



Denon, Dominique Vivant, Baron

Givry, Chalon-sur-Saône 1747 – 1825 Paris

Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte, pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte par Vivant Denon. [Atlas title:] Planches du Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte.

Paris, De l'Imprimerie de Didot l'aîné, 1802

Two volumes, BROADSHEET FOLIO (660 × 490 mm): I: (163)ff. letterpress, signed π¹ (half-title) 2π¹ (title, transcribed above) 3π¹ (dedication, *A Bonaparte*) 1–133¹ a–z¹ aa–dd¹ and paginated (6) 1–265 (1) i–liii (1). The last paginated sequence provides an 'Explication des Planches', 'Index des Planches et du Journal', and 'Noms des Souscripteurs' (this last occasionally lacking). II: (1)f. letterpress, π¹ (part-title, *Planches du Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte*); plus 142 engravings (numbered 1–140, 20 bis, 54 bis), of which eight are double-page (pls. 12, 88, 131, 132, 134, 136–138).

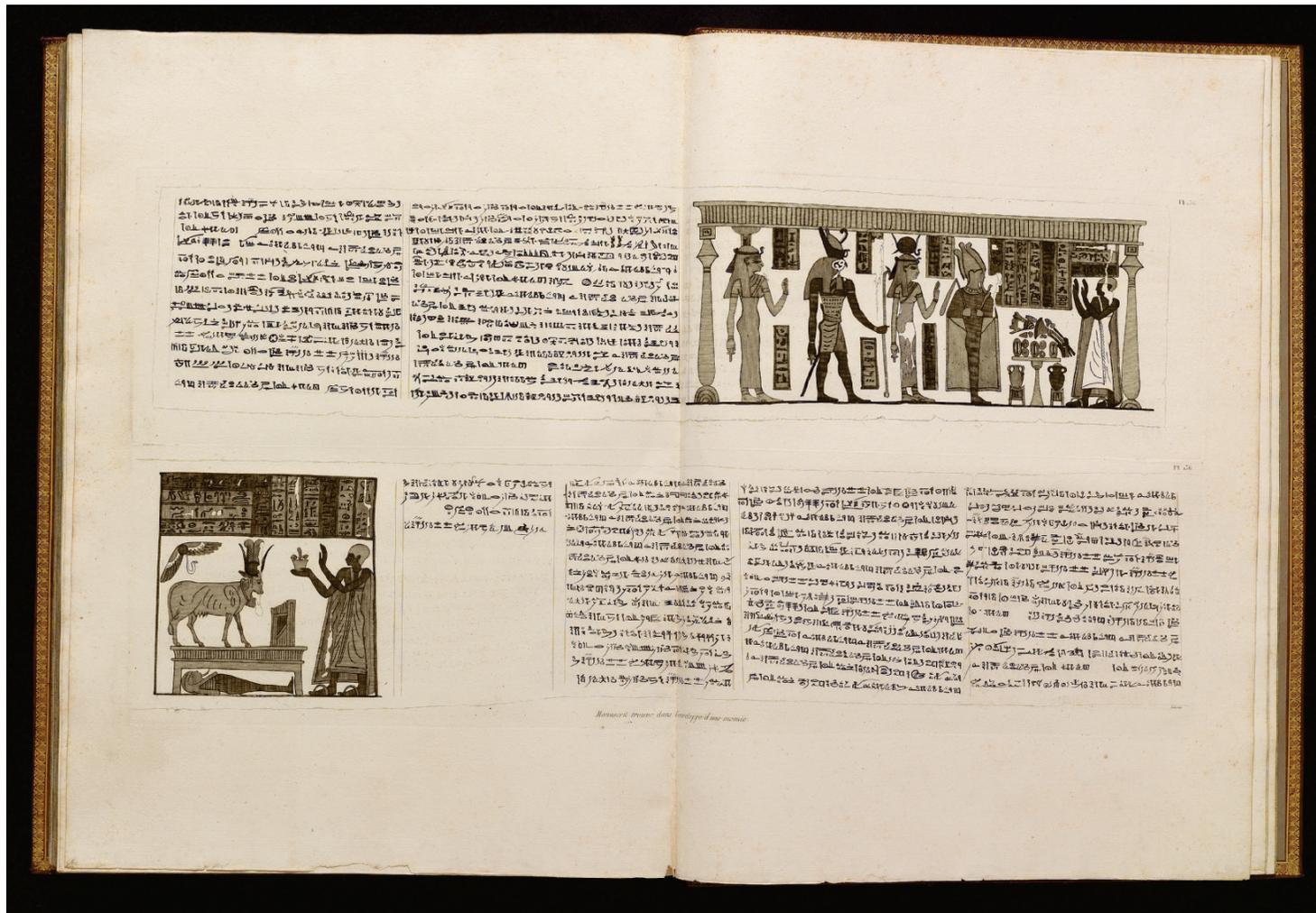
Binding edges lightly rubbed, otherwise in faultless state of preservation.

BOUND in contemporary russia leather, by Philipp Selenka (with his engraved ticket).

MAGNIFICENT COPY of the first edition of Denon's account of his travels in Egypt as a participant on Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, combining topographical observations with the first comprehensive and accurate descriptions of Ancient Egyptian architecture. The work was an instantaneous success, enjoyed an extensive circulation in several languages,¹ and had an extraordinary impact on the architecture and decorative arts in the opening years of the new century. 'With its publication the nineteenth-century Egyptian Revival began in earnest'.²

¹ Jean-Edouard Goby, 'Les quarante éditions, traductions, et adaptations du "Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte" de Vivant Denon' in *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne* 4 (1952), pp.290–316.

