

Jules Itier and the Lagrené Mission

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1 – Gilbert Gimon, 'Jules Itier, le reporter aux 1000 daguerréotypes, 1. Le voyage en Chine: 1843-44', *Prestige de la Photographie*, 8 (1980), 78-98; and Gilbert Gimon, 'Jules Itier 2, le voyage en Egypte: 1845-1846', *Prestige de la Photographie*, 9 (1980), 4-31. This publication in two parts will be referenced as 'the 1980 article' in the following text.

2 – Jules Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine, 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846*, 3 vols., Paris: ed. Dauvin et Fontaine 1848-53.

3 – Gilbert Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', *History of Photography*, 5:3 (July 1981), 225-44. This publication will be referenced as 'the 1981 article'.

In the 1970s, Gilbert Gimon discovered the daguerreotype work of Jules Itier and subsequently published two articles: one in French in 1980 and one in English in 1981. The historical importance of this discovery is now firmly established and the two articles have become key sources of reference. However, a close study of these publications reveals mistakes and assumptions that require resolution. Part one of this article considers two phases of gathering and dispersal of this body of work, first in the mid-nineteenth century and subsequently in the twentieth century. Individuals, situations and institutions are identified in order to assist with the necessary corrections and reinterpretations. In part two, Itier's journal and Gimon's articles are cross-referenced in relation to new source materials in order to undertake an in-depth investigation of a number of plates presented in chronological order. This has resulted in the correction of a number of erroneous dates and statements made by Gimon. In the process, an unexpected new name in the early history of photography was revealed in relation to the earliest clearly dated photograph of India. This article concludes with a new reading of Itier's work and its significance for the history of photography in Asia.

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In 1980, two articles published in the journal *Prestige de la Photographie* brought to light the work of Jules Itier, a remarkable but until then unknown figure in the early history of photography.¹ Written by the collector Gilbert Gimon, they told the life story of a nineteenth-century general inspector of French customs, whose career had enabled him to travel the world in the early 1840s with a daguerreotype camera. In the course of his research conducted in the 1970s, Gimon went to Vêras, Itier's home in southern France, where he discovered many remnants of his early photographic activity. He also made contact with some of Itier's descendants and was able to purchase a number of daguerreotypes in their possession. This exceptional visual material formed a good part of the two articles. The images were complemented by a biography of Itier and lengthy extracts from his journal. Published in 1848, two years after his return to France, Itier's journal provides an extensive account of his journey in Asia, including occasional mentions of his use of the daguerreotype camera.²

Another article followed, published in 1981 in the pages of this journal.³ This article enriched the published corpus of images, with, in particular, two views taken in South India near Pondicherry and one in Sri Lanka. It also featured three photographs taken in the ruined property Vêras. The dating of a number of previously published plates was revised to fit the chronology found in the journal. The text, however, was mostly a translation of the French articles. Since then, there has been little further research. The contribution of Gimon to the history of

photography, at least in terms of publication, stopped there, although his research apparently led him to a number of other meaningful discoveries.⁴ With these articles, Itier and his body of work became known to historians of photography. The recognition given to his work grew over time, particularly in relation to the significance of the plates undertaken in Macao and Canton in 1844. As research on the history of photography in Asia progressed, it became evident that these were the earliest existing photographs of China.⁵

The corpus of information available on Itier and his work remained, however, basically the same. A literature review of work published on him since the early 1980s until 2012 reveals that they mostly reference the articles by Gimon.⁶ However, a study of these articles in relation to Itier's journal raises additional questions as well as highlights often repeated inaccuracies. During my research, I was able to contact descendants of Itier as well as individuals who had known Gimon, and to conduct a study of daguerreotypes kept in various collections. This was completed through a number of field trips in most places visited by Itier during which the locations of many of his daguerreotypes were identified, resulting in a first-hand understanding of the conditions in which these images had been recorded. The purpose of this article is therefore to reassess Gimon's contribution in the light of new elements that give a better understanding of the work of Itier in the context of the Lagrené Mission.

The Itier and Gimon Collections

The photographic activity of Itier mostly took place during his journey around Asia as a member of the Lagrené Mission. By the early 1840s, King Louis Philippe's Department of Foreign Affairs realised that while its attention had been focused on Africa, other western powers had made great progress in Asia. To correct this oversight, a diplomatic mission was established to send Théodore de Lagrené as a plenipotentiary minister to negotiate a treaty with the government of the Chinese Emperor Daoguang. Preparations for this mission had largely been the work of Jean Baptiste Cécille, who was initially sent on a mission of exploration to the South China Sea in 1841.⁷ Cécille was so successful in this mission that by the end of 1843 he was made an admiral, given command of the Station Navale de la Mer de Chine on board the frigate *Cléopâtre* and asked to wait for the arrival of Lagrené to assist him in the military aspect of his mission. A confidential aspect of this mission was the exploration of possible locations for the establishment of a French port in the China Sea. These included the island of Basilan in the Sulu archipelago and Da Nang, or Tourane, in Vietnam. Both would turn out to be mentioned by Itier in his journal as places where daguerreotypes were made.

The Lagrené Mission consisted of the frigate *Syrène* and the corvette *Victorieuse*, on which the diplomatic arm of the mission travelled. The commercial agents in charge of promoting French products to the Chinese market travelled on board the steamer *Archimède* commanded by the captain Pâris. Chinese products were in much higher demand in Europe than the other way round – a situation only made worse by the stringent system of import taxes imposed by the Qing government. The revision of the tax and levy policy would thus be of paramount importance. An experienced inspector was required for this task, and the Customs Office decided to send Jules Itier, who had just returned from a successful mission to Senegal, Antilles and Guyana for the Navy and Finance ministries.⁸ On 12 December 1843, he left Brest for a journey that would last a little more than two years. The stops on the first part of the journey were Rio de Janeiro, The Cape, Bourbon (today Réunion Island), Singapore, Manila and, finally, Macao and Canton. The official purpose of the mission was completed on 24 October 1844 with the signing of the Whampoa Treaty, after which other aspects of the mission took Itier to the Sulu Archipelago, Java and Tourane. By the end of August 1845,

4 – Personal communication with Frédéric Hoch, July 2013. Other meaningful discoveries of Gimon include the collection of Baron Gros and the photographic works of Ratalet Choiselard, Hossard, and Imbert de Mollard.

5 – Terry Bennett, *History of Photography in China, 1842–1860*, London: Quaritch 2009, 3–6.

6 – The year 2012 marked a renewal of interest in the legacy of Itier with two exhibitions resulting in the publication of new studies. The Musée Français de la Photographie (MFP) in Bièvres presented an exhibition fully devoted to Itier, the catalogue of which, edited by the museum director Julie Corteville, included my own recent findings and photographs. Gilles Massot, 'A la Recherche de Jules Itier', in *Jules Itier, Premières Photos de la Chine, 1844*, Publication du Musée Français de la Photographie – Conseil Général de L'Essone 2012, 74–77. This exhibition led to the publication of an online article by Géraldine Barron, who in the course of a doctoral dissertation on Admiral Pâris had come across important new data concerning the Lagrené Mission. The Conseil Général de L'Hérault presented an exhibition on wine and tea, in which Itier, who spent much of his life in Montpellier, was given a prominent position in a catalogue by Régine Mazauric. Régine Mazauric, 'Carnet de Voyage d'un Inspecteur des Douanes (1843–1846)', in *L'Eloge du Thé et du Vin: Carnet de Voyage*, Montpellier: Conseil Général de l'Hérault 2012, 11–41.

7 – By the end of January 1842, Cécille had already established friendly contacts with high dignitaries of the Chinese government in Canton. He was also on very good terms with the British navy, so much so that he was on board the *Cornwallis* for the signing of the Nanking Treaty. This mission in the South China Sea marked the beginning of a successful political career that saw him become a senator and an ambassador to the British Court in London.

8 – Jules Itier was born in Paris of a family originating from Serres in the southern French Alps. He entered the Customs Office in Marseilles in 1819, under the direction of his uncle Dubois-Aymé, a prominent Egyptologist. He became *inspecteur* in 1832 and *inspecteur principal* in 1846. The same year he became *officier de la Légion d'Honneur*. He was also president of the Conseil Général des Hautes-Alpes in 1848 and became a member of the Académie des Sciences et Lettres de Montpellier in 1851.

his deteriorating health made him request permission to return to France on board commercial ships, docking in Sri Lanka, Aden and, finally, Egypt.

Back in France in early 1846, Itier had become a high-profile government official, a still-single wealthy man who needed a family and a home befitting of his position. In March of that year he married Henriette de Brémond, daughter of a general of the Empire, and in 1849 he bought Véras, a priory in the hills overlooking Veynes, not far from Serres, his family hometown in the French Southern Alps. After extensive renovation works, the medieval building was turned into a charming little castle, complete with a fountain gracing the lawn, a library containing hundreds of volumes covering all aspects of nineteenth-century intellectual and scientific life, and a photographic darkroom. This is where Itier gathered his collections of objects and artefacts from around the world, and where they remained until their dispersal in 1968 when the family sold Véras.

A customs officer by profession, Itier was also a very keen amateur scientist whose proficiency in natural sciences, in particular geology and agronomy, contributed to the success of his missions. He neatly classified his collection of rocks from around the world in a small geological museum at the centre of which hung a whale bone. The collections included *objets d'art* and curios, such as a sumptuous Mandarin costume,⁹ and a set of tribal weapons that lent an exotic flavour to this corner of rural France. The photographic darkroom was located in a small vaulted room where in 1978 Gimon found remnants of the photographic apparatus used by Itier.¹⁰ The property, however, was more of a holiday house than a residence and Itier favoured the urban social life in Montpellier where he worked from 1848 to 1857, retired in 1866, and died in 1877.¹¹ Véras then became the residence of his son Paul Jules. A lawyer by profession, Paul Jules mostly lived off the family fortune until his death in 1930. He had thirteen children, and his succession proved to be a complex affair – all the more so because one of his daughters, Titine, who had remained single and looked after him in the latter years of his life, was given custody of the estate. By then, the family's fortune had diminished and the collection began to be sold to pay for daily expenses. Titine died in 1968, by which time much of the building had begun to deteriorate. In the summer of that year, the family resolved the long-standing inheritance. Valuable objects, including boxes of daguerreotypes, were divided into lots allocated through a draw, and the property sold to the resident farmer.

For the next twenty-six years Véras remained open to any passer-by. In 1978, Gimon arrived in Véras where he found a number of daguerreotypes that had escaped the attention of the family.¹² Judging by some of the information in his articles, Gimon also must have found documents, such as an account book listing expenses incurred by Itier during his journey, including some related to his photographic activities.¹³ The findings of Véras were complemented by the purchase of two lots of plates from members of the family. Gimon mentions that in total 'quatre vingt plaques environ se trouvent depuis peu dans une collection privée' ('approximately eighty plates are now part of a private collection').¹⁴ These plates were identified with the stamp 'collection Gilbert Gimon' and after the publication of the articles the dispersal of this collection began. Gimon never dealt directly with his clients. Throughout the 1980s the photographer and dealer Léon Herschtritt was his agent.¹⁵ This role was taken over by Frédéric Hoch from 1992 to 2001, when Gimon withdrew from any form of photographic activity until his death in 2008. By then, only half a dozen erased plates were left in his estate.¹⁶

Besides the plates in his collection, Gimon also mentioned the existence of around forty plates 'acquired by the Musée de Bièvres (Essone)'.¹⁷ These plates were purchased in 1971 by André Fage for the Musée Français de la Photographie (MFP Bièvres) when he answered an announcement published by François Itier, whose father Albert, a great grandson of Jules Itier, had received one of the lots of daguerreotypes in 1968.¹⁸ The story of Itier's legacy is full of timely occurrences that saw this exceptional body of work and much of what surrounded it saved

9 – Itier wears this costume in his famous self-portrait taken in Marseilles in 1847.

