

## Republicanism Deferred

Autonomy agrees with Anglo-Saxons. We, French, are Latin. The influence of Rome molded our spirits during centuries. We cannot escape this obsession and it would be contrary to our nature to depart from the path it has traced for us. We know only to make, and by consequence must only make, assimilation.

—Arthur Girault, *Principes de colonisation*<sup>1</sup>

[A]ssimilation was a natural part of French intellectual life and as French a doctrine as wine is a drink.

—Raymond Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*<sup>2</sup>



In his *Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale*, first published in 1895, the prominent French jurist Arthur Girault broached, yet again, the “arduous and daunting” question: “What is to be done with the natives [of Algeria]”?<sup>3</sup> He reflected upon the three propositions his government had historically contemplated in this regard: exterminate or expel them to the Sahara, abandon the colony altogether to them, or, finally, attempt to assimilate them. Girault promptly dismissed the first and second premises. The “monstrous systematic destruction” or eviction (*refoulement*) of indigenous and aboriginal communities—the stamp of Anglo-Saxon colonialism in America and Australia—was clearly abhorrent to the “natural generosity of the French race.” By the same token, granting the North African colony any form of autonomy or self-government was the “very negation of colonization” and anathema to the standing of Greater France. He then considered the option of colonial assimilation, and acknowledged even its unsystematic practices in Algeria as the true marker of the French and Latin genius and the unvarying ideological legacy of the Enlightenment and principles of

1789. As doctrine and policy, Girault explained, assimilation had originated in the National Convention's endeavors to grant full civil rights to France's colonial subjects and so raise a national citizenry indifferent to race or religion. Thus, when the Constitution of Year III (1795) integrated all overseas possessions into the egalitarian regime of the republic, French colonial policy entered a "new" era, with assimilation as its clearly enunciated principle.<sup>4</sup>

Girault has sketched here the general historical and philosophical background to France's colonial policy of assimilation, as well as the commonly accepted understanding of its practical objectives. To summarize, the policy of assimilation consists of incorporating colonial territories into the national domain by governing them with uniform political institutions, legal codes, and commercial tariffs. It entails administering the colonies as "overseas departments," subject to the conventions, customs, and norms of the metropole, and without special dispensation, therefore, for their non-European peoples or traditions. The indigenous populations are absorbed, in principle, into the national citizenry, regardless of historical or cultural specificities. Accordingly, the second prong of assimilation, the cultural corollary to the political integration of the colony, envisions remaking its natives, as well as its non-French settlers, in the image of France by propagating among them national education, language, aesthetics, and mores.

Yet, significantly, Girault was critical precisely of the native dimensions to colonial assimilation. He qualified his calls for renewed republican commitments to the incorporation of Algeria with grim warnings for his countrymen to "renounce absolutely" the delusional goal of native acculturation. He found the conventional approaches to the cultural rehabilitation of Algeria's Muslims, whether by religious conversion or secular instruction, fraught with "illusion and peril," and he advocated instead a "moderate" and "eclectic" variant of assimilation, "freed . . . from the exaggerations that compromise it."<sup>5</sup> The government, he asserted, had merely to conciliate the natives with French rule "by striving to make them appreciate its practical advantages and by ameliorating their material condition." In this manner, Girault shifted the efforts of his country's civilizing mission among the Muslims of Algeria from cultural to economic concerns. No longer were the prospects for a "harmony of sentiments" between the French and Muslims to be built upon common morals or shared values but, rather, to be based on mutual worldly interests and pecuniary benefits. "All we are able to do," he concluded, "is to attach the indigenous population to the order of things that will be created by the bonds of material interest."

