

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Louis-Amable Crapelet (Auxerre 1822 - Marseille 1867)

Sunset in Egypt, with Two Bedouin on Camels

Watercolour. Signed Am. Crapelet at the lower left. 206 x 291 mm. (8 1/8 x 11 1/2 in.)

Louis-Amable Crapelet was particularly admired for his atmospheric watercolours of Oriental subjects, of which the present sheet is a fine example. As the Orientalist scholar Emily Weeks has noted, 'In the nineteenth century, watercolour had developed into a highly-portable and fat-drying medium, making it a favourite among travelling artists...Watercolour also, in the opinions of its champions, perfectly captured the particular qualities of light and air, the vibrancy, and the almost palpable sense of energy that the Middle Eastern landscape offered. Crapelet's work, which shifts between transparent washes of colour and the more concentrated application of luminous pigments, well conveys this.'

A number of stylistically comparable watercolours of Egyptian views by Crapelet are today in the Louvre.

Artist description:

A pupil of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Louis-Amable Crapelet made his debut at the Paris Salon in 1846. Crapelet produced relatively few paintings, which were generally of an Orientalist nature. After spending some time in Algeria, he went to Egypt between 1852 and 1854, travelling down the Nile as far as the Third Cataract. This journey provided him with material for much of his later career. In 1859 he visited Tunis, and his drawings from this journey later served to illustrate an account of the voyage for the magazine *Le Tour du Monde* in 1865. In the same year he exhibited a *View of Luxor* at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. Crapelet exhibited mainly views of Egypt at the Salons between 1849 and 1866, as well as the occasional Italian and Provençal landscape. Towards the end of his career he also worked on the mural decoration of theatres and other buildings in Lyon and Marseilles.