10 – This room is featured in Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 242, lower photograph. It still exists and the inscription *la cabane à photographie* (the photography cabin) seen in Gimon's photograph is still there. During the renovation works, the current owners, although unaware at that time of the nature of this inscription, felt that it must have had some significance and they preserved the original wall coating. The courtyard shed seen in the upper photograph on the same page, where, according to Frédéric Hoch, Gimon found a number of daguerreotypes no longer exists.

11 – His residence in Montpellier was an apartment on the first floor of a still existing mansion, 34 rue St Guilhem.

12 – Frédéric Hoch, personal communication, July 2013.

13 – For a reproduction of a page of this booklet, see Gimon, 'Jules Itier 2', 30.

14 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, le reporter', 80.

15 – Better known for his work as a 'humanist' photographer in the tradition of Doisneau, Herschtritt also ran a stand in the St Ouen flea market where he worked as a collector and dealer specialising in ethnic photography.

16 – Frédéric Hoch, personal communication, July 2013.

17 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 225.

18 – The MFP Bièvres was founded in 1960 by Jean Fage and his son André who became the first curator of the institution.

from oblivion. Indeed, a lucky turn of events saw what was probably the most important part of the collection kept together in a public collection: Fage had purchased the boxes containing most of the plates from Macao and Canton, which later proved to be the earliest existing photographs of China. These included the historic photograph of the signatories of the Treaty of Whampoa on the *Archimède*, as well as the almost complete set of fourteen plates constituting the panorama of Canton.

Of the one hundred and twenty or so ‘documents’ mentioned by Gimon in 1980, the present research has traced over one hundred through diverse publications. Forty-one are kept in public collections, twenty-seven in known private collections and the last thirty-three are yet to be located. The topics of these images can be listed as follows: two views of Paris, one of Montpellier (paper negative), one view of St Louis de Senegal, four of Singapore, two of Manila, fourteen of Macao, seven concerning the diplomatic mission, thirty of Canton, two of Tourane, one of Galle, twenty-seven of Egypt, five self-portraits (including two prints from collodion negatives), one image of a Dayak from Borneo and four images of Pondicherry. However, the attribution to Itier of the Pondicherry plates is now known to be incorrect.

There are sixteen mentions of the daguerreotype in Itier’s published journal. Most of these references deal with the description of the situation recorded with the camera and there are few indications of his interaction with the medium, such as reflections on the implications of its usage or its technicalities. It is as if within five years of its official introduction, Itier had come to regard the medium as an ordinary one, the workings of which were not worth mentioning in detail. We know from his journal of the voyage to Senegal and Guyana that Itier had his first experience of working with the daguerreotype in a tropical climate in these countries.¹⁹ Had Itier used his camera in the earlier part of the journey to China, particularly in Brazil and Bourbon? From the absence both of plates and mention in the journal we can reasonably infer that he probably preferred to keep his stock of materials intact for later use in Asia.

Besides these mentions in the journal, Itier rarely provided a date in his handwritten captions on the back of the plates. Although remarkable for its contribution, Gimon’s account of his research also occasionally presented assumptions as facts in order to complete the blanks in his account. The following analysis will correct such erroneous information by cross-referencing diverse sources, while expanding the corpus of information available on the making of these daguerreotypes and the subjects represented. The visual legacy resulting from the voyage of Itier around Asia will now be discussed in chronological order, according to the itinerary given in his journal, his references to the use of the daguerreotype, and the dates given by Gimon in his articles.

Singapore

The first mention of the daguerreotype in the *Journal d’un Voyage en Chine* takes place in Singapore on 6 July 1844,²⁰ three days after his arrival in the British port. It is a daguerreotype of the entrance gate of the Tian Hock Keng Temple in Chinatown for which a resident monk allowed him to place his camera on the altar of the main hall. The meeting of western technology and eastern religion found in this image can thus be seen as a telling representation of the convergence of eastern and western cultures that has defined Singapore from its modern founding by Raffles, and one that still aptly represents the city today. The daguerreotype is not of a very good quality, which probably accounts for its reproduction only once in publication.²¹ Despite his eager interest in Chinese culture, Itier did not develop a clear understanding of the subtleties differentiating Buddhism and Taoism and their respective representations of deities. Itier mentions the main altar as being dedicated to the *vierge* Quoan-yn when in fact this temple is dedicated to

19 – Jules Itier, *Journal de Voyage au Sénégal et en Guyane (1842–1843)*, ed. Michel Boyé, Bordeaux: Académie Montesquieu 1999.

20 – Itier, *Journal d’un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 1, 211.

21 – Michel Boyé, *Globe-Trotter et Reporter Jules Itier (1842–1846)*, Bordeaux: Musée des Douanes 1991, 17.

Figure 1. Jules Itier, *Vue de la ville de commerce à Singapour*, daguerreotype, July 1844. Courtesy of the National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board.



Ma Zu, the Goddess of the China Sea. This deity was most important to the Chinese migrant population of Singapore because she would ensure a safe journey on the way to Nanyang – the Chinese name for Southeast Asia. Any Chinese newcomer to the British port would go and thank her in this temple upon arrival.

This plate is one of the four known Itier daguerreotypes taken in Singapore, all dated 1844 by Gimon. One of them shows a horse cart in a street, and the other two Malay carriage handlers. As correctly suggested by Gimon, they are among the earliest known photographs with an ethnographic intent taken outside Europe. The third plate is a view of the commercial town seen from Government Hill, today's Fort Canning, now kept in the National Museum of Singapore (figure 1). Throughout his two years of travelling around Asia, Itier passed through Singapore four times (on 3–6 July 1844, 14 March 1845, 8–14 May 1845, and 9–10 September 1845). On this first visit in 1844, Itier wrote extensively about the city, giving a description of Singapore that strikingly resembles the one given today: a clean and efficient cosmopolitan city. As a reflection of his enthusiastic discovery of Singapore one can reasonably assume, as Gimon did, that all four plates were taken during that first stay.

On 4 July 1844 Itier visited M. Butterworth, governor of Singapore,²² on 'signal hill' – another name given to Government Hill after the signal flagpole overlooking the port. The plate of the commercial town could therefore have been taken on that day and predate the one taken in the Chinese temple. The view from the hill shows the commercial buildings along the riverbank in the upper reach of the estuary. Itier stayed in the London Hotel located in the European town, a hotel that coincidentally housed the first photographic studio in Singapore. Opened by the enterprising Gaston Dutronquoy in 1839,²³ and transferred to High Street in 1844, the London Hotel was known as the most comfortable accommodation available in town at that time.

In December 1843, Dutronquoy placed an advertisement in the *Singapore Free Press* announcing that he had completely mastered 'the newly invented and late imported Daguerriotype' and that he was ready to offer portraits that were 'in every respect perfect likeness',²⁴ thus making him the first resident photographer of

22 – William John Butterworth was the first governor of Singapore from August 1843 to March 1855, and had been appointed directly by the British East India Company.
23 – Dutronquoy was a native from Jersey who arrived in Singapore in early 1839 and advertised himself in the local press as a painter. He mysteriously disappeared in the mid-1850s while on an expedition on the peninsula. The recent finding by Gael Newton of an obituary published on 15 January 1872 in the *London and China Telegraph* suggests that he might have died early that year in Kobe, having been active in China and Japan in the latter part of his life.

24 – John Falconer, *A Vision of the Past, A History of Early Photography in Singapore and Malaya, The Photographs of G.R. Lambert & Co., 1880–1910*, Singapore: Times Edition 1987, 10.

Singapore. The first mention of the daguerreotype in Singapore, however, took place around 1841 and is related by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, the Malay teacher of Raffles, in his memoirs *Hikayat Abdullah*, where he describes in a very accurate manner the working of a daguerreotype demonstrated by an American doctor.²⁵ None of these images – neither the one described by Abdullah nor the portraits of Dutronquoy – have survived, thus making Itier's plates the earliest extant photographs of Singapore.

Pondicherry

An important question resulting from the study of Gimon's articles was the attribution of images of an Indian temple on the Coromandel Coast near Pondicherry and dated 1844.²⁶ There is no indication of a visit to Pondicherry by Itier in his journal, and nor did the Lagrené Mission visit India on its way to China. Gimon assumed that Itier had passed through Pondicherry on board commercial ships on his way back to France in September 1845, and he goes on to state that 'he visited the French counting-house at Pondicherry' between Sri Lanka and Aden.²⁷ But this assumption does not match the 1844 date given for the plates. Furthermore, the *Lady Marie*, which Itier took to travel from Hong Kong to Galle, and the *Hindustan*, which he took from Galle to Aden, did not call at Pondicherry. From the timeline of his journal, there was no possibility of an excursion onto the mainland during his stay in Ceylon in September and October 1845.

The answer to this puzzle was found in the manuscript journal of François-Edmond Pâris, commandant of the steamer *Archimède*.²⁸ The *Archimède* featured the latest developments in naval engineering and was chosen to transport the commercial arm of the mission, acting at the same time as a showcase of the nation's industry. Pâris, who had already travelled these seas and was trained in steamer navigation, was chosen as her commandant. His maritime and scientific expertise was coupled with a real artistic talent that had resulted in a richly illustrated study of naval traditions from around the world published in 1841.²⁹ For this mission, however, Pâris decided to try out the new technique of the daguerreotype and requested a full set of equipment from the Navy Ministry.³⁰ Pâris was well aware of the limitations of the daguerreotype in terms of reproduction and his intention was in fact to use the camera as a notation tool to produce visual documents from which he would later develop his drawings. But he appears to have been quickly put off by the challenging technicalities of the medium and mostly relied on other members of the mission to use it.

The *Archimède* left France in early March 1844. On 9 April, the members of the commercial mission practised the daguerreotype on board to keep themselves occupied during the long days at sea in the Indian Ocean.³¹ On 9 July, they stopped in Trincomalee on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka to replenish their stock of coal, and on 11 and 12 July, Pâris together with Rondot continued their practice of the camera in a small temple located close to the arsenal.³² From this point, the name of Rondot appears regularly in relation to the use of the daguerreotype, together with Raffoux, the on-board mechanic. Rondot appears to have been the main person handling the camera while Raffoux prepared the plates.³³ Finally, on 15 July, they arrived in Pondicherry, where they intended to visit two temples in the surrounding countryside. On 20 July, they spent the day in Vilnour, or Villianour, a district of Pondicherry known for a Shiva temple dating from the eleventh century (Villianur Thirukameeswarar Kokilambigai Temple). Rondot operated the camera and Pâris mentioned the production of a few reasonably good plates. On 22 July, the party moved to Trevicari, or Thiruvakkarai, a town located thirty kilometres away from Pondicherry and famous for a ninth-century Shiva temple.³⁴ Again, Rondot and Raffoux used the daguerreotype through the day, but this time the heat and the intense light appear to have been difficult to

25 – Ibid., 8.

26 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 229.

27 – Ibid., 239. Gimon does not date the Pondicherry plates in *Prestige de la Photographie*. The date only appears in *History of Photography*.

28 – François-Edmond Pâris was a prominent figure of nineteenth-century naval engineering whose successful career saw him eventually become the director of the Musée National de la Marine in Paris in 1871. Géraldine Barron initially studied this journal in 2013 as part of her PhD research on Pâris.

