Meissonier's "1806, Jena"

Constance Cain Hungerford
Swarthmore College, chunger1@swarthmore.edu

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1. Letter from Elisa Meissonier to Alphonse Moutte, 2 November 1889, Meissonier family archives.

2. Sketches for individual motifs, either undated or assigned to 1887–89, were auctioned in Meissonier's studio sale; see Catalogue des tableaux, études peintes et dessins par E. Meissonier, 13–20 May 1893, Hôtel Drouot, Paris. They include horses (nos. 207, 251, and 296), guides and grenadiers (nos. 297 and 759), and officers (nos. 201, 758, and 760).


In an uncatalogued album of photographs that Meissonier's widow gave to the Louvre's Département des Arts Graphiques, the 1884 work is annotated as "donnée à Mme Lippmann-Dumas/Colette à son mariage."

Born out of wedlock to the Princess Naryschkine on 20 November 1860, Marie-Alexandrine-Henriette, nicknamed Colette, was legitimized when Dumas married her mother four years later. Her father may have

loaned the work in 1893 because his daughter’s marriage to Maurice Lippmann ended in divorce the previous year. See André Maurois, *The Titans: A Three-Generation Biography of the Dumas* (New York, 1957), 331, 341, 478 n. 2.

5. See *Exposition Meissonier*, 1893, no. 167; illustrated in the sale version of the catalogue (Catalogue des tableaux, 1893). Gustave Larroumet calls it a sketch (*Meissonier* [Paris, 1895], 15).

6. For a photograph of the wax sculpture see Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, “Meissonier Sculpteur,” in *Ernest Meissonier Rétrospective*, exh. cat. (Lyons, 1993), 241, fig. 8. Although assumed to be for 1807, Friedland, the figure resembles none of its cuirassiers, who lunge and twist rather than ride stiffly upright and straight ahead.

7. See ibid., 245, fig. 19. The photograph was taken from an album given to the Louvre by Meissonier’s widow, who mistakenly inscribed the image as a model in red wax for 1864, *Friedland*.


9. The same pose was used in a number of subsequent works, including *Marshal Saxe and his Troops* (1866, Private Collection), *Antikes, Promenade on Horseback* (1868, Musée d’Orsay, Paris), and *A General and his Aide-de-Camp* (1869, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).


Meissonier’s album is now in the Houghton Library at Harvard University.


18. See letters of 12 December 1882, 6 March 1883, and 21 April 1890 from Muybridge to Meissonier (Paris,


24. The sculpture served as an aid in painting *General Championnet on the Seashore* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons), a problematic work that was kept in Meissonier’s studio and then exhibited and sold only after his death. Though dated to 1882 in the studio sale (*Catalogue des tableaux*, 1893, no. 178), it bears only the estate monogram, not a signature, and is manifestly unfinished. Smudging and repainting indicate that the position of the feet of the trotting horse most dissatisfied the artist. See also *Meissonier Réétrospective*, 216–17, no. 125.


27. Duhousset’s comment was published in 1902 in *Le Cheval dans la nature*, 147–48.

The drawing of *The Voyager*, dated 31 December 1879, is in the Musée du Louvre in the Département des Arts Graphiques, R.F. 2404. Several other drawings from the same sculpture are reproduced in Antoinette Le Normand-Romain’s thorough discussion of the piece, “Le Voyageur de Meissonier,” *La Revue du Louvre* (April 1981), 129–35. The first painting, *Voyager on Horseback* (unlocated), was exhibited in February 1880 at the Cercle de l’Union Artistique. An 1886 variant, *The Gust of Wind*, was auctioned in the Meissonier sale in 1893 (no. 157). The 1886 painting, illustrated by Le Normand-Romain (fig. 8), was shown in 1887 at the Cercle de l’Union Artistique and in 1889 at the Exposition Universelle. Gréard (*Meissonier*, New York version, 378–1—2; Paris version, 415—2—3) lists another painting with the same title, dated 1890 and unfinished.


30. Only in *The Morning of Castiglione* (Musée d’Art et d’Archéologie, Moulins), a work left unfinished on his easel at his death, would Meissonier accept Muybridge’s gallop. Begun in 1884, *Castiglione* was to be an ambitious work, destined for a eight-foot wide surface the equivalent of Friedland. Many of the horses are again sketched in Meissonier’s way, with accurately bent forefeet paired with back feet splayed outward. The considerable degree of smudging and repainting suggests, however, that Meissonier was concentrating on these feet. Moreover, in December of 1890 he made another sculpture of General Duroc and his horse (wax and bronze versions are in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons). This time, although the rider’s seat in his saddle is wrong—he should be raised forward—Meissonier incorporated the most disturbing revelation of Muybridge’s photographs: at the moment when a galloping horse’s feet are most off the ground, they are bunched under its body, the antithesis of the conventional “flying” position. He faithfully included this in the composition at a greatly foreshortened angle, placing the horse two figures to the right of Napoleon. On the Duroc sculpture see *Meissonier Réétrospective* (1993), nos. 162 and 163.

31. The 1889 sketch, located in a private collection, is reproduced in ibid., no. 112; for two others see Meissonier sale (*Catalogue des tableaux*, 1893), nos. 216 and 762. 397