Girault, in other words, was proposing to circumscribe selectively the reach of colonial assimilation in Algeria. In the dying decades of the nineteenth century, he was not alone in campaigning for “intimate union” (*rattachement*) with Algeria’s European settlers, or *colons*, in order to accommodate their increasing demands for self-determination and to stave off the likelihood of their political secession from France. The *colons* themselves understood the term “assimilation” to mean greater legislative representation in Paris and immunity, consequently, from the whim of colonial decrees and the anxiety of metropolitan interventions in favor of the natives. Thus, on the one hand, Girault’s repudiation of the traditional scope of assimilation was meant to placate the colonialist establishment and encourage new policies to serve as the “safety valve that prevents the rupture” between France and Algeria.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, in conceding the necessity for separate rulings and specialized governing bodies for the colony’s Muslim majority, he also advanced a calculated argument for excluding the latter from the republican franchise. From the perspective of the native communities of Algeria, therefore, the policy of “association” amounted to republicanism deferred in the name of racial division and colonial difference: as long as they remained culturally, morally, and mentally unsuited for the burdens of modern citizenship, the Muslims were to be subjected (*assujettis*) to extraconstitutional measures and native laws. *Rattachement* thus guaranteed liberties and representation for the Europeans of Algeria without compromising their colonial privileges, while *assujettissement* placed needed checks upon the exaggerated aims of universalism and integration. Together, the two policies—which would come to delineate the basic assumptions and operations of colonial association in the early twentieth century—made it possible to extend full civil rights to French Algerians, while confining the Muslims to auxiliary political, juridical, and economic standing.

Girault’s *Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale*, read widely in official, academic, and journalistic circles, was one in a stream of influential treatises, composed around the turn of the century, that stimulated growing public condemnation of the policies of native assimilation.<sup>7</sup> Contributing equally to the anti-assimilationist din of the *fin de siècle* was the rising appeal of the sociological inquiries of Émile Durkheim, the ethnolinguistic studies of Ferdinand de Saussure, and the racial theories of Eugène Bodichon and Gustave Le Bon. Finally, the emergence of the Colonial Party (*Parti colonial*) in the Chamber of Deputies, as well as the multiplication of colonialist societies in France, helped propel imperial decision making in novel directions. “In this par-

ticular environment,” observed Raymond Betts, “created in the years 1889–1890 and lasting about two decades, a new concern over colonial theory arose.” Gradually, the paradigm of colonial association was promoted as the cure to the absurdities of native assimilation:

At the end of the nineteenth century and more particularly in the first decade of the twentieth century, assimilation was analyzed and widely rejected. Condemned as rigid, unscientific, and harmful, assimilation was considered by most theorists no longer of any value to France’s new and highly diversified colonial empire. Arguing in favor of a more realistic and flexible native policy, the new generation of colonial thinkers was desirous of gaining native cooperation and willing to respect native institutions. “Association” was the word most often employed to express the method they desired and the policy of association was offered as the antidote to assimilation.<sup>8</sup>

To this interpretation of the progression of French colonial thinking at the turn of the century, two specific objections may be dutifully raised. First, there are justifiable grounds to dispute the conventional status of assimilation as the dominant colonial practice and policy in Algeria in the nineteenth century. The reputation of assimilation as the mainstay of French colonial governance, I will counter, was largely a by-product of the critical debates of the 1890s and was later cemented in historical representations of the decade in question as a transitional phase, straddling two contradictory doctrinal eras in French colonial policy.<sup>9</sup> Second, the early twentieth century, I will argue, did not inaugurate a new phase in colonial decision making or witness a rupture with an old, established tradition of assimilation. The debate of the 1890s was rather the resumption—after a two-decade suspension following the overthrow of the Second Empire in 1870—of theoretical and practical discussions that had persistently preoccupied French colonial administrators since the conquest of the Ottoman Regency of Algiers in the 1830s. The “new colonial policy of association” in the twentieth century was rather a return to measures implemented systematically from the late 1840s until the military collapse of 1870.