29 – François-Edmond Pâris, *Essai sur la Construction Navale des Peuples Extra-européens*, Paris: Arthus Bertrand 1841.

30 – Pâris to the Ministère de la Marine, 16 January 1844, Service Historique de la Défense Marine, BB4/622, Vincennes.

31 – Pâris, 'Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission, 1844–1846', Musée National de la Marine, 85.

32 – Ibid., 158.

33 – Beside his successful career in trade and industry, Natalis Rondot also published extensively on French arts and artists. He was a member of juries for many international exhibitions, from London in 1851 to Paris in 1889.

34 – The Thiruvakkarai Vakkali Amman Temple is known for an unusual three-faced Shiva lingam combining Shiva, Vishnu and Bhrama. This lingam probably resulted in the caption *Temple de Brahma* given by Itier on the back of a plate.

Figure 2. Natalis Rondot, *Dans un temple indien de Brahma, Côte de Coromandel*, daguerreotype, 22 July 1844. Wilson Centre for Photography.



35 – The identification of the temple was made possible with the help of M. Ramaswamy from the office of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in Pondicherry.

36 – Christopher Pinney, *The Coming of Photography to India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008, 10. There is clear evidence of photographic activity in Calcutta in the early 1840s, including by William Brooke O'Shaughnessy, but none of these photographic works have been recovered.

37 – Pâris, 'Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission', year 1844, 158: 'Le matin nous allons avec Mr. Rondot nous exercer au daguerreotype sur une petite pagode située dans le ravin près de la porte de l'arsenal. Nous ne faisons pas grand chose de bon le soleil est trop ardent. Mr Rondot est pour cela d'une complaisance charmante'.

38 – Ibid., 301.

39 – Ibid., 337.

40 – Ibid., 324, 14 November 1844; and year 1845, 52, 10 February 1845.

control and the plates said to have been either too dark or solarised. However, a field trip to Pondicherry conducted in December 2014 allowed the clear identification of the temple seen in the daguerreotypes as being indeed Thiruvakkara.³⁵ These daguerreotypes can therefore be confirmed as having been taken on 22 July 1844 by Natalis Rondot (figure 2). Currently, the earliest known existing photographs of India are a few salted paper prints, part of an anonymous journal dated between 1843 and 1845.³⁶ Being dated by the day, these daguerreotypes of Pondicherry are thus the earliest clearly dated photographs of India.

The relation of Pâris to the daguerreotype was not an easy one. On 24 July, while still in Pondicherry, he wrote:

In the morning we try to do a small white pagoda, but Raffoux and myself are like two simpletons and we can not produce anything good. We obtain a very dark image at best. This damn daguerreotype is so difficult that drawing easily as I do, I hardly see why I should use it.³⁷

In fact, it was not just the use of the camera that he found difficult; even the intended use of the images hardly met with his expectations. On 27 October, while in Canton, he mentioned how difficult it was to transcribe onto paper the image of a bull taken by Rondot in Trévicari, so elusive was the image of the daguerreotype.³⁸ On 15 November, there was a last mention of an unsuccessful attempt by Rondot at a portrait of the Viceroy Kying,³⁹ after which any mention of the daguerreotype in his journal always takes place in relation to Itier's activity. He lent him his equipment and gave him unused plates during the stay in Canton,⁴⁰ which might explain the large number of plates eventually used there. This transfer of daguerreotype material might also be the reason why these Pondicherry plates

found their way into the collection of Itier, who captioned them with his handwriting.

Manila

There are two known plates of Manila by Itier. Although he had three stays in Manila,⁴¹ there is no mention of the daguerreotype in his journal. It is therefore not possible to ascertain an exact date for these photographs. The second stay was mostly devoted to an inland excursion to central Luzon, and the third was busy with visiting plantations. As in the case of Singapore, the exploration of Manila during the first visit in August 1844 would therefore seem to be an appropriate context for the photographing of these plates.

The two daguerreotypes are a view of Manila's Intramuros looking south from the opposite bank of the Pasig River,⁴² and a street scene in San Miguel neighbourhood further up the river on the north bank (figure 3). These two images are representative of the way life was organised in Manila in 1844. Each bank of the river had a very different function and identity. Since 1571, the south bank had been the seat of Spanish colonial power and the austere walled city of Intramuros gathered churches, convents and government buildings behind its fortifications. By 1590, the commercial town of Binondo started developing on the north bank, the growth of which was largely fuelled by an important migration from China. By the mid-nineteenth century, Intramuros remained a stronghold of religious and political power, described by Itier as 'sad and solitary',⁴³ while Binondo had become an attractive cosmopolitan centre, driven by a lively Chinatown. This is where most of the commercial and social activity took place, and upon arriving in Manila on 26 July, Itier found lodging in a Binondo hostel run by Signor San-Iago Blanco (in fact a compatriot originating, as he did, from Provence). Binondo was connected to Intramuros by an eight-arch bridge, upstream from which the new residential district of San Miguel was found, its main street lined with the typical Filipino houses seen in Itier's daguerreotype and described by Lavollée, the secretary of Itier, in his own published journal.⁴⁴

Another question raised by Gimón's articles is the mention of the purchase in Manila of twenty-five plates by Itier at the end of December 1844.⁴⁵ Itier does not give this information in his journal, and as in the case of a number of his

41 – 25 July–5 August 1844, 15 December 1844–2 January 1845, and 20 June–10 July 1845.

42 – This plate, probably kept in a private collection, has not been located.

43 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 1, 229.

44 – 'The road leading from Binondo to San Miguel is a large avenue, lined all along, with Filipino houses. [...] All these Filipino villages, that follow one another on the way out of Binondo, present a similar modest cleanliness and well-being that please the eyes much more than our wealth surrounded by misery' ('Le chemin qui mène de Binondo à San-Miguel forme une large allée bordée, dans toute sa longueur, de cases tagales. [...] Ces villages tagals, qui se succèdent comme autant de faubourgs à la suite de Binondo, présentent tous cet aspect de propreté modeste et de bien-être général qui réjouit les yeux bien plus que le spectacle de nos richesses voisines de tant de misères!'). Charles Hubert Lavollée, *Voyage en Chine*, Paris: Just Rouvier & A Ledoyen 1852, 188.

45 – Gimón, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 232.



Figure 3. Jules Itier, *Vue du Faubourg de St Miguel à Manila*, daguerreotype, August 1844(?). Collection W. + T. Bosshard.

46 – Ibid. This is the family of the mandarin Paw ssé chen.

47 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier 2', 12. His interpretation of the account book, however, is again problematic. Gimon notes the date as 1844 in the caption – the year mentioned at the top of the page – but right below it 1845 is mentioned, followed by a series of month-by-month purchases according to an itinerary that correlates with Itier's movements throughout that year. This purchase could therefore have taken place in Egypt.

48 – Sinibaldo de Mas's early daguerreotype activity in Manila has been repeatedly asserted and the story now appears to be well entrenched. However, scholars appear to have referenced only second-hand sources to support this claim, which has recently been questioned. Juan Guardiola quotes a rather fanciful description of de Mas's photographic activity published by a newspaper in Barcelona in 1910. Juan Guardiola, *El Imaginario Colonial: Fotografía en Filipinas durante le periodo español, 1860–1890*, Barcelona: Casa Asia 2006, 212. Juan Palazon mentioned that de Mas offered 'his services in the streets of Manila as an itinerant photographer in an attempt to provide for his sustenance'. Juan Palazon quoted in Dr Carlos Botor, *Secret Report of Sinibaldos de Mas*, Manila: Historical Conservation Society 1963, 13. My thanks to John Silva and Jonathan Best for the latter reference.

49 – Personal conversation with Jonathan Best, February 2014. The association of Wood with the early phase of photography history seems to stem from a daguerreotype portrait of him kept in the GBR Museum, General Trias Cavite, the Philippines. However, recent studies of this image suggest that it was probably made in the 1850s in America or Hong Kong, prior to his arrival in Manila. He is known to have operated a studio in Manila by the early 1860s, and with the exception of the aforementioned daguerreotype all other known works by him make use of the collodion wet plate process.

50 – Barcela Caroline, 'Conservation Project of the Manila Daguerreotypes', available at http://notesonphotographs.org/index.php?title=Barcella,_Caroline._%22Conservation_Project_of_the_Manila_Daguerreotypes.%22 (accessed 31 May 2011).

51 – Led by Caleb Cushing, the Cushing Mission resulted in the Treaty of Wanghia between the United States and China.

52 – Itier's view of the Fort of San Francisco was used as the cover for Bennett's *History of Photography in China*.

53 – Six are kept in the MFP Bièvres and the others in diverse private collections.

54 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 1, 321.

statements, Gimon does not substantiate it. Furthermore, Gimon writes that the purchase of these new plates enabled Itier to complete 'a magnificent piece of work on a Chinese family'.⁴⁶ Itier was indeed in Manila by 15 December on his second stay. However, the photography session of the Chinese family (quoted in full by Gimon) took place on 27 November 1844 in Canton. The sequence of events proposed by Gimon is thus not logical. Itier might have mentioned the purchase of plates in Manila in his account book, a page of which is reproduced in part two of the 1980 articles.⁴⁷ The question raised by Gimon as to who could have sold these plates to Itier is indeed an interesting one. The history of photography in the Philippines is said to begin in 1841 with the use of a daguerreotype camera by Sinibaldo de Mas. A Spanish diplomat who had arrived in Manila in September 1840, de Mas is believed to have practised the daguerreotype to supplement his salary.⁴⁸ Having left Spain in 1834, he may have purchased his camera in early 1840 during an extended stay in Calcutta. He stayed in Manila for about two and a half years and none of his work has been so far identified.

Another name associated with early photography in Manila is William W. Wood, an American photographer until recently thought to have arrived in Manila in the 1840s or even the 1830s. However, recent research now considers him to have been active from the late 1850s in the Philippines.⁴⁹ A lot of eighteen daguerreotypes by an unidentified photographer was discovered in 2007 in the collections of the Hispanic Society of America in New York City and has been dated from the mid-1840s to the 1850s.⁵⁰ Lastly, a daguerreotype of 'the city of Manila Intramuros in which we see a flag' has been mentioned repeatedly as being the earliest preserved photograph of the Philippines. This image, unidentified and dated early 1840s, was seen in about 1996 by Jonathan Best in the magazine of a French photography club. When shown the reproduction of Itier's view of Intramuros in the course of the present research, Best concluded that it looked very much like the image he remembered seeing almost twenty years earlier. From all of these elements one can infer that Manila was indeed a site of early daguerreotype activity, although the case for a studio or merchant from whom Itier could have purchased his plates remains difficult to ascertain. In any case, his two plates of Manila, probably taken in August 1844, appear to be the earliest known photographs of the Philippines.

