15. Le Soleil levant (Harbour scene with rising sun) 1634

130 (132) × 199 (201)

REFERENCE: R-D.15; D.15; B.10; K.118; R.23



90. (cat. no. 15.i) *Le Soleil levant.* Paris (L)

First state:

On the right, at the same height as the top of the round tower, there is a faint break in the ropes of the barge at the point where they cross.

A small black mark to the right of the tree, 1 cm above the tall masted ships, has not yet been worked over to resemble a bird.
The plate-corners are sharp.
Before the inscription *CLA* on the plank, lower centre.

COLLECTION: Paris (L)

The first state mentioned by Russell (1982, p. 341), lacking the inscription on the triumphal arch, does not exist. Blum's description of the first state, 'avant les travaux sur l'arc de triomphe et avant l'inscription', refers to the rework on the columns of the arch and the inscription *CLA* on the plank.

91. (cat. no. 15.ii) *Le Soleil levant*. London (BM)



Second state:

Inscribed in drypoint on the large plank in the foreground: *CLA*
The black mark above the masted ships has become a bird in flight.
The sky above the tree has been lightened.
The plate-corners are still sharp.
Before the general rework; the break in the ropes at the right is still present.

COLLECTIONS: London (BM); Oxford; Paris (BN, L, PP)

WATERMARK: Bird in a circle topped by a star

Third state:

The blank space between the borderline and the platemark has been cleaned and there is now a second inscription to the right of the lower margin: *CLAUDIUS. Claudius inv. et F. Romae – sup. Licentia*
The entire plate has been reworked: the ropes on the barge now print uniformly and the front of the columns of the arch on the left, previously white in parts, have been shaded in.
The plate-corners have been rounded.
Before the number *11* in the left margin.

All previous catalogues raisonnés list this state, but I have never seen it. The impression in the Bibliothèque Nationale, described as a third state, has in fact had the number *11* skilfully erased.



92. (cat. no. 15.iv) *Le Soleil levant.* Author

Fourth state:

With the number *11* in the left margin.
Before the date in the lower margin.

COLLECTIONS: Boston; Chicago; Oxford; Paris (PP); Washington; author

WATERMARKS: Fleur-de-lys in a crowned circle; cross on three mounts in a circle with letter *A*

The rays from the sun become less and less visible in later printings of this state.



93. (cat. no. 15.v.A) *Le Soleil levant*. London (BM)

Fifth state (A):

The date *1634*, with the *3* reversed, has been scratched in lightly in drypoint in the lower margin towards the left, directly below the seated figures.
The number *11* is still present.
The plate has been rebitten and is generally darker, especially in the foreground; the sun is visible again.

COLLECTIONS: Boston; London (BM)

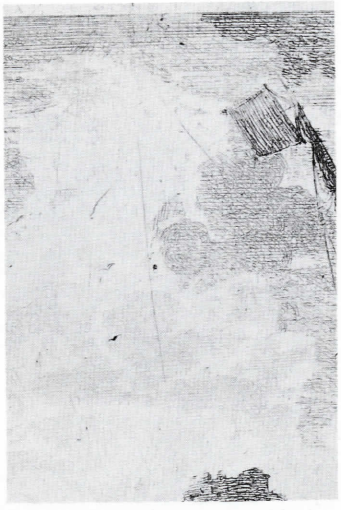
WATERMARKS: Fleur-de-lys in a double circle with letters *A* and *N*; galloping horse in a crowned cartouche

In later printings of this state the date becomes almost impossible to see.

Fifth state (B):

With two long vertical scratches in the sky, above the round tower.

COLLECTION: Cambridge



94. Detail from cat. no. 15.v.B

Sixth state:

Inscribed in the lower margin: *N 44 p 1*
The date *1634* has practically disappeared.
The two vertical scratches become gradually fainter.

COLLECTION: Author

95. Detail from cat. no. 15.vi



96. Detail from cat. no. 15.vii



Seventh state:

The number *11* and inscription *N 44 p 1* have been erased, although faint traces of both still remain, especially the number *1* at the bottom, 76 mm from the left edge.

COLLECTION: London (BM)

Published in the 1816 McCreery edition of *200 Etchings*.



97. (cat. no. 15.viii) *Le Soleil levant*. London (BM)

Eighth state:

The plate has been reworked: the distant mountains on the left have been outlined and covered in diagonal lines; the sun and its rays are clear again and the lower part of the sky is covered with horizontal lines to restore the areas of cloud.
Traces of the erased numbers are still discernible.

COLLECTION: London (BM)

There are two reversed copies of this etching, one by François Langlois (Paris 1589–1647) and one by Israel Henriet (Nancy 1607–Paris 1661). Impressions of both are in the British Museum.

Published in the 1816 Schulze edition of *200 Etchings* and in later editions.

By the time Claude started working on this plate he had perfected his mastery of etching. This technical perfection, combined with one of his favourite subjects, the harbour-scene, resulted in this masterpiece, regarded by many people over the last three hundred years as one of his finest plates.

The image was taken from a painting (now in the Hermitage, Leningrad; see MRP, fig. 32, p. 103) done by Claude for Charles Beaumanoir, Bishop of Le Mans, and recorded in the Liber Veritatis (*Coast scene*, LV 5, MRD 85). Both the painting and drawing are undated; only the etching, in the fifth state, bears the date 1634. It has been accepted that the painting and the drawing can also presumably be correctly dated at 1634, although, the inscribed date on the etching may well have been added later.



98. (MRD 85) *Coast scene*. London (BM)

Most of the impressions I have seen of the fifth state were printed on slightly later paper (i.e., with fleur-de-lys in a double circle and galloping horse watermarks), and yet the inscription is not dissimilar from the scratched date appearing on *Le Troupeau à l'abreuvoir* (cat. no. 16). It is possible that the date could have been added during the second phase of Claude's etching career, i.e., during the 1660s.

Claude's evident love of this image is indicated by his painting yet another, this time smaller, version of the same subject in 1674 for Freiherr Franz Mayer von Regensburg, a patron and collector of Claude's works. This painting is now in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich.

An interesting comparison between this plate and another of Claude's etchings, *La Tempête* (cat. no. 6), is made by Russell (1982, pp. 341–2), where 'the figures in the boats and labouring on the shore are quite similar. In the earlier work, the moon strikes and articulates a turbulent sea, while here the rising sun seems to dispel the clouds and calm the sea. Each image is thus an exploration in etching of different times of day and climatic conditions, yet in the later print, Claude displays a more sophisticated control of the medium, reducing the amount of line, using the paper itself to greater advantage, and more clearly defining the forms.'