To sustain these claims, I introduce in this book the often overlooked, yet cardinal, influence of France’s military Arabists on colonial policy making in Algeria from 1830 to 1870. These specialized officers and colonial administrators, serving in concentrated numbers in the Ministry of War’s Directorate of Arab Affairs in Paris and Algiers, were longstanding critics of native assimilation and proponents of “controlled association” with the Muslims of Algeria. Imbued with the teachings of the philosopher Henri de Saint-Simon, the Arabist officers contested the existence of primordial human racial and cultural characteristics and

insisted on the need for societies at different stages of historical development to evolve within their particular institutional structures and cultural traditions. In the 1840s, their endeavors to concretize the associationist agenda of Saint-Simon, especially as rearticulated by Prosper Enfantin and his follower Thomas "Ismayl" Urbain, would dedicate France's military Arabists to the reform and reorganization of native activities and beliefs. On several occasions, and particularly in the winter of 1848, the army's Saint-Simonian technocrats would outmaneuver assimilation-minded republican officials and successfully preserve their specialized dual administration over Algeria's Muslim population. Their discretionary control over the "Arab territories" would provide them with the human laboratory for their experiments with Saint-Simonian reforms, as well as the geographic space in which to erect in the 1860s a semiautonomous and protected "Arab Kingdom."

This study of the Arabist followers of Saint-Simon is also meant to illustrate how the unfounded confidence in the assimilationist fiber of French colonialism has become interrelated with three "problems" in writing the history of French Algeria. The first problem springs from the tendency to favor ideology over practice, to consider the former as the source of the latter, while simultaneously entertaining an uneven view of assimilation and association as alternative colonial doctrines that can neither coexist temporally nor be reconciled conceptually. In the following chapters, I argue that historical context, political expedience, and technocratic expertise, more than any ideological clarity, held sway in determining the orientation of French policies in Algeria. Moreover, I will maintain that to regard assimilation and association as doctrinal opposites is only possible when the ideological substance of colonial theory is considered independently of, and superior to, the myriad practices from which it tended to draw its main consistency.

Colonial assimilation and association derived their political logic from the same philosophical and ideological stock. Yet, as I hope to underscore with my brief comparison of Napoleon Bonaparte's pronouncements and actions during his campaigns in Italy (1796-1799) and Egypt (1798-1801), the contingencies of imperial rule occasioned very different cultural discourses and procedures in each setting. As the pivotal figure in defining and propagating France's revolutionary ideals, Napoleon's respective dealings with Italian and Oriental societies demonstrate that his nation's claims to a universal enlightened humanism tended to fade before the political rationalities of racial difference and European exceptionalism. During their occupation of Egypt, the French deployed new forms of power based on the strict policing of the boundaries between the European self and its non-European opposites.

The racial and cultural inferiority of Turks and Arabs, confirmed by the military, economic, and technological preponderance of France, was not only important for buttressing French identity. It necessarily provided the colonial expedition with the humanitarian pretense for its reorganization of Egyptian beliefs and lives. In other words, it was the accepted existence of racial and cultural hierarchies that allowed Napoleon to rationalize his imperial aggression against Egypt with the liberal rhetoric of civilizing obligations and the rule of law. In the aftermath of the direct colonial encounter with the Oriental other, revolutionary notions of the republic as a universal body politic began to make way to more compelling and symbolic conceptualizations of the French nation as a racialized polity.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, upon his return to Paris, after the coup of 18 Brumaire, Napoleon would overturn the egalitarian clauses of 1795, discontinue the assimilation of overseas territories (*territoires d'outre-mer*), and with the Constitution of 22 Frimaire, Year VIII (December 13, 1799), begin to regulate the latter with separate bylaws.

The second problem concerns the reliability of conventional representations of the colonial state as undifferentiated and uniform. By accepting assimilation as the mainstay of French imperial rule, historical scholarship has tended to depict the colonial bureaucracy as a political monolith and to cloud the presence of ideological subcultures within it, each with a defined sense of group identity, a conspicuous grid of relational solidarities, and very recognizable political practices. This general tendency has complicated our ability to analyze colonial institutions from the standpoint of variable power relations and to appreciate the impact of internal bureaucratic tensions on administrative theory and decision making.