Macao

On 15 August 1844, in Macao, M. de Lagrené finally stepped onto Chinese land. He did so with his right foot – a sign of good omen much appreciated by the Chinese spectators and noted by Itier in his journal. The diplomatic mission had reached its destination and would reside in Macao until 29 October. Itier would have another relatively long stay there, from 12 July to 31 August 1845 at the end of his mission. But if one is to judge by the entries in his journal, his activity as a daguerreotypist seems to have taken place mostly during the first stay. This took place a little more than two years after the first recorded use of the daguerreotype in China, by Major Malcolm and Dr Woosnam on the banks of the Yangtze River on 16 July 1842. Itier's photographic activity also appears to be contemporary to that of the American artist George R. West who is known to have come to China in February 1844 as an attaché of the Cushing Mission and subsequently opened a photographic studio in Hong Kong in March 1845.⁵¹ However, no work resulting from the activity of these three men has so far been recovered. Terry Bennett has acknowledged that Itier's images are the oldest known photographs of China.⁵²

There are two entries mentioning outings around the Portuguese colony devoted to *prise de vue* (photographic shooting), resulting in a total of seventeen surviving plates.⁵³ On 18 and 19 October, Itier simply mentions taking 'les points de vue les plus remarquables de Macao' ('the most remarkable viewpoints of Macao').⁵⁴ He is a little more explicit on 28 October when he mentions the Praja Grande, the main pagoda, the inner port, and the streets of the bazaar as

the subjects of his images.⁵⁵ Among the views of Praja Granda kept by the MFP Bièvres, one is mentioned as being *redressée*, meaning that the exposure took place using a mirror that puts the image back in the right orientation (figure 4).⁵⁶ This important technical detail is mentioned on the back of the plate, but is not given any further explanation in the journal. The daguerreotype of the main pagoda is matched by an extensive description in the journal and here again, as in Singapore, Itier mistakes the Sea Goddess Ma Zu as Kuan Yin. None of the street photographs have survived, but we know of a portrait of his two Chinese servants in Macao. On its first publication in 1980, this plate, together with another six from Macao, Canton, and Singapore, were surprisingly dated 1843 by Gimon.⁵⁷ However, Gimon dates the plate 1845 on its second publication in *History of Photography*, probably in relation to the second stay in the Portuguese colony in August 1845 when Itier rented the former French factory, a mansion that required the service of numerous servants. A portrait of the interpreter Callery indicates that indeed Itier did some *prise de vue* during that stay and the date of August 1845 seems to be most likely for the portrait of the two servants as well.

Another date given by Gimon needs to be revised in relation to the information now available in the journal of Pâris. The part of the 1980 articles concerning the Treaty of Whampoa is illustrated with three daguerreotypes showing the pagoda where the treaty was negotiated (figure 5). Gimon dates these plates '3 October 1844' and the pagoda is left unidentified. Although he does not mention it, Itier must have been aware that this pagoda, the Kun Iam Temple, had already been the site of the negotiation and the signing of the Sino-American Treaty of Wanghia on 3 July 1844. In his journal, Itier describes a lavish reception given by Ki Yin in the pagoda on 3 October at the start of the diplomatic negotiations between the Chinese Viceroy and the French ambassador. It would seem that Gimon used this event to date the plates. Pâris, however, gives a clear indication of daguerreotype activity by Itier in relation to the pagoda on 14 October. That day he wrote: 'I went back on land after lunch to visit M. Itier and invite him to come along to take some daguerreotype of the pagoda and while he is preparing his plates I go there with M. Cadiou'.⁵⁸ This date of 14 October also concurs with the caption given by Itier for one of the plates, which he says had been taken 'on the day of the conclusion of the treaty between France and China'.⁵⁹ In his diplomatic correspondence, Lagrené mentions on 21 October that Ki Ying and himself had come to an agreement on the different points of the treaty they had been negotiating since the fifth of that month.⁶⁰ The 3 October 1844 date given by Gimon therefore seems impossible to substantiate.

The Diplomatic Mission

Besides the three plates of the Kun Iam Temple, another four plates help us to visualise some aspects of the diplomatic mission. The most famous is the daguerreotype showing the signatories of the treaty on the *Archimède* on 24 October 1844, by far the most reproduced image since it was first published in 1980. This was the only daguerreotype from the MFP Bièvres used by Gimon in his article, and its historical importance was highlighted by an extensive extract in Itier's journal describing the event.⁶¹ The other three plates are a portrait of Lagrené, published in *Prestige de la Photographie*, and two portraits of the interpreter of Italian origin Joseph Marie Callery, one of which was published in *History of Photography*.⁶² Callery first came to Macao in 1836 as a missionary but quickly left the religious orders to work for the French consulate in Macao, and eventually played an important role in the relations between the two countries.⁶³ Gimon purchased the two portraits of Callery from Pierre Callery,⁶⁴ probably in 1980 if one is to judge from the sequence of their publication. The date 22 October 1845 inscribed by Pierre Callery on the back of the plates appears to have been a misinterpretation of the date originally written by Itier on one of them that read: '22 8^{ème} 1845'. This

55 – Ibid., 331.

56 – Three plates are captioned as being *redressées* by Itier, the other two being a view of the San Francisco church in Macao and a view of the European factories in Canton.

57 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, le reporter', 91. Repeated in Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 232. These dates of July, September and November 1843 (some followed by a question mark) in the 1980 article are rather puzzling. On the one hand, Gimon is well aware of the journey chronology found in the journal, and other plates published along with these are given the correct year. On the other hand, he dates pictures taken in Asia at a time when the mission has yet to leave France.

58 – Pâris, 'Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission', year 1844, 276: 'Je retourne à terre après déjeuner et vais voir M. Itier pour l'engager à venir prendre quelques épreuves de daguerreotype à la pagode [où il a dîné la veille] et pendant qu'il prépare ses plaques je m'y rends avec M. Cadiou [...]'.
59 – Quoted from the caption for the plate reproduced in Gimon, 'Jules Itier, le reporter', 96. Gimon does not provide the source, but it is provided as a quote and so presumably derives from Itier's own handwritten caption on the back of the plate. The current whereabouts of this plate is not known.

60 – Théodore de Lagrené, *Correspondence Diplomatique Chine 1840 à 1845*, microfilm 15MD/4, 200. Archives des Affaires Étrangères, La Courneuve.

61 – The taking of this daguerreotype is also described by Lavollée in his published journal and Pâris in his manuscript. The two men, however, have a diverging opinion on the result of this session. Lavollée highlights the difficulty in obtaining a clear image because of the movement of the ship, but mentions that the second attempt was successful. Pâris, on the other hand, seems to have been much more demanding of the quality for the image. His conclusion is far less positive: 'Unfortunately he could not produce a good image and should he have done so, it would have been much more precious than the best possible drawing' ('Malheureusement il ne peut réussir à faire une bonne épreuve et certes s'il l'eût obtenue, elle était plus précieuse que le meilleur dessin').

62 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 233.

63 – Joseph Marie Callery's (1810–62) contributions to Sinology include the publication of an influential phonetic transcription of the Chinese language, the *Systema Phonicum Scriptorum Sinicarum*, and the first translation of the *Li Ki*, one of the five great King or canonical Chinese books. He eventually became the official secretary and official translator for the Chinese language of King Louis Philippe. He worked in the field of natural sciences and his name



Figure 4. Jules Itier, *Vue redressée de la Praja Grande à Macao*, daguerreotype, October 1844. Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.



Figure 5. Jules Itier, *Pagode occupée par Ky-ing, Viceroy de Canton, pendant les négociations du traité de Wampo (à Macao)*, daguerreotype, 14 October 1844. Collection Hoch Frédéric France.

way to annotate the month is found in many other documents of the mission. It appears that the figure '8' was mistaken for 'X', thus resulting in the incorrect month given by Pierre Callery. Gimon, probably aware that in October 1845 Itier was already in Sri Lanka, gave only the year and not the day and month in his 1981 article. In August 1845, Itier was indeed in Macao, which he left on the 31st of that month. These portraits of Callery in Macao therefore are the last known dated images from Itier's stay in China.

These two portraits are also interesting from a pictorial point of view (figures 6, 7). One of them shows Callery in a dignified traditional pose, although his gaze directed away from the camera and looking down at the lower right corner of the image is not quite conventional. The other, which includes the exact date from Itier's hand, is even more unusual. Callery seems lost in an introspective daze, his right arm leisurely resting on the back of the chair, his whole body limp as if almost drunk. Another singular element of this image is the flowery background of what appears to be wallpaper with a Chinoiserie motif of exotic birds.

Canton

By 29 October, with the signing of the treaty completed, the mission was allowed to travel up the Pearl River to Canton where its members stayed until 10 December 1844. This fairly long stay resulted in thirty-two known daguerreotypes,⁶⁵ the largest number of plates made in one single location. These include a panorama of Canton, the photography of which Itier briefly mentions on 7 November 1844. This panorama was taken from the rooftop of the American factory,⁶⁶ with the help of the American consul Forbes who facilitated the photographer's access to the rooftop. Pâris went up with Itier and his description of the view allows us to understand better the plates now kept in the MFP Bièvres.⁶⁷ He concludes his account by commenting that Itier had managed to produce some good images, but he doubted whether he had been able to complete the intended 360° view. According to the captions on the back of the plates, the panorama was made up of fourteen views.⁶⁸ Out of these, plate number nine has disappeared and the image on plate number fourteen has been erased. Plates number two, seven, and eleven exist in two versions. Because the last plate, number fourteen, is no longer legible, it is not possible to judge whether Itier had indeed completed his overview of the horizon, but a distribution of the plates over a map of Canton from that period suggests that he might have indeed done so or at least come very close to it. The remaining fifteen plates, however, give a striking vision of the skyline of this Chinese city in the mid-nineteenth century.

It appears that after Itier's lifetime this panorama was first assembled in the course of this research. The photographic technique of this panorama does not compare with other famous daguerreotype panoramas in which the connection from one plate to the next is almost flawless. In this case, the height of the horizon is not consistent and the change of perspective from one section to the next indicates that the camera must have been moved to different spots on the rooftop. The figure '5' had also been wrongly interpreted as a '9' at the time of the purchase of the plates. The correct sequence was reinstated in May 2014 and the digital reconstitution completed in October 2014 (figure 8). The two extremities of the panorama are visually coherent, while the centre part is somewhat disjointed. Plate one looks north and shows the heart of the Inner City, overlooked by the Zhenhai tower on a hill and Baiyunshan (White Cloud Mountain) in the distance. The pointed rooftop seen in plate one might be the Treasury mentioned by Pâris. The eye runs over the Chinese city in plate two to reach the river in plate three. In the foreground of plates three, four, and five are the factories east of the American factory. Plates five and six cover what Pâris described as being the most scenic part of the panorama with the many boats on the river and the 'pretty little fortified island',⁶⁹ which must have been the Dutch folly seen on maps of that period. Plate

was given to a pear, the *Pyrus Calleryana*, which he introduced to Europe.

64 – Personal communication with Frédéric Hoch, July 2013.

65 – Twenty-nine of these Canton plates are in the collection of the MFP Bièvres.

66 – The thirteen foreign factories were commercial-cum-residential quarters located southwest of the Inner Chinese city and outside its walls on the northern bank of the river. They find their origin in a 1684 edict of the emperor Kangxi that resulted in one of the four earliest Customs set up by the Qing Dynasty. By 1757 the other three customs were closed, and up to 1842 the factories in Canton became the only place in China where foreigners were allowed to reside and conduct business with the powerful accredited *hong* merchants. The foreign quarter, or *Shisanhang* (thirteen factories), consisted of three streets, perpendicular to the river and lined by Chinese shops. To the south of the long and narrow buildings was an esplanade, known as Respondentia Walk, on which poles flew the colours of the resident foreign nations.

67 – Pâris, 'Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission', year 1844, 341–42. Elaborate panoramas are an important aspect of the drawing practice of Pâris. In his journal he mentioned the intention of combining his drawings and colour annotations to the daguerreotypes of Itier to produce a complete panorama at a later date. But he eventually found the complexity of this Chinese urban landscape too difficult to transcribe. However, when back in Macao, one month later, he completed an almost seven-metre-long panorama of the Portuguese colony, now kept in the Musée de la Marine in Paris.

