

BRAFA ART FAIR

On the occasion of BRAFA 2026, the Gallery de Potter d'Indoye is pleased to unveil, as a preview, an exceptional work: The panoramic wallpaper *The battle of Heliopolis*, also known as *The French in Egypt*

Manufactured by Velay (Paris), early 19th century

Designer: Jean-Julien Deltil (signed on the obelisk)

Commissioned by General Kléber, printed by M. Formentin

Exhibition: Paris, 1819. Exhibition of the Products of French Industry

Dimensions: Overall H 208 cm x W 594.50 cm

This panoramic wallpaper is composed of three panels mounted on canvases stretched over frames.

- H 208 x W 211 cm

- H 208 x W 213.50 cm

- H 208 x W 170 cm

An identical example can be found in the Wallpaper Museum in Rixheim, France.



From left to right

General Kléber arrives at the head of his troops. In the foreground, a sutler tends to the wounds of a dey. In the background, a column of grenadiers seizes the tents of the Grand Vizier. In the center, a column of prisoners escorted by French hussars. On the right, Theban palms and date palms.

The Battle of Heliopolis was a decisive French victory, won on March 20, 1800, by the Army of the Orient under the command of General Jean-Baptiste Kléber against the Ottoman army.

Seeking to evacuate Egypt honorably in order to rejoin military operations in Europe, Kléber entered into negotiations with the Ottomans and the British. These talks resulted in the Convention of El-Arish, signed on January 24, 1800. Its implementation, however, proved impossible due to divisions within the British command, the hesitation of the Ottoman Sultan, and the resumption of hostilities in Egypt.

British Admiral George Keith Elphinstone refused to recognize the Convention of El-Arish. Faced with this refusal, Kléber resumed hostilities. Believing the Army of the Orient to be too weak to resist them, the Ottoman and British forces underestimated their opponent.

Under the command of the Grand Vizier Yusuf Pasha, assisted by Nassif Pasha, the Ottoman army advanced on Cairo, where the population rose in revolt. French troops counterattacked decisively, won a resounding victory at Heliopolis on March 20, 1800, and subsequently returned to Cairo, where they succeeded in suppressing the uprising. In the immediate aftermath of these operations, French control over Egypt was temporarily reestablished.

Forces involved

French Army: approximately 11,000 men, under the command of General Jean-Baptiste Kléber.

Ottoman Army: between 40,000 and 80,000 men according to contemporary sources, under the command of Grand Vizier Yusuf Pasha, assisted by Nassif Pasha.

Losses

French Army: 600 to 800 men killed or wounded.

Ottoman Army: approximately 8,000 to 9,000 men killed, wounded, or captured.

Technical description

Color-printed panoramic wallpaper, produced using engraved blocks and requiring several thousand impressions. Issued in both hand-colored and black-and-white versions (Library of the Army Museum, Paris; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Ob. 1, 1800, M 104 319 and M 104 820, titled Battle of Heliopolis).

Locations

Public collections, France: MAD (deposit of the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts).

United Kingdom: Shropshire.

Sweden: Gothenburg, Södermanland, Västergötland, Östergötland.

Switzerland: Bern.

Exhibition: Paris, 1936, no. 36

Literature: Baumer, 1989, p. 156; Clouzot, 1931, p. 27; Entwistle, 1902, pls. 36, 39 (ill.); Leiss, 1961, p. 97; Lynn, 1980, p. 200 ff. (ill.); McClelland, 1924, pp. 79, 306–307 (ill.); Olligs, 1970, pp. 269–270; Teynac, 1981, pp. 110–112 (ill.)

Published text

The French in Egypt. Colored landscape, executed in 30 strips on large-format paper.