Recent scholarship has certainly afforded greater consideration to the limits of metropolitan directives in regulating or managing the colony and has called into question the validity of the centralized and hegemonic powers of the colonial state.<sup>11</sup> However, as may be gathered from my description of the conflicts and reversals in colonial policy making in Algeria between 1830 and 1870, such political redeployments also bring to light the ways in which the universal precepts of the civilizing mission were themselves conditioned by, or made responsive to, local factors. The following chapters will make clear that, although the definitive concepts and imperatives of the civilizing mission, including the directives for colonial assimilation, may have seemed constant from the vantage points of metropolitan culture and history, they clearly faltered in their encounter with the practical realities of Algeria and soon unraveled into a multitude of competing, even contradictory, proposals, opin-

ions, and expectations. In the absence of a singular colonial strategy or doctrine, public initiatives during the 1830s were reconfigured to reflect political realignments within the colonial administration. Increasingly, "Parisian" decrees came to be governed by intelligence reports from analysts stationed in remote colonial outposts belonging to the military Offices of Arab Affairs (*Bureaux arabes*). As the Arab Bureaux attained administrative prominence in the 1840s, their specialists would redefine the scope and objectives of the civilizing mission with an eye toward securing their executive autonomy over rival factions within the colonial polity. Their growing involvement in the instrumentalities of colonial governance, therefore, was as much a response to native challenges to French rule as it was a symptom of internal organizational struggles for political advantage.

The third problem entails situating the decades of military and imperial rule in Algeria within the traditional historical narrative of the making of modern France. Here again, the emphasis on the assimilationist propensities of French imperialism has exaggerated, to some extent, the centrality of the Third Republic (1871–1940) in the development of the modern polity. In the narrative of the "clean break" of 1870–1871, the policy of assimilation emerges as the redeeming feature in republican imperialism, and France's claims to its own modernity are thus safely relocated to the annals of the liberal and democratic Third Republic. Historians of France, from Gabriel Hanotaux to Alain Corbin and Eugen Weber, have depicted the modern nation as the flower of the democratic and republican state. Despite recent challenges to their particular accounts, the neat delineation between "republic" and "colony" continues to entertain two important occlusions: it closes off the modern republic from its monarchical and imperial predecessors, especially the excoriated Second Empire (1852–1870), and, in so doing, conceals the military and colonial antecedents to the development of the civil political culture of France.<sup>12</sup>

Undoubtedly, the contours of the modern French state were largely codified and consolidated under the Third Republic. But the rationalities of France's modern sociopolitical structures and indicators of culture, the basic parameters of its historical and legal notions of identity and citizenship, were also fashioned in the context of the making of a colonial state in North Africa and in adjunction to imperial policies that sought to define "race" and "nationality" in France as well as in Algeria. Along the way the republic incorporated or prolonged traditions from the authoritarian, illiberal, and archaic colonial state. Its leaders, with regard to the native populations of Algeria, never departed clearly

from the discourses and patterns of the former military and imperial administrators in Algiers. As a point of comparison, the Saint-Simonians themselves did not trace such definite boundaries between metropole and colony and, instead, regarded their modernizing project in Algeria as their transplanted vision for France's own hopeful progress. From the very start of their colonial venture in the 1830s, the Saint-Simonians' alternative modernity in Algeria—with its particular modes for rationalizing and regulating colonial society, its specific understandings of evolution and change, of culture, race, and gender—was meant to reverse the flow of historical development and progress and to radiate from Algiers as a model for Paris to heed. Accordingly, their modernizing paradigms percolated upward into metropolitan thinking and continued to influence colonial theory and policy well past the “rupture” of 1870. Indeed, by the 1910s, the colonial policy of the Third Republic had reverted to practices devised by military administrators in the 1840s, and which had seen their heyday under the associationist regime of the Second Empire in the 1850s and 1860s.

In the remaining paragraphs, I revisit the three historical problems outlined previously and substantiate my arguments against France's tradition of assimilation with an examination of educational reforms in Algeria between 1830 and 1870. Although parallel developments occurred in other domains of colonial policy making, educational reforms offer a particularly rewarding standpoint from which to evaluate the tensions between the assimilationist tendencies in French imperialism and the countervailing associationist philosophy of the Saint-Simonians.<sup>13</sup> On the one hand, assimilation in the realm of education meets few of the semantic ambiguities that usually muddle the term. It implies quite plainly the substitution of indigenous schools with metropolitan academies, and contemporary policy makers emphatically equated the acculturation and civilization of the natives with the dissemination of French learning (*francisation*).<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, educational decision making during the decades under consideration remained the site for protracted political conflicts and disagreements between factions or authorities with weighted concerns. Despite the consensus among French officials on the paybacks of acculturation to their political domination in Algeria, one still comes across repeated instances of dissonance during which the governing guidelines of the colonial state were fundamentally recast, and the networks of contending forces involved in shaping and making local policies were clearly exposed.