68 – Beside the historical importance of its subject, Itier's panorama is also exceptional for comprising fourteen plates. Prominent daguerreotype panoramas such as the 1848 Fair Mount Water Works panorama by W. S. Porter and the Cincinnati panorama by Porter and Fontayne are respectively made up of seven and eight plates. Choiseul and Martens made a six-panel view of Toulon in 1845. As for panoramas known to predate 1844, Friederich von Martens used a swinging lens camera on single curved plates to produce panoramas of Paris in 1842 and Claudet is said to have made a panorama of London, reproduced as a woodcut illustration in the January 1843 issue of the *Illustrated London News*. Personal email conversation with Mike Robinson, 27 August 2014.

69 – Pâris, 'Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission', year 1844, 342: 'la jolie petite île fortifiée'.

Figure 6. Jules Itier, *Joseph Marie Callery*,
daguerreotype, 22 August 1845. Wilson
Centre for Photography.



Figure 7. Jules Itier, *Joseph Marie Callery*,
daguerreotype, 22 August 1845. Collection
Hoch Frédéric France.



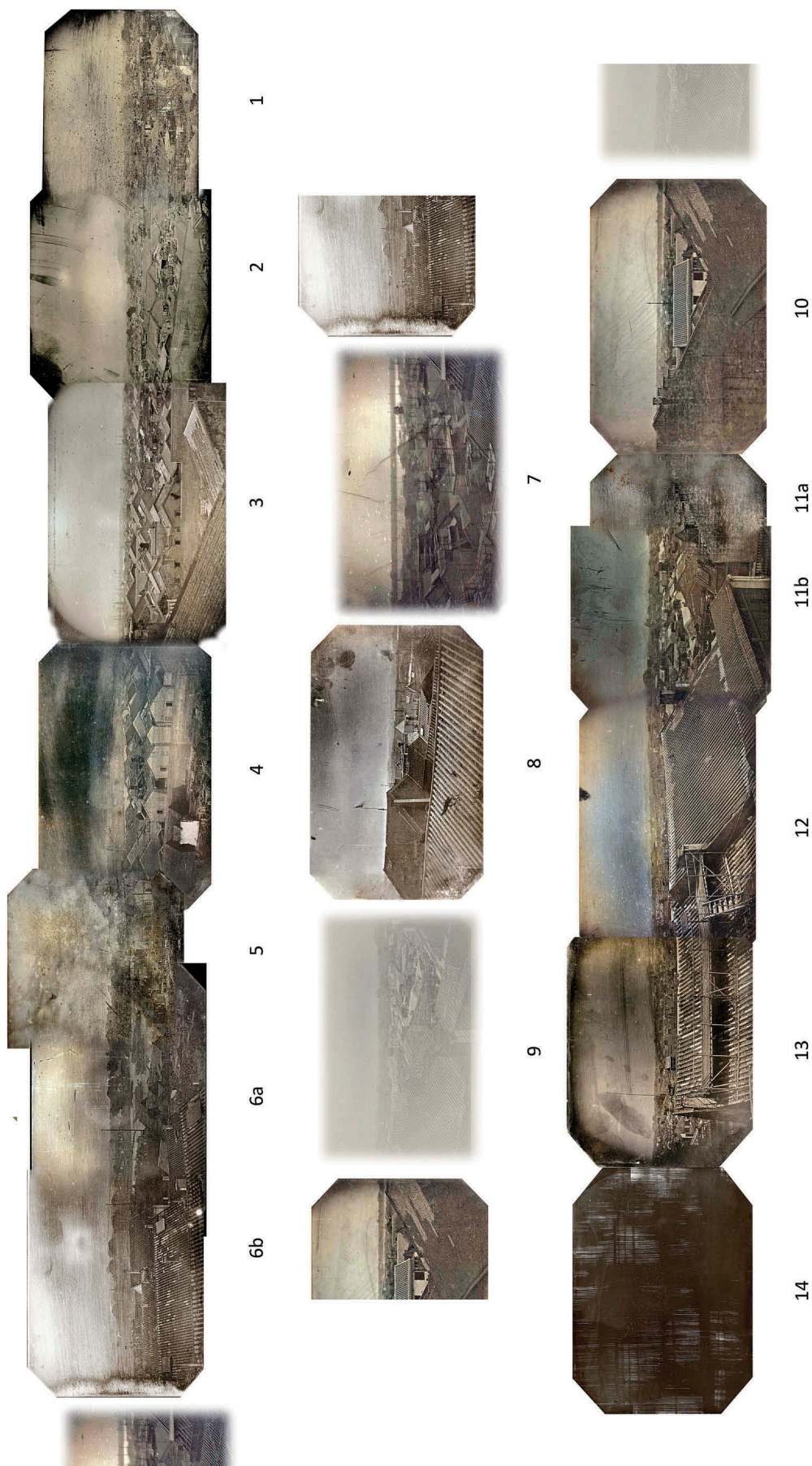


Figure 8. Jules Itier, digital reconstruction of the 1844 panorama of Canton by Jules Itier, fifteen daguerreotypes digitally assembled, 7 November 1844 (reconstructed October 2014 by Gilles Massot). Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.

seven is somehow problematic and seems out of place. It does not connect on either side with plates six and eight and the perspective does not follow the flow of the panorama. Furthermore, it shows an extensive section of Chinese habitations by the riverside in a place where we should see the southern esplanade of the factories. Plates ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen are again in perfect succession and show the western factories and the outer Chinese city beyond. This panorama therefore combines unique visual information with technical tour de force – an achievement that has yet to be acknowledged for its full importance in the history of photography.

The MFP Bièvres keeps another two plates showing the factories. One is taken from the other side of the river and shows the busy river filled with Chinese boats in the foreground and the waterfront buildings in the distance. The same buildings appear in the other plate, taken from a height and captioned as *redressée* by Itier. A comparative study of this plate with paintings and maps from the period allows us to identify this block of six buildings as the central part of the compound, between Old China Street and Hog Lane with the American factory to the extreme left, the more elaborate building in the centre being the Imperial factory. Judging by the configuration of Respondentia Walk, it appears that this plate must have been taken from the upper floor of the French factory (figure 9), with the corner of the Hong Merchant's factory showing in the left corner of the image, blocking the view of the American factory and the entrance to Old China Street. The foreground is occupied by a garden behind a prominent wall and fenced by a grille. This garden and the wall keeping it private were recent additions at the time of Itier's visit. Respondentia Walk was turned into a fenced garden in 1840 and, by 1843, yet another incident opposing the foreigners and the Chinese crowd led to the construction of walls, further isolating the foreign community from the surrounding population.⁷⁰ Another daguerreotype kept by the MFP Bièvres shows a section of this wall under construction.

Itier does not mention going out to photograph the streets of Canton the way he does in Macao, where he comments that people were very willing to pose 'after showing them the image on the glass at the back of the camera'.⁷¹ None of the street scenes from Macao have survived, but one street scene exists of Canton, which shows a group of four coolies posing in the bright sunshine, carefully arranged in frontal and profile positions (figure 10). This methodical composition, in which the subjects are purposely objectified, is a very early use of the profile view in ethnological photography and possibly unique at that time outside Europe.⁷² An additional photograph of Canton streets surfaced in the course of the present research (figure 11). The plate had been part of the museum collection ever since the purchase of the lot, but being almost erased it was given little attention. In 2014, the digital interpretation revealed the image of a street with the prominent signboard of a shop selling birds' nests. Although of poor quality in terms of exposure and composition, the image is nonetheless significant for the rarity of its topic.

Another group of images centred on the Mandarin 'Paw-ssé-tchen' is the subject of multiple descriptions in the journal (figure 12).⁷³ Paw-ssé-tchen was a prominent Cantonese merchant and one of the four mandarins involved in the negotiation of the treaty. His country house west of the city was one of the most luxurious in the province. Foreigners being forbidden to enter the Inner City, Chinese authorities used this opulent property outside the city walls to entertain their guests. On 5 November 1844, Itier and a few companions visited this house for the first time and he mentions taking two daguerreotypes of the house and the surrounding gardens, one of which was used as an illustration for volume one of his journal (figure 13).⁷⁴ On 15 November, the whole mission was invited for an official reception described by Pâris in his journal, and he writes that, Itier being absent,⁷⁵ it was Rondot who attempted to make a portrait of Ki Ying, 'without succeeding much better than when on board the Archimède'.⁷⁶ Finally, on 21

70 – Peter C. Perdue, 'Rise and Fall of Canton Trade System – III', *Visualizing Cultures*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2009, available at http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/rise_fall_canton_03/index.html (accessed 17 December 2013). Lavollée also mentions this wall in his journal when describing the lifestyle of the foreign residents.

71 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 1, 331.

72 – E. Thiésson uses the profile pose for a clear anthropological purpose at the request of the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle in August or early September 1844 to photograph two Brazilian Botocudos Indians in Paris.

73 – According to Itier, Paw-ssé-tchen had bought his Honorary Mandarin title for one hundred thousand piastres. Paw-ssé-tchen is the spelling used by Itier in his published journal, but he uses numerous other spellings in the captions of the different plates showing him and his family: Pon-Tin-Qua, Pon-Tin-Quoi, Pan Tsen Chin, and lastly Pan Tse Chen. Contemporary pinyin spelling should be Pan Shi Cheng.

74 – On that day there is also the interesting description of a missed opportunity: the photography of a group of young ladies who were about to pose for him when the impromptu arrival of one of his companions made them run away.

75 – Itier, however, describes the same reception in his journal.

76 – Pâris, 'Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission', year 1844, 337: 'sans pour cela mieux réussir qu'à bord de l'Archimède'.



Figure 9. Jules Itier, *Vue redressée des factoreries européennes de Canton*, daguerreotype, November 1844. Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.



Figure 10. Jules Itier, *Groupe pris dans une rue de Canton*, daguerreotype, November 1844. Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.

November, Itier spent a whole day with Paw-ssé-tchen and his family, during which his camera became a subject of great interest for his hosts and their visitors. The daguerreotype session is described in great detail and he mentions having taken a dozen plates by the end of the day.⁷⁷ A number of these were given as presents and only three group portraits are now kept by the museum, all in formal frontal poses before a white background. The plate titled *Famille de Pon Tin Quoi* shows a woman with an infant in her arms and three boys, probably the wife of the mandarin and his male offspring (figure 14). Another, *Trois enfants et deux mandarins*, is underexposed and the nature of the posers is difficult to ascertain.

77 – It is this session resulting in a large number of plates that Gimón mentions as following the purchase of plates in Manila in December 1844. However, as mentioned earlier in the article, his suggested chronology of events does not coincide with the dates of the journal.

Figure 11. Jules Itier, *Une rue de Canton*, daguerreotype, November 1844. Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.



Figure 12. Jules Itier, *Pon-tin-qua dit pann ssé tchen mandarin honoraire de 1ère classe bouton rouge, plume de paon*. Octobre 1844 à Canton, daguerreotype. Terry Bennett collection.