² James Stevens Curl, *The Egyptian revival: Ancient Egypt as the inspiration for design motifs in the West* (London 2005), pp.204–205. See also *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.208–209 no. 108 and *passim*; Abigail Harrison Moore, 'Dominique-Vivant Denon and the transference of images of Egypt' in *Art History* 25 (2002), pp.531–549.



A funerary papyrus (a copy of the *Book of Breathings Made by Isis*), written for a Theban dignitary in the time of Cleopatra VII (51–30 BC). At the sale of Denon's antiquities in 1826, it was purchased by Baron Westreenen, and is now Museum Meermanno-Westreeniaum, The Hague, Inv. 42/88; see Marc Coenen, 'The so-called Denon Papyri' in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 81 (1995), pp.237–241; *De Papyrus Denon in het Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, Den Haag: of het Boek van het Ademen van Isis*, by Marc Coenen and Jan Quaegebeur (Louvain 1995)

In a 'Preface', Denon explains that he saw his main duty to be recording the visual nature of Egypt, and he therefore 'made drawings of objects of every description'.³ While working as a diplomat in Naples (1779–1785), he had learned how to engrave, and many plates illustrating the book are Denon's own;⁴ the remainder were engraved by Louis-Pierre Baltard, Pierre-Gabriel Berthault, Louis Croutelle, Jean Duplessis-Bertaux, Claude-François Fortier, Auguste-Claude-Simon Legrand, Georges Malbeste, Louis-Joseph Masquelier, Victor Pillement, Jean Baptiste Réville, among other printmakers (some unidentified).

According to the list of subscribers, copies printed on *vélin* also were available (Napoleon took twenty-six such copies for distribution as gifts).⁵ To the best of our knowledge, the portrait called-for by some bibliographers occurs only in the special-paper copies.⁶ The price after completion was 360 francs on *papier ordinaire* and 720 francs on *papier vélin*.⁷

Our copy contains the engraved ticket of the bookbinder Philipp Selenka (1803–1850) of Wiesbaden, brother of Johann Jacob Selenka (1801–1871), Hofbuchbinder in Braunschweig.⁸

³ The drawings were included in the sale of Denon's collection held in Paris, 1–19 May 1826 (Lugt, *Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques*, 11164): *Description des objets d'arts [sic] qui composent le cabinet de feu M. le Baron V. Denon...Tableaux Dessins et Miniatures* (Paris 1826), pp.204–205 no. 892. The majority later entered the British Museum (acquired in 1836 from 'Duncan').

⁴ Bibliothèque Nationale, *Inventaire du fonds français après 1800* (Paris 1953), VI, p.253 no. 1 (26 plates); *The Illustrated Bartsch, 121: French masters of the nineteenth century: Dominique Vivant Denon, Part II*, compiled by Petra ten-Doesschate Chu (New York 1988), pp.11–29 nos. .435–.458 (24 prints by Denon) and pp.30–250 (by others after Denon).

⁵ André Monglond, *La France révolutionnaire et impériale: annales de bibliographie méthodique et description des livres illustrés* (Grenoble 1938), V, cols. 1192–1198.

⁶ J.-C. Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres* (Paris 1861), II, col. 599: 'Le portrait de l'auteur se trouve dans quelques exemplaires'. Monglond (*op. cit.*, V, col. 1192) identifies the portrait as Denon's own print after the drawing by Isabey, for which see *Denon: l'oeil de Napoléon*, *op. cit.*, p.477 no. 599 (drawing) and *Inventaire du fonds français, graveurs du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris 1949), VI, p.573 no. 271 (print).

⁷ *Journal général de la littérature de France ou Répertoire méthodique des livres nouveaux* (Paris & Strasbourg 1802), V, p.238.

⁸ Two bindings by Philipp Selenka in the Fürstlich Waldecksche Hofbibliothek, Arolsen, are described by Rudolf-Alexander Schütte and Konrad Wiedemann, *Einbandkunst vom Frühmittelalter bis Jugendstil aus den Bibliotheken in Kassel und Arolsen*, Universitätsbibliothek Kassel (Kassel 2002), p.54 no. 68 and Abb. 51. He was a specialist 'Portefeuillearbeiter'; see Hektor Rössler, *Ausführlicher Bericht über die von dem Gewerbeverein für das Großherzogthum Hessen im Jahre 1842 veranstaltete Allgemeine deutsche Industrie-Ausstellung zu Mainz* (Darmstadt 1843), p.240.

REFERENCES Georges Vicaire, *Manuel de l'amateur de livres du XIXe siècle* (Paris 1897), III, cols. 177–178; *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. 841; *Présence de l'Égypte: dans les collections de la Bibliothèque universitaire Moretus Plantin*, catalogue of an exhibition (Namur 1994), pp.161–165 no. 64; Chantal Orgogozo, 'Le voyage dans la Basse et la Haute-Égypte' in *Dominique-Vivant Denon: l'oeil de Napoléon*, catalogue of an exhibition, edited by Pierre Rosenberg (Paris 1999), pp.108–127; Ulrike Steiner, *Die Anfänge der Archäologie in Folio und Oktav: fremdsprachige Antikenpublikationen und Reiseberichte in deutschen Ausgaben In Folio und Oktav* (Ruhpolding 2005), pp.121–124 no. 95; cf. Leonora Navari, *Greece and the Levant: the catalogue of the Henry Myron Blackmer Collection of books and manuscripts* (London 1989), pp.102–103 no. 471 (second edition, in quarto format)