## A FALSE DEBATE?

In 1919, Louis Vignon, a professor at the famed *École Coloniale*, tried to put an end to the sterile ongoing political debates on colonial theory.<sup>15</sup> Association, he observed, was merely a “disguised tendency” to assimilation, and certainly, from the vantage point of their objectives, the two policies seemed destined, in principle, to merge at some distant focal point. Indeed, M. M. Knight concluded long ago that the doctrines were “not different . . . in any practical sense.”<sup>16</sup> Both were ideological vehicles for exaggerating and imposing the norms of France while discrediting those of Algeria. Both aimed above all to legitimize colonial hegemony, absorb the natives and their characteristics into the superior culture of the colonizer, and thereby secure the colonial dominion and state. The verdicts by Vignon and Knight, however, do not gauge adequately the distance between the directive principles of assimilation or association and the political or institutional processes they respectively invoked. In other words, the apparent intellectual sophistry in assimilationist or associationist arguments is not a sufficient basis to dismiss the practical implications of each. This book will show that assimilationists and associationists were greatly polarized over their preferred methods for carrying out their civilizing mandates in a given colonial situation. In the implementation of educational reforms, specifically, the political operations of assimilation or association demanded different administrative procedures and institutional mechanisms of control, and their concrete policies generated very different local outcomes and responses. My survey of educational initiatives under the regimes of assimilation or association until 1870 confirms that each set of policies created its own specific contradictions for colonial rule, with very real, albeit very dissimilar, consequences for the native and European populations of Algeria.

As mentioned previously, assimilation was conceived as a plausible means to reconcile the fact of colonial rule with the revolutionary slogans of human emancipation and individual equality. Thus, colonial educational initiatives, when operating under the universalist assumptions of assimilation, devised policies that brooked no compromise with extant local institutions and barely countenanced facilitating the anticipated native embrace of French values. Association, on the other hand, admitted the inequalities between human civilizations and was conjured up as a strategy for cadenced progress or as a set of authoritarian guidelines with which to pilot the natives through their long evolution toward integration. The preserved customs and institutions of Algeria’s

Muslims competed directly with French traditions and thus necessitated constant monitoring and regular interventions. Accordingly, educational reforms under the regime of association engaged the colonial authorities in recurrent negotiations with native communities. Indeed, for the Saint-Simonians—and here is where they differed most vividly from the “neo-associationists” of the early twentieth century—the social constructivism underlying their program for controlled association was not meant to spare the European establishment in Algeria or, ultimately, the French metropole itself. The successful fusion, under their supervision, of the Oriental and Occidental elements in Algeria was to provide the catalyst and platform for the renewal of France’s own sociopolitical elites, and for the eventual inauguration of a new technocratic order dominated by them. No doubt, the appeal of the doctrine of association to Algeria’s Arabists was related, to some extent, to Saint-Simon’s known antipathy for republican egalitarianism and democratic populism.

#### THE NETWORKS WITHIN

Exposing the tensions within the colonial administration allows us to discern more clearly the adaptation of the universal notions of civilization and modernity to the particularities of French rule in Algeria and thus to move away from the monolithic analytical categories of “colonizer” and “colonized.” The standard descriptions of the self-contained colonial state minimize the array of contending political interests and oppositions that impacted official policy making, and accommodate poorly the social and cultural variations within French Algeria. Likewise, the autonomous category of the colonized conceals the differentiated impact of imperial policies on local communities, the manifold responses to such policies, and the potential for indigenous groups to subvert or gain from the new political order. France’s experiences with educational reforms in Algeria between 1830 and 1870 suggest that the colonial encounter did not simply pit a dynamic French “modifier” acting unobstructed upon an unreceptive “modified.” Since the colonial archives have retained mainly the government’s particular interpretations and handling of native reactions to its decrees, there is much to learn from the examination of modes of resistance that relied on individual or collective disengagement rather than the outright use of force. This study of education in colonial Algeria will show that French intrusions faced a tacit, ordinary, and deliberate defiance that made its impact felt incessantly rather than in intermittent, spontaneous or spectacular outbursts of violence. Cultural initiatives were consistently compromised

