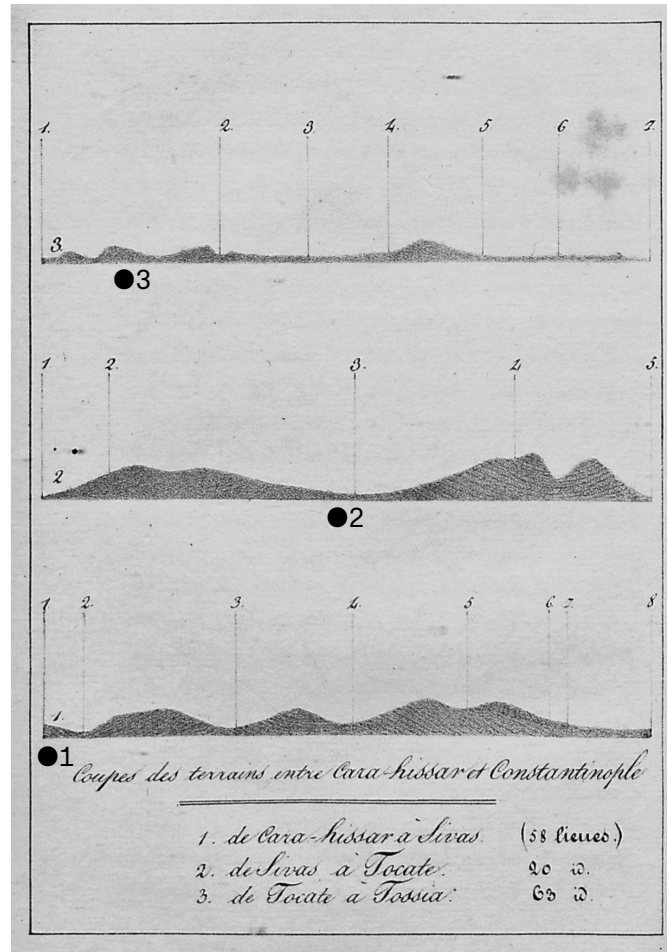


↳ ON
GEOLOGICAL
CURIOSITY

CURATORIAL
TEAM



Victor Fontanier, *Voyages en Orient*, entrepris par Ordre du Gouvernement Français, de l'année 1821 à l'année 1829, ornés de Figures et d'une Carte, *Turquie d'Asie* (Paris: P. Mongie Aîné, 1829). Courtesy of American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library.

This 1820s drawing by French naturalist Victor Fontanier included in his book *Voyages in the East* (*Voyages en Orient*) presents three geological cross-sections from the northern and eastern territories of Anatolia: between Şebinkarahisar (Giresun) and Sivas ^{●1}, Sivas and Tokat, ^{●2} and Tokat and Tosya (Kastamonu). ^{●3} While each segment between the indicated numbers specifies a particular area of the geological investigation, a separate legend reveals the drawing's ultimate motivation: a geological curiosity exposed through a detailed specification of the rock formations. The legend of the drawing annotates each cross-section with the minerals they contain, such as limestone marble, granite, pectinite, limestone, gypsum, porphyry, and siliceous sandstone.¹

Fontanier became the French consul of the city of Trabzon in the Ottoman Empire not long after his expedition to the East. He was one of the first six graduates of the *École des Naturalistes Voyageurs*, a school established in 1819 at the Museum of Natural History in Paris. The school trained young "naturalist voyagers" on account of the French Government's desire to re-establish a productive engagement with colonial possessions² by discovering

1 Victor Fontanier, *Voyages en Orient*, entrepris par Ordre du Gouvernement Français, de l'année 1821 à l'année 1829, ornés de Figures et d'une Carte, *Turquie d'Asie* (Paris: P. Mongie Aîné, 1829). See Özgür Yılmaz, "Tarihî, Coğrafi ve Arkeolojik Bilgi Kaynağı Olarak Konsolos Gezileri," XVII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, IV. Cilt (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2018), p. 1431.

2 Although the content of the relations between the French and Ottoman Empires in the 19th century does not sit in a

foreign natural resources along with collecting, preparing, preserving, and transporting local specimens, such as plants, animals, and minerals.³ Fontanier was initially sent to the East to examine local resources as a voyager expert and then was a short run diplomat already familiarized with the region.⁴ On the one hand, Fontanier's travel books, and this geological drawing for that matter, reveal, once again, the intricate associations between geological curiosity and imperialist protocols. On the other hand, it marks the potential of other future drawings that would help to undo and reconstitute these procedures while prompting alternative observations and curiosities of the Earth itself.

framework that can be described as colonial, it has an intricate structure that can be characterized from the perspective of self-interest.

3 Richard W. Burkhardt, "Naturalists' Practices and Nature's Empire: Paris and the Platypus, 1815-1933," *Pacific Science*, vol 55, no.4 (October 2001), 327-341.

4 Some of the consular duties assigned to Fontanier by the French Foreign Office were to establish connections with the tribal chiefs located on the borders of the countries, to observe the trade relations of other colonial countries, and to identify and notify the authorities of the barriers to the trade of French goods. See Özgür Yılmaz "Victor Fontanier'nin Trabzon Konsolosluğu (1830-1832)," *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 35 (Bahar 2014), 164-165.