



Fig. 1 'Temples Égyptiens avec tous les genres d'accessoires dont on pourrait supposes que la magnificence Égyptienne décorait ces grands monuments' (III, pl. 97), etching by Louis-Jacques Cathelin after a drawing by Cassas (figures added by Michel Nitot, dit Dufresne)

Cassas, Louis François

Azay-Le-Ferron 1756 – 1827 Versailles

Voyage pittoresque de la Syrie, de la Phœnicie, de la Palestine, et de la basse Ægypte [title taken from wrapper of Première livraison].

[Paris, Imprimerie de la République, 1798–1799]

Three volumes, FOLIO (555 × 365 mm):

I: (91) plates, numbered 1–3, 5–7, 9–10, 14–15, 18, 20–23, 23 bis, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35–38, 41–42, 45, 53–55, 57–58, 65–68, 71, 74–75, 77, 79–81, 84–87, 89–91, 93–94, 98–99, 101–102, 104–106, 108–109, 109 bis, 110–114, 116–118, 118 bis, 119–127, 127 [*i.e.* 127 bis], 128–129, 131–132, 134–135, 137, of which thirteen folding (nos. 24, 26–28, 30–31, 33, 38, 53, 58, 68, 71, 91) and the others full-page. WITHOUT TEXT (see below); a printed bifolium (paginated 1–4) with above caption title and headings 'Première Livraison, composée de six planches' and 'Explication provisoire de chacune des six Planches', is the only letterpress present.

II: (31) plates, numbered 1, 3–4, 15–17, 27–30, 34, 54, 56–57, 59, 61, 64, 67–69, 76–80, 82, 85, 87, 91, 94, 96, of which seven double-page or folding (nos. 3, 4, 15–17, 30, 96) and the others full-page. Plus duplicates of plates 15 and 69.

III: (56) plates, numbered 2–4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 19–25, 29–30, 32–36, 38, 40, 41, 43, 46–47, 52–55, 58, 63, 65–66, 69, 74, 76–77, 81–82, 87–88, 89, 91–92, 95–99, 101–102, 104–106, of which eight folding (nos. 8, 19–20, 58, 81, 91, 97–98) and the others full-page. Plus duplicates of plates 104, 105, and 106.

An untrimmed copy, with minor wear along some sheet edges; occasional spotting in margins, otherwise in fine state of preservation.

PRESERVED in a modern cloth box.

FINE SET of this uncompleted work documenting ancient sites and scenes from daily life observed during the author's travels in 1785–1787 through the Ottoman Empire.

The son of a land surveyor, Louis François Cassas, had studied the art of surveying antique monuments in the Académie de dessin established by Auguste de Rohan-Chabot in Paris, and latterly in the Académie de France in Rome. In August 1784, he entered the retinue of the French ambassador to the Ottoman court, the collector and traveller Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier, and – commissioned by the ambassador – soon set out on a journey to gather a corpus of drawings to illustrate a text by Choiseul-Gouffier. Cassas returned to Constantinople in January 1786, presented tracings of his drawings to his patron, and travelled on to Rome, where he lingered until 1792, evidently adding drawings to his corpus.¹

The French Revolution disrupted their project: when Choiseul-Gouffier refused to obey the Convention, his goods in France were seized, and he fled from Constantinople to Russia, where he became Director of the Academy of Arts and Imperial Public Library. Cassas thus

¹ Annie Gilet, 'Le Voyage pittoresque de la Syrie, de la Phénicie, de la Palestine et de la Basse Égypte de Louis-François Cassas (dessinateur)' in *Miroirs de l'altérité et Voyages au Proche-Orient, Colloque international de l'Institut d'Histoire et des Civilisations Françaises de l'Université de Haifa, 1987* (Geneva 1991), pp.211–221; Annie Gilet, 'Louis-François Cassas und der Orient' in *Europa und der Orient, 800–1900*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, edited by Gereon Sievernich and Hendrik Budde (Gütersloh 1989), pp.279–287; *Louis-François Cassas, 1756–1827: dessinateur-voyageur = Louis-François Cassas, 1756–1827: Im Banne der Sphinx: ein französischer Zeichner reist nach Italien und in den Orient*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tours, and at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Graphische Sammlung, Köln (Mainz 1994).

lost not only his patron, but also the author who was to write the text for his *Voyage pittoresque*.