by natives who eluded the boundaries of colonial control by refusing to attend France's schools, by mocking or dismissing its cultural claims, by ignoring the commands of its administrators, and, finally, by resorting to brutality when necessary. If school inspection reports are clearly not representative of the entire native population—women, in particular, are largely absent—they nonetheless provide insight into the wide range of local strategies of disobedience or co-optation.

By the same measure, I take these inspection reports as examples of more subtle deployments of colonial power against the natives. Recent years have witnessed a revisionist revival in colonial studies, with books, essays, and even articles of law purporting to reassess the positive or beneficial consequences of European rule for the formerly colonized societies.<sup>17</sup> Coincidentally perhaps, the important contributions of the Saint-Simonians in modernizing the infrastructures of commerce, communication, and transportation in France, Egypt, and Algeria are also enjoying renewed scholarly interest. Several recent studies have revisited the “benign colonialism” (*colonisation en douceur*) of Prosper Enfantin or have celebrated the “Arabophilia” of Thomas “Ismaÿl” Urbain and Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte. From November 28, 2006, to February 25, 2007, the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal in Paris, which houses the important records of Enfantin and Urbain, held an exhibition titled “The Century of the Saint-Simonians.” It was, in the words of its organizers, an attempt to remind humanity of its debt to these “advocates of progress” who stood at the “roots of French modernity.” This book hopes to muddle the picture of Saint-Simonian philanthropy and to moderate the enthusiasm for colonial rehabilitation by illustrating the exploitive assumptions and repressive outcomes of civilizing initiatives, well meaning or otherwise. As the chapters on educational reform will make clear, the Saint-Simonian vision for universal association or cultural fusion accepted at its most basic level French subjugation of indigenous society and the dissolution of the latter’s retrograde features to the satisfaction of autocratic sensibilities. Few liberal thinkers or Saint-Simonian doctrinaires considered military conquest and pacification as less than integral to France’s apostolate of civilization and modernization. We shall see later that Saint-Simonian soldiers and modernizers such as General Christophe Léon Louis Juchault de Lamoricière saw little but moral righteousness in marshaling extreme force against the enemies of reason and progress, whether insurgent Arab natives or Parisian workers.

## UNBOUNDING THE COLONY

I mentioned earlier that the theoretical demarcations between metropole and colony have distorted our understanding of the formative implications of colonialism for the construction of national culture and identity in France.<sup>18</sup> Thus, my focus on colonial education also aims to uncover the practical and theoretical continuities between cultural initiatives in North Africa and developments in the metropole. The colony often served as a testing ground for social policies that were ultimately considered for domestic implementation, and the schooling of the natives of Algeria held important consequences for educational reforms in France proper, especially with respect to the nation's attempts to assimilate its cultural or religious minorities of Breton, Basque, Alsatian, and Savoyard communities. The familiarity of ministers of public instruction, such as Victor Duruy, Albert de Broglie, and Jules Ferry, with the project of acculturation in Algeria was never far removed from their thinking as they attempted to reform and homogenize metropolitan standards of education.

By the same token, the valorization of the Third Republic points to a general bias in the scholarship on European imperialism, which consists of locating the conjunctions between colonial regimes and European modernity in the post-1870 decades of "high imperialism."<sup>19</sup> In the prevailing historical narrative, the last great wave of European expansion in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century was at once the outcome of the political and economic maturation of the bourgeois nation-state, and essential to Europe's redefinition of its role and power in the world. With structural transformations in the global system of capitalist production and exchange, the colonial powers of Europe abandoned their informal mercantile spheres in Africa in favor of outright occupation and absorption of the continent.<sup>20</sup> The liberal bourgeois regimes, equating their succession to the governing aristocratic order with the advent of a new progressive and lawful society, produced new rationalizations for imperial military ventures and a re-enunciation of the dominant theories of historical and social development. The colonial expansion of Europe was recast as a secular and philanthropic mandate to modernize the non-European world and was justified and legitimated with the Enlightenment ideologies of progress and emancipation.<sup>21</sup> The new criteria implicated Europe's classical imperial powers in projects of state making and cultural transformation in their respective colonies. As Thomas Richards observed, colonies in the late nineteenth century ceased to be regarded as distant outposts held by force alone and became "a sort of