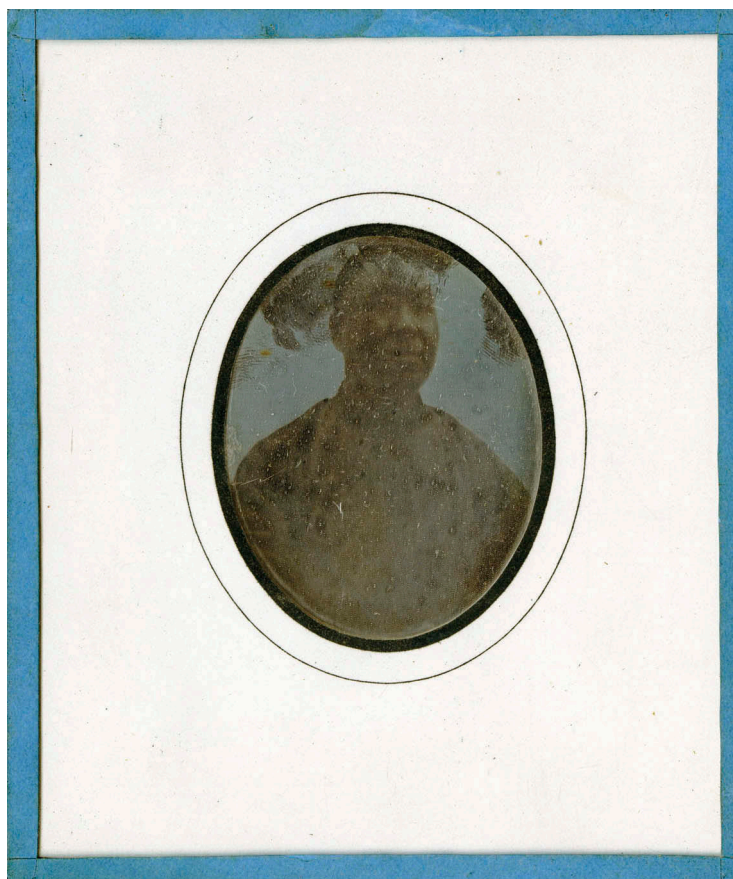




Figure 13. Jules Itier, *Principal corps de logis de la maison de champagne de Paw-ssé-tchen grand mandarin de 1^{ère} classe bouton rouge plume de paon, au dessus de Canton*, daguerreotype, November 1844. Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.



Figure 14. Jules Itier, *Famille de Pon Tin Quoi*, daguerreotype, 21 November 1844. Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.



Figure 15. Jules Itier, *Grands Mandarins de Canton*, daguerreotype, 21 November 1844. Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres.

78 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, le reporter', 92.

This most beautiful daguerreotype has been published only once. Unfortunately, its current location is unknown.

79 – Ibid., 88. Itier provides the date in his journal when Kum Chon came to invite him to visit his master's house the next day. A medical doctor by profession, Kum Chon asked him to give a demonstration of the different scientific apparatus Itier had brought with him, including the daguerreotype camera. Gimon listed November 1843 as the date in the *Prestige* publication, which clearly cannot be the case.

80 – In the first publication in *Prestige de la Photographie* (Gimon, 'Jules Itier, le reporter', 86), Gimon gives 4 November 1844 as a date, although the presence of Durant is not mentioned in Itier's journal that day. The image is again reproduced in Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 232, and dated 1844–45.

81 – Patrick Conner, *George Chinnery 1774–1852: Artist of India and the China Coast*, London: Antique Collectors' Club 1993, 252–55.

The third plate titled *Grands Mandarins de Canton* shows three important visitors for whom Itier was asked to demonstrate the daguerreotype process in the late afternoon (figure 15).

There are twelve known portraits attributed to Itier resulting from his travels in Asia, and with the exception of the *Portrait of a Dayak* discussed later in this article, the consistency in the way these images are composed suggests that he had developed a personal style of photographic portraiture characterised by tight cropping and a plain white background. One of the most arresting images from a pictorial point of view is the portrait of his servants in Canton.⁷⁸ With its deft non-symmetrical yet well-balanced composition, the portrait of the intendant Cum Chou, taken on 4 November 1844 and published in Gimon's 1980 article, is among his best portraits.⁷⁹ Cum Chou, or Kum Chon if one is to follow the spelling used by Itier in his published journal, was the intendant of Paw-ssé-tchen with whom Itier spent a fair bit of time in Canton. Itier appears to have been rather fond of Kum Chon, whom he describes as an intelligent and inquisitive man eager to learn about western science and therefore actively seeking the company of the 'barbarians'. He is also seen in the plate captioned *Mr Durant de Macao et Cum Chou de Canton* – an historically significant photograph for its rare display of Asian and European men side by side on an equal footing.⁸⁰ J. A. Durant (also often spelt Durran) was a prominent figure in the Macao foreign community from 1832.⁸¹

Presented as a ‘merchant’, but in fact the owner of the opium schooner *Lyra*, Durant was a close friend of the painter George Chinnery.⁸² There are a number of drawings of him by the famous British artist and he figures prominently in the painting *On Dent’s Veranda* (1842), which provides an insight into the leisurely life enjoyed by foreign residents in Macao at the time of the First Opium War. Itier briefly mentions benefiting from the hospitality of Durant during his first stay in Macao, and Pâris gives a colourful description of a house whose many rooms were open all year round to visitors and whose table was as welcoming as a restaurant.⁸³

Although the plate has not been recovered, the mention of another portrait completed in Canton deserves particular attention. On 14 November, Itier wrote that the previous week he had been visited by the painter Lamqua, praised for his skilful portraits in a western style and whose studio in New China Street was favoured by foreigners. Lamqua had heard about this ‘admirable apparatus that can draw by itself and that so intrigued the painters of Canton’.⁸⁴ The painting of Chinese scenery on all sorts of supports was an important aspect of the trade in Canton. At a time when miniature painters in the West were adopting daguerreotype to stay in business, the coming of this invention to China was preoccupying local artists with good reason. To demonstrate the process, Itier took a portrait of Lamqua, which he offered to the painter. One week later Lamqua returned with a green morocco box similar to the one Itier had used to offer the daguerreotype. When he opened the box, Itier was delighted to find a miniature painting on ivory that faithfully reproduced the daguerreotype, a present that he mentions as being a reflection of the exquisite courtesy of the Chinese people in general. Unfortunately, neither the miniature nor the daguerreotype has been recovered, but this exchange of pictures between the two men can be seen as typifying the many transformations taking place in the world at that time.

Lastly, was there any contact between Itier and the Cantonese scientist Zou Boqi (1819–69), or at least an awareness by the latter of the activity of the former in Canton in November 1844? Besides extensive work as a cartographer and a mathematician, Zou is said to have built a camera mostly based on ancient Chinese knowledge of optics and lenses. It is not quite clear whether he managed to master the chemistry needed to fix the image produced by the camera, but his research into optics and experiments with a form of photographic concept were gathered in a manuscript titled *Sheying zhi qi ji* (‘Notes on a Mechanism for Capturing Images’), thought to have been completed ‘in or before 1844’.⁸⁵ It is from this title that the term *sheying* comes (to capture the/an image) to denote the taking of a photograph in contemporary China. The Lamqua episode indicates the degree to which the photographic activity of Itier had been noticed by people in Canton. As a prominent member of the local scientific community, it is likely that the rumour had reached Zou Boqi and at least comforted him in his research. The principle aspects of the camera had been well known to the Chinese independent of any western knowledge since very ancient times, and one could even argue that the photographic adventure finds its distant origin in the first known description of the pinhole phenomenon by the philosopher Mozu in the fifth century BCE.⁸⁶ If put in relation with this early observation of the natural phenomenon upon which photography is based, the images of China by Itier are much more than just the earliest known photographs of China. They could be argued to mark the closing of a cycle in the history of the human fascination with the representation of the world, and the opening onto a new era.

Sulu Archipelago

Although there is no known existing daguerreotype from the Sulu archipelago, the use of the camera in this remote and dangerous part of the China Sea is mentioned on several occasions by both Itier and Pâris. On 5 February 1845, the *Cléopâtre* and the *Archimède* reached Sulu where the mission was to investigate the possible establishment of a French naval base on the island of Basilan. This project had

82 – He was made trustee of Chinnery’s estate. *Ibid.*, 254.

83 – Pâris, ‘Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission’, year 1844, 231.

84 – Itier, *Journal d’un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 2, 74: ‘cet instrument admirable qui dessine tout seul et dont les peintres de Canton sont fort préoccupés’.

85 – Oliver Moore, ‘Zou Boqi on Vision and Photography in Nineteenth-Century China’, in *The Human Tradition in Modern China*, ed. Kenneth J. Hammond and Kristin Stapleton, Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2008, 41.

86 – Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 4 Physics and Physical Technology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1962, 82.

87 – Jean Mallat, also known as Jean Malat de Basilan, is the author of a major study of the Philippines published under the title *Les Philippines, Histoires, Géographie, Mœurs, Agriculture, Industrie*, Paris: Artus Bertrand 1846.

88 – Pâris, 'Personal journal of the de Lagrené Mission', year 1845, 55, Friday 14 February: 'Comme si quelques épreuves de daguerreotype étaient importantes'.

89 – Although mentioned by Gimón, these daguerreotypes appear to be lost.

taken shape at the instigation of Jean Mallat (1808–63),⁸⁷ who on the occasion of earlier sojourns in the Philippines in the 1830s had become aware that the Sultan of Sulu had not paid obedience to the Spanish government, therefore leaving a possibility for negotiations to take place. Cécille and Lagrené had a few meetings with the Sultan, apparently without much success. Furthermore, Spain clearly objected to the French intention and the idea was quickly dropped in order not to affect preparations for the wedding of a son of Louis Philippe to a Spanish princess. This change of plan eventually resulted in the French focus on Vietnam and the colonisation of French Indochina.

From 5 to 21 February, the ships of the mission were anchored in the bay of Sulu (today Jolo, capital of the Sulu archipelago). Some slaves of the Malays had escaped and found refuge on the French ships. Because of possible retaliation, members of the mission were asked to restrict their on-land exploration to a strict minimum. This limitation was most upsetting for Itier whose passion for geology and biology took him for long study walks in all of the places visited. Bored and frustrated, Itier, then on board the *Archimède*, repeatedly expressed his unhappiness. This behaviour, in turn, irritated Pâris who had to impose the interdiction on shore leave. The tension between the two men increased, resulting in a series of rather unflattering descriptions of Itier by Pâris who complained about his incessant rambling and his unreasonable insistence on landing to collect stones and take daguerreotypes, 'as if a few daguerreotypes could be of any importance'.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, on 12 February, Itier managed to leave the ship with an excursion set the task of replenishing provisions of fresh water. He made two daguerreotypes described in his journal: of a group of horsemen and their mounts resting by a spring, and of a giant banyan tree shading that spring.⁸⁹ Always driven by his passion for science and documentation, Itier specified that the tree had a ten-metre circumference.

This part of the mission was eventually concluded on 27 and 28 February by a punitive expedition conducted to a Malay pirates' village on Basilan to avenge the death of three French sailors. On 1 March, Itier wrote a report on the observations conducted in the Sulu archipelago while preparing for the expedition's departure to Singapore. By 5 March, the *Archimède* passed by the island of Borneo and Itier mentions the view of the mountain Keemy-Baloo (Mt Kinabalu). By 14 March, they had returned to Singapore.

Borneo

In at least four publications, the daguerreotype titled *Portrait of a Dayak* is the second most published picture after the group portrait of the treaty signatories on the *Archimède* (figure 16). In the 1980 article, the caption given by Gimón for this daguerreotype was 'Borneo, a Dayak, living in the centre part of the island. It is thrilling to know that the man belongs to a cannibal tribe'. In 1981, the caption had changed to 'Portrait of a man from Central Borneo, believed to be from a cannibal tribe'. In 1991, the attention of the curator of the Bordeaux exhibition focused on the western clothing of the Asian man, and the caption had changed once again to 'Dayak from Borneo dressed in a European manner by Itier'. Finally in 2008, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Picture Paradise* presented by the National Gallery of Australia, the uncertainty surrounding the image was finally highlighted with the following caption: 'A man from Central Borneo – An inscription with this work says "a man from Central Borneo, possibly a cannibal", however the man is believed to be of Malay origin'.