According to a printed prospectus, dated 1798, the Republic interceded and rescued the project: 'Le Gouvernement, convaincu de l'utilité de cette entreprise pour le progrès des arts et de sa liaison intime avec l'enseignement de l'architecture et les intérêts du commerce, l'a encouragée avec persévérance au milieu même des crises de la révolution, en ordonnant à ses frais la gravure des planches et l'impression du texte'.² Three authors were appointed to prepare a text: the historian Pierre-Louis Ginguené (1748–1815), for an account of the voyage; the architect Jacques-Guillaume Legrand (1768–1808), for descriptions of the sites; and the orientalist Louis-François Langlès (1763–1824), for transcriptions and remarks on the epigraphs. Among the many printmakers employed were Pierre Bacqoy, M.-A. Benoist, Pierre-Gabriel Berthault, and Louis-Jacques Cathelin.³ The plate illustrated (**Fig. 1**) is a view of an imaginary Egyptian temple, showing a ritual procession and priests burning a sacrifice at an altar. The sculpture of the lioness-headed goddess Wenut at far right is believed to have been inspired by the statue then in the Borghese Collection in Rome (now Paris, Musée du Louvre, 4535).⁴

Between fifty and fifty-five *livraisons* (about 330 plates) were projected, all to be printed on *papier d'Annonay superfin* with a small number issued *avant la lettre*.⁵ The first seven *livraisons* combined an explanatory text with the plates; thereafter, subscribers received only small folio leaves of text; and following publication of the thirtieth *livraison* the work was abandoned.⁶

² Cf. *Magazin encyclopédique ou Journal des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, edited by A.L. Millin (Paris 1798), IV, pp.135–144 (extract p.141).

³ Cf. Bibliothèque nationale, *Inventaire du fonds français. Graveurs du dix-huitième siècle*, edited by Marcel Roux (Paris 1933), II, p.29 no. 83 (Bacqoy), pp.348–351 nos. 10–28 (Benoist), pp.413–416 nos. 330–342 (Berthault); *idem* (Paris 1940), IV, pp.49–50 nos. 120–121 (Cathelin), etc.

⁴ *Egyptomania: Egypt in western art, 1730–1930*, catalogue of an exhibition organised by and held at the Musée du Louvre, the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 1994–1995 (Ottawa 1994), pp.164–165 no. 88: 'Cassas issued thirty separate instalments comprising 173 of the 330 plates originally intended'.

⁵ The prospectus is found in British Library, R.599 (14); Victoria & Albert Museum, Prints & Drawings Study Room, 106.B.28–29.

⁶ André Monglond, *La France révolutionnaire et impériale: annales de bibliographie méthodique et description des livres illustrés*, IV (Paris 1935), cols. 993–1005, listing thirty *livraisons* and the subjects of the plates (but not plate numbers). According to Monglond's description and calculations, a complete copy contains 78 pages of text (7 + 8 + 8 + 15 + 12 + 20 + 8 pp.) and 180 plates (30 *livraisons* × 6 plates).

Few copies contain much (if any) text and the number of plates varies from about 170 to 192 (the latter total in an unspecified copy cited by Cohen-De Ricci). This copy contains 178 plates (plus five duplicate plates). The copy in the British Library contains forty leaves of text and 180 plates;⁷ the same number of plates is reported in the Blackmer copy.⁸ The copy in the British Architectural Library contains 179 plates *avant la lettre* and its catalogue speculates that the total number of plates published was 183 (all 180 plates present in the British Library copy, plus plates numbered 23 bis and 109 bis in volume I, and a plate numbered 77 bis in volume II).⁹ Among a collection of documents, manuscript material, and drawings, possibly made by the author, are 'a letterpress title page, indices, tables for the arrangement of prints' and '190 printed proofs'.¹⁰