extended nation," where information gathering and intellectual production, as much as compulsion, were involved in actualizing the needs and interests of the colonizing power.<sup>22</sup>

From this perspective and by the standards of conventional scholarship, the colonization of Algeria between 1830 and 1870 should be regarded as the precursor to the modern European colonial systems of the late nineteenth century, and as France's first colonial venture in the dawning age of liberal imperialism.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the conquest of the Ottoman Regency of Algiers was conceived and launched in the context of rapid shifts in the distribution of material and symbolic power between France's traditional "bellicose landed order" and its modern "peace-loving industrial bourgeoisie, the product of merit, not birth."<sup>24</sup> After the dethronement of Charles X in July 1830, the incoming liberal regime invested the colonization of Algeria with a set of "civilizational" objectives that projected the specific values, interests, and considerations of the national bourgeoisie. Military victory over the Ottoman forces was soon followed by public debates concerning the improvement and development of the newly acquired populations and territories. As early as 1833, a petitioner to the minister of war remarked that colonization was "no longer nowadays what it used to be: the usurpation of the natural rights of a people; the destruction of nations in order to raise others." In fact,

It is by enlightening the populations; by civilizing them, that we wish to colonize today; and if political necessities sometimes demand the invasion of a new country, it must be done with the object of ameliorating the fate of its inhabitants, or at least to live sensibly with them in order to render them useful to the general welfare; for in this age of positive interests, we feel that we must no longer destroy, but create and preserve.<sup>25</sup>

The day of enlightened imperialism—of colonial possessions ruled by reason rather than by "the savage coercion" of the earlier empires—was breaking.<sup>26</sup>

#### PERIODIZATION

Finally, in light of the three historical problems discussed above, I will propose a new periodization for the decades of military rule in Algeria (1830–1870), based less on the totalizing official perspective from Paris and more on the particular modalities of colonial rule and the local applications of the civilizing mission. In the initial phase of political uncertainty, extending from the capture of Algiers in July 1830 to the

beginning of the military strategy of “total conquest” in early 1841, France’s empirical understanding of North Africa was colored by contemporary national imperatives and predetermined Enlightenment paradigms for Muslim and Oriental cultures. The Ottoman Regency, on the eve of the invasion, was depicted as a welcoming land of opportunity for the idealistic project of civilization and emancipation. Accordingly, colonial policies in the 1830s were designed with no questioning of the local appeal or utility of French initiatives. By 1839, however, the persistence of native anticolonial resistance and the escalation of the conflict with the emir Abd al-Qadir prompted experienced military commanders and Arabist experts to dispute the foundational reasoning of far-away ministers and policy makers. With several Saint-Simonian “doctrinaires” commissioned in the army’s Arab Directorates, the anxieties of the military command translated into ideological refutations of the prevailing approaches to colonial pacification. Accordingly, against the backdrop of the uncertain war with Abd al-Qadir in the early 1840s, they began to take the necessary steps to set colonial decision making on a new footing.

The second phase thus opened with the transition toward dual and incremental sociocultural policies and coincided with the authoritative intervention by the army’s Arabists to correct the record of the civilizing mission with more practical assessments of local conditions. Beginning with the scientific exploration of 1840–1842 and culminating in the great inquiries (*grandes enquêtes*) of 1846–1847, historical experience and prolonged contact with native society empowered the specialized officers of Arab affairs to articulate new ideological justifications for their alternative solutions. Recruited from the pool of skilled and accomplished graduates of the military academics and motivated by the novel sociological ideas of Saint-Simon, the personnel of the Arab Bureaux attempted to regulate native society with the protective and customized measures of colonial association.