The caption written by Itier on the back of the plate is actually: 'Dayak, habitant de la partie centrale de Borneo' ('Dayak, inhabitant of central Borneo'). There is no mention of cannibalism or that the plate was taken in Borneo. In fact, Itier only very briefly referred to Borneo en route from Sulu. Yet Gimón does mention a visit to Borneo in May 1845,⁹⁰ which is impossible if one follows the itinerary given by Itier in his journal. Nor is there any trace of a stop in Borneo in

90 – Gimón, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 237.



Figure 16. Jules Itier, *Dayak habitant de la partie central de l'île de Borneo*, daguerreotype, 1844–45(?). Wilson Centre for Photography.

archival documents. A few questions are thus raised: where was this picture taken? Is this man truly a Dayak? Finally, is Itier the author of this daguerreotype? As seen in the case of the Pondicherry plates, the fact that the picture is captioned with his handwriting cannot be taken as proof that he made the work. A number of elements suggest that this daguerreotype should maybe only be 'attributed' to Itier.

From a stylistic point of view this portrait stands apart from all other portraits by Itier in Asia. As mentioned earlier, they are characterised by the use of a plain white background and tight cropping. This picture features an elaborate setting and a pose reminiscent of commercial studio portraiture that does not fit his hallmark style. The possibility that this plate is the work of another daguerreotypist, and may have been purchased by Itier, is thus worth considering. Very few daguerreotypists are known to have been active in South-East Asia in the first half of the 1840s: these include Dutronquoy in Singapore, Sinibaldo de Mas in Manila, and the German Adolf Schaefer in Batavia. In any case, and although the ethnic origin of the man featured cannot be ascertained, a few things point in the direction of Manila, and therefore possibly Sinibaldo de Mas. Art historians consulted about this image all agreed that there is something very Spanish Filipino to both the clothing and furniture depicted in this daguerreotype.⁹¹ The man is clearly at ease in his western outfit, proudly wearing his suspenders with his hand confidently resting on the armrest – all aspects indicating long contact with European lifestyle. The Spanish developed education for the local population at an early stage of their colonial history as a way to proselytise. It would thus seem reasonable to see in this man someone who had been in contact with Spanish education and was therefore probably photographed in Manila.

91 – I discussed this plate with John Silva and Jonathan Best in Manila and Gael Newton, who also consulted Robyn Maxwell, former senior curator of Asian Art for the National Gallery of Australia.

Java

The French legation reached Batavia in early April 1845 and from there Itier embarked on a journey taking him to Bandung and Ceribon over a period of three weeks. On the way, he visited numerous plantations, commenting on the exploitation of the peasants and their submission to Dutch authority. He also witnessed many aspects of Javanese culture that left him in awe, such as a particularly beautiful dance about which he wrote on 18 April while in Ceribon: 'It had to be under the Javanese sky, where love takes such an important role in daily life, that was born such a mystical dance, ardent poem dedicated to sensuousness, making it eternal by holding back the supreme moment'.⁹²

There are no known daguerreotypes of Java and no mention of any photographic activity in his journal. This is in fact the only country visited for which there are no traces of the use of the camera in any form. It might have been because of a lack of material, although the daguerreotype was already present in Batavia by the time of his visit. The history of photography in Indonesia began when the medical officer J. Munnich was sent to the Dutch Indies in 1840 with a daguerreotype camera; by 1842, he had taken only a few successful images.⁹³ The documentation of Javanese antiquities was then entrusted to the German Adolf Schaefer, who had arrived in Batavia in June 1844 and opened a studio in September that same year. None of the plates from this commercial studio have been identified. Finally, in April 1845, Schaefer began photographing the collection of the Batavian Society of Arts, and travelled to Central Java to photograph the Borobudur. These daguerreotypes, preserved in the University of Leiden, are known to be the earliest photographs of Indonesia. Itier's work undertaken in 1844 in Singapore, Macao, and Canton therefore predates these Indonesian pictures.

Vietnam

On 16 May 1845, Itier left Singapore on board the *Alcmène*, for a mission under the command of Captain Fornier du Plan. The purpose of this mission was the liberation of Monseigneur d'Isauropolis, a French bishop who had been jailed by the Vietnamese emperor. This mission gave Itier the opportunity to produce two daguerreotypes of 'news events' that can be considered some of the earliest examples of photojournalism.

The mission reached Tourane in central Vietnam on 31 May and the *Alcmène* anchored at the foot of a hill on which stood the fort of Non-Nay that protected the bay. For the next two weeks, Itier visited the town and its surroundings while negotiations took place. Finally, on the morning of 12 June, orders were given for departure as soon as the missionary was on board. Itier had prepared a few plates with the intention of fixing images of these historic moments. He asked to go ashore at the foot of the fort, but shortly after reaching his destination, signal was given that the ship was about to weigh anchor. In a mad rush, anxious the ship might leave without him but determined to use the prepared plates, Itier managed to make two exposures and, helped by a quiet sea, to row back in time to reach the corvette. Once developed, the successful images revealed a scene in which 'everything is faithfully reproduced, with the exception of the emotion of the author' who had almost missed the departing ship.⁹⁴ The eventful episode was fully reported in the journal and special attention should be given to the following sentence: 'A few minute's delay could change the course of my destiny, but these few minutes are absolutely essential to me if I am to carry away the irrefutable evidence of these journeys'.⁹⁵

The plate showing the *Alcmène* leaving the Bay of Tourane is a fairly successful view clearly showing elements of the local topography identified by Itier in both his journal and in the caption on the back of the plate (figure 17). The view of the fort, however, is underexposed and the building on the hill does not present any striking feature (figure 18). Yet, although visually less attractive than others in

92 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 2, 265: 'c'est assurément sous le ciel de Java, sous ce ciel où l'amour tient une si grande place dans les occupations de la vie, que devait naître cette danse mystique, ardent poème dont les chants consacrés aux préludes de la volupté l'éternisent en suspendant l'instant suprême'.

93 – Herman J. Moeshart, 'Daguerreotypes by Adolph Schaefer', *History of Photography*, 9:3 (1985), 211–18.

94 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 3, 87–88.

95 – Quoted in Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 237.



Figure 17. Jules Itier, *La corvette L'Almène appareillant le 12 Juin 1845 à 9 heures du matin pour quitter la rade de Tourane; on aperçoit à gauche l'entrée de la rivière de Fai-fo et par la droite les rochers de la Pagode des Rochers de Marbre et au premier plan l'île de Mo-Koi appelée Ile de l'Observatoire*, daguerreotype, 12 June 1845. Collection Serge Kakou.



Figure 18. Jules Itier, *Vue du Fort de Non-nay situé à l'entrée de la baie de Tourane (Conchinchine) – Juin 1845*, daguerreotype. Terry Bennett collection.

96 – H. Cosserat, 'La Première Photographie d'un Site Cochinchinois – Le Fort de Non-Nay', *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hué*, 14:3–4 (July–December 1927), 185–92.

97 – Charles Lavollée, 'Les Voyages en Chine. M. J. Itier – M. de Ferrière Le Vayer', *L'Illustration* (22 July 1854), 59–60.

98 – Cosserat, 'La Première Photographie', 191: 'Combien devons-nous regretter, d'après cette description, que Jules Itier n'ait pas fait reproduire dans son ouvrage ces deux épreuves qui à l'entendre "ont réussi à souhait", et qui seraient pour nous aujourd'hui des documents d'une bien autre valeur que ce banal fort de Non-Nay qu'il nous donne'. Cosserat interpreted the reference of the view of the fort in Itier's journal as having been a third daguerreotype.

99 – The Paris Foreign Mission Society is a Roman Catholic missionary organisation founded in 1650 by the Jesuit Father Alexander de Rhodes when, on his return from one of his earlier trips to Asia and Vietnam, he received from Pope Innocent X permission to send secular priests and bishops as missionaries.

100 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 3, 139: 'D'un autre côté, la situation géographique du territoire [...] et la salubrité de son climat, semble réunir toutes les conditions désirables pour un établissement colonial d'un grand avenir. Quelques régiments d'infanterie suffiraient à cette conquête'.

101 – There are other instances of the intended use of the photographic medium for purposes of documentation contemporary to these two pictures by Itier, such as the Newhaven fisherwomen by Hill and Adamson or the work of De Prangey around the Mediterranean. However, it can be argued that these bodies of work do not so fully meet the definition of news photography and reportage, as we understand it today.

his collection, it is precisely this image that Itier chose as an illustration for the third volume of his journal. This surprising choice was noted by H. Cosserat as a conclusion to his article published in 1927.⁹⁶ At the time of writing this article, the original daguerreotypes of Itier were not available to the public. His photographic work was known only through the three illustrations in the published journal and their subsequent reproduction for an article by Lavollée, in the journal *L'Illustration* in 1854.⁹⁷ Unable to see the view of the bay described by Itier, Cosserat concluded: 'How regretful it is, according to this description, that Jules Itier didn't reproduce in his book the two pictures, which if we are to believe him "were fully successful", and which would be for us today documents of a much higher interest than this banal fort of Non-Nay he gives us'.⁹⁸ However, one might better understand the choice made by Itier if we see it in relation to the political context of the time.

The Lagrené Mission had just completed the Sulu part of the expedition and the prospects for the establishment of a French naval base in that part of the China Sea were not promising. Still free of any western presence, Vietnam was more or less the only option left for the French government, an alternative that had already been discussed in Paris while preparing the Sulu expedition. That 1845 mission was one of the many minor initial interventions of the French government in Indochina, often justified on the pretext of securing the protection of members of the Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris.⁹⁹ This line of action would eventually result in the direct military attack on Da Nang in 1858 by Rigault de Genouilly that truly marked the start of a colonisation process. We know from the correspondence of the Lagrené Mission that its members actively discussed the prospect of a French settlement in Vietnam during the journey. In the chapter on the Tourane mission, Itier includes a detailed survey of the geographical, political, and economic situation in Vietnam, resulting from his conversations with the bishop. He specifically mentions on a few occasions the poor condition of the Vietnamese military defence system, in particular its forts, and concludes the chapter with these lines: 'Furthermore, the geographical situation of this territory [...] and its salubrious climate seem to gather all the desirable conditions for a colonial establishment of great prospect. A few infantry regiments would be enough for its conquest'.¹⁰⁰

Throughout his journal, Itier gives repeated indications of his far-sighted understanding of the future of Asia in relation to the presence of western nations there. It is within this context that his choice of the seemingly uninteresting picture of the Non-Nay Fort has to be understood. He was aware when taking these two daguerreotypes that he was documenting a political event of possibly far-reaching consequences and he made it clear that he took these pictures because he regarded them as 'irrefutable evidence'. Of the two images, he chose the one that said the most about possible future developments to illustrate his point in the account: the relatively poor condition of the fort. The dissemination of this image was later expanded by its publication in the most famous French journal of the time. Besides being the first known photograph of Vietnam, as rightly mentioned by Cosserat, it would also appear that the publication of this picture of the Non-Nay Fort combines all the elements that define 'reportage' as we now understand it. From topic to intention, to eventful recording, to publication in relation to a text reporting the event, to distribution in a newspaper, all of the elements are there to make it possibly the earliest full-fledged 'photojournalistic' photograph.¹⁰¹

Sri Lanka

Itier had returned to Macao by mid-July 1845 where he rented the former French factory to write a report on his visit to Java. He fell sick during a short trip to Hong Kong in early August and, in a letter dated 29 August 1845, Lagrené permitted him



Figure 19. Jules Itier, *Vue de la ville de Pointe de Galle (Ile de Ceylan), prise de l'autre côté de la rade*, September–October 1845. Wilson Centre for Photography.

to leave the mission and return to France on his own.¹⁰² On 31 August, Itier wrote in his journal:

The preparations for my departure are now completed: in a few hours I will have left behind me the shores of the Celestial Empire, and say farewell to this land so rich in occurrences, which I only glimpse into rather than truly observed, and which I had promised in my ambitious dreams to make accessible to the ardent European curiosity.¹⁰³

On 1 September, Itier left Hong Kong on board the *Lady Mary Wood* and reached Galle in Sri Lanka on 19 September, via Singapore, Malacca, and Georgetown.