REFERENCES Henry Cohen, *Guide de l'amateur de livres à gravures du XVIII^e siècle*, edited by Seymour de Ricci (Paris 1912), cols. 204–205; Shirley Howard Weber, *Voyages and Travels in Greece, the Near East and Adjacent Regions made previous to the year 1801* (Princeton 1953), p.186 no. 832; Leonora Navari, *Greece and the Levant: the catalogue of the Henry Myron Blackmer Collection of books and manuscripts* (London 1989), p.63 no. 295; *Early printed books, 1478–1840: a catalogue of the British Architectural Library Early Imprints Collection, Vol. 1, A–D*, compiled by Nicholas Savage [et al.] (London 1994), no. 580; *Présence de l'Égypte dans les collections de la Bibliothèque universitaire Moretus Plantin*, compiled by Marie-Cécile Bruwier (Namur 1994), pp.140–141 no. 54; Leonora Navari, *The Ottoman world: the Şefik E. Atabey Collection, books, manuscripts and maps* (London 1998), no. 201 (179 plates)

⁷ • British Library, 149. i. 9 (540 × 350 mm), in a modern library binding. TEXT Première livraison: (4)ff. signed 1–2² and paginated 1–7 (1); IIe livraison: (4)ff. signed 1–2² and paginated 1–8; IIIe livraison: (4)ff. signed 1–2² and paginated 1–8; IVe livraison: (8)ff. signed 1² 2² 2² and paginated 1–15 (1); Ve livraison: (6)ff. signed 1–3² and paginated 1–12; VIe livraison: (10)ff. signed 1–5² and paginated 1–20; VIIe livraison: (4)ff. signed 1–2² and paginated 1–8. On p.8, the suspension of publication is announced ('Avertissement relatif à la huitième Livraison'). PLATES (lettered and numbered) Volume I: 90 plates, numbered 1 ('Abord de la ville d'Alexandrette'), 2–3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14–16, 20–23, 23 bis, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35–37, 38, 41–42, 45, 53, 54–55, 57, 58, 65–67, 68, 71, 74–75, 77, 79, 80–81, 84–87, 89–90, 91, 93–94, 98–99, 101–102, 104–106, 108–109, 109 bis, 110–114, 116–118, 118 bis, 119–127, [127 bis], 128–129, 131–132, 134–135, 137. Volume II: 34 plates, numbered 1, 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 27–29, 30, 34, 47, 54, 56–57, 59, 61–62, 64, 67–69, 76–80, 82, 85, 87, 91, 94, 96. Volume III: 56 plates, numbered 2–4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34–36, 38, 40, 41, 43, 46, 47, 52–55, 58, 63, 65, 66, 69, 74, 76, 77, 81, 82, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106.

⁸ • Sotheby's, 'The library of Henry Myron Blackmer II, sold by order of the executor', London, 12 October 1989, lot 455 (plates before letters). See also • Sotheby's, London, 7 June 1999, lot 181 (517 × 335 mm, 180 plates) • Sotheby's, London, 13 November 2008, lot 70 (650 × 470 mm, 180 plates).

⁹ • Sotheby's, 'The Ottoman world: the library of Şefik E. Atabey with a supplement', Sotheby's, London, 28 May 2002, lot 201 (527 × 327 mm, 179 plates) • Sotheby's, 23 March 1999, lot 45 (183 plates, allegedly all those in the Blackmer and British Library copies, plus plates numbered 57 and 58 in volume I [these however are listed by Blackmer!], 24 bis in volume III).

¹⁰ Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Collection Number: 840011. See on-line finding aid for 'Louis François Cassas Materials for Voyage pittoresque de la Syrie, de la Phœnicie, de la Palaestine, et la Basse Aegypte' (prepared by Isabella Zuralski, March 2006).



**Fig. 2 A trial proof? (detail from Fig. 1)
The figural sketch in the left margin has been burnished away
in all other impressions seen by the writer**