The last phase, extending from 1848 to 1870, marked the apogee of the technocratic administration and disciplinary powers of the Offices of Arab Affairs and the formalization of the categories of knowledge produced by their great inquiries. The implementation of the procedures and institutions for controlled association began in the summer of 1850 and peaked in the early 1860s, when Napoleon III confirmed Urbain’s scheme for native governance and endorsed his efforts to finalize the establishment of the Arab Kingdom.

Thomas Urbain provides ideological and political continuity across the three phases and is without doubt the central figure throughout the decades under review.<sup>27</sup> From his modest and illegitimate origins, the

Guyanese quadroon developed into the principal exponent of *Enfantin's* doctrine of association in Algeria and was the main architect of indigenous policy making in the 1850s and 1860s. Around him rotated the "Arabophile plot" to take control of the colonial administration, and for his lifetime, Urbain remained a fervent advocate of native rights as he understood them. He became acquainted with the Saint-Simonian doctrine and his future mentors in the late 1820s through his friendship with Gustave d'Eichthal, with whom he had earlier coauthored antislavery and antiracist tracts. In April 1833, he traveled to Constantinople, Beirut, Alexandria, and Cairo, where he gained familiarity with the Arabic language, converted to Islam, and adopted the name "Ismaÿl." In 1837, he made his first journey to Algeria, to join General Thomas-Robert Bugeaud's corps of military interpreters. There, he married twelve-year-old Djeyhmouna bent Messaoud ez-Zebeiri (1828-1864) in March 1840, a union that admittedly "strengthened the regard" of local Muslims toward him. "I used to wear the Arab dress then," he would later recall, "and lived *à l'arabe* within my inner self."<sup>28</sup>

From 1837 to 1847, Urbain contributed regular anticolonial articles to various Parisian broadsheets, especially *Le Journal des Débats*, in which he defended Muslim culture and advocated the fusion of Oriental and Occidental civilizations. His editorial verve, familiarity with Islam, and striking appearance brought him to the notice of the Duke of Aumale, who appointed him as his personal interpreter in November 1842. His transfer to the Directorate of Algerian Affairs in the Ministry of War in Paris in January 1845 was a bittersweet promotion due to the ostracism that he and his wife encountered in the capital city. With the discredit of Bugeaud and the rise of Aumale, Urbain was promoted to serve as chief of the political bureau in the Ministry of War. His immediate superior Eugène Daumas, director of Algerian affairs from April 1850 to October 1858, appropriated many of his ideas and research without giving Urbain his due. Still, from his rank, Urbain would oversee the implementation of the Arabophile policies and become the directorate's first specialist on native questions.

With the creation of the Ministry of Algeria in 1858, Urbain authored pamphlets against the rampant dispossession of native lands that not only caught the attention of Emperor Napoleon III but also earned him the fierce enmity of the colonialist establishment. Appointed chief councilor to the restored governor general in December 1860, he was relocated to Algiers to promote colonial reforms before the Government Council. By then, his stature had grown to make him the driving force in a nucleus of Arabophile officers and officials, centered in the Imperial Court around General Émile Fleury and Frédéric Lacroix, the emperor's

main advisors on Algeria after 1861. Urbain's booklet, *L'Algérie française. Indigènes et immigrants*, published in 1862, exerted an immense influence upon Napoleon, who referred to it as the basis for his project for the Arab Kingdom in Algeria. Urbain's documents and works would also inspire the senatus consults of 1863 and 1865, the emperor's main legislation on Algeria. The ascendancy of the Arabophiles, however, sparked a vicious colonialist counterattack, abetted and encouraged by the governors general of Algeria, Jean-Jacques Pélissier and his successor Patrice de Mac-Mahon. With the fall of the Second Empire in September 1870, Urbain was forced to flee Algiers for Marseille. He resumed his campaign against the prosettler policies of the Third Republic with letters to *Le Journal des Débats* and the Saint-Simonian *La Liberté* of Isaac Péreire. With his death on January 28, 1884, disappeared the last colonial proponent of the Arab Kingdom and Franco-Muslim union.