Itier stayed one month on this island famous for its tea and other plantations, a month spent travelling around to study the local agriculture. There is no mention of the daguerreotype in the Ceylon chapter, but one plate exists – a view of Pointe de Galle, one of the most scenic views in the whole body of work (figure 19). This view is taken from the other side of the bay, and shows a group of fishermen on the beach with the town of Galle in the distance – a scene that has remained very much the same until today. This picture has been published only once and dated 1844 by Gimon in his 1981 article. In his journal, Pâris does mention stopping in Ceylon but only in Trincomalee to replenish the stock of coal. The possibility for this view of Galle to have been undertaken by him or Rondot in 1844 is therefore unlikely and the correct date should be September–October 1845. While early photographic activity in Sri Lanka is known through multiple studio advertisements in the press,¹⁰⁴ no work from the early 1840s has so far been recovered, thus making Itier's daguerreotype the earliest known photograph of Sri Lanka.

102 – This letter was part of the archive kept by Itier's descendant, Claude Guillard, at the time of the dispersal of the family's possessions in Vêras in 1968.

103 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 3, 181: 'Mes préparatifs de départ sont terminés: dans quelques heures j'aurai quitté les rives du céleste empire, et dit un dernier adieu à cette terre si riche de faits que je m'étais promis, dans mes rêves ambitieux, de livrer à l'ardente curiosité de l'Europe'.

104 – Ismeth Raheem and Percy Colin Thomè, *Images of British Ceylon, Nineteenth Century Photography of Sri Lanka*, Singapore: Times Edition 2000, 9–12.

Egypt

Itier left Galle on 19 October 1845 on board the *Hindustan*, a paquebot plying the route between Calcutta and Eden, where he arrived on 28 October. The last chapter of volume three of Itier's journal describes Aden and Suez and closes on his departure for Cairo on 10 November. Gimon mentions that Itier was able to purchase thirty plates in Cairo, as well as another four in Alexandria, which

allowed him to continue his photographic activity in Egypt. In his 1980 article, Gimon mentions around thirty-five daguerreotypes from Egypt, of which twenty-seven are known through publication. These include views of Cairo and Alexandria, diverse monumental ruins in Louqsor (Luxor), Karnac (Karnak), and Edfu, as well as the Isles of Elephants and other views of the upper Nile valley. Itier was back in France in 1846, and produced a self-portrait dressed as a mandarin in 1847 – now considered an iconic picture from his body of works. In Véras, Gimon found a copy of Gustave Le Gray's *Traité de la photographie sur papier* (1852), which leads him to suggest that Itier's interest in photography continued on at least until 1859. Indeed, the last known works by Itier are two self-portraits with his children made with the collodion technique in the 1860s.

Senegal

One should not leave this survey of Itier's body of expeditionary photographs without going back to its very origin and taking a closer look at a plate of St Louis, Senegal. This daguerreotype shows the main square of the city, said to have been founded in 1659 by sailors from Normandy and named after Louis XIV. There are two brief mentions of the use of the camera in Itier's journal of the voyage to Senegal: the first on 8 January 1843 in St Louis, probably the day the only surviving view was taken, and then on 13 January when it is mentioned in relation to the celebration of the Islamic Tabaski festival,¹⁰⁵ suggesting a possible early use of the camera for ethnographic purposes. Gimon published this plate in the articles of 1980 and 1981,¹⁰⁶ at a time when the history of photography in both Africa and Asia had barely begun to be written.

In an article published in this journal in 2010,¹⁰⁷ Jürg Schneider provided an overview of the progress accomplished in the field of African photography history over the preceding thirty years. References to photography, however, prior to the 1860s in Africa are not common. The French Navy captain Louis Edouard Bouët-Willaumez (1808–71) is known to have used a daguerreotype camera in 1840 in Elmina, Ghana, but no plate has survived. According to Schneider, the earliest extant images at the time of his writing were produced by the African-American daguerreotypist Augustus Washington (1820/21–75), who migrated to Liberia in 1853, opened a studio, and later extended his practice to Sierra Leone, Gambia, and Senegal. A little-known group of sixty-two daguerreotypes from the eastern African coast is also kept by the Quai Branly museum in Paris, which have been examined by Christine Barthe.¹⁰⁸ They were taken by the sailor and explorer Charles Guillaumin (1808–75) on the occasion of a scientific mission to eastern Africa between 1846 and 1848. In view of the few dates given, it therefore appears that Itier's view of St Louis, Senegal, is the earliest extant photograph of the African continent south of the Sahara and contemporaneous with the Frenchman Girault de Prangey's work in north Africa.

Jules Itier: An Amateur Daguerreotypist in Asia

Gimon notes at the end of his 1981 article that while Itier received a number of awards from diverse scientific societies, the amateur photographer received no recognition for his work in his lifetime and that 'even in the field of 19th century "reportage" his work has not yet been given the adequate recognition'.¹⁰⁹ Thirty years later it could be said that the situation remains the same. While his work is now well known, its scope and full implications have yet to be understood and this article seeks to address these matters.

References to the coming of photography in Asia soon after the public announcement of the daguerreotype in 1839 are many and there is at least one such story for all the countries visited by Itier, with the exception of Vietnam.

105 – Itier, *Journal de Voyage au Sénégal*, 78–80.

106 – The plate is dated 7 January 1843 in Gimon, 'Jules Itier, le reporter', 84, but the correct year was unexpectedly changed to 1842 one year later in Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 227.

107 – Jürg Schneider, 'The Topography of the Early History of African Photography', *History of Photography*, 34:2 (May 2010), 134–46.

108 – Christine Barthe, "Les éléments de l'observation". Des daguerréotypes pour l'anthropologie', in *Le daguerréotype français, un objet photographique*, Paris: Quentin Bajac, Dominique Planchon de Font-Réaulx 2003, 80–83; and 'Anthropologie', *ibid.*, 372–74.

109 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 244.

While these are known through literature, none of the resulting works concerning Singapore, the Philippines, China, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia have been recovered. The primary position of Itier's work in Singapore, China, and Vietnam has been established through publication for each of these countries. As argued in this article, the two plates of Manila are so far the earliest known and dated photographs of that city, as is the case for the view of Galle in Sri Lanka. As a whole, Itier's body of work around Asia can therefore be said to be the earliest surviving photographic documentation of that part of the world. Most significantly, his daguerreotype of the Tian Hock Keng Temple in Singapore appears to occupy a special position in the history of photography. This plate, dated 6 July 1844, predates by a few weeks the now dated plates of Pondicherry by Rondot and the 1845 daguerreotypes of Javanese antiquities by Schaefer. It therefore appears to be the earliest dated photograph of Asia. Given that the daguerreotype of St Louis, Senegal, is also the earliest photograph of western Africa, Itier thus can be said to have produced the earliest extant photographs of two very different parts of the world.

The significance of Itier's work in Asia, however, also goes beyond its simple position in the chronology of the medium. The scope and date of his 360° panorama of Canton makes it an important achievement in the history of photography, and the daguerreotype of a group of four people in a street of Canton is among the earliest known uses of the front-profile pose on location for the purpose of ethnographic documentation. Some of his portraits are remarkably modern in their composition. Lastly, his association of a text narrating events and images illustrating these events can be regarded as an early form of published reportage, even if only a few images were used in the final publication. From his later body of publications and the lengthy geological, botanical, and economic analysis found in the journal, it is clear that Itier was driven by a passion for exact sciences and the recording of data for further analysis.

An important aspect of his mission was precisely to produce in-depth economic reports that would be later used by the French government to plan its action in Asia. As seen in the extracts of the journal quoted earlier, Itier embarked on this journey with the clear intention of making his observations 'accessible to the ardent European curiosity' through text but also by using the daguerreotype as a medium that would provide 'the irrefutable evidence of these journeys'.¹¹⁰ This approach was probably a reflexion on the experience acquired during the earlier trip to Senegal and Guyana. Itier left for that journey around the Atlantic Ocean in 1842 with a daguerreotype camera, and kept a written account in a journal illustrated with drawings by his travel companion M. de Corbery. This manuscript remained unpublished in his lifetime, but the experience of using both *écriture* and photography while travelling must have influenced his plan for a more ambitious project when embarking on the journey to China.

Itier was far from being the only member of the mission to leave France with some literary ambition in mind. The 'Bibliographie de la Mission de Chine', published by Lavollée in 1900, lists fifteen books and over twenty articles published by twelve of its members.¹¹¹ For Itier, the publication of this journal must have been the subject of a much-anticipated satisfaction, the subject of many considerations all along the journey, and, as the Tourane episode indicates, a process in which the choice of photographic subjects must have been planned as possible illustrations. Why so few of these plates were eventually used remains an unresolved question in the absence of any surviving correspondence between Itier and his publisher. But considering the importance he gave to this self-assigned mission, it seems fair to infer that the publisher probably chose to restrict the number of engravings to three for reasons of economy and that, if left to his own choice, Itier would have opted for a book in which the pictures recorded along the journey would have followed the narrative of his text.

110 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 3, 88: 'Le témoignage irréfutable de ces péripéties'.

111 – Charles Lavollée, 'Bibliographie de la Mission de Chine', in *France et Chine*, Paris: Plon-Nourrit et cie 1900, 415–17.

112 – Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 225.

113 – Gimon suggests that Itier's camera was a Lerebours model. Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', 227.

114 – Itier, *Journal d'un Voyage en Chine*, vol. 1, 331: 'C'est qu'il est bien des sujets qui n'étonnent que les savants, que les esprits méditatifs, et les phénomènes du daguerreotype sont dans cette catégorie'.

Itier was a man highly representative of his time in his personal interests and pursuits, but his position as a customs inspector took priority and he remained a proficient amateur in the practice of these. Judging by the outline of his photographic training given by Gimon,¹¹² he might have been in contact with a number of personalities who played a role in the development of daguerreotype practice in the early 1840s. He might also have seen examples of Lerebours's *Excursions Daguériennes*, the first volume of which was published in 1841, before his first departure from France.¹¹³ But Itier does not seem to have been a member of any photographic society where he could have picked up techniques and ideas. The scope of the solutions, both pictorial and technical, he implemented to give a visual account of his journey around Asia seem therefore to have been the result of a personal investigation of the possible uses of the camera and could be seen as reflective of the predestined developments of the medium.

One of the very few indications given by Itier of his own understanding of the photographic phenomenon is found in the context of taking street scenes in Macao, which closes volume one of his journal. On 28 October 1844, while commenting on the kind of curiosity demonstrated by the people in the street for his apparatus, he wrote: 'There are topics that surprise only the scientists and the meditative minds, and the phenomena of the daguerreotype are among them'.¹¹⁴ This thought-provoking way of closing the first part of his journal almost seems to be a reflection of the manner in which the intrinsic mystery of the daguerreotype, upon which a whole new society of image and information had begun to be established, was all too quickly going to be taken for granted. This article has presented sufficient information and relevant analysis to reassess the full implications of Itier's contribution to the history of photography and give it, at long last, adequate recognition.