

Visitor's itinerary

The « total conquest » of Algeria

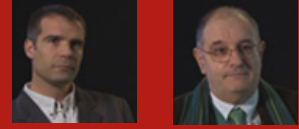
Until the late 1830s France hadn't really planned to conquer. It all changed in 1839 when these African lands were called « Algeria » for the first time in a government decree. Finding it too unfavourable, France reneged



Abd el-Kader (1807-1883) par Godefroid Marie Eleonore, peint vers 1830-1844 à Paris © Paris - Musée de l'Armée, Dist. RMN-GP / image musée de l'Armée

on the Treaty of Tafna, signed with Abdelkader in 1837, and crossed the Iron Gates. That signalled the end of limited occupation and the beginning of the « total conquest » advocated by General Bugeaud. Once appointed governor of Algeria in December 1840, he focussed on a new form of warfare, better suited to the terrain and to his opponents: constant campaigns, forced marches, and mobile columns radiating from fortified positions all aimed at bringing the tribes into submission. Any opposition must be traced, hunted down and destroyed. Supported by tribes hostile to the Emir, Bugeaud relied on a restructured African Army in which many of the officers who would play a significant role during the Second Empire saw active service for the first time. By 1841 French forces had taken most of the Emir's strongholds. The Duke of Aumale took Abdelkader's Smala in May 1843, and in August 1844 the Emir's main support, the Sultan of Morocco's army, was defeated by Bugeaud and his men at the battle of Isly. The warring parties were particularly violent during the conquest, and public opinion was struck by the violence on both sides: razzias and the « smoking out » of entire tribes. Having fought hard for 15 years and now abandoned by his former Moroccan allies, Abdelkader surrendered to General Lamoricière on 23 December 1847.

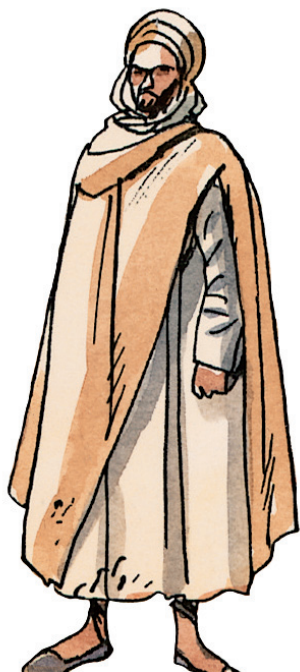
All along the exhibition, historians share their analysis



A violent conquest
D. Guignard/JC. Jauffret



Fusil à silex ayant appartenu à Abd el-Kader, fabriqué avant 1883 ; calibre 18 mm ; poids 3,8kg © Paris - Musée de l'Armée, Dist. RMN-GP / Pascal Segrette



Young visitors' itinerary

The fall of the cities of Algiers and Constantine

During the first half of the nineteenth century the conquest of Algeria by the French was determined by the fate of two cities: the invasion of Algiers in 1830 and the capture of Constantine in 1837

